

St. Matthew United Methodist Church
Neighborhood Assistance Fund

Adopted May 12, 2014
Updated March 15, 2020

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Neighborhood Assistance Fund (also known as the Pastor's Discretionary Fund) is to provide assistance to persons in need who reside in the Parish and surrounding area. The fund is to be used to provide assistance with the following necessities:

- 1) Utility bills, including water, electricity and natural gas;
- 2) Food via gift cards;

The Pastor, Associate Pastor, Treasurer, Administrative Associate or Designated Alternate (approved in advance by the Finance Committee) may approve the use of the Neighborhood Assistance Fund for other specific documented purposes that are consistent with the program and budget of the church to care for the needy.

Assistance may be provided to persons who are in need as follows:

- 1) Members or Constituents of St. Matthew United Methodist Church,
- 2) Persons who reside in the following zip codes:
73110, 73130, 73115, 73135, 73141, 73145, 73150, 73020, 73045, 73084.

From time to time, special donations may be made to the Neighborhood Assistance Fund to assist members and/or their families with a emergency situation. In these cases, the funds donated will be paid to the designated party to assist as designated by the donor(s).¹

The Neighborhood Assistance Fund may not be used by the Pastor, Associate Pastor or Designated Alternate for themselves or their immediate family members.

The maximum single payment from the Neighborhood Assistance Fund shall be no more than \$500 at any one time without advance written permission from the Finance Committee or the Church Council.

II. DOCUMENTATION

Documentation to support each payment and record distribution from the fund is required.

¹ Added 8 September 2014.

UTILITY PAYMENTS:

- 1) Persons seeking assistance with Utility Payments must provide a Photo ID and a current utility bill with a service address in the areas served by the Neighborhood Assistance Fund. The person seeking assistance must be named on the bill or provide proof that they reside in the household.
- 2) The Administrative Assistant or Designated Alternate will review the bill to ensure eligibility for assistance and forward to the Treasurer for payment approval.
- 3) The Treasurer will review and approve payment of the bill directly to the Utility Company by the Accounting Assistant.
- 4) The Accounting Assistant will issue the approved payment directly to the utility company via online bill payment. A copy of the payment confirmation, Utility Bill, and Photo ID will be retained for records.

FOOD GIFT CARDS

- 1) The Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Designated Alternate may request Food Gift Cards using the Request Voucher Form (attached) from the Treasurer. The request will include the merchant (i.e., Crest), the type of card, the amount of the individual gift card, the number of gift cards requested, and the total amount to be expended, not to exceed \$500 without prior approval of the Finance Committee or Church Council.
- 2) The Accounting Assistant will issue payment directly to the merchant and retain a copy of the check and the Request Voucher Form. The check will be given to the person requesting it to purchase the Gift Cards.
- 3) Persons seeking assistance with Food must provide a Photo ID with a service address in the areas served by the Neighborhood Assistance Fund. The person seeking assistance may provide additional documentation to provide evidence of residency in the area served.
- 4) The Pastor, Associate Pastor, Administrative Assistant, Designated Alternate, or Fund Administrator will provide the Gift Card to the person requesting assistance.
- 6) A copy of the Gift Card and Photo ID/Driver's License will be retained for records, which is to be signed and dated by the person receiving the gift card.

ALL FUND DISTRIBUTIONS

A register of all Neighborhood Assistance Fund distributions will be maintained by the Accounting Assistant or other designated person approved by the Finance Committee via accounting software, to include the name of the person assisted, the name of the utility, and the service address.

A detailed report of all distributions of the Neighborhood Assistance Fund will be provided to the Financial Secretary and Finance Committee on a monthly basis via the Check Register report.

The Neighborhood Assistance Fund will be audited annually along as part of the annual church audit.

III. PAYMENT POLICY

For Members and Constituents of St. Matthew United Methodist Church, assistance will be granted on an as needed basis as confirmed by the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Administrative Assistant or Designated Alternate. The maximum payment in **30 days** will be:

- 1) \$100 for one utility, **OR**
- 2) \$100 for food.

For persons living in the area served by the Neighborhood Assistance Fund, the maximum payment in **90 days** will be:

- 1) \$50 for one utility, **OR**
- 2) \$25 for food.

Utility payments will not include any fees or surcharges for late payment, and all payments will be made directly to the utility service.

Payments from the Neighborhood Assistance Fund will be suspended if the balance of the fund drops below \$500. Payments may resume when the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Designated Alternate or Finance Committee determines that the balance is reasonable to do so.

LIMITATION: Persons may receive assistance payments from the Neighborhood Assistance Fund for up to **two years**, or a total of **\$400**. This limitation does not apply to members or constituents of St. Matthew United Methodist Church. The Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Administrative Assistant may request that the limitation be suspended on an individual basis from the Finance Committee, who will provide written approval for any additional payments.

IV. DONATIONS

The Neighborhood Assistance Fund is funded through special offerings and grants. All identifiable donations will be recorded to the donors giving record.

All donations made to the Neighborhood Assistance Fund are to be counted and deposited each week with the Sunday morning offering by the Counters or others designated and approved by the Finance Committee.

V. APPROVED PARTIES

Approved Parties to the Neighborhood Assistance Policy will be updated and approved by the Finance Committee upon the appointment of a different Pastor or Associate Pastor. The funds will be maintained in the church checking account, in a separate accounting fund, and signators to that account are those approved for this fund.

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Ron Perceful
Associate Pastor	Rev. Wendelyn Perceful
Administrative Assistant	Tomi Jo Dyer
Treasurer	Steve Martin
Fund Administrator	

**St. Matthew United Methodist
Neighborhood Assistance Fund
Request Voucher Form**

Merchant: _____

Type of Card: Food 04-1251-000

Individual Card Amount: \$ _____

Number of Cards Requested: _____

Total Amount Requested: \$ _____

Requested by: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

*Per the Neighborhood Assistance Fund Policy, The maximum single payment from the Neighborhood Assistance Fund shall be no more than **\$500** at any one time without advance written permission from the Finance Committee or the Church Council.*