



Funding, Fundraising, Sales & Collections Policy

I. Purpose

- A. Set standards and practice for funding ministry at Messiah
- B. To provide guidance to groups seeking money or other donations for ministry and missions
- C. To avoid making funding decisions on an inconsistent basis
- D. To maintain consistency when ministry leadership or staffing changes occur
- E. To ensure that fundraising does not overshadow Biblical stewardship and core discipleship principles

II. Scope

This policy applies to anyone seeking funds for ministry or mission, including church and school staff, lay leaders, and volunteers. These groups are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by this policy. If a need for funds is identified in a particular ministry area, the following individual(s) are the first point of contact:

Messiah Lutheran School: School Administrator, School Administrative Assistant, or Athletic/Activities Director

Messiah Lutheran Church (general): Operations Coordinator

Messiah Lutheran Church (missions): Missions Coordinator

III. Church Funding and Stewardship Philosophy

In keeping with Biblically based principles, the large majority of funding for the church and its ministry and operation is received from offerings to Messiah's general fund. Everything we have been given is a gift from God. We are honored to give a portion back to Him!

***"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."
1 Chronicles 29:14***

Many Christians have looked to the Old Testament tithe – a ten percent offering- as a guide to determine how much they should contribute to their church. However, more important than a percentage that may become legalistic is that all gifts to the church are given freely and cheerfully.

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

When we give a gift with a glad heart, strings are not attached. It is Messiah's intent that offerings to the general fund are managed by our designated leaders and staff, who shall use these funds to further the mission, vision, and values of our church. The church leadership will in turn ensure proper financial stewardship by the establishment of an annual budget, adherence to generally accepted accounting principles, and transparent financial reporting.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Acts 2:44-45

When a special need or occasion arises, Messiah offers additional giving opportunities that allow those who are moved to give "above and beyond" their regular offering. We wish to provide those options in a consistent, yet limited fashion. The process of raising funds is part of the ministry and not just the means to an end. Messiah is truly blessed with a passion for helping others! It is important to understand that fundraising limits are not a reflection of the "worthiness" of a cause or mission, but simply a desire to remain faithful to the principles of Biblical stewardship.

IV. Funding Options for Ministries and Missions at Messiah.

- A. Church Budget/General Fund for Operations - The preferred way for ministries to receive funding for ministry operation is by requesting budget funds from the operating budget at Messiah. These requests usually come through the staff liaison for a particular ministry area. Using the church budget to fund the majority of ministries at Messiah keeps our work regarding finances in the area of Christian Stewardship instead of fundraising. Requests for budgeted funds must be submitted in writing by February 1 as part of an annual ministry plan. If a need exists beyond what is allotted in the general budget, the ministry leader and the operations staff should work together to determine the best funding method from the additional options listed here.
- B. Development- Many people mistakenly use the terms "fundraising" and "development" interchangeably. This is not accurate. Fundraising is a short-term way to raise money for a specific need. Development is about building long-term relationships with people who have a passion for the overall cause or mission in which they are involved. Certainly fundraising events are a part of development work, but development at Messiah is more about working to ensure that funds are always available for the advancement and expansion of the ministry. Some examples of development funds include capital campaigns, scholarship funds, endowment funds, and estate funds.
- C. User Fees - Some ministries are helped financially through user fees – school tuition, confirmation registration fee, VBS, etc. This is a way to raise additional funds by people who use these areas of ministry and keep the emphasis on Stewardship and ministry and not on fundraising. Generally this is done in the larger areas of ministry that serve our members. Requests for user funds used on a recurring basis should be submitted in writing by February 1 as part of an annual ministry plan.

- D. Requests for user funds on a one-time basis should be submitted in writing to the Operations Coordinator.
- E. Direct request –Similar to a user fee, there may be times when those involved in a ministry wish to raise funds for the direct benefit of that ministry, or to support an individual going on a mission trip. In these instances, it is preferable to conduct a “direct ask” of involved members or close friends and family, rather than asking the entire church. The use of the church directory to contact members by phone or mail for fundraising purposes is not allowed.
- F. Door Offerings – Occasionally a particular mission project arises that provides an opportunity for members to give directly to a ministry opportunity or relief agency. Most often this method is used for missions and ministries outside of our own congregation – Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Blind Missions, Missionaries, etc. Door offerings are only sanctioned by the senior pastor.
- G. Fund-Raising/Sales – Although the strong preference is to keep funding in the realm of direct giving, there are occasional cases when fundraising can be a helpful tool. Because too much fundraising distracts from the work of ministry and is counterproductive to Christian Stewardship, there are guidelines to keep fundraising in control and to keep it as the last funding option.

