

Policy of Messiah Lutheran Church

Revised February 27, 2013

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Administrative Assistant

It is our policy that the paid position of Administrative Assistant not be filled by a member of Messiah.

Adopted January 9, 2010

Alcohol Use

Inasmuch as the use of alcoholic beverages as a part of social activities is believed inconsistent with the use of the House of God as a place of worship and Christian education, and on the advice of our legal counsel, it is the policy of Messiah Lutheran Church that the use of alcoholic beverages on the premises will not be permitted with the exception of the wine used for the celebration of Holy Communion, and a wine or champagne toast to the bride and groom at wedding receptions.

Adopted December, 1987

Reaffirmed, September, 2001

Christian Education

It is the policy of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church to protect and promote the safety and well being of all children and adults who participate in our programs and activities.

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Communion Assistants

A communion assistant is nominated by a Pastor with the approval of the Congregation Council.

It is the role of the Communion Assistant to assist the Pastor(s) in the administration of the elements of the communion. Other duties may be performed to aid in the orderly course of the service. Such duties include: serving as lector, acolyte, and any other duty, as requested.

Reaffirmed, September, 2001

Electronic Voting by the Congregation Council

The President or Vice-president may authorize voting by e-mail.

Issues that would require a simple majority in a live meeting, shall require 2/3 majority in e-mail ballots.

Issues that require more than a simple majority in a live meeting shall not be acted upon by e-mail ballot.

The ballot period shall be a minimum of 72 hours or until all members have responded, whichever is shorter.

Members may respond only to the author of the ballot, or may copy all council members on their response.

Phone or other contact shall be attempted with members who do not have access to e-mail.

Phone or other contact shall be attempted with members who do not respond to an e-mail ballot in 72 hours.

A ballot shall pass if 2/3 of members vote affirmative even if there is no response from the other members.

Results of the ballot shall be announced by e-mail and recorded in the minutes of the next regular meeting of the council.

In cases where the issue to be balloted cannot wait until the next meeting of the council but live discussion on the issue would be useful, an e-mail ballot to the whole council could authorize the Executive Committee to meet and decide on the issue.

Adopted June, 2002

Facilities Use

Introduction

The following policy statement governs the use of church facilities, including rooms, furniture, equipment, and utilities for activities by groups outside of the Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church (MELC) organization. This document is intended to serve as a document of record for current and future council members.

Definition

An outside group is an assemblage of people, formal or informal, whose function or purpose is not sponsored or directed by MELC.

Policy

1. It is the policy of MELC to have as the primary purpose of our church building, equipment and other facilities, a place to conduct religious worship, education and Christian fellowship of the congregation. (original 11/86 revised 5/16/96)
The church facilities including rooms, furniture, and equipment must be treated with respect. Persons using the facilities and equipment are held responsible for damages to said properties.
Violations of this policy may result in the termination of building use.
Use Of the church facilities is governed by the Church Council.
2. The church and facilities shall be available to MELC congregational members for weddings and exceptions only when the wedding is performed in this church.
3. The Program/Facilities Coordinator is designated as the official representative of the council in dealing with groups or individuals desiring to use church facilities. The Program/Facilities Coordinator shall be responsible for scheduling the use of the facilities by internal or external groups.
4. Priority for facility use is as follows. However this does not give the internal group the right to "bump" an external group from the facility without prior notice.
 - a. Groups or functions within the congregation
 - b. Non-profit organizations or individuals
 - c. Profit making organizations or individuals
5. All external groups are expected to make a monetary donation to cover use of utilities (air conditioning/heat, water, electricity); cleaning; and normal wear and tear of the facilities. A donations guideline is appended to this document for use by the Program/Facilities Coordinator.
6. The Council, at its discretion, may choose to waive the donations guidelines for an outside group if that group's activities are in accord with community or social ministry objectives of the church. Permission for waiver of donations must be obtained in advance of the activity during a normally scheduled council meeting. A Request for Waiver of the Facilities Use Donation form must be completed and delivered to the facilities coordinator no later than one week prior to the regularly scheduled council meeting.
7. Membership in the MELC by one or more of an outside group's members does not constitute waiver of policy regarding use of the facilities by the group.

