

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Overland Park Benevolence Ministry Guide



Basis for benevolent giving

“Benevolence” is a charitable act or gift. For the child of God, this action is wholly dependent on, and conditioned by God’s prior love. Christian love is the imitation of divine love. Luther speaks of faith and love, by which a person is placed between God and his neighbor as a medium, which receives from above and gives out again below; and is like a vessel or tube through which the stream of the divine blessings must flow without intermission to others. Love seeks the welfare of all, (Romans 15:2), and works no ill to any, (Romans 13:8-10); love seeks opportunity to do good to all, and especially toward the household of faith, (Galatians 6:10).

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we...?’ When did we...?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Purpose of this Guide

The following information has been collected and assembled with the purpose of providing guidance for the Benevolence Team and to illustrate for interested parties the concepts, principles and process considerations that guide our benevolence support.

Our benevolence will be divided into gifts of witness and mercy which for our work together we will attempt to embrace both, separately and together.

Authorization

This Team is assembled, supported and overseen by the Executive Ministry Team (EMT) ultimately responsible to the Congregational Leadership Team (CLT) and manages our first fruits, the tithes of the gifts of our worshiping family. Changes in direction, mission or practice of this Team will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Ministry Team and the Congregational Leadership Team of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Overland Park, Kansas.

Team Structure

The Benevolence Team, led by the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** will meet on a quarterly basis and consist of up to 12 individuals. Each individual will serve as the ambassador for one of our 12 Benevolence Partners. At Team meetings, each will give a brief update on their mission partner. Outside of meetings, each Team member has committed to serve at their mission partner at least once a year, to champion their Benevolence Partner in a grassroots way to others in their sphere of influence, and to recruit others to serve alongside them.

Guiding Principles

To keep us accountable as this Christian Family to our call, we have determined:

- To make benevolence the first priority in our expenditures (see Christ Lutheran Core Values)

Proverbs 3:9-10

*Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the **first fruits** of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*
and

- To make sure that our benevolence remains at least 10% of our offerings (not 10% of all income).

Leviticus 27:30

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.

Deuteronomy 26:13

Then say to the Lord your God: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them".

Strategy for benevolent giving

The allocation of resources for the benevolence program is guided:

In Focus: We have determined as a faith family that rather than scattering our Benevolence tithe to many organizations but remaining shallow with each of them, we would prefer to focus on "going all in" with 12 official partners. This will allow us to provide more financial support to those chosen organizations, but also to build relationships, steer volunteer involvement, and communicate/market these ministry partners to our congregation as a whole. As a CLCOP staff, we have embraced this concept so that our individual internal ministry areas are focused on these ministry partners as well.

In Touch: Benevolence is more than just sending a check. We want to encourage involvement and build relationships with these Benevolence Partners, participating and encourage participation by "*boots on the ground*".

Witness & Mercy: Our benevolence is aimed at ministries that accomplish both witness (sharing the Gospel) and mercy (compassionate acts to relieve suffering). Although we recognize that some of our Benevolence partners lean more toward one or the other, our goal is that among all of our partners we are accomplishing both.

The distribution of our Benevolence will be guided by an annual budget and is directed as follows:

- A minimum of 60% of our Benevolence financial gifts will be sent to ministries outside our walls
- to ensure that ministries at Christ Lutheran are available to all, regardless of the ability to pay, and
- to encourage participation in Christian education and mission involvement

The whole of our giving will be prioritized

- a) First to our defined Benevolence Partners
- b) Secondly to Missionary support
- c) Thirdly for Scholarships for Christian education, and/or to ensure that ministries at CLC are available to all, regardless of the ability to pay.
- d) Fourthly, for Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) support to emergency relief and natural disasters
- e) Fifthly, internally led outreach efforts. For the purposes of this document, outreach will be defined as caring for others, those outside our walls.
- f) Lastly, as outlined in greater detail later in this guide, any remaining portion of undesignated funds will be distributed as one time gifts divided up between our current Benevolence partners.

Administration

The Benevolence Team will schedule their quarterly meetings to be held one month after the end of each church fiscal quarter so that we have the proper financial information with which to make decisions.

So as to reduce competition internally between the members of our Benevolence Team campaigning for their respective partner, we will collectively establish goals for 4 partners a year, beginning with the ministries with which we have the least volunteer involvement, in order to apply our collective support and to ensure cross familiarization with all Benevolence partners.

The Benevolence budget will be assembled annually and based upon the congregationally vote endorsed Spending and Operating Plan as assembled and proposed by CLT. This amount allows for a planning budget to be assembled. It is our intent to commit no more than 60% of the Spending and Operating Plan's Benevolent Fund to its budget until such time when gifts have been received, counted and are financially available for distribution to the benefactors. This allows for a firm commitment to be made to the current Benevolence Partners, Missionaries and Scholarships while ensuring that the risk of committing or distributing funds beyond those received is mitigated.