V. Fundraising, Sales & Collections Guidelines

- To the greatest extent possible, ministry operations should be funded through the general offering, development efforts, and user fees. Fundraisers, sales, and collections are reserved for the advancement of Messiah’s local, national, and international mission partnerships. (This does not apply to sales of books, CDs, cards or Messiah apparel/Spirit Wear).
- All fundraising, sales and/or collections proposals should be presented in advance to the Operations Coordinator. The preferred option is to include these proposals as part of an annual ministry plan. Requests will be considered by the staff for approval based on need, church or community benefit, and other scheduled events at the church.
- Collections of donated items are generally limited to one per quarter for a period not exceeding two consecutive Sundays, with the exception of October-December, when special Thanksgiving and Christmas collections may occur.
- Fundraisers should support mission programming rather than defray the costs of the people participating. Funds to defray costs should be raised through user fees or direct giving (see above).
- Fundraisers and collections at Messiah Lutheran Church are limited to faith-based organizations. Messiah does not allow the solicitation or sale of home-based business products at the church, even if the proceeds will be donated to the church.
- Groups should plan events that do not require the sale of materials during weekend worship services whenever possible. Goods for sale on Sundays are limited to the Information Center and

The Commons. The Ministry Spotlight table may not be used for sales, except for ticket sales to a larger development event (e.g. School Auction, Celebrate Uganda, etc.)

- No sales may occur on the following days: Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Thanksgiving, and Jubilee Sunday.
- Groups using the building for a fundraising event must ensure that the facilities are available and must abide by Messiah's Facility Use Policy. Groups should try to host events that also provide a ministry opportunity, i.e. – events that also serve as fellowship opportunities, meals that coordinate with a planned ministry event, etc. Note that facility use for the daily operations of the church and school, and special occasions such as weddings or funerals will always take priority over a fundraising event.
- If an event, collection, or sale requires publicity or promotional material, it is the responsibility of the group leader to complete the "Promote an Event or Ministry" form online in a timely manner (at least 3 weeks before needed).
- In order to maintain transparency, groups holding a fundraiser must submit a completed Special Event Accounting Worksheet (see attached) or a spreadsheet listing all expenses and income for the event. Completed forms must be sent to the Operations Coordinator within 10 days of the event.

Special Event Accounting Worksheet

Name of event: _____

Ministry Action Team: _____

Date of event: _____

Completed by: _____

Income Details (e.g., ticket sales, food, silent auction) _____

Total Income \$ _____

Expense Details (e.g., food, equipment rental, supplies, postage) _____

PLEASE ATTACH ALL RECEIPTS TO THIS PAGE

Total Expenses \$ _____

*****This form should be completed and given to the Operations Coordinator within 10 days of the end of the event. Alternatively, you may submit a spreadsheet with income and expenses listed.***

**Messiah Lutheran Church
User Fee Form**

****User fees are not intended to be fundraisers! The goal is to collect fees to cover all or part of the costs of the ministry event.**

Name of event: _____

Ministry Action Team: _____

Date(s) of event: _____

Team Leader: _____

Event Description:

Estimated cost:

Estimated number of people attending:

User fee (divide the cost by the number of people):

User fees should be collected by the team leader. Checks should be made payable to Messiah Lutheran Church. The team leader is responsible for turning in the user fees to the church office.

Appendix 1: Funding Sources and Uses

Funding Source	Uses/Examples
General Fund	Worship, Ministry staff and support, Operational staff and support, Facility operations and maintenance
Development Funding	Join the Journey- Debt retirement Lion's Legacy- School financial aid fund (supported through school auction and golf tournament) Celebrate Uganda- Annual event with our mission partner Hearts & Hope for Uganda
User Fees	School tuition, VBS, youth soccer, Bible study materials, participation in mission trips
Direct Request	Mission trip participation, urgent or unanticipated financial need
Door Offering	Lutheran Blind Mission, LWML, Disaster relief, Missionary support
Fundraisers/Collections	Selling Three Avocados coffee, selling jewelry for Uganda missions, collecting change for THRIVE, collecting food for OASIS