8. All outside groups using the church facilities must have a representative fill out and sign the Permit For Use of Messiah Lutheran Church Facilities form. The purpose of this form is to identify the group, its officers, and persons who are responsible for obtaining the use of MELC's facilities.
9. The Program/Facilities Coordinator will provide each group representative with the Rules & Regulations for the Use of Church Facilities document (copy attached).
10. A Room List and Donations Schedule is attached to this document for use by the Program/Facilities Coordinator. The room list indicates what rooms are available, their capacity, and any special notes regarding their use. The donations schedule should be reviewed from time to time to insure that it reflects current economic conditions and is consistent with other churches in our locality.
11. Equipment loans for off-premises use are restricted to folding tables and chairs; and is generally limited to church members. The only non-member borrowing of equipment would be by organizations whose representative is a church member and for a purpose consistent with the church's community or social ministry objectives. An Equipment Use Agreement form must be signed by the borrower in which he/she assumes full responsibility for any damages.
12. Non-members desiring use of the facilities should have a member of the congregation as a sponsor. If they do not, they are encouraged to make a personal presentation to the congregation council concerning the request.

Related Documents:

- Request for Use of Church Facilities
- Rules and Regulations for the Use of Church Facilities
- Room List and Donations Schedule
- Equipment Use Agreement Form
- Request for Waiver of Donations

Adopted June 15, 1989

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Financial Accountability

It is the policy of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church that counting of offerings is conducted with a minimum of two unrelated people.

It is the policy of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church that persons authorized to sign checks shall not be related to anyone who participates in counting offerings. Normally there are three people authorized to sign checks: Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and President.

For the purpose of this policy, the following relationships apply: wife/husband, brother/sister, parent/child/grandchild, cousins, and uncle/aunt.

Adopted Sept 1, 2008

Fundraising

Background

As Disciples of Christ, we are encouraged to acknowledge the blessings that God bestows and respond with faithfulness, generosity, wisdom and good stewardship.

Commercialism in the church “the selling of goods and services in the name of the church, for the purpose of obtaining funds to finance the programs and operations of the church”¹ has been a concern since Biblical times. In the Gospel, we read the account of Jesus’ outrage at the vendors in the temple. The sale of indulgences to fund the building of St Peter’s Basilica in Rome aroused the ire of Martin Luther.

Commercialism “distorts the clear relationship between the giving of the Christian and the mission of the church. It fails to bear testimony to the mission of the church. Commercialism opens the door to misunderstanding and hurt feelings, weakens the life of the church and a biblical understanding of stewardship for the following reasons:

- It involves the church in other than its true mission: that of giving the Gospel to all people
- Buying from the church suggests supporting the church. This leads to a false sense of security, which satisfies the consciences of people not vitally related to the church.
- The relinquishing of commercialism offers new and deeper opportunities for service, participation and fellowship in the life of the church.”²

“In teaching, preaching and practicing stewardship, ELCA materials and leaders focus on a biblical base. Voluntary giving by church members remains the primary method of financing congregational activities.”³

Policy

Funding of Ministries

It is the intention of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church to teach biblical stewardship. It is the policy to prohibit fundraising as a means of supporting the regular operating budget of the congregation or any specific ministry area. Funding may be secured through Messiah’s Annual Mission Funds (Budget) and may also be secured through specific contributions made to the Designated Giving List (which includes projects reviewed for their alignment with our Spiritual DNA by Messiah’s Ministry Hub).

Raising funds toward a specific special event or program that has strong alignment to our ministry and mission goals, and that could not be considered as within the operating budget for the ministry is acceptable.

Payment for Ministries

Ministry activities which require payment to cover the cost of materials and supplies are permitted. Any excess monetary gain incurred from payments should be donated to a benevolent cause designated in advance.

Services

In the name of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, services are not to be sold. Services may be rendered at no charge. If the service recipients’ feel so moved based on the services received, they may donate to a specific group or ministry. For example, the youth may hold a free car wash, if people are so overjoyed about the youth providing such a wonderful service, they may make a donation to Messiah in honor of the youth.

Other groups using the building are not operating in the name of Messiah, so they may charge for services in the name of their group. For example, the Boy Scouts may hold a car wash and charge for it.

¹ “Commercialism in the Church”; A Statement of the American Lutheran Church; October, 1964

² Fundraising Policy; King of Kings Lutheran Church; ELCA

Gambling

Gambling and games of chance are specifically prohibited, according to ELCA guidelines. "Games of chance have no place in the life of a congregation. These games send adverse messages regarding the value of giving and financial stewardship. Games are based on the principle of receiving a high return for a low investment. Luck, instead of thankfulness, need, compassion or commitment, is the guiding principle."³

Examples (all in the name of Messiah)

Can we hold a bazaar/craft sale to support ongoing programs? No.

Can we host a gambling event for any cause? No.

Can we sell cookbooks, with profits to Journey Home? Yes.

Can youth hold a pasta dinner as a fundraiser to support ongoing programs? No.