To aid our selected Benevolence Partners we will affirm a monthly one twelfth distribution of annually allocated support as our financial commitment to their efforts. Additional support may or may not be available as additional receipts are distributed but if so they should be considered as one-time support, distinct and separate from our annual commitment. Support for scholarships and other large gifts will be distributed quarterly.

Evaluation of Current and Potential Official Benevolence Partners

Once a year, at the 3rd quarter meeting, the Benevolence Team will evaluate all of our existing Benevolence Partners to determine whether they are still aligned with the attributes we deem necessary. If not, we will notify that organization that unless we can find a way to bring about alignment, we will be withdrawing support for the next fiscal year.

The Benevolence Team has assembled for consideration the following attributes to ensure that recipients align with the Guiding Principles as stated above. Separately, the Team members will weigh each benevolence support request as to its alignment with these attributes in order to guide the work of the Team.

Any organizations that are being considered as a potential future partner will have a representative fill out an application (Appendix B: Benevolence Partner Application Guide), and then will be evaluated based on this same list of attributes.

	No									Yes
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How connected is this effort/agency to a specific Christian organization/church?										
Does the mission of the organization align with our mission, vision, values, and beliefs?										
Does this organization impact many people?										
Are there opportunities for volunteers to serve? (or do we send people as clients to them?)										
Is the effort of this organization unique to our current Benevolence partners?										
Mark the column that most closely illustrates the % of funding (column times 10) going directly to recipients										
<i>* Each Benevolence team member evaluates the mission partner separately and then we average the totals.</i>										
<i>For us to adopt a new partner, and/or to continue with a current partner, the minimal score needs to be 30.</i>										

Concerning attribute #2 above (alignment with mission, vision, values, and beliefs), the Benevolence Team will be looking to insure that the organization at a bare minimum is grounded in Scripture and professes the faith as made known through the Apostle's Creed.

Mission Grant Requests:

Mission Grants are gifts of financial support for consideration to anyone going on a mission trip for any timeframe less than a full year.

Requests for support by organizations in need should be sent to the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** who will then bring the request forward to the Benevolence Team at the next quarterly meeting. A complete application process is attached and labeled as Appendix A– Benevolence Request Application Guide

Grant Requirements:

Persons available to receive Mission Grants will:

- Be an active member of the faith family at Christ Lutheran Church
- Willing to make a presentation(s) to the congregation if requested.

As of August 2019, an amount of \$500.00 is to be considered the sum for a Mission Grant request.

Mission trips/projects requested financial support as a Mission Grant must:

- Be consistent with the mission of Christ Lutheran Church and supportive of our values.
- Provide opportunities for spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual growth for the individual

The James Project Guatemala Mission Trip event will be supported as a single unified act, rather than paying the support of individual team members.

Missionary Support (local, national, or global)

Financial support for Missionary Support will be considered for those who are raising part or all of their own salary as they work in the local, national, or global mission field for a multiyear commitment.

Requests for Missionary Support should be sent to the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** who will bring the request forward to the Benevolence Team at the next quarterly meeting. A complete application process is attached and labeled as Appendix A– Benevolence Request Application Guide.

Grant Requirements:

Persons receiving grants will:

- Be an active member of the faith family at Christ Lutheran Church. Exceptions for consideration would be immediate family members of an active member.
- Willing to make a presentation(s) to the congregation if requested.
- For all new missionaries we will incorporate a sending/blessing into our worship services.

Support Guidance for Missionaries

Currently our guide is to provide \$1500/year to those working in a local/national mission field and \$3000/year to those working in the global mission field.

For those serving as Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Missionaries our current guide is \$3000/year to local and or national efforts, and \$4500/year to global missionaries.

* We are open to supporting non LC-MS missionaries that work with sending organizations that are grounded in Scripture, and share our common faith as professed in the Apostle's Creed. These will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Scholarship Policy

Christian education is an important value to our Faith Family. It is our desire to encourage and support those families wishing to pursue a Christian education at all levels. For those members of Christ Lutheran Church seeking a Christian education, we offer financial support in the following ways:

Christ Lutheran School & Christ Lutheran Early Education Center

As a Faith Family we strive to make Christian education at Christ Lutheran School & Early Education Center available to all members, neighbors and our entire community. Therefore, we offer need based scholarships.

The Principal of Christ Lutheran School receives and reviews requests for scholarships to support those who otherwise would be unable to attend. See Appendix C for the specific process followed. The Principal then makes a request for the total amount needed (for all scholarships for the year) of the Benevolence Team prior to commitment to those families. The Benevolence Team will review the requests and respond with the level of financial support that can be provided from the Benevolence budget. The total amount will be distributed evenly between financial quarters.

Secondary Education

Kansas City Lutheran High School

The members of Christ Lutheran Church in Overland Park, Kansas, are supportive of Christian education at the secondary level, and we will continue to send financial support to Kansas City Lutheran High School through a line item in our budget. The congregation has not voted to be a member of the Kansas City Lutheran Association (KCLA). (Policy adopted August 26, 2005). A KCLA church member receives a discount from the full cost of tuition at two levels, A and B.

While we are not a KCLA member but still the educational goals of the school we have established the following policy. If an active member or a member of their immediate family wishes to attend Kansas City Lutheran High School, we will offset up to 50% of the difference between full tuition and the tuition charged to Level A members of the KCLA congregations.

Any scholarship request must be made in writing to the congregation, addressed to the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement**, who will forward it to the Benevolence Team at the next quarterly meeting. A complete application process is attached and labeled as Appendix A – Benevolence Request Application Guide.

Christian Colleges/Seminaries

It is our desire as a congregation to encourage and support those members wishing to pursue Christian education at the collegiate level. Therefore, each year we will make a gift directly to the institution on behalf of the individual pursuing such an education, to be applied toward the individual's tuition.

Any scholarship request must be made in writing to the congregation, addressed to the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement**, who will forward it to the Benevolence Team at the next quarterly meeting. A complete application process is attached and labeled as Appendix A – Benevolence Request Application Guide.

Financial support for Synodical Universities/Seminaries will be \$1,500 per school year for 2019/2020.

Financial support for Non-Synodical Christian Colleges/Seminaries will be \$1,000 per school year) for 2019/2020.*

* We are open to supporting students attending non LC-MS colleges/universities that are grounded in Scripture, and share our common faith as professed in the Apostle's Creed. These will be taken on a case by case basis.

Undesignated Mission Funds:

These funds are distributed quarterly or as requests are approved by a simple majority, yet never less than 5 affirming members of the Benevolence Team, remaining ever mindful of budgeted commitments.

At the next quarterly meeting after fulfilling all budgeted commitments, the Benevolence Team will review the reported funds available for distribution from actual giving in excess of those budgeted commitments and distribute any remaining undesignated funds as follows:

1. First, the Benevolence Team will review and address requests that may be supported by that portion of the budget identified as unobligated in a timely and responsible fashion. All requests will be subject to Benevolence Team review. All considerations will be mindful as to how they align with the assembled attributes and evaluation guidance of the Team and will only obligate or distribute funds that have been received. Consideration and consent from the Team for all distributions of financial support will be by electronic mail or in-person vote of which the simple majority but never less than 5 affirming votes will prevail. In the event of a tie, the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** will be the determining voice. These types of requests may be for, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Missionary Grant Requests/Missionary Support
 - b. Scholarships (in particular if they go beyond the budgeted amount)
 - c. LERT support towards emergency relief and natural disasters (see note below)
 - d. Internally led outreach efforts (REACH, Alpha, etc.), not to exceed the % of Benevolence Funds that will remain "within our walls" as defined on p. 1 of this manual.
2. Second, once requests have been considered, any remaining portion of undesignated funds will be distributed as one time gifts divided up between our current Benevolence partners. All distributions of gifts should be in whole dollar amounts for ease of accounting leaving remaining funds in an unobligated balance.
 - a. Special requests or special needs from our Benevolence Partners will come primarily from these extra one-time gifts.

Emergency relief and natural disasters –The news of natural disasters and the need for emergency relief or our awareness of such events appears to be on the rise presenting a particular and new challenge for our Benevolence. While we should be diligent and remain

faithful in our prayerful support of all mankind, the Benevolence Team recommends that our primary support of these efforts is through the support of our LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) ministry, which is deployed to such situations.

Global or national catastrophes must be addressed as they arise but should not impact the budgeted commitments already in place, and if Benevolence Funds are not available the EMT will consider other funding sources.

The distribution of all Benevolence funds will be reported annually in the Christ Lutheran Church Annual Report.

The following information regarding Financial Aid to Individuals and Families is provided here as information only for the Benevolence Team as the financial and personal support provided is managed and administered by the Christ Lutheran Church Care Ministry Team.

Financial Aid to Individuals and Families

In 1987, our congregation established the Good Samaritan fund. The purpose of the fund is to provide financial aid to individuals and families who are facing severe stress due to the loss of shelter, transportation, health, or inadequate food supplies. This emergency support is to be used to assist a person in becoming self-sufficient, with as little red tape as possible. ***We believe that while everyone cannot be fully helped, everyone can feel cared for.***

Strategy:

For Faith Family members:

Identify and assess needs:

- a. What's the problem?
- b. How did the problem develop?
- c. What has the person tried to do to remedy the problem?
- d. What is the person's goal?

Examine options for solving the problem

Develop a plan of action to address immediate needs

Offer appropriate assistance.

For Non-members:

No cash grants for any reason.

