

SUBJECT: BENEVOLENCE

Responsibility: Deacon/Committee/Pastor, Elders

(CONFIDENTIAL...FOR LEADERSHIP ONLY)

Policy

Benevolence is a vital part of ministering within the body of believers, and requires several Coordinated Ministries. The Church will use the Sunday Alms offering to fund Benevolence requests. An Alms offering can be given in several ways: money, dish/food, or clothing. It is a kind deed arising out of compassion, mercy, or concern for the unfortunate. We do not provide loans; however, under certain circumstances, a member may be asked to repay a debt.

Scripture tells us that clothing, a roof over the head and daily food are the key criteria in determining to whom the help should be given first. Our emphasis will be on meeting needs in these areas. How and when to help beyond basic food, clothing and shelter needs will be determined on an individual basis.

Currently, distribution of benevolence funds is limited to **active** members of MZMBC. Members must exhaust all other resources prior to requesting benevolence funds. Requests must be initiated directly with the member's Deacon. With only rare exceptions, cash will be given directly to members.

1. Who is eligible for Benevolence?

Benevolence distributions are limited to **active** members of MZMBC. Any requests for benevolence funds from either inactive members (see membership policy) or nonmembers of MZMBC must be submitted directly to the Elders for review and approval.

2. What are the distribution range/limit guidelines?

Benevolence is funded through the Alms offering that is collected during the Sunday worship services. Distributions will be limited to the current availability of monies within the Benevolence Fund.

Distributions for hardships will be limited to once a year per family/individual. Also the criteria below will apply:

- a) Alternate sources of financial assistance will be recommended based on needs and **active** member's personal status.
- b) **Active** member must exhaust all other resources before requesting benevolence assistance.

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c) Distribution maximums have been set as follows:

Shelter	\$1,000 (includes utilities)
Food	\$ 400 (food card will be purchased)
Clothing	\$ 200
Transportation	\$ 500
Medication	TBD on individual basis
Other	TBD on individual basis

3. Who are the “Coordinated Ministries” and what are their responsibilities?

A. Deacon Ministry - First point of contact for the member

- Deacon is required to complete the Benevolence Request Form and submit form to the Benevolence Committee .
- Requesting Deacon will participate in an initial conference call. Deacon will be required to present Benevolence Request Form information.
- Deacon is required to provide all communications to the requesting member.

B. Benevolence Committee (The committee acts as an anonymous review agent. Committee member names are not to be disclosed.)

- Receives completed benevolence request form from requesting member's Deacon.
- Evaluates and makes decision on the member's request within 48 hours. (The decision time frame may be extended if additional information is required by the Benevolence Committee to render a decision.)
- Communicates decision simultaneously to the Deacon and the Pastor/Elders via email. (If no concerns have been raised, a Benevolence Committee member will contact the financial secretary to disburse funds.)

Note: A committee member must excuse him/herself from making a decision on a request if the member is a close friend, family member, or has an association/relationship with the committee member (i.e. committee member is also the Deacon of the requester). An Elder will substitute for an excused committee member.

C. Social Concerns Ministry

- Provides referrals to outside agencies and churches.

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- Provides a database of social services resources in Wake and the surrounding counties.

D. Pastor/Elders

- Reviews and renders a decision on request from inactive members and nonmembers.
- Reviews and renders a decision on escalated requests.
- Reviews and renders a decision on requests that are outside of defined distribution areas.
- Substitutes for an excused committee member.

Process

1. Requesting and Approving a Benevolence Distribution

- a) **Active** members requesting a Benevolence distribution should first contact their Deacon to indicate that a hardship exists.
- b) Deacons are to:
 - Discuss the situation with the member.
 - Complete the Benevolence Request Form with the member. (THE DEACON SHOULD NOT GIVE FORM TO MEMBER TO COMPLETE.)
 - Submit form to Benevolence Committee.

1. Deacon Ministry - First point of contact for the member

- Deacons are required to complete the Benevolence Request Form.
- Member's Deacon must submit completed form to the Benevolence Committee.
- Requesting Deacon will be contacted by the Benevolence Committee to participate in an initial conference call within 48 hours of receiving request.
- Deacons will be required to present information gathered on the form to the Benevolence Committee. (During this call it will be determined if additional information is needed from the requester or if the request should be escalated to the Pastor/Elders.)

- i. If additional information is needed, the Deacon must notify the member following the conference call.
- ii. The decision time frame may be extended if additional information is

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requested by the Benevolence Committee or the request is escalated to the Pastor/Elders.

If the decision time frame must be extended, the member will be notified by the Deacon with an update as to why the extension is being requested.

- Communicate decision back to the member within 72 hours from the initial request.

Note: If for any reason the Deacon is unable to complete the process with the requester (i.e. family emergency, etc.), he should request assistance from another Deacon to complete the request. An overview of the request and outstanding action steps should also be communicated to the accepting Deacon prior to transitioning the request.

2. Benevolence Committee (The committee acts as an anonymous review agent; committee member names are not to be disclosed.)

- Receives completed benevolence request form from Deacon; conducts conference call with Deacon.
- Evaluates and makes decision on the member's request within 48 hours. (The decision time frame may be extended if additional information is required by the Benevolence Committee.)
- Communicates decision simultaneously to the Deacon and the Pastor/Elders via email. (If no concerns have been raised from the Pastor/Elders, a Benevolence Committee member will contact the financial secretary to disburse funds.)

Note: 1) A committee member must excuse him/herself from making a decision on a request if the member is a close friend, family member, or has an association/relationship with the committee member (i.e.-committee member is also the Deacon of the requester). An Elder will substitute for an excused committee member.

2) At anytime, a Benevolence Committee Member with due cause can escalate a request or other concerns to the Pastor/Elders. All members of the committee must be notified prior to such escalation.

3. Benevolence Distribution:

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The distribution of benevolence funds for active members will be authorized by the Benevolence Committee. A committee member will work with the financial secretary to ensure the benevolence distribution is executed appropriately. Below is a list of situations that may occur. This does not represent a complete list.

- a) Rental/mortgage assistance or inevitable eviction from the primary residence.
 - b) Water/Gas/Electricity is being turned off.
 - c) Primary source of transportation is being repossessed.
 - d) Fire, effects of natural disaster to the home not covered under homeowner's insurance policy.
 - e) Immediate need for food, clothing or medication.
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Benevolence Request Form

Today's Date:_____

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(Last Name) (First) (Middle)

(Street Address) (City) (Zip)

What is your need?

☐ Clothing

☐ Food

Is there a refrigerator to store the food? _____

Is there a microwave to prepare foods? _____

Is there a stove or a cook top to prepare foods? _____

Is there storage or space for the food? _____

☐ Shelter

Has an eviction notice been served? Yes/No _____ When? _____

☐ Transportation

Is this the primary and only source of transportation? Yes/No _____

Is there a repossession timeframe/payment due date? _____

If necessary, is other transportation available? _____

☐ Medication

Type(s) of medication? _____

Where are prescriptions filled? _____

☐ Other, please specify? _____

How are you handling your other bills, medications, food, personal items?

Have you exhausted all other resources prior to making this request to Mt. Zion? (i.e. family, friends, outside agencies) _____

Are you tithing? Yes ____ No ____

What caused the financial problem(s)? _____

What are you doing to prevent future financial problems? _____

Have you requested assistance from the church before? Yes ____ No ____

If so, when? _____ What or How much was given? _____

Would you like to receive counseling, (i.e. budgeting)? THIS IS OPTIONAL Yes ____ No ____

How do I, as your Deacon contact you? Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Deacon's Name: (print) _____

BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

TODAY'S DATE: _____

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RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

(Committee Member Printed Name)

(Committee Member Signature)

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BENEVOLENCE REQUEST DECISION:

Today's Date: _____

Approved____ **Denied**_____

Comments: _____
