



Gifts of Grace

Toward Financial Wellbeing

Thank you for helping us to spread the word about Gifts of Grace: Toward Financial Wellbeing. If you need to abbreviate this temple talk, consider using the last three paragraphs which contain the core message.

Before the people of Israel entered the promised land God told them that they were to put God’s word, “in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem[e] on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.” Deuteronomy 11:18-21

This is why we come and worship together as communities of faith. We come before God who has graciously filled our hearts and our lives with divine love, we give thanks, and we surround ourselves with people across generations who have experienced God’s love. Our hope, as the church, is that we will continue to share the amazing work that God has done in this world with those who will come after us for generations. Through the Gifts of Grace program, the Southwestern Minnesota Synod is committed to building a culture of healthy, sustained ministry in its congregations so we can continue to live out our call, just as the people of Israel were charged before entering into the promised land.

Gifts of Grace is an effort by the Synod in partnership with the Lilly Foundation Inc. to improve the vitality of congregations throughout the synod, helping them to build a foundation of ministry that will last well into the future. Congregations struggle to be places of healthy sustained ministry if the rostered leaders are not healthy themselves. Through a process of deep listening we have discovered that Student Debt, Medical Debt, and Deficient Retirement Savings present barriers to our rostered leaders becoming the generous, vibrant leaders needed in our congregations. The Gifts of Grace project seeks to address those three areas by making grants available to free our rostered leaders to live fully into their callings.

(If you have benefited from or know a colleague who has benefited from Gifts of Grace, now is a great opportunity to share that experience.)

We also recognize that a culture of healthy ministry needs to be built within congregations. Another aspect of Gifts of Grace is providing resources for financial literacy, financial health, and stewardship training. By continuing to provide resources for our rostered ministers and leaders to attend stewardship programs, such as the Executive Certificate for Religious Fundraising and Cultivating Generous Congregations, Gifts of Grace supports our rostered ministers in their efforts to ensure the financial health of their congregations—not just in the short term, but in the long term as well—through cultural changes in the way generosity is approached and understood.

To build this future, we are asking you to partner with us by making a donation to Gifts of Grace. The church throughout the synod and the world does better when we support one another in ministry. Together we are showing how God has impacted our lives through the life of our congregations, and together we are helping to sustain ministry for generations to come.

Ways to Give:

- Invite your congregation to participate in a special offering for Gifts of Grace. Your gift will be matched 1 to 1 by Lilly Endowment Inc. until the \$280,000 goal is reached, after which donations will grow and sustain the Gifts of Grace Work into the future.
- To give a gift online, go to the synod's website: www.swmnelca.org. At the top of the webpage, select "make a gift" under Gifts of Grace. You'll be directed to our online giving page, where you can set up a one time or sustaining gift.
- If you would like to mail a check, please make it payable to the SW MN Synod ELCA and include "Gifts of Grace" on the memo line and mail it to:
Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA
PO Box 499
Redwood Falls, MN 56283
- View and download the Gifts of Grace Pledge Card. www.swmnelca.org/gifts-of-grace.



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

www.swmnelca.org