

GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY

General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church

I. Introduction

The General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church (Church and Society), a nonprofit organization, encourages the solicitation and acceptance of gifts from a variety of sources that will enable it to fulfill its mission. However, to maintain its independence, credibility, and high regard, Church and Society seeks to avoid conflicts of interest or situations in which the mission, programs, and projects of Church and Society could be compromised or could cause or create the perception of being compromised.

- A. Church and Society will consider gifts from and partnerships with individuals, foundations, other organizations, and select corporations. A “gift” is defined as any contribution—cash or otherwise—that is given to Church and Society to support its mission. A partnership is an arrangement between Church and Society and another organization to cooperate to advance mutual interests.
- B. Church and Society recognizes that individuals, foundations, and other nonprofit organizations have a variety of motives for providing financial support and might have expectations for their donation. Similarly, corporations, as profit-centered organizations, have obligations to their shareholders, boards and employees to be financially successful. They support nonprofits not only out of a desire to be helpful, but also with an expectation of financial return.
- C. Given these realities, Church and Society is willing to accept support from and negotiate partnerships with individuals, foundations, other nonprofit organizations, and corporations in ways that will recognize the funder or partner while enabling Church and Society to achieve its mission without compromising its principles.

II. Principles

- A. Church and Society will solicit and accept support only for activities that are consistent with its mission.
- B. Church and Society will accept no cash or real property, pledge of support, or noncash gift or services nor enter into any partnership with any organization that is involved in producing goods and/or services that are inconsistent with the current Book of Discipline, the Book of Resolutions, or the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church at the time of the gift.
- C. Church and Society’s assets, including its name, building and other work, will be protected at all times. Donors will not be permitted to use Church and Society’s name, image, or building unless expressly stipulated in a written agreement. Church and Society’s General Secretary reserves the right to refuse any donation, or decline a partnership, if such support is not in keeping with these principles or for other reasons that Church and Society deems appropriate.
- D. Church and Society will not modify its positions to conform to those of an individual, other organization, or corporation, regardless of the level of funding provided.
- E. Church and Society will state in publications, on its website, or in other appropriate places that its positions do not necessarily represent the views of its funders, nor are the views of funders necessarily those of Church and Society.

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- F. Church and Society will not accept funds from or enter into partnerships with individuals, nonprofit organizations or corporations that profit from or are known to support the following: anti-personnel weapons and armaments and firearms; environmental degradation; alcoholic beverages, tobacco, gambling, and pornography; privately-owned correctional facilities; unjust workplace, labor, and media practices; inhumane genetic technologies.
- G. Church and Society will not accept support that implies or requires endorsements of products and services provided by a for-profit or a nonprofit organization.
- H. Church and Society will maintain complete control, consistent with any donor restrictions acceptable to Church and Society, of all resources provided by funders.
- I. Church and Society will solicit and accept current and deferred gifts that do not impose undue financial or legal liability on the organization.
- J. Church and Society will not accept gifts that are too restrictive or too difficult to administer for any reason.
- K. The General Secretary, in consultation with staff and the Development Advisory Council, shall confer to discuss potential funders, sponsors, and partners on a regular basis to ensure that the integrity of Church and Society is protected and that potential funders do not present a challenge to the organization's strategic vision and mission.

III. Gift Acknowledgement

As a matter of standard practice, Church and Society will strive to send a written acknowledgment of all gifts within two weeks of receipt.

- A. Recognition of individual support, or corporate, organizational, or partnership funding, will be developed in cooperation with the donor and will be consistent with the level of support and Church and Society's mission and strategic direction. The General Secretary, in collaboration with the Development Advisory Council, will establish recognition opportunities that are appropriate and meaningful for supporters and Church and Society. In most cases, acknowledgements of corporate or organizational support will be limited to the organizations' names, logos or slogans, web addresses, etc. that are an established part of the donors' or partners' identities. Such acknowledgements might appear on Church and Society publications, promotional items, and the website, or other places deemed appropriate by the General Secretary.
- B. Information about Church and Society might appear on the website or appropriate materials produced by the sponsoring organization at the discretion of the General Secretary.

