



BENEVOLENCE FUND POLICY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of LAND O LAKES

The Benevolence Fund Policy of First United Methodist Church of Land O Lakes (FUMC-LOL) is established, effective March 30 2020, as approved by the Leadership Board of First United Methodist Church Land O Lakes.

¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. – 1 John 3:17-18 (NIV)

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. – Acts 4:32 (NIV)

I. PURPOSE OF POLICY:

FUMC-LOL's Benevolence Fund Policy exists to glorify Christ by sharing His love in a physical way with members in our congregation and/or community. Benevolence assistance will be given to any member, person or family ("Requestor"), who meets the requirements, when it is determined that the Requestor is truly "in need".

II. BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE & OBJECTIVE

The Benevolence Fund Emergency Resources Team (ERT), is a subcommittee of the Leadership Board. The ERT reviewing the benevolence case will be comprised of, at least, three members. It has been modeled after Acts 6:1-6, when the Apostles appointed individuals from the congregation to minister to those who had needs.

The Benevolence Fund ERT will be comprised of the following members:

- Senior Pastor
- Director of Family Ministry
- One member of the church as appointed by the Leadership Board

The objective of this policy is to set forth the responsibilities and limitations of the Benevolence Fund ERT and the guidelines for discharging those responsibilities. It is not intended to cover all circumstances under which funds may be approved, adjusted or denied. The Benevolence Fund ERT has the ultimate responsibility and accountability of the Benevolence Fund and the Biblical stewardship of the money held therein.

The Benevolence Fund ERT shall determine who will receive disbursements from the Benevolence Fund, in what amount, and for what duration.

The Leadership Board, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, will have full authority to alter the policy.

III. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Benevolence Fund ERT member(s) will be apprised of the need for extreme confidentiality when dealing with personal issues of the needy. All matters will remain within the confines of the Benevolence Fund ERT. However, the Benevolence Fund ERT may divulge personal information to appropriate outside individuals, with the prior approval of the Senior Pastor, such as specific financial, family, or spiritual counselors when it is in the best interest of the Requestor(s).

IV. BENEVOLENT PROCESS

- 1) A request is received from a Requestor asking for assistance.
- 2) A Benevolence Fund Application Request form is sent via email or a Requestor will complete the form in the church office.

If possible, the ERT should invite the Requestor to sit down with a member of the ERT for spiritual coaching and to fill out the form. If the Requestor cannot meet in person, a phone interview must take place. No funds will be given without personal interaction (no email requests without voice or in-person verification).

- 3) ERT form is returned to the lead team member.
- 4) Information will be accessed for verification to see if the Requestor meets ERT requirements.
- 5) Information will be distributed to all ERT members for a final decision.
- 6) Obtain external verification. Verify the information provided by the Requestor with another source. This could be individuals listed as references on the application, an employer, or another church member.
- 7) Each benevolence payment will be processed and delivered to the 3rd party receiver (“Payee”) of the funds, not the Requestor.
- 8) Payment will be 1) a USPS mailed check 2) use of a church Credit Card or 2) hand delivered to the payee. No payments are to be given to the Requestor.
- 9) The ERT will email the Leadership Board Chairperson and Finance Sub-committee members to notify of money spent and the purpose.
- 10) Archive/print all documents and place in the designated folder at the church office.
- 11) Follow up with the Requestor of funds to set an appointment to sit down for pastoral coaching, or specific financial, family, or spiritual counselors.

V. BENEVOLENCE NEED CATEGORIES

The main purpose of the Benevolence Fund resources is to help meet basic needs. Normally, these needs are defined as:

- 1) Temporary Lodging including all fees (i.e. Hotel and/or Motel)

- 2) Food
- 3) Clothing
- 4) Medical treatment and may include medications for a month maximum period
- 5) Transportation
- 6) Funeral expenses
- 7) Initial evaluation and professional counseling appointments

Needs that may not be met by the benevolence fund include but are not limited to:

- 1) Car payments, mortgage payments, rent, etc.
These will be referred to resource agencies for handling.
- 2) School expenses or loans, business investments, or anything that brings financial profit to the person or family.
- 3) Paying off credit cards.
- 4) Needs of individuals who are wanted by the law or for paying fines as a result of breaking the law.
- 5) Legal fees
- 6) Penalties relating to late payments or irresponsible actions
- 7) Private school fees or tuition
- 8) Repasts (Catering after a funeral)

NOTE: *Loans will not be made for any form of benevolence fund assistance.*

VI. DISBURSEMENT

- 1) Overview:

The First United Methodist Church Benevolence Fund is intended to be a source of last resort, to be used when a member or family requesting assistance has explored all other possibilities of help from family, friends, savings, or investments. The benevolence fund 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 ERT may decide to help more than once. Under no circumstance is a gift from the benevolence fund to be considered a loan. No gift is required be repaid, either in part or in full, in money, or in labor.

The Requestor must be willing to receive financial, family, or spiritual counseling, if deemed necessary. The Benevolence Fund ERT will not provide help to a Requestor who, in its

estimation, will have negative or irresponsible behavior reinforced by receiving financial assistance.

The Requestor must be willing to give the committee permission to follow up on any information provided to the committee.

2) Funding Amounts:

- a) Regular Attenders of FUMC-LOL can be given a max of \$500.00

Discretion may be used by the ERT in extreme circumstances for more. However, Pastoral coaching must take place with regular attenders.

- b) Non-Attenders can be given a maximum of \$100.00.

3) ERT Follow-Up Activities (if disbursement approved)

When providing benevolence fund assistance, the ERT should maintain adequate records and case histories to show:

- a) Name and address of each Requestor of aid;
- b) The amount distributed to each;
- c) The purpose for which the aid was given;
- d) The way the Requestor was selected; and
- e) The relationship, if any, between the Requestor and other members of the church.

The FUMC-LOL Leadership Board affirm these principles and, by God's grace and His glory, commit to be guided by them as we exercise faithful stewardship of the funds entrusted to us for the purpose of ministering and providing benevolence to members, individuals or families in their time of need.