**Elk Point Baptist Church**

**Elder's Council**

**Benevolence Fund Policy Guidelines**

**I - General**

The membership of Elk Point Baptist Church have designated certain funds to the aid of those in crisis whether locally or internationally. One area that this is designated is within the Annual Budget under the purview of the Grace Contingency Fund under 'Mercy Ministries' and "Disaster Relief'. Therefore the current administrators of these funds includes the Deacon's Board and the Elder's Council. The variety of those that administer the funds, the difficulty of the situations that often come to our attention; and the need to use these funds with integrity and Biblical veracity require some policy guidelines. Many of the ideas in this document were derived from the Canadian Council of Christian Charities.

**II - Purpose**

1. People in need matter to God.

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.

* Galatians 6:2 (NASB95)
2 Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.
* Galatians 6:10 (NASB95)
10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
* 1 John 3:17 (NASB95)
17 But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (see also Matthew 25:31-46).

**III - Administration**

Therefore, as an integral part of the ministry of our church, certain aspects of the Annual Budget and the Grace Contingency Fund provide financial assistance to individuals or families who are experiencing financial or material needs. Ideally both of these 'accounts' should be administered by the Deacons under the guidance of the Elders. In any case where there is uncertainty by the Deacons in these matters, they should refer the request to the Elder's Council. In this document the term "benevolence funds" include both the Local Missions and the Grace Contingency Fund, for simplicity.

A request for benevolent funds will normally involve the completion of a written request in the form of the Application for Assistance (Addendum "A") and will normally be received by the church Administrator and forwarded to the Deacon's Board. There are four primary levels of support in the benevolence ministry as detailed in sections A through D below.  In the case where the church feels that a gift would be beneficial, but is unsolicited, refer to Section E below.

1. Levels of support

There are four primary levels of approved benevolence ministry:

A) Basic (up to $150 per situation)

Any Deacon may approve this level of assistance in each single situation. The Senior

Pastor or the Associate Pastor may also approve this level of assistance, but must inform

the Deacon Board in writing. Repeat support at this level places the assistance at the

Intermediate level.

B) Intermediate ($150 to $1,000)

This level of assistance, per situation, requires a consensus of the Deacon’s Board. This may be decided informally through a verifiable medium (text message or email) then ratified at the next scheduled meeting. Repeat support at this level places the assistance at the Advanced level.

C) Advanced ($1,000 to $5,000)

This level of assistance, per situation, requires the approval of both the Deacons Board and Elder’s Council. Ideally this will be done at a duly called meeting of each board, but if time is of the essence, it may be decided informally through a verifiable medium (text message or email) then ratified at the next scheduled meeting. This level of assistance requires a consensus to be reached at both board levels, subject to meeting all other specified criteria. Note: Deacons, Elders, and those consulted must disclose conflicts of interest (e.g., where proposed assistance involves a family member) and excuse themselves from the related discussion and decision.

D) Exceptional ($5,000 to $10,000)

This level of assistance, per situation, requires the approval of the Deacons Board, Elder’s Council, and a vote of the membership. This level of assistance will only be approved upon a congregational vote of 50% +1 at a duly called membership meeting.

E) Unsolicited Gifts for Crisis or Emergency (up to $5000 maximum)

This is for situations where one or more members of the church puts forth a recommendation to the Elders Council or Deacons Board that a person or family should receive financial assistance. That person may be a member of the church that has recently sustained a financial loss or is in a crisis of some sort.

This category should also be used where there is a suggestion put forward that a non-profit organization or ministry should be supported in a manner outside of standard budgeted items. (ex. disaster relief, missionary gift, etc.)

The process of approval should involve the following steps (and in this order):

1. Discussion at the Deacon’s Board level.
	* To determine if there are funds available and if this is an appropriate method of supporting this individual, family, or organization.
	* The affected party will not yet be consulted at this time. This will come in step 3 once the approval for support has been established at both the Deacon’s Board and Elder’s Council levels.
2. Subsequent approval at the Elder’s Council Level.
	* There may be spiritual issues that are also involved. The Elders may desire a conversation with the intended recipient or may have other relevant knowledge which will affect the decision. This approval would then be subject to determination of actual need.
3. Return to the Deacon’s Board for implementation.
	* If approved by the Deacons and Elders, the deacons will then assess the actual financial need. This will involve a direct conversation with the intended recipient of the gift to determine if their situation has resulted in a short- or long-term cash requirement and what the nature of that deficit is. Determining need is necessary to ensure that the funds are being utilized in the best manner possible.
	* The requirement for “actual financial need” to be established may be over-ruled by a consensus of the Deacons and the Elders Board if the gift is deemed to be primarily a sign of compassion/sympathy from the church, particularly in the case of funeral expenses or other unexpected items. This situation would result in a COMPASSIONATE GIFT with a maximum limit of $1500.

