

# The River Christian Center's Benevolence Fund Policy

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November 2022

## Purpose

No individual in the community who is willing to receive help in Christ's name should be without food, shelter, and other basic needs. Furthermore, God's people are commanded to care for each other.

"Bear one another's burden and thus fulfill the law of Christ and give to the people in need"  
Galatians 6:2

"Whoever has the world's goods and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the law of God abide in him? 1 John 3:17

As an integral part of the ministry of our church, the Benevolence Fund provides financial assistance to individuals or families who are experiencing financial or material needs due to prolonged illness, accident or an emergency situation.

## Levels of Support

The Board of the church is responsible for administering the Benevolence Fund with established guidelines. There are three levels of approved benevolence ministry:

1. **Basic** (up to \$100 per situation)  
The Senior Pastor may approve this level of assistance at his discretion however must inform the board monthly of all instances. Use of the Benevolence Request Form is left to the Pastor's discretion. Repeat support at this level places the assistance at the Intermediate level.
2. **Intermediate** (\$100 - \$500 per situation)  
A Benevolence Request Form must be completed by the applicant(s). A majority of the board may approve this level of assistance in each single situation. A phone poll with corresponding documentation may be used if necessary. Completed request forms will be provided to the board each month. Repeat support at this level places the assistance at the Advanced level.
3. **Advanced** (over \$500)  
A Benevolence Request Form must be completed by the applicant(s). This level of assistance must be approved by the Board at a face to face meeting. Approval is subject to meeting all specified criteria. A motion will be passed with the outcome of the approval for retention and accountability purposes.

**Note:** All parties involved must disclose any conflicts of interest (e.g., where proposed assistance involves a family member) and excuse themselves from the related discussion and decision.

## **Funding**

Assistance will only be provided as resources are available.

All funds remain under the direction and control of the board responsible for the church's charitable resources and will be administered when authorized a specific disbursement.

Funding sources are as follows:

1. Benevolence Fund
  - a. Funds designated by the donor for the Benevolence Fund.
  - b. The church may allocate funds from the General Fund to the Benevolence Fund as part of the annual budget process.
2. Project Fundraising
  - a. The board may approve a demonstrated need that is more than available funds. Designated gifts toward an approved benevolence project will be used as designated with the understanding that when a given need has been met as determined by the board, any excess will be used for other benevolence projects.
  - b. Fundraising for a specific project will only be approved if the project meets all guidelines for this policy as a whole.

## **Guidelines**

First and foremost, private charity between individuals is encouraged, but it must be done independently of the Church. For the Church's own benevolence program, the following guidelines should be applied in determining need and eligibility for assistance from the Church's benevolence fund.

1. Determining Need
  - a. The need of an individual or family may come to attention during the course of ministry, or by referral from a third party. When required a Benevolence Request Form should be completed and submitted.
  - b. A dependent individual's need must be assessed in consideration with the person who has legal responsibility for the individual and the financial status of the legal parent or guardian will be taken into consideration.
  - c. Other sources of community assistance may need to be verified and will be taken into consideration.
2. Eligibility
  - a. All assistance, including reporting, shall comply with the requirements of the Income Tax Act and Regulations. The assistance must be charitable under the law.

- b. Token assistance may be provided as a tangible demonstration of moral support without meeting all of the eligibility criteria.
- c. A person in the community whose current status is financially or materially 'needy'. Support will not be restricted to members of the church.
- d. Needs that will be considered for benevolent assistance include the following:
  - i. An accident that results in financial needs.
  - ii. An unavoidable unemployment situation.
  - iii. Families that encounter legitimate financial difficulties.
  - iv. Funeral expenses.
  - v. Individuals that are in need of special education/ training opportunities due to social, emotional, delinquency, or related difficulties. These opportunities should serve to help the individual for the greater good of society in the short and long-term.
  - vi. Medical treatments and related expenses prescribed by a recognized a Canadian medical professional not covered by a public or private insurance/medical plan.
  - vii. Other situations of demonstrated need.
- e. When financial assistance is provided consideration should also be given to meeting the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and other needs of the party receiving assistance. This will be done in consultation with the pastoral staff and/or other qualified professionals.
- f. The Church will not participate financially (funding or receipting) in projects which the law considered to be private benevolence.
- g. Needs NOT usually considered for benevolence assistance:
  - i. Discretionary expenses (e.g., vacations)
  - ii. Treatments not prescribed by a recognized Canadian medical professional.
  - iii. Business needs arising for any reason.
  - iv. Legal fees
  - v. Insured losses.
  - vi. Where an individual or those legally responsible for the individual are determined to have adequate resources, unless the individual has been rejected by those persons.
  - vii. Projected and future needs.
- h. Duration of charity
  - i. The church will provide assistance for a specific need that is not expected to involve a long-term commitment.
  - ii. When a major need arises, other possible sources for assistance will be explored with the party in need (e.g., community and/or government programs).

### 3. Reporting/Documentation/Evaluation

The Board evaluating a case for assistance are responsible for the following:

- 1. Basic** - The Pastor is to report the process involved in evaluating and reasons for granting assistance at the next regular scheduled board meeting. To avoid repeat requests at the basic level between meetings, the Pastor will keep a confidential record of all instances. Use of the Benevolence Request Form is left to the Pastor's discretion.
- 2. Intermediate** - A Benevolence Request Form must be completed by the applicant(s). All completed request forms must be reported to the board monthly. A majority of the board will approve this level of assistance in each single situation. A phone poll with corresponding documentation may be used if necessary. Repeat support at this level places the assistance at the Advanced level. Names of recipients will remain confidential in all recordings besides the initial request form(s) presented.
- 3. Advanced** - The board will evaluate the request forms and financial resources available to the person being considered for assistance. If needed, documents such as proof of government support, copies of most recent tax returns, pay stubs, financial statements or other supporting documentation may be requested by the board for review. A written explanation including the process involved in evaluating, amount of funds and reasons for granting or denying assistance will be retained in a confidential manner by the board. A motion will be passed with the outcome of the approval for retention and accountability purposes. Names of recipients will remain confidential in all recordings besides the initial request form(s) presented.

#### **Notes:**

Payout will be in form of written cheque or whenever reasonably possible, benevolent assistance should be paid directly to the supplier/service provider, or the assistance should be in the form of physical goods or vouchers.

Qualifying benevolence assistance payouts will be reported on T5007 slips as 'social assistance' in accordance with the requirements of the Income Tax Act.

*\*Information gathered to create this policy was provided by the CCCC website - 11/22*