

# Planned Giving Articles for SAS

## Article #1: Gifting a Submarine

In a congregation in South Carolina, Mr. Paul was listening to a presentation about the value of creating a comprehensive charitable estate plan. “What if someone in your congregation wanted to give you a submarine?” the presenter asked. The point of the question? As a congregation, would you take a submarine, an actual real life, used in the water, military edition submarine? Do you know what types of gifts people want to offer? Would it cost more to manage than the asset is worth?

The point of the question, “Does your congregation have a gift policy?” A gift policy answers the questions, would you take that submarine, who would decide, and what would you do with it? The presenter used a submarine because it was outlandish and funny. It proved the point to the extreme, but Mr. Paul laughed. When he was a student at the Citadel in 1969, someone did in fact offer the Citadel a submarine, he shared with the group. Any guesses on whether or not they took the gift?

While a gift policy answers the import questions about the types of gifts your congregation will accept, who will decide if they are accepted, and what you will do with them, it actually does much more than that. A gift policy shows that your congregation values the generosity of its members. A gift policy builds trust and minimizes in-fighting. It gives you the words to reject the submarine, or the piece of land that is a money pit, or the \$100,000 someone wants to give to build a million-dollar building you can’t afford or don’t need.

While these are all important realities of how a gift policy helps you manage gift types in your congregation, the most important reason to have a gift policy is simple. It encourages giving. It sparks generosity. It keeps your congregation members talking about creative and faithful ways to support the mission and work of the congregation in the community.

The Citadel did not take the submarine. They took the periscope, and according to Mr. Paul, the cadets had a great time with it when the board members arrived to unveil it.

Our congregation is currently working on our gift policies and we expect to be able to report to you our completed policies in a couple months.

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I/we \_\_\_ have \_\_\_ are interested in including \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church in our estate plans. Please contact us with more information.

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## Article #2: Tithing from the Grave

George sat across from his Charitable Estate Gift Planner sharing stories about how he fell in love with his bride. He was 93 years old. “I was headed off to fly planes in the war, and had I decided I wanted to

marry my girl. So, I flew in a little jumper plane to Atlanta in 30-degree weather to pick up her ring. I wanted to ask her before I left so no one else would snag her up while I was gone.”

George and his bride Lois have been married for more than 70 years now. “We have been tithing for more than half of that.” Like most couples, when they first got married, they felt they had nothing and tithing to their congregation was last on their list. As they grew and matured in their faith, their priorities and their generosity changed.

“Our congregation does good work in the community,” said George. “We feed God’s people and look out for each other. The world needs more messages of grace, not less. Our tithe helps provide hope.” George and Lois were worried that when they died, their tithe would die with them. They were worried that the congregation would feel that loss on a monthly basis and feared it would limit the congregation’s ability to continue in the important ministry they do.

George and Lois decided to tithe their estate to their congregation by making their congregation the beneficiary of one of their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) that represented 10% of their assets. They chose to use the gift to start an endowment for the congregation knowing that with a standard 4 or 5% distribution each year, their tithe would live on in perpetuity. George and Lois were ready to make their gift, but their congregation wasn’t ready to receive it. They had not discussed the possibility and did not have an endowment by-law ready to answer the questions, who will steward the endowment, how will it be invested and how will we use the quarterly distributions to build up the Kingdom of God? Their gift helped spark the congregation to action and now, three other couples in the congregation had followed the faithful and generous example of George and Lois.

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I/we \_\_have \_\_are interested in being like George and Lois by including \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church in our estate plans. Please contact us with more information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Article #3: The Most Important Gift**

At age 76, Shelby, a widow, shared her story with her Charitable Estate Gift Planner. “It’s just me now,” she said. “My church is my family and I want to leave them \$100,000 so they can continue the work of supporting the community like they did for me when my sons and husband died.” Shelby’s most important gift in her charitable estate plan was to her church. She listed in her Will that she wanted \$100,000 to go to her congregation. Sadly, Shelby, like so many, had no idea she was part of the 70% of people whose estate plans fail to pay out the way she intended.

As she continued her story through the asset evaluation process, she revealed that her late husband had nine nieces and nephews who had been asking her for money over the years. Money, she shared reluctantly and kept track of. It was important to her that each niece and nephew receive the same amount from her whether in life or death, so she divided up her financial accounts by adding them as beneficiaries with percentages to ensure they only got what they were due. “One of the nieces helps me with the house, so I have left the property to her in my Will.”

Shelby was sure she had everything done and done correctly. She met with her lawyer to draft her Will. She met with her financial advisor to update her beneficiaries, but when she met with her Gift Planner to look at the entire estate through her heart of charitable giving, it revealed that her most important gift, the \$100,000 to her church, was unfunded. Her church wasn't going to get a dime. Shelby's eyes filled with tears.

