

BLC IMF FAQs Updated 02-20-2022

Q: How does my giving to the regular Sunday Offering differ from a gift to the Investment in Ministries Fund?

A: The mission is the same, to WORSHIP the Living God, GROW in Faith and Discipleship, LIVE our Faith in Daily Life, CARE for One Another, and SERVE our Neighbor. What differs is the timeframe. Annual giving supports the operational expenses of the Church and funds the annual budget. The Investment in Ministries Fund offers a way to support missions and ministries beyond those contained in our annual budget. As the Fund assets grow and are distributed, BLC Investment in Ministries Fund can make additional investments in missions and ministries that reach out to our local community and our global neighbors to plant the seeds of faith for generations to come.

Q: Is the Investment in Ministries Fund an endowment fund?

A: Yes. Each year, the fund will disburse no more than 4% of the year-end balance to outreach ministries locally as well as world-wide. This ensures that your gift has an impact for generations to come.

Q: Does BLC manage the investment funds?

A: No. Once you have made a gift, the funds will be managed by the ELCA. The Investment in Ministries Team chooses from available investment options, monitors fund performance, and provides the Church Council periodic updates on funds available for disbursement. After the close of each calendar year, the Team will provide an annual report on 1) the performance of the fund for the previous year, 2) new contributions to the fund, and 3) distributions from the fund during the preceding twelve-month period.

Q: I already have BLC as a beneficiary in my estate plan. Do I need to do anything else?

A: We ask that all those who mentioned Bethlehem Lutheran Church or the Investment in Ministries Fund in their estate plan fill out a donor intent form ([insert link here](#)). If you would like assistance, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the IMF Team – Paulette Costanza, Roger Kolker, Neil Vokes, Mark Gaul, John Panko, or John Costanza.

Q: Is there a minimum gift amount?

A: No, there is no minimum giving amount. “Some seeds fell on good soil, and when they grew, they produced a hundredfold.” ~Luke 8:8

Q: Can I make a gift to BLC or the Investment in Ministries Fund if I am not a BLC member?

A: Yes, all are welcome to make a gift to have an eternal impact.

Q: Can I leave a gift to charity without taking away from what I leave my immediate heirs?

A: Absolutely. There are many ways to fulfill your charitable goals while still providing for your family and other loved ones. Many vehicles for planned giving, such as life insurance or retirement assets, allow you to leave a variety of gifts to both a charity and family members, all the while providing tax benefits to you. ~~Consult your financial advisor to explore options beneficial to your personal goals and circumstances.~~ We can connect you with the ELCA Regional Gift Planner to review your personal situation.

Q: How do I leave a gift in memory of a person or for a specified purpose?

A: Fill out a donor intent form ([insert link here](#)) indicating you are giving a gift in memory of an individual.

Q: How will ~~these~~ this fundraising campaigns impact our normal contribution drives during Thanksgiving, Advent, and Lent (world hunger)?

A: We want to make it clear to donors that the Investment in Ministries Fund does not replace any of the existing programs of BLC. Instead, it is a way for us to look to the future of BLC and make gifts that will grow over time and produce a lasting legacy. It is an excellent way to remember a loved one who has passed, celebrate a birth or anniversary, or simply thank God for the blessings in your life.

We envision outright gifts to the IMF to be one-time gifts or pledges made this year in conjunction with BLC's 100th anniversary. (Add something here about making legacy gifts.)

Q: Who will manage the distribution of the funds?

A: ~~The details will need to be worked out, but basically,~~ once a year the IMF team, working with the ELCA, will prepare a statement showing Invested Funds beginning balance, contributions, withdrawals (if any), management fees, and gain or loss on the funds. The statement will show the year end value. When the value reaches \$25,000 or more, then 4% of the year-end account value will be transferred to an "Awaiting Distribution" account. Then the Missions and Social Concerns Committee will be notified of the amount available for distribution. They will make a recommendation to Council and Council will approve, decline, or modify their recommendations. Then the M&SC will execute the distribution through the Treasurer.

Q: Who will have rights to write checks from the fund?

A: BLC's Treasurer with Council approval.

Q: Will the synod receive a percentage of the funds taken into the endowment fund?

A: No. The 15% contribution made by BLC annually to the synod comes from unrestricted funds (annual giving of our members). Restricted funds are just that – restricted for the purpose for which they are intended. So when we have a capital campaign (e.g. enlarging the church or replacing the elevator) or a fundraiser (ELCA Youth Gathering or Chautauqua Lake Confirmation Camp), 100% of the monies raised are specific for that purpose.

Members are also free to contribute/leave legacy gifts to the Synod or ELCA. The Synod and ELCA have their own campaigns to encourage gifts for these purposes.

Q: How will this fund encourage members to grow through mission?

A: The IMF will provide additional financial resources for mission outreach. Church Council, Missions & Social Concerns Committee, and the congregation are responsible for identifying specific mission opportunities and engaging individuals in them. If a member has a passion for a particular ministry, they will be able to make a request to M&SC for funds to be allocated for that purpose.