IV. Forms of Acceptable Gifts

A. Cash

Gifts in the form of cash and checks shall be accepted regardless of amount unless there is a question as to whether the donor has sufficient title to the assets or is competent to legally transfer the funds as a gift to Church and Society. Cash gifts must be made payable to the General Board of Church and Society or Church and Society and shall in no event be made payable to an employee, agent, or volunteer for the credit of Church and Society. Cash gifts may also be made payable to the United Methodist Church Development Center of the General Council on Finance and Administration to either its Social Justice Ministry

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Endowment Fund or its General Board of Church and Society Fund; Church and Society is the beneficiary of each of these funds.

B. Real Property

No gift of real estate shall be accepted without prior written approval from the General Secretary.

No gift of real estate shall be accepted without first being appraised by an independent party acceptable to Church and Society, who shall have no business or other relationship with the donor, the United Methodist Church, or Church and Society. If appropriate to the property, a Level I Environmental Site Assessment would be performed by a qualified geologist, engineer, or site assessment firm. A follow-up Level II Site Assessment may be required, dependent on the initial study. Clean-up of contamination would be completed prior to the acceptance of the gift property, except in the rare cases as determined by Church and Society.

The following questions may apply to all gifts of real estate:

- Is the property useful for the purposes of Church and Society?
- Is the property marketable?
- Are there any restrictions, reservations, easements, or other limitations associated with the property?
- Are there carrying costs, which may include insurance, property taxes, mortgages, or notes, etc., associated with the property?
- Has an environmental impact assessment been conducted?

Church and Society will not accept real estate encumbered by mortgage unless special circumstances exist and with written authorization of Church and Society. Gifts of real property valued at \$5,000 or more must be evaluated by an independent appraiser and appropriate IRS forms must be completed.

C. Tangible Personal Property

Tangible personal property is everything, other than real estate, that is used in a business. Examples of tangible personal property are computers, furniture, tools, machinery, signs, equipment, supplies, and leased equipment. Before acceptance by the General Secretary all gifts of tangible personal property must be examined in light of the following criteria: (1) Does acceptance further the purposes of Church and Society? (2) Is the property marketable? (3) Are there any undue restrictions on the use, display, or sale of the property? (4) Are there unacceptable costs associated with the property? (5) Will liquidating the property create undue expense or burden for Church and Society? Gift valuation for charitable tax deduction is the responsibility of the donor.

D. Services-in Kind

Church and Society may accept pro-bono services from a corporation, organization, or individual at the sole discretion of the General Secretary. Such gifts must be properly accounted for and acknowledged. The valuation of the gift for charitable tax deduction is the responsibility of the donor.

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E. Securities

1. Church and Society can accept both publicly traded and closely held securities. In general, unrestricted marketable securities will be sold upon receipt unless the General Secretary determines that the retention of the securities will benefit Church and Society's financial position.
2. Closely held securities, which include not only debt and equity positions in non-publicly traded companies but also interests in limited liability partnerships or limited liability companies or other ownership forms, can be accepted subject to the approval of the General Secretary. However, securities must be reviewed prior to acceptance to determine there are no restrictions on the security that would prevent Church and Society from converting them to cash; the security is marketable; and the security will not generate any undesirable tax consequences for Church and Society.
3. For gift recognition purposes, Church and Society will rely on the value of the stock on the day that the transfer is completed. The donor is responsible for delivering a qualified appraisal and paying any fees associated with obtaining it.
- a. The following gifts of securities will not be accepted:
 - Securities which are not accessible or in any way could create a liability to the institution.
 - Securities which, by their nature, may not be assigned.
 - Securities which, on investigation, have no apparent value.
 - Exceptions to the above restrictions on gifts of securities may be made the General Secretary.

F. Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designations

Church and Society may accept designations as the beneficiary of retirement plans. Such designations shall not be recorded as a gift to Church and Society until such time as the gift is irrevocable. When the gift is irrevocable, but is not due until a future date, the present value of the gift will be recorded.

G. Planned Gifts

1. This gift types include bequests, life insurance, irrevocable or revocable trusts, life estates, charitable remainder annuity and unitrusts, and charitable lead trusts (annuities). The General Secretary and legal counsel will review all planned gift vehicles, prior to acceptance.
2. Bequests designating Church and Society as the beneficiary shall not be recorded as a gift to GBCS until such time as the gift is irrevocable. Where the gift is irrevocable, but is not due until a future date, the present value of the gift may be recorded.
3. Planned gift types can be funded with cash, marketable securities, closely held stock, real estate, notes, mortgages and contracts, and miscellaneous tangible personal property. The funding source for planned gifts will be reviewed according to the previous stated policy for outright gifts.

