

Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing Gift

Acceptance Policy

1. Introduction

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing (UU Lansing) solicits and accepts gifts to fund its activities and fulfill its mission. UU Lansing urges all prospective donors to seek the assistance of personal legal and financial advisors in matters relating to their potential gifts, including the tax and estate planning consequences. The following policies and guidelines govern acceptance of gifts made to UU Lansing for the benefit of any of its operations, programs, or services.

A. Gifts Not Accepted

UU Lansing will not accept gifts that:

- would result in UU Lansing violating its by-laws, Board policies, or applicable state or federal laws and/or regulations,
- would result in UU Lansing losing its status as a tax-exempt organization,
- are real estate,
- are too difficult or expensive to administer,
- place additional obligation on the Church to commit resources or raise funds to complete the purpose for which the gift is intended,
- would result in unacceptable consequences for UU Lansing including harm to its reputation, or
- are for purposes outside UU Lansing's mission.

2. Restricted and Unrestricted Gifts

A. Restricted Gifts

Restricted gifts, or gifts whose use is restricted by donors for a particular purpose, will be accepted and used as directed by the donor if consistent with the church's Mission. If the requested purpose is not consistent with the mission, the gift will be used at the discretion of the Senior Minister after discussion with the donor. Any potential donor who is considering a restricted gift is encouraged to communicate with the Senior Minister prior to making the gift.

Sunset Clause

Every effort will be made to use a restricted gift as the donor intended. If there are funds from the gift unspent after five years, the balance may be re-allocated to support a similar mission of the church. Donors will be notified of this policy in the letter accepting the gift. This sunset clause applies retroactively for gifts received over five years ago.

Challenge and matching gifts may be accepted upon approval of the Senior Minister.

B.Unrestricted Gifts

In contrast to restricted gifts, unrestricted gifts are those in which the donor gives the church leadership total discretion in how the money may be spent, which maximizes their ability to respond to the ever-changing needs of the church. UU Lansing encourages its donors to make unrestricted gifts. The first \$5,000 of any unrestricted gift will be used for operating expenses. Any amount greater than \$5,000 will be invested in the church's Endowment Fund.

3. Memorial and Honor Contributions

Contributions made in honor of or in memory of someone are used as designated by the donor, honoree, or, in the case where the honoree is deceased, by honorees' family. We recommend that donors discuss their future contribution with the Stewardship team.

If the contribution is undesignated, the first \$5,000 will be used for operating expenses. Any amount greater than \$5,000 will be invested in the endowment fund.

4. Types of Gifts

A.Gifts of Cash

Cash is acceptable in any form, including checks, money orders, credit cards, or online donations.

B. Gifts of Securities

All marketable securities shall be sold upon receipt.

If the securities were donated as an unrestricted gift, the first \$5,000 will be used for operating expenses and any amount greater than \$5,000 will be invested in the endowment fund. If the securities were donated as a restricted gift, they will be used as directed by the donor if consistent with the church's Mission. If the restriction is not consistent with the Mission, it will be used at the discretion of the Senior Minister after discussion with the donor.

UU Lansing will send the donor an acknowledgment of the gift valued on the day the securities are received.

Gifts of securities must be reviewed prior to acceptance to determine that:

- there are no restrictions on the security that would prevent UU Lansing from converting the assets to cash,
- the security is marketable,
- the security will not generate negative financial consequences for the Congregation, and
- the gift transaction does not involve tax or other financial planning in which UU Lansing would not wish to participate.

The final determination on the acceptance of closely held securities shall be made by the Senior Minister, with the advice of legal counsel when necessary. Valuation of the securities is the responsibility of the donor. However, UU Lansing reserves the right to refuse the gift if it disagrees with the valuation or to request a second valuation.

C. Gifts of Tangible Property

All other gifts of tangible personal property shall be examined considering the following criteria:

- Does the property contribute to or further the Mission of the church?
- Is the property marketable?
- Are there any undue restrictions on the use, display, or sale of the property?
- Are there any carrying costs for the property?

The final determination of the acceptance of tangible property gifts under \$500 will be made by the congregational administrator. The decision to accept gifts over \$500 in value shall be made by the Senior Minister. Unless otherwise agreed with the donor, the property will be sold as soon as practicable. Valuation of the gift is the responsibility of the donor.

D. Legacy Gifts

Bequests: Donors and supporters of UU Lansing are encouraged to make bequests under their wills and trusts. Such bequests will not be recorded as gifts to the Congregation 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 that gift may be recorded at the time the gift becomes irrevocable.

Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designations: Donors and supporters of UU Lansing are encouraged to name the Congregation as beneficiary or contingent beneficiary of their retirement plans such as IRAs, 401Ks, annuities, and other forms of investment. Such designations shall not be recorded as gifts 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 that gift may be recorded at the time the gift becomes irrevocable.

Life Insurance: UU Lansing must be named as both beneficiary and irrevocable owner of an insurance policy before a life insurance policy can be recorded as a gift. The gift is valued at its interpolated terminal reserve value, or cash surrender value, upon receipt. If the donor contributes future premium payments, UU Lansing will include the entire amount of the additional premium payment as a gift in the year that it is made. If the donor does not elect to continue to make gifts to cover premium payments on the life insurance policy, UU Lansing may continue to pay the premiums, convert the policy to paid-up insurance, or surrender the policy for its current cash value.

Other planned gifts: UU Lansing encourages its supporters to consider other planned gifts during their lifetimes, including charitable gift annuities (“CGA”), pooled income trusts, charitable remainder trusts and charitable lead trusts. These gifts can provide the donor lifetime income and income tax deductions, as well as support to UU Lansing. Donors interested in planned gifts should contact the Congregational Administrator for guidance.

If the contribution is undesignated, the first \$5,000 will be used for operating expenses. Any amount greater than \$5,000 will be invested in the endowment fund.

E. Other Gifts

Other more complicated or esoteric gifts – such as remainder interests in property; oil, gas and mineral interests; or bargain sales – may be accepted by UU Lansing, but only with the approval of the Senior Minister. Consideration will be given to the time and costs involved in assessing and structuring the gift before accepting it.

5. Gift Valuations

UU Lansing shall follow accepted guidelines for income recognition and the valuation of gifts such as stock, personal property, and life insurance that require specific methods of valuation for the protection of both the donor and UU Lansing. Valuation of non-cash gifts for tax purposes is the responsibility of the donor. As stated above, the Senior Minister has the right to refuse any gift deemed inappropriate.

6. Gift Acceptance Management

UU Lansing will be responsible for good gift acceptance management practices by following these guidelines:

- All gifts will be acknowledged within a reasonable period of time.
- Gifts to UU Lansing and accompanying correspondence will be considered confidential information. All donor requests for confidentiality will be honored. Anonymity, if so desired and designated by the donor, will be honored except as may be required by law.
- Lists or data files including the names of donors or other personal information will not be sold or given by UU Lansing to other organizations.

7. Conflict of Interest

Those individuals who normally engage in the solicitation of gifts on behalf of UU Lansing shall not personally benefit by way of commission, contract fees, salary, or other benefits from any donor in the performance of their duties on behalf of UU Lansing, nor should any benefit be received by a family member or business of the solicitor. The active participation of the minister and UU Lansing staff or volunteers in stewardship activities is not considered a conflict of interest.

Note of acknowledgment: This policy is largely based on the October 11, 2016 policy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton, which was based on a policy shared by First Parish of Arlington, Massachusetts.

—Adopted by Rev. Neal T. Anderson on April 24, 2024