

Gifts of Hope Guidelines for the Congregation's Treasurer

In the 18 years since *Gifts of Hope* was established, more than \$2 million has been distributed to Lutheran-supported, local and international benevolence organizations. Many people in congregations and throughout our Synod contribute to the success of this program. Congregational treasurers are a vital link in the process. We suggest a few simple guidelines that we hope you as treasurer will observe to ensure an accurate accounting and speedy disbursement of the *Gifts of Hope* receipts.

After each sales event: Ensure accurate recording of deposits of Gifts of Hope proceeds, using your congregation's usual procedures

Your congregation's *Gifts of Hope* coordinator records each individual purchase and provides those records to the congregation financial secretary to permit him or her to record the purchases on each person's record of giving. The order form includes a space for congregants to record their envelope or giving number. The coordinator also ensures that the proceeds from that event are deposited in the congregation's bank account, in the same manner that you would deposit any receipts, and provides to the treasurer a record of the total amount of those deposits, again using your congregation's regular procedures for this process. The congregational *Gifts of Hope* committee is urged not to keep the proceeds until the end of the program, but to deposit them as you would any other contributions. The treasurer, in turn, will ensure that each deposit is recorded in the appropriate manner and identified as *Gifts of Hope* proceeds.

At the end of the Gifts of Hope sales season: Verify the total Gifts of Hope proceeds received during the sales period, and promptly issue a check to the Synod for the proper amount.

Your congregation's *Gifts of Hope* coordinator will prepare a summary sheet, the "Synod Remittance Report", showing a breakdown of the total purchases of each gift. Please verify that the dollar total of *Gifts of Hope* purchases on the form agrees with your accounting records of *Gifts of Hope* deposits, and if there is a discrepancy, resolve it with the coordinator. You will note that there are 39 separate gifts listed on the Remittance Report form, and a subtotal line for the dollar amount of these gifts. Prepare a check for this amount to "Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA". In order to reduce the possibility of confusion, please **do not combine** this money with any other funds you may need to send to the Synod Office. We recommend that you give the check to the *Gifts of Hope* coordinator for mailing, but if you prefer to mail it yourself, send the check to the Synod Office address shown on the Remittance Report together with a copy of the Report, and notify the *Gifts of Hope* coordinator that you have mailed it. In addition, either you or the *Gifts of Hope* coordinator needs to send a copy of the Remittance Report to John Clark, a member of the Synod *Gifts of Hope* committee, at the address shown on the form.

Send any money raised using the "congregation-designated gift" (#40) directly to the beneficiary

Our program provides the opportunity for each congregation to designate one unique "congregational" Gift of Hope, which is listed as gift #40 on the form. Some congregations elect to do so, others do not. Those that do create such a gift are responsible for remitting those proceeds directly to the appropriate agency. Please ensure that your check to the Synod does not include proceeds for gift #40. Instead, remit those proceeds directly to the beneficiary organization.

To help speed the delivery of Gift of Hope funds to the recipients, get your congregation's check and Report to the Synod Office by January 10, 2012.

Our goal is to get the funds to the beneficiary organizations as soon as possible after Christmas. The Synod cannot make disbursements until all remittances are received from the more than 70 participating congregations. Don't let your congregation hold up the distribution of funds. Try to send your congregation's check and Remittance Report to the Synod Office as soon as possible after the last sales event—at the very latest by January 10.

Any questions? Please contact John Clark at johnclark31@verizon.net or call 703-573-2719.

Thank you for your participation in this year's **Gifts of Hope** program.