

TEMPLATE: Letter presenting a parish endowment fund

For suggestions on how to set up an endowment, see *Funding Future Ministry Chapter II Establishing a Structure*. For suggestions on how to educate parishioners in giving to the endowment fund, see *Funding Future Ministry Chapter VI Educating Your Congregation*. To order *The Ministry of Gift Planning* brochures, visit www.EpiscopalFoundation.org.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION: SET THE VISION FOR THE ENDOWMENT FUND

Dear _____,

Personalize using mail merge.

“The good leave an inheritance to their children’s children...” Proverbs 13:22

We all plan for the future. Often we set goals for ourselves, such as advancing our careers, running a marathon, or visiting the world’s great wonders. However, the most important plans we make concern the welfare of others, particularly our families. We thoughtfully consider what the future may hold and take appropriate action to provide for them.

As Christians, we are called to plan for the future of our church—our spiritual family—in the same way. To accomplish this, the Vestry of St. Swithin’s has established an endowment fund to provide a reliable source of income to the parish for generations to come.

The St. Swithin’s Endowment Fund has a unique purpose in the life of our parish—to empower ministry beyond what is possible through annual operating funds. The Endowment Fund is not simply a hedge against future uncertainties. It is a commitment to provide our future parishioners with the means to minister to the community as we have been blessed to do.

Use the official name of your parish’s endowment fund.

SECTION 2: DESCRIBE THE TYPES OF FUNDS SET UP BY THE PARISH (IF APPLICABLE)

St. Swithin’s has established several funds within the Endowment Fund to allow our donors to designate their gift to a specific area of ministry. You can select the particular fund into which your gift will go:

- The Premises Fund: for the maintenance and repair of the buildings and grounds, and for projects of enduring character.
- The Christian Mission Fund: for support of worthy organizations furthering the mission of the church, and for scholarship and outreach projects.
- The Christian Education Fund: for the teaching ministry, including work with youth.
- The Parish Life and Music Fund: for the enrichment of worship, music, fellowship and lay ministry and for the enhancement of the organ.
- The Remembrance Fund: for memorial gifts and “in lieu of” contributions, to be used for worthwhile purposes

Examples from Calvary Church, Summit, NJ. Adjust text to describe your parish’s sub-funds. If none, remove this section.

Details on the investment policies, guidelines and performance of the Endowment Fund are available through the church office.

SECTION 3: EXPLAIN HOW GIFTS CAN BE MADE TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND

Gifts can be made to the Endowment Fund in two ways: by a direct gift of cash or check, or by making a planned gift.

Planned gifts, though requiring financial and estate planning assistance, offer a unique opportunity to make a substantial gift to the Endowment Fund while providing for one's family. Some planned gift options provide income for life and reduce the tax burden on the donors and their heirs.

If the brochure is not included in this mailing, you can use the brief description of planned giving options provided at the end of this document.

Please take a moment to read the enclosed brochure, The Ministry of Gift Planning, which explains the most common types of planned gifts and their benefits.

You may also want to visit the Episcopal Church Foundation website (www.EpiscopalFoundation.org) to learn more about planned giving.

SECTION 4: PROPOSE NEXT STEPS/PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION TO FOLLOW UP

We ask you to prayerfully consider your role in building St. Swithin's Endowment Fund. If you would like additional information, or wish to discuss confidentially the best way for you to make a gift, please feel free to contact me, any member of the Endowment Committee, or the rector.

Adjust text to name the appropriate individuals.

We are grateful for your generosity and commitment to ensure an abundant future for St. Swithin's.

Faithfully,
Chair of the Endowment Committee

Alternate text: Descriptions of planned giving options (Use if The Ministry of Gift Planning brochure is not included with letter.)

Planned gifts are generally made through the following means. More detailed information on these options can be found on the Episcopal Church Foundation's website, www.EpiscopalFoundation.org.

Bequest in a Will

The easiest and most common way of making a planned gift is through a bequest in your will. You can designate a specific amount of money, a percentage of your estate, or a specific asset. St. Swithin's Endowment Fund could also be named as a contingent beneficiary.

Life Income Gifts

Gifts such as a charitable gift annuity, a charitable remainder trust, or a pooled income fund provide you and/or your designated beneficiary income for life. Upon your passing, the church receives the gift. Life income gifts generally reduce or eliminate certain taxes and guarantee an income for life.

Life Insurance

Life insurance can be used to make a sizeable gift to St. Swithin's Endowment Fund. For example, you can purchase a new policy and make the church the owner and beneficiary of the policy. You can make St. Swithin's the owner and beneficiary of an existing policy you no longer need. Or you can name St. Swithin's a contingent beneficiary of an existing policy. Your life insurance can actually "endow" your annual pledge to St. Swithin's.

Life Estate

You can deed your home, vacation property, or condominium to St. Swithin's and retain the right to live in the property and/or receive income from the property for as long as you or your beneficiaries live. A life estate gift reduces capital gains, inheritance and estate taxes and offers an income tax deduction as well.

Depending on the type of planned gift, different assets may be used to fund it. Cash, appreciated securities, appreciated property, or personal property (such as jewelry or art) may be options. Check with your financial and legal advisors before making a gift.