

Grace Lutheran Church



Policies & Procedures

1120 Walker Street
Port Townsend, WA 98368
www.gracelutheranpt.org
(360) 385-1595

Financial Procedures

- a. Offering Procedures:
 - i. All offerings should be counted and reported by a team of two unrelated people unless approved by church council.
 - ii. No offering should be left unattended. Funds received prior to Sunday services will be placed in the lock box.

- b. Memorial Funds:
 - i. All memorial funds received by the church shall be either undesignated or designated for a current or near-term church project. All designated memorial funds shall immediately be put into the balance sheet (“earmarked”) fund for that specific project. All undesignated memorial funds shall be tracked in the Memorial Fund account.
 - ii. Funds from the undesignated Memorial Funds account may be used, at the Council’s discretion, for capital projects. Capital projects are defined as projects meeting the following criteria:
 - Greater than \$100
 - Will purchase or repair an asset with a life greater than three years (does not include computers).
 - Is not regularly recurring maintenance that occurs on a schedule more frequently than every three years. For example, purchasing a car is a capital expenditure, changing the oil in the car is maintenance and not capital.
 - Is approved by the Council as a capital expenditure.

- c. Dispersal of Funds:
 - i. Each minister is the approval authority for his/her budget accounts. In his/her absence, the approval authority will be the president or vice-president of the council.
 - ii. For reimbursement, submit a completed voucher with appropriate receipts to the Treasurer.
 - iii. For substantial amounts, it is preferable for the Treasurer to write a check to the supplier in lieu of personal reimbursement.
 - iv. No checks shall be issued unless accompanied by a properly completed check request with two authorizing signatures.

- d. Pass-Through Donations
 - i. A pass-through donation is a check made out to Grace, but intended for a third party (Food Bank, Lutheran World Relief, etc.). Such donations are run through Grace’s books and Grace then writes a check to the third party.
 - ii. Grace will only accept pass-through donations for official Grace Lutheran fund-raising activities as determined by the Council. Individuals may make other donations directly to a third party.

Staff (Job descriptions are on file in the office)

- a. Positions
 - i. Choir Director
 - ii. Office Manager
 - iii. Custodian
 - iv. Accompanist
- b. Salary Policy – Pastor
 - i. The salary policy of Grace Lutheran Church is to pay the pastor a wage that meets or exceeds the minimum salary recommended by the Synod.
- c. Paid Sick Leave per RCW 49.46.210
 - i. Paid sick leave must accrue at a minimum rate of one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked. This includes part-time and seasonal workers.
 - ii. Workers will be eligible to use paid sick leave 90 days after start of employment.
 - iii. Workers will be able to carry over up to 40 hours of unused sick leave to following year.
 - iv. Workers will be able to use all accrued hours for authorized purposes.
 - v. For absences exceeding three days, employers may require documentation that shows that the leave was used for an authorized purpose.
 - vi. A day of sick leave shall be the worker's normal hours per week divided by 5.

Mail Boxes – Authorized Use

- a. Any and all materials that are placed in member boxes to share information, ideas, and concerns beyond the congregation must have Council approval.

Property – Conditions of Use

- a. Meetings:
 - i. If the event does not conflict with activities of the congregation, members of the congregation can use the Fellowship Hall for events lasting less than eight hours without charge provided they clean up the areas used, return furniture to the way it was arranged when they arrived and arrange for the building to be locked up securely when they are finished. Persons wishing to use the building in this way must notify the office, get their event on the church calendar and complete a building use request form. Such uses of the building do not require Council approval. A donation to cover expenses is appreciated.

- ii. If their event does not conflict with activities of the congregation, non-profit entities may use the building for events lasting less than eight hours without charge provided they clean up the areas used, return furniture to the way it was arranged when they arrived and arrange for the building to be locked up securely when they are finished. Entities wishing to use the building in this way must notify the office, get their event on the church calendar and complete a building use request form. Such uses of the building do not require Council approval, but should be approved by the Pastor. A donation to cover expenses is appreciated.
 - iii. Non-profit entities who wish to use the building for recurring events must meet all the above requirements and their use must be approved by the Council.
 - iv. The church is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization supporting the congregation and wider non-profit community. In order to preserve our non-profit status, the building will not be made available to private parties or for-profit entities.
 - v. There is no smoking allowed in the building.
 - vi. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises.
- b. Memorial Services:
- i. There will be no charge for the use of the church facilities for members. Non-members will be asked for a donation to cover utilities.
 - ii. The family will pay the normal charges for the church organist and church-furnished soloist.
- c. Music Performances:
- i. The sanctuary may be used for recitals.
 - ii. The Fellowship Hall may be used for musical productions.
 - iii. No admission shall be charged. Donations may be accepted.
 - iv. The church reserves the right to pre-empt the use of the facilities when necessary.
 - v. Musical performances may be scheduled with permission of the pastor or the Minister of Facilities.
 - vi. The use of the facilities will follow policy as outlined under the "Meetings" section.
- d. Sanctuary:
- i. The use of the Sanctuary will be at the discretion of the pastor or the church council.
 - ii. Non-Christian groups shall not use the sanctuary for ceremonial purposes.
- e. Weddings and Receptions :
- i. The use of the church buildings and staff is certainly not a matter of "money-making" for our congregation. However, certain charges are necessary for covering time, energy, and utility costs. The family will be asked to pay normal fees.