Requests should be referred to an appropriate agency (i.e., MLM, Johnson County Emergency Assistance, the closest Lutheran church, etc.)

Catholic Social Services:

Olathe (southern zip codes) (913) 782-4077

Northern Johnson County (913) 384-6608

Wyandotte County (913) 621-1504

Johnson County Multi-Service Center (913) 715-6650

Hotline for the Homeless (816) 474-5499

United Way 211

Salvation Army (816) 756-1455

Johnson County Mental Health 24 Hour Hotline (913) 268-0156

Administration:

Cases will be evaluated by **Director of Pastoral Care and Family Life** and the **Director of Care Ministry**. Both persons must sign any checks.

Funding:

The Good Samaritan Fund is made possible by ongoing private donations.

Sharing the Word

The Bible is the “inspired” Word of God who redeems, calls and gathers people into His family. In His Word, God confronts human beings personally. From creation to life eternal, God is the Lord of Life.

Believing that we are “together in Christ, that others may know Christ” it is important that this avenue by which one can be called into the family is available to all.

Therefore, we have determined that no one should be deprived of their own Bible. We annually present each third grade child a copy of their own Bible.

And we make Bibles available through our church office to anyone who wants a Bible. We also make Bibles available to those who give them away from their homes and offices.

Appendix A: Benevolence Request Application Guide

Individuals seeking support will fill out an application. Viable requests will be brought forward by the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** to the Team at the next quarterly meeting. If not, the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** will notify the individual immediately that the request does not align with current Benevolence support practices.

Name: _____

Address: _____

(mailing address)

(city)

(state and zip)

I am an active member at CLC

I have an immediate family member that is an active member at CLC

I am a staff member of CLS/CLC

I am a volunteer leader of a ministry at CLC/CLS

This request is for the following purpose:

Going on a short term mission trip (less than a year)

Being a long-term local missionary (more than a year) ***

Being a long-term global missionary (more than a year) ***

Financial assistance to attend an event/program at church that requires a fee

Financial assistance to attend CLS/CLEEC (there is a separate process for this request)

Financial assistance to attend The Lutheran High School of Kansas City

Financial assistance to attend a Synodical College or Seminary of the LC-MS*

Financial assistance to attend a Christian College (non LC-MS)**

Financial support of an outreach effort by a ministry of CLC/CLS

Please tell us more about your request:

* If your college/university has a matching funds form, please submit that along with this application. If not, please share the name and address of the institution so that a check can be sent.

**In addition to the above bullet point, if attending a non LC-MS college/university please submit a statement of faith from the institution, which describes their basic beliefs.

*** If working as a missionary in a non-LCMS setting please submit a statement of faith from the sending organization.

Appendix B: Benevolence Partner Application Guide

Organizations seeking either one-time support or to become an ongoing Benevolence Partner will fill out an application. This application will be based on the attributes that the Benevolence Team has deemed fitting and in alignment with our core mission and values. If it appears that the request fits the attributes on the application form, and is a viable request, the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** will bring it forward to the Team at the next quarterly meeting. If not, the **Director of Outreach & Member Engagement** will notify the organization immediately that the request does not align with current Benevolence support practices.

Name of Organization: _____

Address: _____
(mailing address) (city) (state and zip)

Website of organization: _____

Submitted by:

A representative of the organization

A CLC/CLS staff member who would like us to consider adding this organization as a partner

A CLS member who recommends we add this organization as a partner

A Benevolence team member who recommends we add this organization as a partner.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Is this organization a Christian organization? And if so, do they have any denominational affiliation?

2. Please tell us about the impact of the organization (who is it reaching, impacting, and to what extent?)

3. Please tell us about the volunteer opportunities that exist within the organization.

4. What % of funding goes to administrative costs?

In addition to this application please submit whatever marketing materials are going to be the most effective in helping our Benevolence Team to see the impact of this organization's work. Please also submit a statement of faith for the organization.

Appendix C: CLS Financial Aid Process

Financial Aid Process as followed by the principal of CLS

1. If a family is interested in Financial Aid they must complete an ISM FAST application.
2. This application uses W-2 information and other reported cost & living expense calculators to determine to what extent a family may be eligible for aid. Some info is highly verifiable; other information are statements given voluntarily that are difficult for the Principal to verify.
3. The school family proposes and amount they believe they can afford to pay on an annual basis in their application.
4. The system processes their application and creates a suggested aid total, based on the information that was provided. This is the proprietary process of the company so the specifics of how that works on the inside are unknown.
5. The Principal compares the reported amount of scholarship with the amount reported as affordable by the family.
6. After comparing the two numbers and the contextual factors that get reported in the application, an amount is issued to the family.
7. They either accept or reject the amount that has been offered.

This process is re-examined in a year over year basis to re-affirm eligibility for aid as well, especially as conditions change regarding people's work.