

Visioning Committee Meeting Minutes

Members present: Pastor Craig, Rich Floyd, Jay Tomlinson, Linda Hane, Gail Haney, Don Ingerson

Pastor Craig opened the meeting with an opening prayer.

OLD BUSINESS

Weekly Dinners Initiative

Discussion centered around the complexity of the initiative: limiting the initial number of meals to 75, offering meals initially to only our church members and their guests, keeping the meals simple, whether to provide a basket for donations to help fund the initiative, and how this initiative should be promoted.

Concerns included the ability of our church facility to handle up to 125 to 150 diners during the allotted time frame, the complexity of the menus, the crew or team required to prepare, serve and clean-up the weekly meals. More research and consideration regarding this initiative needs to be done before we can move forward with this initiative.

NEW BUSINESS

Control of the Benevolence Fund

Don Ingerson brought a concern to the committee regarding what constitutes a benevolence gift, how benevolence gifts are decided on, who makes those decisions, when and how are they paid, and who controls the fund. Don felt that the Benevolence Fund should be used to spread the love of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to those in need. Don indicated he did not want to control the Benevolence Fund. He did not want people to come up to him and ask if a specific gift was OK to come from the Benevolence Fund. What he envisioned was forming a committee to control the Benevolence Fund.

Jay presented a draft of a plan that would resolve the questions regarding the Benevolence Fund and set up a Committee to control the Benevolence Fund. The plan included suggestions that identified the types of benevolence gifts, who actually decides to give, how much each gift should be, what frequency gifts are given, how our church promotes the Benevolence Fund, how and who is to receive notice of a benevolence gift need, and how benevolence gift should be recorded. The Visioning Committee reviewed the draft and finalized most of the questions. The committee also decided that the finance committee decisions for benevolence line items included in the annual church budget, such as Northwoods Partners or Young Life, would not be paid from the Benevolence Fund. Any additions to, over and above, the line item amounts specified in the annual church budget decided by the Benevolence Committee would come from the Benevolence Fund. The finalized plan details the Benevolence Fund Directives and is included with this report.

Two issues regarding the Control of the Benevolence Fund are still outstanding. The first item is to decide who are the two individuals from our church congregation who would make up the committee that controls the Benevolence Fund. We plan to bring up suggestions at our next meeting in January and follow up with asking those we choose if they would serve on that committee. Benevolence Committee members may or may not already be on a committee. The second item that was not resolved was what specific verbiage should be drafted that would be added to our church website regarding the Benevolence Fund. That too is planned to be resolved at our next meeting in January.

Please see the Benevolence Fund Directives document attached.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Meeting Date & Time – The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

BENEVOLENCE FUND DIRECTIVES

I. Ely United Methodist Church Benevolence Fund Opportunities for the purpose of sharing the love of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. (Those in red indicate additions to the list of opportunities.)

1.

1. Institutions, Businesses and Organizations

Northwoods Partners

Young Life

Food Shelf

Free Will Offerings. *(For a specific Institution, Business or Organization)*

Umcor

a) Ukraine Response

b) US Hurricane Response

c) Latest International Disaster Response

d) Latest US Disaster Response

2. Programs, Projects and Initiatives

Soup Kitchens

Outreach Initiatives

Refugee Migration Response

Community needs

Free Will Offerings *(For a specific Program, Project or Initiative)*

Weekly Dinners

3. Individuals or groups of individuals

Bible Camp Scholarships

Children's International

Free Will Offerings *(For a specific Individual or group of individuals)*

Occasional needs of/for the congregation

People in immediate and temporary need

Fuel Gift Cards

Food Gift Cards

Outstanding extraordinary personal need (Such as an electric or repair invoice)

II. Who makes the decisions to give?

1. The Pastor. *(Food and Fuel gift cards spontaneously at his/her discretion)*

2. A committee of two members from the Congregation selected by the Connections Committee.

III. How much to give? Should there be limits to the size of the monetary gifts and what should those limits be?

1. Fixed amounts for Fuel and Food Gift Cards.

2. Individual limits depending on the need up to \$250 per benevolence gift.

3. Extraordinary needs up to \$2,000. *(Extraordinary gifts defined: medical needs, equipment needs, repairs/replacement needs, disaster needs, etc.)*

4. Leave the decision up to the committee.

IV. When is it appropriate to give and how frequently?

1. Spontaneously. (Fuel and Food Gift Cards)

2. Spontaneously after a review of the committee authorized to issue benevolence gifts.

3. Frequency to the same individual, group, project, institution?

- a. Annually to Institutions
- b. Once to Projects
- c. Up to twice annually to groups.
- d. Up to twice annually to individuals.

V. How do we let the Congregation know there is an available benevolence fund?

1. Through the weekly Parish News. *(Included in the first Parish News of the month)*
2. From the pulpit. *(On each third Sunday of the month)*
3. On the Website. *(Verbiage to be determined)*

VI. How do we receive notice of a benevolence need and how do we deal with ongoing needs?

1. Through the Pastor. *(By private individual conversations/requests)*
2. Requests directed to the Benevolence Committee. *(By individuals or through the church congregation)*
3. Through the knowledge of the Benevolence Committee. *(Community or individual awareness)*
4. Refer multiple on going needs to other organizations that address those needs. *(food shelf, police, shelters, social services, etc.)*

VII. Do we need to track Benevolence Gifts?

1. Food and Gift Cards: Yes *(To control the frequency of gifts to the same individuals and to identify when more funds are needed.)*
2. Other benevolence gifts: Yes. *(To provide accountability by the committee or whomever is issuing the gift and identify when more funds are needed.)*