Scholarship Fund Award

- a. Applicants must attend a school of higher education, including training or vocational programs.
- b. Applicants must be active members of Grace Lutheran Church.
- c. The amount of the scholarship fund will be established as an annual budget item. The fund will be divided among the qualified applicants.
- d. Applications will consist of the following items:
 - i. An appropriate grade transcript
 - ii. A brief, but comprehensive, narrative outlining the applicant's educational plan, financial plan, and personal achievements as demonstrated through church, school, community, and work activities.
 - iii. Two or three letters of recommendation reflecting the applicant's personal characteristics and accomplishments.
 - iv. Students requesting renewal of the scholarships will submit an unofficial transcript and a letter of request.
 - v. If the applicant is a graduating senior from area High Schools the Uniform Scholarship Application Form may be submitted along with items needed in the requirements of Item iv above.
 - vi. Priority for awards will be given to applicants in this order;
 - Applicants enrolled in a Lutheran seminary.
 - Applicants enrolled in a Lutheran college
 - Applicants enrolled in any other school of higher education
- e. The Endowment Committee will serve as the Scholarship Selection Committee. They will set and announce the annual application period, consider the applications, and recommend recipients to the church council for approval.

Policy for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Individuals

- a. General Purpose Statement:

Grace Lutheran seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for children and vulnerable adults who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the following practices, our goal is to protect the members of Grace Lutheran from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

“Let the little children come to me: do not hinder them...” (Mark 10:14)

Grace Lutheran is committed to care for, support and protect all individuals who enter its doors and share with them the love of God in Jesus Christ. The Church is called to welcome and nurture each person.

The abuse of children and vulnerable adults in our society necessitates a policy to protect all such persons. Grace Lutheran has instituted policies and procedures to reduce the risk of abuse in our church and church-related activities.

We believe that reporting abuse can help stop existing abuse and prevent further abuse. Reporting abuse is a witness to the world of the love and justice of God and it is a means of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help.

b. Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults as well as those who officially visit children or vulnerable adults in their homes. “Vulnerable adults” are those who are 18 years of age or older with physical, mental or emotional dysfunction that impairs their ability to meet basic needs or protect themselves. The term “vulnerable individuals” used in this policy includes both children and vulnerable adults.

c. Selection of Workers:

All persons who desire to work with the vulnerable individuals participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

i. Six Month Rule:

A worker must have been involved with Grace Lutheran for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with vulnerable individuals.

ii. Written Application:

All persons seeking to work with vulnerable individuals may be asked to complete and sign a written application. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with vulnerable individuals, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

iii. Personal Interview:

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

iv. Criminal Background Check:

All employees and volunteers working with vulnerable individuals are required to sign a release allowing the church to request a criminal background check.

A disqualifying offense will be determined by the congregational Council Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or vulnerable adults and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children or vulnerable adults. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on an application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

d. Adult Supervision:

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open.

e. Restroom Guidelines:

A worker should take a child to the bathroom. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should knock on the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires help, the worker should seek assistance from another adult, prop open the bathroom door, and leave the door open as they assist the child.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

f. Teenage Workers:

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- i. Must be at least age 14.
- ii. Must be screened as other workers.
- iii. Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

g. Responding to Allegations of Abuse:

For purposes of this policy, "abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a vulnerable individual's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Abuse includes the following:

- i. Physical abuse:
Any physical injury to a vulnerable individual that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- ii. Emotional abuse:
Emotional injury when the vulnerable individual is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- iii. Sexual abuse"
Any sexual activity between a vulnerable individual and an adult or between a vulnerable individual and another vulnerable individual, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

- iv. Financial abuse/coercion:
Any coercive interaction with a vulnerable individual regarding their financial resources or any financial advice provided by a non-qualified individual.
- v. Neglect:
Depriving a vulnerable individual of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Workers may become aware of abuse or neglect of the vulnerable individuals. Suspected abuse or neglect of a vulnerable individual should be reported immediately to the Pastor for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

- h. In the Event of Alleged Abuse or Neglect:
In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during church sponsored programs or activities and the abuse is alleged to have been perpetrated by a worker, the following procedure shall be followed:
 - i. The parent or guardian of the vulnerable individual will be notified.
 - ii. The Synod office will be notified and their advice and assistance sought.
 - iii. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with vulnerable individuals pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
 - iv. Civil authorities will be notified, and the church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
 - v. Our insurance company will be notified and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
 - vi. The Pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
 - vii. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who request it.
 - viii. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with vulnerable individuals.

Open Door Policy:

Classroom doors should remain open. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Records Retention (Financial)

- a. Permanent
 - i. Annual audit reports
 - ii. The treasurer's report and the congregation's budget should be attached to the minutes of the annual congregational meeting
 - iii. Information on permanent bequests, gifts, and endowments
- b. Seven Years
 - i. Canceled checks or copies of cancelled checks
 - ii. Bank reconciliations
 - iii. Payroll administration records such as W-2, W-4 forms and payroll registers
 - iv. Cash receipt journals
 - v. Record of member giving (All records related to congregational spending are **open**. All records related to member giving are **confidential** and should be secured.)
- c. Three Years
 - i. General invoices (for major purchases, you may wish to keep receipts or canceled checks as evidence of ownership for insurance purposes.)
- d. No Need to Retain
 - i. Offering envelopes

Records Retention (Non-Financial)

- a. Records shall be retained in accordance with the current ELCA Records Retention Policy.

Approved by Council: May 8, 2012
Revised Facilities Policy: Nov. 12, 2013
Added Policy for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Individuals:
Nov. 10, 2015
Added Pass-Through Donation Policy: April 18, 2017
Added Records Retention and Paid Sick Leave: January 27, 2019