

BENEVOLENCE POLICY

Approved at Church Council: November 19, 2023
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Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. - Galatians 6:2

Purpose

Northeast United Methodist Church (NEUMC) has established a Benevolence Process to assist persons in our church and local community with financial needs. The process includes the maintenance of a Benevolence Fund within the financial structure of the church. In addition, we will assist with or direct people to resources that will help equip them for long term success in the area of finance.

The aim of the benevolence process is to support those in financial crisis. The amount of financial aid provided will be determined by the urgency of the need. Aid will normally be limited to alleviating a short-term crisis.

Benevolence Disbursements

The Benevolence Fund is primarily reserved for providing life essentials in time of financial need. These essentials include, but are not limited to:

- Food
- Utilities (electricity and water)
- Heating oil or gas
- Gasoline for transportation (\$20 gas card)
- Temporary Lodging including (i.e., hotel and/or motel)
- Emergency medical expenses (i.e., medications) and health expenses not covered by existing insurance benefits

Benevolence Process

1. The Benevolence Committee will be composed of the Pastor, Director of Finance, Director of Nurture, and Lay Leader. This group will be tasked with assessing the needs and distributing the funds.
2. Persons requesting financial assistance will be directed to the Pastor and/or Director of Nurture who will work with the Benevolence Committee to determine the need and appropriate response.
3. The Pastor has the ability to help with up to \$100 without consulting the committee, but will report to the committee per instance.
4. On needs of over \$100, the committee will vote on the response and the amount of assistance if the request merits a financial response.
5. Each individual or family seeking aid from NEUMC must complete an application and provide identification.
6. Each case will be assessed to see if an outside organization could better meet the needs or if financial training/counseling would be helpful.
7. Assistance from the Benevolence Fund must always be paid directly to creditors. On occasion, food cards, or other specific gift cards may be given as assistance.

Benevolence Priorities

Eligibility for assistance from the Benevolence Fund will be given the following priorities with comparable needs:

- Members and regular attendees of NEUMC
- Extended family members or neighbors of members and regular attendees of NEUMC
- Referrals from community non-profit agencies
- Walk-ins and transients

Biblically, the church recognizes as a priority its duty to care for those given it to shepherd while seeking to be a good neighbor to all in need regardless of their affiliation with the church.

Size of Financial Need

The church seeks to maintain a wise assessment of the church's limits and resources to extend meaningful help in every situation. The Pastor and Benevolence Committee may approve gifts of up to \$500 per year per family not to exceed \$250 within a (6) month period.

Benevolence Policies

The Benevolence Fund does not give loans that must be repaid. Through grace, it provides gifts. If recipients find themselves someday in the position to give back, they are encouraged to do so in the form of a contribution to the Benevolence Fund that will be used to assist others. Every request for financial assistance or financial counseling is strictly confidential.

Confidentiality

The Benevolence Fund member(s) will be apprised of the need for confidentiality when dealing with personal concerns of those who may be in need. However, the Benevolence Fund may divulge personal information to appropriate outside individuals, with the prior approval of the Pastor, such as specific financial, family, or spiritual counselors when it is in the best interest of the person(s) requesting financial assistance.