

Willing Witnesses Society

A line from a country tune rings true in saying; "It's not what you take with you when you leave this world, its what you leave behind when you go." At some point in our lives we all recognize that we must make plans to distribute our estates. We use the term **Willing Witnesses** to mean those ELCA members of the Grand Canyon Synod who have planned for a gift from their estate to go to one of the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Why should I consider joining *Willing Witnesses Society*?

We have been the beneficiaries of generous gifts given by our ancestors to the Church. We celebrate our ELCA ministries as they serve the needs of people that we cannot serve by our own individual efforts. To ensure that these ministries will remain strong and responsive to the needs that emerge each day, it is our challenge to provide gifts that will have a lasting impact on future generations. By your exercise of whole life stewardship you pass your blessings on to future generations. By your membership in the **Grand Canyon Synod Willing Witnesses Society** you encourage others in our church to engage in Christian planning of their estates.

What are Estate Gifts?

These gifts may take forms such as:

- A bequest of a specific dollar amount;**
- A bequest of a percentage of the estate;**
- A primary beneficiary designation of a life insurance policy;**
- A remainder interest in a qualified retirement plan;**
- A remainder interest in an individual retirement account (IRA);**
- A "Payable on Death" designation of a savings account or certificate of deposit;**
- A remainder interest in a charitable gift annuity;**
- A remainder interest in a charitable remainder trust;**
- A remainder interest in a revocable (living) trust;**
- Other property gifts that will ultimately go wholly or partially to the Church.**

What ELCA Ministries must I name in my Estate Planning?

You may name ministries recognized by the ELCA as being affiliated with it. Local congregations, social ministry agencies, bible camps, retreat centers, colleges, seminaries, our synod and churchwide programs and agencies are examples of such ministries. Further, membership in **Willing Witnesses Society** does not require that your ELCA Affiliated ministry beneficiaries be present in, or serve, the Grand Canyon Synod.

What will it cost me to join *Willing Witnesses*?

Absolutely nothing except the cost of the stamp to mail a letter to us. You *will not* be put on list for solicitations. If you change your estate planning, or for any reason choose to do so, you can ask to be removed from **Grand Canyon Synod Willing Witnesses Society** with no questions asked.

What Information must I supply?

We will be adding you to the roll of **Willing Witnesses** so we need to know only your name, address and e-mail address. We also wish to know the vehicle you have used to make the gift, such as a will, revocable trust, life insurance policy, retirement plan, etc. However, we *do not* need to know the amount of the gift. Unless you wish us to know, we also *do not* need to know the ELCA ministry beneficiary, or beneficiaries, of your gift. If you wish, we can even list you as an anonymous member of the Society.

What are the benefits of being a Willing Witness?

First and foremost, you will be serving as a Christian witness to your faith. By having your name listed as a **Willing Witness** you are encouraging your fellow ELCA members in the Grand Canyon Synod to remember Church ministries in their estate planning.

When sufficient numbers have joined **Willing Witnesses** we plan to have an annual event to thank you for your whole life stewardship.

How do I become a member of Willing Witnesses?

You become a **Grand Canyon Synod Willing Witnesses Society** member by planning to invest a portion of the financial resources with which you have been blessed in the ministries of our Church. Through this action, you witness to our faith and support those church agencies and institutions we care about. Once you have taken the steps to assure that a portion of your estate will be left to an ELCA ministry, the rest is easy. Contact us so we can supply you with a form letter that you can use to advise us that you have made such plans.

To join, or for more information, contact Susan Hannah at our office, 4432 N. 24th Street, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85016; Tel 602-957-3223 Ext 18, shannah@gcsynod.org.