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BENEVOLENCE FUND APPLICATION

Revised 2026

Benevolence Guidelines

Biblical Basis for the Benevolence Fund

The Benevolence Fund Policy shall be guided by the following Biblical principles: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongues but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:17-18) "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." (Galatians 6:9-10) "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had." (Acts 4:32)

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set forth the responsibilities of the Benevolence Committee and the guidelines for discharging those responsibilities. It is not intended to cover all circumstances under which funds may be disbursed, only those which involve the Benevolence Fund. The purpose of the benevolence fund is to meet people's basic needs on a short-term, interim basis.

Oversight and Accountability

The committee has ultimate responsibility and accountability for the Benevolence Fund and can make decisions to disburse funds—subject to these guidelines—without seeking approval from the Deacons. However, the committee shall communicate their decisions when spending benevolent funds with the Pastor and Deacons so that everyone is aware of who is being helped and how much money is being spent. This will prevent duplication of efforts and maintain unity.

General Guidelines

The benevolence fund is intended as a source of last resort, to be used when the family or individual requesting assistance has explored all other possibilities of help from family, friends, savings, or investments. It is intended to be temporary help during a time of crisis.

Assistance from the benevolence fund is intended to be a one-time gift per year. In unusual circumstances, the Benevolence Committee or Pastor may decide to help an individual or family more than one time a year. However, under no circumstance is a gift from the benevolence fund to be considered a loan.

If the recipient desires to give to the church at a later time, this individual should be encouraged to give directly to the general fund of the church.

Those requesting assistance must also be willing to receive financial, family, or emotional counseling. The Benevolence Committee will not provide help to anyone who, in their estimation, will have negative or irresponsible behavior reinforced by financial help.

Those requesting help must be willing to give the Benevolence Committee permission to follow up on any of the information provided to the committee. The committee will be sensitive to confidential issues.

Criteria

The stated purpose of the benevolence fund is to meet people's basic needs. Normally, these needs are defined as: mortgages and rents; utilities (lights, gas, water — cell phones*, pagers, and cable TV are not eligible expenses; *phones may be considered on a case-by-case basis); food; medical treatment (including prescription drugs medically necessary for the treatment of an illness or injury); transportation to or from a place of employment; and assistance with funeral expenses for members, the spouses and children of members, and individuals for whom the member was "caretaker."

Although not all-inclusive, the following are some needs that may NOT be met by the Benevolence Fund: school expenses (tuition or fees), business investments, or anything that brings financial profit to the applicant; pay-off of credit cards (exceptions can be made when a card was used in a crisis or emergency such as hospitalization or

death); needs of individuals wanted by the law or paying fines as a result of breaking the law; legal fees; penalties related to late payments or irresponsible actions; and private school fees or tuition.

Generally, assistance from the benevolence fund will be small amounts to help as many as possible. If a need exceeds \$1,000 it must be presented to the Pastor for review. The amount given can never reduce the ministry's balance below half of its current balance.

Recipients

In order of priority, recipients of funds disbursed from the benevolent fund are at the direction of the Benevolence Committee and are as follows: (1) church members; (2) sister congregations; (3) regular attendees; (4) members of the community; and (5) ministries and Christian agencies that serve people with the same needs that fit the criteria for assistance but which provide services the church does not.

Procedure for Disbursement

A Benevolence Request Form must be filled out by the person requesting help or by a committee member assisting the person in need. The committee member taking the request will obtain references and contacts to corroborate the need by reviewing the applicant's financial situation, and may contact utility companies, landlords, etc. to verify need. The applicant will be informed of the status of the application no later than five business days from the committee's receipt of the completed application. The application must be completed fully, with all supporting documentation attached. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

All disbursements from the Benevolence Fund shall be made directly to the party or entity to whom payment is due. No funds will be given directly to the person or household requesting assistance. As much as possible, checks will be payable to vendors, homeowners' associations, etc., rather than to the individual requesting assistance. The family group leader or ministry leader for the person receiving assistance will be notified.

BENEVOLENCE REQUEST FORM

Full Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____ Name of Employer: _____

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Other

If Other, explain: _____

Name of Spouse (if married): _____ Years a Member of WGBC: _____

Explanation of Need

Funds Needed for Payment of: ☐ Mortgage/Rent ☐ Utilities ☐ Medical ☐ Food ☐ Other

If Other, or to explain further:

Amount Requested \$: _____ Date Funds Are Needed: _____

Why funds are needed:

Name, address & phone number of each party to whom requested funds will be paid:

What steps have you taken to obtain financial assistance from non-church sources?

How will you meet this financial obligation going forward?

Are you presently receiving any income / Food Stamps / assistance from other sources?: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain:

Are others besides husband, wife, or children living in your household?: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain:

Are others in the household working?: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain their contribution to household expenses:

Is there anyone in your household with addictions?: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain:

Are you willing to accept financial counseling if requested?: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, explain:

Have you received assistance from WGBC in the past 12 months?: ☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, total amount received \$: _____ Date: _____

By signing below I attest that I fully understand the information being requested in this application and that, to the best of my knowledge, I have provided the Committee with accurate and honest responses.

Applicant's Signature:

Date:

BENEVOLENCE REQUEST APPROVAL STATUS

(For Benevolence Fund Committee Use Only)

Requested By:

Date Requested:

☐ Request Approved

Amount Approved \$:

Observations / Recommendations:

☐ Request Denied

Reason(s) for Denial:

Committee Members Making the Decision:

Signature:

Date:

Signature:

Date:

Signature:

Date:

"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." — John 13:35 (ESV)