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4. Church and Society will accept funds it receives as the designated beneficiary of a retirement plan (for example, an IRA, a 401(k) plan, or a defined contribution plan). The donor shall provide a copy of the executed designation form that has been submitted to the retirement plan administrator naming Church and Society as the beneficiary.

H. Life Insurance

1. Church and Society must be named as both beneficiary and irrevocable owner of an insurance policy before a life insurance policy can be recorded as a gift. It is preferable that the policy be a “paid-up” policy. If it is not a paid-up policy, and the donor contributes future premium payments to Church and Society, Church and Society will include the entire amount of each subsequent premium payment as a gift in the year that it is made or received by Church and Society.
2. In a number of states, a donor must first establish an “insurable interest” by applying for the policy in his or her own name, before transferring ownership to Church and Society. Approval by the General Secretary is required prior to acceptance of any gift of life insurance.
3. Once the policy is accepted, life insurance holdings will be reviewed periodically to determine whether it is best to continue to pay the premiums, convert the policy to paid up insurance, surrender the policy for its current cash value, or change the underlying investment structure.
4. Donors are encouraged to name Church and Society as a beneficiary or contingent beneficiary of their life insurance policies and/or retirement plans. Such designations shall not be recorded as gifts to Church and Society until such time as the gift is irrevocable.

I. Cryptocurrency

1. At this time, Church and Society does not accept cryptocurrency.

V. Miscellaneous Provisions

A. Memorial Fund Donations

Named memorial funds can be established at Church and Society and can either be restricted or unrestricted depending on the wishes of the decedent or his/her family.

B. Church and Society as a Beneficiary of a Third-Party Event

Church and Society will, upon approval of the General Secretary, accept being named the beneficiary of a third-party activity, provided the event would not be deemed inappropriate or incongruous with the Church and Society mission. The sponsoring organization must provide contact information for all supporters so that Church and Society can acknowledge their support in a timely and appropriate manner. Under no circumstances will a third party be allowed to use Church and Society’s Federal Tax ID number for fundraising purposes outside a sanctioned event to raise funds for Church and Society.

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C. Donor and Data Confidentiality

Under no circumstances will Church and Society provide the names, addresses or any other information regarding our donors to anyone without gaining permission from the donor. All Church and Society donor lists are confidential.

D. Responsibility for Implementation of the Policy

The Church and Society Development Advisory Council, in consultation with the General Secretary, will develop an annual development plan for review by the Board of Directors. Once the plan is approved, the General Secretary will be responsible for its execution and need not seek further approval from the Board to solicit or accept gifts unless the gift has significant potential financial or reputational impact on the organization, is not covered by this policy, or board approval is required by the donor. The General Secretary will seek the advice of the Trustee Advisory Committee or Finance Committee about the acceptance of any stock or securities or any other issues that have major financial implications.

E. Church and Society shall use the [Guidelines for Reporting and Counting Charitable Gifts](#) (updated 2021) as prepared by the National Association of Charitable Gift Planners to manage its risk and ensure accountability to donors and the public.

F. The General Secretary may consult the Finance Committee or Development Advisory Council if there is any question about whether a proposed gift is consistent with Church and Society's mission, values, programs, or policies. The following gifts will not be accepted by Church and Society:

- Gifts that violate any federal, state, or local statute or ordinance.
- Gifts that contain unreasonable conditions (e.g., a lien or other encumbrance) or gifts of partial interest in property.
- Gifts that are made with the condition that the proceeds will be spent by Church and Society for the personal benefit of a named individual.
- Gifts that could expose Church and Society to liability or reputational damage.

G. Ethical Standards

Church and Society is committed to the highest ethical standards. Development staff at the organization will be required to adhere to the [Donor Bill of Rights](#).¹ It is further recommended that they be familiar with and adhere to the [Model Standards of Practice for the Charitable Gift Planner](#) adopted by the American Council on Gift Annuities and the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning.

¹ Developed by the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel (AAFRC), Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), and adopted in November 1993.