Can people make donations to the youth ministries, as gratitude for the pasta dinner? Yes.

Can youth hold a pasta dinner to raise funds to support Youth Gathering participation or other specific and extraordinary mission events? Yes.

Can people make donations to any ministry at any time? Yes.

Revised February 2013

Gift and Memorial Acceptance

All permanent gifts and memorials to the church shall be approved by the Congregation Council. All such gifts shall be evaluated as to appropriateness, quality, theology (with the advice of a pastor), and any additional costs which may occur with the acceptance of the gift. If the gift is deemed inappropriate, the council may refuse acceptance. Donors shall be advised of this procedure.

In the event that a donor wishes to commission art or other items to be made for the church, detailed plans and a review of the artist or craftsman shall be presented to the council for review prior to commencing. The proposal shall be reviewed as to appropriateness, quality, theology, and additional costs. The council shall vote on acceptance of the proposal. After the items(s) are completed, the council reserves the right to refuse acceptance if the criteria of the proposal are not met. The donor shall be advised of this procedure.

The Council may appoint a task force to provide guidance concerning acceptance of the proposed gift. The task force should contain a cross-section of active members who have been involved in various ministries and it should consider:

- focus group input to maximize harmony; minimize upset
- is it Christian?
- does it suit our mission?
- does it require maintenance or follow-up?
- can we afford to maintain it? In the future event that the gift is no longer deemed necessary or appropriate, the item may be removed with the approval of the council with the notification of the donor whenever possible.

Reaffirmed May, 2002

³ "Considerations Regarding Commercialism in the Church"; ELCA; August, 1993

Keys to the Building

Keys will be issued to those that have a need to access the building. This policy is intended to keep the building and its contents secure at all times without limiting usage. To do this, all doors must be locked when the building is not occupied.

There are three levels of security as follows:

- The minimum access level is the PASS KEY. This allows access only at the two lower doors of the building. It will be issued to outside organizations and members of the congregation that use the building for regularly scheduled meetings after normal office hours.
- The MASTER KEY allows access at all outside doors, the kitchen, and the church secretary's office. It will be issued only to congregation members with a continuing need for such access.
- The highest level is the GRAND MASTER KEY. It allows access to the whole building and is reserved for staff and Property Committee only.

The church secretary is responsible for issuing keys and keeping key records current. Information to be recorded includes the key number, recipient's name, phone number, and organization.

Normally, outside organizations requiring keys will be approved for access by the church council through the Facility Scheduling Committee. One-time pass key use will be approved and recorded by the church secretary. If there is any question as to need for access, the church secretary will pass the concern on to the church council to make a decision before issuing the key.

Keys not issued will be kept in a locked cabinet in the church secretary's office.

Special use keys, for cabinets, the shed, and other locks not mastered and used infrequently will be tagged and kept in a key cabinet in the secretary's office. These keys should be signed out on a form located in the key cabinet and returned to the cabinet before the user leaves the building.

All keys should be returned to the church secretary when no longer needed.

Keys will not be passed on to another person without the church secretary's permission, even if that person assumes the duties of the original key holder.

It is the responsibility of the key holder to be sure the building is secure when leaving. Failure to do so will result in loss of access privileges.

Originally adopted May, 1994

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Nursery School/Sunday School

Messiah Lutheran Church recognizes that the Nursery School is a non-profit community service organization and therefore, the Church has made, continues to make, and desires to continue to make available to the Nursery School certain portions of the Church at specified times for the operation of the Nursery School.

In consideration of the mutual covenants and promises contained herein, the Nursery School and the Sunday School agree as follows:

Regularly scheduled activities of the Nursery School may be carried on in the Nursery School Area, Church Social Hall, main Sunday School Room and Outdoor Play Area daily, Monday through Friday, during the months of September through June, inclusive, throughout the term of this agreement.

Any amendment to the terms of this agreement will be made in writing by mutual agreement to the Church Council and to the Nursery Board.

The Church is responsible for the general maintenance and good repair of the facilities and grounds of the Church used by the Nursery School.

The Church is responsible for snow removal, janitorial services, and for maintaining sufficient quantities of paper supplies for the restrooms.

The Sunday School and Nursery School will each provide materials, supplies, equipment, and any consumables as needed from their separate budgets.

On Sundays the Church may make use of the tables and chairs in the Nursery Area as needed.

All of the Nursery School Area is available for use as needed during the summer for Vacation Bible School. If used for such purposes, the area will be left as found.

Whoever uses either Kitchen Area will be responsible for cleaning it up within a reasonably short-time after its usage.

