

Benevolence Application and Policy

Furnace Brook Wesleyan Church
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802-483-2531
www.furnacebrook.org

BENEVOLENCE FUND APPLICATION:

PART 1 WHAT IS THE BENEVOLENCE FUND:

The Benevolence Fund is a limited financial fund, made available by application to an individual who is in need on an urgent basis due to unforeseen circumstances. Eligible individuals are those who have attended Furnace Brook two times a month in the previous six months. The money is granted as a gift, and repayment is not expected. However, if the recipient desires to give to the church at a later time, the recipient is encouraged to give directly to the general fund. A maximum of \$200 per year is the limit for each applicant, or household. Funds are disbursed to the party owed, not to the individual applicant.

Your request will be reviewed in accordance with the attached Benevolence Fund Policy, which is included herein and is an integral part of this application process. The Benevolence Fund Application and Policy is available in the church office or at www.furnacebrook.org. You will be contacted if more information is needed. If your request is approved, it may take up to one week to receive funds.

PART 2 WHAT OTHER HELP IS AVAILABLE:

Our concern for you is not limited to your financial situation. We care about your emotional, spiritual and relational health.

Would you like a pastor to follow up with you about these types of concerns? (Note: Your response to this question has no bearing on the approval of the financial request.)

_____ No, thank you _____ Yes, call me at (_____)_____ - _____

THE APPLICATION MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED TO BE CONSIDERED.

PART 3 APPLICANT INFORMATION:

Full Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Name of Employer: _____

Marital Status: ___ Single, ___ Married, ___ Divorced, ___ Separated,
___ widowed, ___ other

If other, please explain: _____

Do you have any children under 18 living at home? ___ No, ___ Yes,
How Many ___

How long have you been attending Furnace Brook Church? _____

Name of other adult(s) in your household: _____

Employment of other adult(s) _____

Does the other adult help with the household finances? _____

Explain: _____

PART 4 EXPLANATION OF NEED:

Funds Needed for payment of: ___ Mortgage/ Rent ___ Utilities ___ Medical
___ Food ___ Transportation ___ other (Explain) _____

(Additional information may be requested)

Amount requested \$: _____ Date Funds are needed: _____

What situation(s) created this need (attach pages if necessary)? _____

Attach supporting documentation of the amount, name, address and phone number of each party for whom requested funds will be paid:_____

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

How will you meet this (these) financial obligations going forward?

Attach proof of your monthly income.

PART 5 GENERAL INFORMATION

Is Applicant related to a member, employee, officer or Board Member of Furnace

Brook Church? No, Yes If yes, list names:_____

Has applicant received assistance from the Benevolence Fund in the past 12 months? No, Yes, If yes, what was the total received? \$: _____
Date _____.

NOTE: By signing below, I attest that I have read the Benevolence Fund Policy and that I fully understand the information being requested from me for this application process, and that to the best of my knowledge I have provided accurate and honest responses.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE_____

DATE:_____

BENEVOLENCE FUND POLICY

Objective of this Document

1. To establish a written process for the evaluation of requests for assistance from the Benevolence Fund.
2. To outline eligibility requirements and criteria for receiving assistance from the Benevolence Fund.
3. To describe the process involved in the request approval and disbursement of monies from the Benevolence Fund.
4. To describe the appointment and responsibilities of the Benevolence Fund Committee.

Biblical Basis for the Benevolence Fund

The Benevolence Fund Policy shall be guided by the following Biblical references:

“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 in 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 of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:9-10)

“All 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)

Purpose of the Benevolence Fund

The Benevolence Fund is a budgeted fund made available to those who attend Furnace Brook by application to assist those who are struggling financially due to unforeseen circumstances. Its receipts consist primarily from donations from the congregation, and its expenses consist of funds disbursed for its intended purpose at the direction of the Benevolence committee.

Oversight and Accountability

The Benevolence Fund Committee will consist of three (3) members of the congregation selected by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors, and the pastor. The lay members will each serve a two year term. The pastor will not vote on the approval of applications. While the pastor and committee are accountable to the Board of Directors, the committee and or pastor may find it necessary to act independently in case of an emergency. Each member of the committee shall sign a “Confidentiality Agreement”.

Sources of Income for the Fund

All benevolence funds come from the church revenues generated primarily by congregational contributions designated to the benevolence fund, and to a lesser extent from the church's general fund.

Contributions may not be earmarked or otherwise designated for a particular purpose of individual. Although church members may designate their contributions to the overall Benevolence Fund, the leadership of Furnace Brook Church discourages the practice of giving to the Benevolence Fund in lieu of the church's general fund. Church leadership may choose, at its discretion, to decline certain contributions that are earmarked or designated.

To comply with IRS regulations concerning charitable contributions, all contributions to the Benevolence Fund must be unconditional and without personal benefit to the donor.

Eligibility

Only those individuals who have been attending Furnace Brook Wesleyan Church for at least two times a month for the past six months may be eligible to apply for assistance. The pastor may make exceptions at his discretion.

General Guidelines

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

Disbursements from the fund may not be made in the form of a loan, nor considered by anyone as a loan. No disbursement may be repaid, either in part or in full in money or in labor. However, if the recipient desires to give to the church at a later time, the recipient is encouraged to contribute to the general fund. This is not to ever be considered a repayment.

While not a requirement, a recipient may be asked to receive financial counseling. The Benevolence committee may deny help to some who refuse counseling, in cases where negative or irresponsible behavior contributes to financial distress.

Recipients of funds must be willing to give the Benevolence Committee permission to follow up on any information provided to the committee. The committee members will be sensitive to confidential information.

Benevolence Need Categories

The stated purpose of the Benevolence Fund is to meet people's basic needs. This section lists some of the basic needs, or circumstances, under which financial assistance may be disbursed from the fund:

- Mortgages & 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)
- Transportation to or from employment
- Financial assistance for counseling (on recommendation by the pastor)

Non -qualifying Needs: below is a list of some needs which do not to qualify for help from the Benevolence Fund:

- School expenses (tuition and fees), business investments, or anything that brings financial profit to the individual or household applying
- Pay off of credit cards
- Needs of individuals wanted by the law, or paying fines due to breaking the law
- Legal fees
- Penalties due to late payments
- Private school fees
- Business ventures

Process of Applying for Assistance

Those seeking assistance should take the following steps:

1. Obtain a "Benevolence Fund Application" from the church office or website. The application must be completed fully, with all supporting documentation attached, and returned to the church office. (Incomplete applications will not be processed.)
2. The application will be reviewed by the Benevolence Committee. The committee may contact the applicant for additional information or to schedule a meeting. The committee may also contact utility companies or landlords to verify need.
3. The applicant will be informed of the status of the application within five days.
4. If the request is approved, the committee will notify the applicant of the amount of the disbursement, and how and when the funds will be paid.
5. Disbursements: All funds from the Benevolence Fund will be made directly to the entity or party to whom funds are owned according to the application. If funds for food are needed, grocery store gift cards will be used.

BENEVOLENCE FUND APPLICATION STATUS FORM

(For Benevolence Fund Committee Use only)

Requested By: _____ Date Requested _____

_____ Request Approved: Amount Approved \$ _____

Observations/ Recommendations:

Request Denied: Reasons for Denial:

Committee Members making the Decision:

Signature:

Date:
