

Adopted December 12, 2006

United Church of Christ
Plymouth Congregational Church
3e. MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Operating Guidelines
March 14, 2006

Committee Members: Eva Wallace, Elizabeth Hinde, and Tom Nesler

Mission: The Memorial Committee (Committee) shall be primarily responsible for assisting individuals or families in the decision and selection of appropriate memorial gifts to Plymouth Congregational Church to honor deceased family members and to facilitate this giving process in a respectful manner during their time of grieving for a loved one. This Committee will also be responsible for maintaining records of memorial gifts, oversight of expenditures from Memorial Funds, and notification of family of the deceased in the event of subsequent expenditures from dedicated or general memorial funds or decommissioning of memorial gifts.

1. Committee composition, term of membership and rotation

- a) The committee is composed of three (3) members,
- b) Membership on the committee will be for three (3) years,
- c) The senior member will be replaced annually with a new recruit to serve a three-year term. If any of the present Committee members are unable to complete the balance of this term, an additional member shall be sought by the Committee to serve the balance. The schedule of replacement of present members shall be:
 - i) 2007 – Breese Hinde
 - ii) 2008 – Eva Wallace
 - iii) 2009 – Tom Nesler

2. Dedication of a memorial gift

- a) If planned giving arrangements were made with the deceased before the time of death, responsibility for those prior arrangements will be assumed by the Planned Giving Committee.
- b) If no such prior arrangements for planned giving have been made between the Church and the deceased, the Committee will be responsible for contacting the family with suggestions for a memorial designation, of which the Endowment Fund will be one of the priority options.
- c) Information will be provided to the family of the deceased. This information will be given to the family by the pastor or whoever first visits the family representing Plymouth Church.

- i) This information will be prefaced with a statement saying that once a gift is made to the church, it becomes property of the church.
 - ii) The information provided shall include a list of suggestions that are made to assist the family in their deliberations for designation of a gift. The Committee will update this list of potential gifts through annual consultation with the standing committees of the church. Potential gift suggestions shall include the Endowment Fund (with brief explanation) as a first priority. Other potential gifts will be based on specific projects that are going on at the moment (e.g. interior redecoration, landscaping, remodeling, ceremonial or functional). If the family chooses the Endowment Fund, the Planned Giving Committee be contacted and referred to the family for further assistance.
 - iii) If the family is aware of a special gift the deceased or the family had in mind that is not included in the list of suggested gifts, the families' request will be taken by the Committee to the Church Council for consideration and approval. The Memorial Committee will present a recommendation to the Council.
 - iv) A special dedication ceremony can be arranged at the family's request.
- d) Cash as a memorial gift shall be sent to, or otherwise handled by the Church through the Church Secretary (Secretary). Cash gifts shall be deposited by the Secretary or Treasurer.
- e) Recordkeeping and Communication
- i) The Secretary shall:
 - Make sure the name of the donor and designation of the gift, if any, has been put into the church records of the deceased (Church Windows).
 - Send an acknowledgement card to the donor that the gift was received.
 - Maintain and provide to the family of the deceased a list of gifts received, including the name of the donor and designation of the gift if more than one designation was noted (e.g. multiple charities)
 - ii) The Memorial Committee shall:
 - Add the name of deceased Church members to a list to be maintained for the calendar year for the purpose of remembering and honoring them. This action may correspond to the Church's annual memorial rose ceremony. This list will be published the month before so families are aware of the upcoming ceremony.
 - Enter the name of the deceased into the memorial committee's record book with dates of birth/death, memorial gift description, amount and designation of gift if it is a cash donation (**Committee's book only**).
 - Create a page for the deceased to be placed in the Memorial Registry, which is made available as a record for public display and shall include the nature of any memorial gift(s). Cash memorials will not specify amount in this registry.

3. Decommissioning of a memorial gift

- a) Decision Criteria for decommissioning:
 - i) Nonfunctional,

- ii) Damaged beyond repair,
 - iii) Too expensive to repair,
 - iv) Too impractical to maintain or replace,
 - v) No longer suitable for current landscape, church function or environment (outdated).
- b) Initiation of the process requires a recommendation to decommission a gift from any committee or church council. The recommendation must be made in writing to the Memorial Committee for processing and include reasoning/justification.
- c) A recommendation shall be made by the Memorial Committee to Church Council as a decision item to either renew or update a memorial gift, or continue with the decommissioning process.
- d) A Church Council decision to approve a decommission action shall be considered final. Upon Church Council approval to decommission a memorial gift, the Committee shall prepare a letter to the family of the deceased including:
- i) Notice that the Church has decided to decommission their memorial gift, and that the Memorial Book entry will then represent the sole public reminder,
 - ii) Reasons for decommissioning, and
 - iii) Options for further action – dismantle, replace, renew, recycle, sale, repossession by family,

The letter is considered informational to the family and only represents an invitation to respond as desired concerning options presented in the letter.

4. Process for declining a proposed gift

- a) If the proposed gift is not part of the suggested list of desired memorial options and is not accepted by the Church Council, the Committee will work with the Church Council to develop a list of alternatives.
- b) The Committee will meet with the family to present and discuss these alternatives with the objective of persuading the family to modify the family's suggested memorial to make it appropriate for Plymouth, or suggest other organizations for which the suggested memorial is more appropriate. If the family's approval to modify the nature of the memorial gift cannot be obtained, the Committee will graciously decline the gift and express both thanks to the family for considering the Church as the recipient of a memorial gift and regret that a mutually acceptable memorial gift decision could not be reached.

5. Proposals to re-designate the purpose of an existing cash memorial and transfer of funds

- a) The Committee will monitor Church Council business and become involved when a transfer of cash from a memorial fund to another purpose is proposed by Church Council or a standing committee.

- b) Upon discussion with Church Council as to the advisability and rational for such a re-designation, the Committee shall contact the family, present the proposal and justification, and request permission of the family to make the desired transfer.
- c) The positive response of the family to the desired proposal will be returned to the Church Council and the transfer action will proceed; a negative response from the family will be presented to Church Council for further deliberation and action.

6. Dual Memorials

- a) The family may designate a dual memorial -- meaning giving to more than one charity or organization. If the family wishes, all memorial gifts may be sent to the church. With the help of a Memorial Committee member, the Secretary will track the amounts designated to each recipient organization and provide to the family the information on final totals of memorial gifts sent to each.
- b) The Treasurer shall deposit the portion of memorial funds that have been given to the church for disposition and write/send checks to the designated organizations in the name of the deceased's memorial based on the cash amounts received and recorded by the Secretary. The Memorial Committee will oversee and assist this process as necessary.

7. Memorial Funds - expenditures

- a) Expenditures of memorial funds for pre-determined or dedicated purposes that may receive accumulated gifts will be tracked and authorized by the Committee. This does not pertain to gifts originating through planned giving into the Endowment Fund, or otherwise dedicated to the Endowment Fund.
- b) Requested expenditures of general memorial funds, those not specified for a particular purpose or otherwise not obligated, will be made in writing to the Committee and provide detailed description, use, and justification of the desired acquisition. The Committee is authorized to approve requests for expenditures from memorial funds up to \$2,000. Requests for larger sums will be referred to Church Council for approval with a Committee recommendation.