2. Funding

The Pastors, Elders, and/or Deacons will only provide assistance as resources are available. Pastors, Elders, and Deacons must be kept aware of the financial reports and seek an update if necessary.

3. Guidelines

First and foremost, access to Government assistance must be sought. Private charity between individuals will also be encouraged; and the Church may facilitate individuals carrying out private benevolence. The following guidelines should assist in determining need and eligibility for assistance, should government or private charity not be realized.

A) Determining need

i) The need of an individual or family may come to a Pastor, Elder, or Deacon’s attention during the course of ministry, or by referral from a third party.

ii) A dependent individual’s need must be assessed in consultation 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.

iii) Other sources of community assistance, including support from other area churches, may need to be verified. An 'Authorization to Release Information' (Addendum B) is required to be completed.

iv) Support will not be restricted to Church members or adherents.

iv) Needs that will be considered for benevolent assistance include the following:

a. An accident, illness or death that results in financial needs.

b. An unavoidable unemployment situation.

c. Families that encounter legitimate financial difficulties such as:

1. Medical treatments and related expenses prescribed by a recognized Canadian medical professional not covered by a public or private insurance/medical plan.

2. Marital breakup or family crisis that requires temporary emergency support.

4. Holistic Philosophy

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 Pastors and/or Elders. Those seeking assistance ought to be made aware that this is our philosophy of ministry. The most important need of any individual is to enjoy a personal, saving and vital relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Consideration will always be given to individuals seeking assistance, to provide for them the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel.

5. Duration of Charity

A) The church will provide assistance for a specific need that is not expected to involve a long-term commitment.

B) 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).

6. Cheque Requisitions

Payments will only be processed upon written authorization from a Deacon (or, in the case of

Basic assistance, the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor) by means of the Elk Point Baptist Church Cheque Requisition Form. Whenever reasonably possible, benevolent assistance should be paid directly to a supplier/service provider, or the assistance should be in the form of physical goods or vouchers.

Addendum A.

**Elk Point Baptist Church**

**Application for Financial or Material Assistance**

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Name:

Address:

Phone Numbers: Home:       Cellular:       Email Address:

Number of Dependents: Choose an item.

Age group of applicant: [ ]  Youth [ ]  Adult [ ]  Senior

Age group of dependents (put number of dependents in each group)

       (child 0-12)      youth       adult       senior

Amount of Request:

Reason for Request:

*I am aware that Elk Point Baptist Church is a Christian organization that will seek to help me spiritually as well as materially.* *We believe that it is your most important need is to enjoy a personal, saving and vital relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. You should be aware that you will be given the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel.*

*I am aware that this assistance is limited and that is intended only to be accessed once due to my current emergency. If further assistance is required I will voluntarily agree to personal or family counseling, as recommended by the Pastors and/or Elders of the Church, with the view to gaining long-term stability.*

Check here if you have read and understand the statement above: [ ]  Click here to enter a date.

Approved by:



5705 49 Street, Elk Point, Alberta T0A 1AO

780 724-4194

**Addendum B.

**Elk Point Baptist Church**

**Authorization to Release Information**

(*Please print clearly*)

The authorization is being requested to verify information based on your **Application for Financial or Material Assistance** to Elk Point Baptist Church.

Failing to grant consent to discuss your situation with other sources of community assistance, including support from other area churches will result in not being able to consider your request.

I,      (Your name) authorize Elk Point Baptist Church to request and/or release information to any government, community or church organization, to verify my request for financial or material assistance and to seek out possible alternatives for help based on my request.

I have read and understand this authorization. Check Here [ ]

Click here to enter a date.

Instructions: Please save this form using a different name in Microsoft Word document or an Adobe PDF; and mailto:mainoffice@elkpointbaptistchurch.com



5705 49 Street, Elk Point, Alberta T0A 1AO

780 724-4194