

Glenstone Chapel

Benevolence Fund Committee Guidelines

Definitions:

Benevolence Fund: The benevolence fund is an officially recognized and designated fund, established by Glenstone Chapel. As such, it is an approved recipient for special offerings, taken each month on communion Sunday, and for designated gifts. It has no budget for either income or expense. Its receipts consist entirely of the special offerings, and designated giving, and its expenses consist of funds disbursed for its stated intended purposes at the direction of the benevolence committee with oversight of the senior pastor and elder board.

Benevolence Fund Committee: The Benevolence Fund Committee is a sub committee of the elder board. Its members serve at the appointment of the elder assigned by the elder board. Member's serve for one year terms with no restriction on the number of consecutive years a member may serve. The Benevolence Committee has no set number of members but should try to maintain at least 3 non elders on the committee.

Purposes: The purpose of this document is to set forth the responsibilities of the Benevolence Fund Committee and the guidelines for discharging those responsibilities. It is not intended to cover all circumstances under which funds may be distributed. The purpose of the Benevolence Fund is to meet people's basic needs. The Benevolence Fund achieves this purpose primarily through specific disbursements at the direction of the Benevolence Fund Committee.

Oversight and Accountability: The Benevolence Fund Committee is accountable to the Elder Board. The Benevolence Fund Committee will interface with the Elder Board in the following ways: The Benevolence Fund Committee will be chaired by an Elder who will report back to the Elder Board on the activities of the Committee. The Benevolence Fund Committee will provide a monthly report to the Elder Board and the Elder Committee Chair on all disbursements of funds and any other details the Elder Board would like to see.

Guidelines for Disbursement: 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 a temporary help during a time of crisis.

Assistance from the benevolence fund is intended to be a one-time gift. In unusual circumstances, the Benevolence Fund Committee may decide to help more than one time. Under no circumstances is a gift from the benevolence fund to be considered a loan or gift to repay in part or full, in money or labor.

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

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

Recipients: In order of priority, recipients of the funds disbursed from the benevolence fund at the direction of the Benevolence Fund Committee are:

- 1. partners**
- 2. regular attendees**
- 3. family of partners**
- 4. members of the community**
- 5. Ministries and Christian agencies that serve people with the same needs as those which fit the criteria for assistance from the benevolence fund, but which provide services the church does not.**
- 6. Employees of the church.**

Criteria: The stated purpose of the benevolence fund is to meet people's basic needs. Normally, these needs are defined as:

Lodging/housing

Food

Heating

Clothing

Medical Treatment

Transportation to or from place of employment

Funeral Expenses

Initial evaluation and professional counseling appointments.

Needs that may not be met by the benevolence fund include:

School expenses, business investments, or anything that brings financial profit to the individual or family

Paying off credit cards, unless the individual had to use a credit card in a crisis or emergency. (Hospitalization, death, etc.)

Needs of individuals who are wanted by the law or for paying fines as a result of breaking the law.

Housing for unmarried couples.

Legal fees

Penalties relating to late payments or irresponsible actions.

Private school fees or tuition

Business ventures or investments.

Financial assistance for counseling will be considered if it is perceived that counseling would directly enable the individual to address a current FINANCIAL situation. In most cases, this would be limited to an initial counseling appointment but under special circumstances can include other appointments not to exceed a limit of \$750 of distributions.

Generally, assistance from the benevolence fund will not exceed \$2,000 per family in any calendar year. In very unusual circumstances, families and individuals who are in need of substantial funds (over \$2,000) and who have the opportunity to make a life-changing decision can continue to be assisted up to whatever limit the elders deem appropriate. Such cases should be reviewed carefully and when appropriate, additional accountability should be sought.

Special projects, sometimes funded by special offerings designated for the Benevolence Fund, might include supporting local outreach ministries to the poor, or helping to provide assistance during times of catastrophe or major crises.

Procedure of Disbursement

Source of Request: A Request of Assistance Application must be filled out by the person requesting help or by someone who is assisting the person in need. This can be done in person, on line, or an application picked up at

church and completed. If the application is not taken in the presence of a Pastor, Church Administrator, Elder, or Benevolence Committee Member, then a follow up phone call will be made to the applicant to complete the process before the committee meets on the request. Other calls to references may be made to verify the need.

Processing the Request:

The Request for Assistance Application is returned to the office, pastor, elder, or committee person in preparation for review by the Benevolence Fund Committee. A one week or less time line will in most cases be adhered to

In a meeting, telephone conference, or e-mail the Benevolence Fund Committee reviews the request and comes to a decision.

The person making the request is informed of the decision.

Checks are written and disbursed. As much as possible, checks from the benevolence fund will be payable to vendors, homeowners associations, etc, rather than to the individual requesting assistance.