A charitable estate plan doesn't have to be complicated or expensive to set up, but it does have to be comprehensive. Wills are a critical part of that, so we are going to spend an entire article on them next month, but they are only a part. Your lawyer isn't looking at all your assets. Your financial advisor isn't usually asking you about your charitable intent, they are mostly concerned with helping you grow your assets, which is their job.

The reason Shelby's most important gift was unfunded, was because of her beneficiary designations to the nieces and nephews. Beneficiary designations are the right and best way to get assets to loved ones and organizations, but Shelby didn't have any assets left to probate through her Will which is where she listed her \$100,000 gift to her church. By working with a Charitable Estate Gift Planner, Shelby's congregation will now receive her most important gift after she dies, and Shelby has the peace of mind and trust it is done correctly. Our congregation can connect you with a Charitable Estate Gift Planner if you'd like to look at your plan and ensure you aren't part of the 70% like Shelby.

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I/we \_\_\_ have \_\_\_ are interested in including \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church in our estate plans. Please contact us with more information and to help us meet with a Charitable Estate Gift Planner so that we can be sure our intentions are carried out by our plan.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Article #4: Probate is a Fancy Word for Government**

“We had a man in our congregation that moved around a lot, so in his Will he included, ‘I leave \$10,000 to the congregation I am a member of at the time of my death.’ Except when he died, all three of his children told the court that he wasn't a member of any congregation.” This put the congregation in an awful and expensive position of deciding whether to contest the Will for \$10,000. Either way, the wishes of the man were not honored.

Ronald was thinking about this story and the signed piece of paper in his sock drawer as the presenter shared, “Will is a fancy word for Probate. Probate is a fancy word for government. If you don't decide where your assets are going after you die, the government will be happy to decide for you, and they will be happy to take a huge percentage of it when they do.” Probate is a given in most states if you own property, whether you have a Will or not. In today's world, a simple note with your signature is subject to all sorts of scrutiny by family long removed from your life. If you don't have a clear Will, you are basically allowing the government can decide for you. It sounds harsh, but sadly it is true.

Your Will is a critical part of your comprehensive charitable estate plan. For years, updating a Will has felt expensive and burdensome. “I don't have time to meet with a lawyer.” The reason the man in this story wrote his Will the way he did was to eliminate the need to change his Will each time he moved. With Gentreo, you can update your Will without the hassle and expense of meeting with a lawyer and at

the same time, you can help ensure that your expectations and wishes for your hard-earned resources are honored.

Gentreo takes estate planning to the next level. They combine the ease and affordability of online tools with a long-term relationship to help members protect the people, pets and assets they care most about. Gentreo helps members create essential estate planning documents – including state-specific and legal binding Wills, Health Care Proxies, Powers of Attorney, and more. Our congregation is able to use Gentreo’s products at a discount thanks to our stewardship partner, GSB. Visit \_\_\_\_\_ to get started. Or, join us on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) for an online overview about Gentreo’s estate planning tools.

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I/we \_\_\_ have \_\_\_ are interested in including \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church in our estate plans. Please contact us with more information and send the link so we can join the online workshop with Gentreo.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Article #5: Creating a Culture of Generosity**

*This little light of mine, I’m gonna to let it shine.* We know the song. We can sing the verses. If we hide our light under a bushel, our light is lost, it goes out. There are so many conflicting messages in our world today about bragging, yet we live in a culture where our dinner gets posted on social media for the masses.

What if we lived in a world where we felt comfortable sharing God’s story with such passion and ease? When we are excited about something, we can’t help but share that with others. Excitement and passion are contagious. Our excitement about the mission and ministry of our churches can serve to be contagious also. It is not a matter of bragging; it is a matter of invitation. When we share our faith story and how our congregation formed and shaped us through community living out the Gospel, we are inviting others into God’s story. What better place to be? When we are part of something positive and bigger than ourselves, it changes us. We find acceptance, forgiveness, and belonging. We learn to strive for justice and peace in all the world. Our transformation serves to transform. Our generosity serves to spark that same generosity in others.

Creating a culture of generosity starts with each of us. We must evaluate our own comfort with giving from what God has first given us and sharing the story. If we want this to be cultural, we must welcome hearing these stories from others. We must honor the stories and give them time in our gatherings. If this feels scary, consider this phrase, “10 seconds of courage.” Our 10 seconds of courage to start telling our story, will open our hearts and others to growing in generosity and sharing their own stories. Let our light so shine.

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I/we \_\_\_have \_\_\_are interested in including \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church in our estate plans so that the story will continue to be told here in such bold and profound ways. Please contact us with more information to begin the process to discern how we can be generous through our estate planning.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_