

Establishing a Maintenance Reserve Fund

Introduction

There is no such thing as a maintenance-free building. This truism, in the context of the physical facilities of a local congregation and the costs for maintenance and upkeep of its property, can often challenge the congregation as it attempts to strategize, prioritize and fund its mission objectives.

Recognizing that the congregation's physical facilities are its face to the community, deferring maintenance to "next year" because of budget constraints generally is unwise. Maintenance issues do not improve with age.

Process

The following suggests a process—albeit long-term—used successfully in a congregation, to provide funds for maintenance and upkeep of its facilities apart from the normal annual program budgeting process:

- Establish a Building / Grounds Maintenance Endowment Fund; appoint (elect) a qualified committee to promote and oversee its operation.
- To separate the dynamics of the congregation's mission action plan and its budget from the "mundane" necessity of maintenance, identify and actively promote two Sundays per year in the congregation's calendar to support the Endowment Fund via special offerings apart from the weekly contributions. Emphasize the importance and value of the physical plant in facilitating the congregation's objectives. Memorials and other special gifts could also be encouraged for inclusion in the Fund. Invest the Fund with the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF). For rates and investment choices, see www.lcef.org.
- Allow the special offerings to accumulate in the fund (generally for three to five years) until sufficient monies, including accumulated interest, are available to adequately fund maintenance needs. The growth of the fund will, of course, be dependent on the contributions as compared to the scope of maintenance funding required. Careful planning and management of the fund is required to maintain the continued solvency of the fund.

Contact LCEF to find an Architectural Advisory Committee member near you for additional information.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund

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The mission of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund is to support The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future.

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