Outdoor Play Equipment, if installed, will be for the joint usage of the Sunday School and the Nursery School.

The Nursery School is responsible for the storage of all supplies and equipment, other than that permanently located in the Outdoor Play Area, at the close of each week or special activity, so that such equipment and supplies do not interfere with the operation of the Church Sunday School.

Toys may be shared by the Sunday School and the Nursery School so long as Sunday School teachers always return in an orderly manner all items as they were found. Any breakage will be negotiated via the mediator.

The Chair of Christian Education will act as mediator between the Nursery School and the Sunday School. Any violations to these stated agreements or any clarification in meaning will be resolved by the mediator.

Procedure for contacting the mediator includes:

- 1) Verbal contact in person or via phone
- 2) Allow seven days for resolution.
- 3) If no action has occurred, inform mediator in writing through the mail, with a copy to the Council President
- 4) Allow seven days for follow-up.

Originally approved June, 1980

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Performance Evaluations of Staff

Performance evaluations shall be completed annually on all employees of Messiah Lutheran Church for the purpose of providing performance feedback, both positive and negative, in a way that encourages continuation of effective behavior. The Performance Evaluation form is intended to reflect, to the degree possible, the collective views of those church members who use the services of or interact with person being evaluated.

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Property

It is the policy of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church to monitor and implement the proper maintenance and protection of all property of the congregation, and insure the same is kept in good repair.

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Reimbursement by Individuals for Items Purchased through Messiah

Individuals are offered the opportunity to purchase certain items through Messiah Lutheran Church for a variety of purposes. The individuals reimburse the church for the expenses incurred. Purchases of this type include flowers for worship services, memorials of a tangible nature, hymnal and other worship materials for personal use, Christmas gift items, church related clothing items, books for study groups, etc.

These items should be prepaid in advance before the items are ordered. An exception to this practice occurs when a ministry within the church is conducting a program whereby the items must be purchased in advance, before the participants are registered for the program. For those events, the expenditures will be charged to the budget of the ministry and credited when the reimbursement is received from the participants.

Adopted September, 2001

Safety and Supervision of Children

It is the policy of Messiah Lutheran Church to:

- safeguard the children and youth of our church from harm
- protect church staff and volunteers from allegations of improper behavior
- limit our church's legal risk and liability due to improper interaction among children, youth, and adults
- establish guideline that will be reviewed on a regular basis

The following guidelines have been established:

Guidelines for Safety and Supervision of Children
Youth Programs Guidelines for Safety and Supervision of Children
Weekday Nursery School Guidelines for Safety and Supervision of Children
Vacation Church Bible School Guidelines for Safety and Supervision of Children
Summer Sunday School Guidelines for Safety and Supervision of Children
Sunday School Guidelines for Safety and Supervision of Children
Messiah Lutheran Church Sunday School Evacuation/Fire Drill Plan

Reaffirmed September, 2001

Social Ministry

Gift requests to the Social Ministry Committee (i.e. Angel Tree and birthday presents) will not be honored if the request is deemed offensive and is in opposition to Christian teachings. This list includes, but is not limited to professional wrestling merchandise, CDs and tapes with explicit language warnings, and violent video games. The sitting Social Ministry committee will decide what is offensive. Funds designated for Social Ministry will not be used to purchase offensive merchandise. Anyone making a request of Social Ministry will be advised of this policy by the Social Ministry committee.

Adopted April, 1999

Reaffirmed November, 2001

Solicitation

Commercial solicitation by members is prohibited, as it can be exploitive and cause members to feel obligated. It is permitted to provide business information in the Member Services Directory (located in the Office).

Children who are selling items for non-profit organizations do not cause the level of concern as solicitation by adults and this non-solicitation policy does not apply. One example is the sale of Girl Scout cookies.

Adopted June, 2003

Wedding Music

It is the policy of this congregation that the services of the Director of Music Ministry will be used at all weddings held within the church at which music is desired.

In special circumstances, the services of other organists may be used. The Director of Music Ministry should be consulted well in advance in this respect. If another organist is used, the normal wedding fee shall still be paid to the Director of Music Ministry.

If the Director of Music Ministry is unavailable for the date requested, the church will assume responsibility for finding a suitable substitute.

Outside soloists and instrumentalists are more than welcome.

All musical selections will be made in coordination with the Pastor and the Director of Music Ministry.

If special music is provided, every effort should be made to provide an original copy; unauthorized photocopying of copyrighted material is illegal. Photocopies will not be accepted.

Use of taped accompaniments is not permitted.

Adopted September, 2001