



*Mission*  
*We are a vibrant spiritual community awakening each life to the Christ within.*

*Vision*  
*Centered in Divine Love, we honor and celebrate a world awakened to peace, abundance, and respect for all creation.*

**Unity of Fairfax Board of Trustees**

**Monthly Meeting, October 25, 2022**

<b>Board Members Present</b>	<b>Others Present</b>	<b>Board Members Absent</b>
Russell Heiland, Senior Minister		
Julie Fisher, First Chair		
Ed Merritt, Second Chair		
Dave Richardson, Treasurer		
Marangely Sandvik, Keeper of the Flame		
Midd Hunt, Member at Large		
Bowman Kell, Secretary		

**Quorum present?** Yes

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm ET

**Executive Session**

An Executive Session was called to order at 7:11 pm ET and ended at 7:14 pm ET.

**Minister’s Report:** Attached as Appendix 1

**Financial Report:** <https://www.unityoffairfax.org/board-financial-statements>

**Committee Reports:**

Nominating Committee: Mara reported two candidates for the Board of Trustees have been shared with the congregation - Bowman Kell and Rev. Sherrie Quander. Russ shared they have been fully vetted and will be introduced to the community on Sunday, Oct 30th, via Zoom.

**Old business:**

January 2023 Board Retreat: the Board agreed on January 20 - 23, 2023 for its in-person leadership retreat in Williamsburg VA. Rooms for the retreat at Powhatan Resort were graciously donated by Midd Hunt; and the Board will cover their own travel and meal expenses. A facilitator is being considered.

Mildred Park Society Leadership and Benevolence funding: the Board agreed to continuing the dialogue during our November meeting; as well as our 2023 planning discussions.

**New business:**

November 6th Annual Membership Meeting: the Board discussed agenda and presentation materials. All members will review the draft deck and provide comments to Julie.

Newsletter: Ed graciously agreed to draft the newsletter highlighting what will be discussed at the Annual Meeting.

Benevolence Fund Guidelines: Rev. Russ presented suggested revisions to the guidelines to reflect that Finance and Operations Manager replaces the Community Care Coordinator, a position Unity no longer has.

November meetings: the Board agreed to cancel the November 8th mid-month meeting given the closeness to the November 15 meeting which will now be held November 14, 2022.

**Motions:**

**MOTION:** Approval of Sept 27, 2022 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
Julie moved, Ed seconded, unanimously approved.

**MOTION:** Approval of Oct 11, 2022 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
Russ moved, Dave seconded, unanimously approved.

**MOTION:** Approval of the adoption of revised Unity of Fairfax Benevolence Fund Guidelines  
Russ moved, Ed seconded, unanimously approved.

**MOTION:** Approval for \$8,700 from the Mildred Park Endowment to be transferred to the Unity of Fairfax Operating Fund.  
Dave moved, Julie seconded, unanimously approved.

**Upcoming Dates:**

Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting on Nov 14th 7-9:30 pm EDT

## **Strategic Goals**

2022-2023 Progress Log on Minister's Goals is available [here](#).

## **Discussion Items**

I invite the Board to discuss this idea from Patie Wilcox in re the Benevolence Fund: *I think the best way to replenish the BeneFund consistently without major impact is for the BOT to designate 10% of the monthly Reserve transfer (\$3527) for a \$3147/353 split. The BOT can specify this will be done from October 2022 through December 2023 and then reassess. (The Board can reassess at any time as is its purview.)*

In October, Unity of Fairfax had a request for a benevolence fund grant from a highly engaged member. The fund balance was so low the grant could not be filled as requested. I consulted with Treasurer Richardson and we agreed to a one-time transfer of \$1,000 from the operating fund to the benevolence fund in order to meet the grant request.

## **Action Items**

I move that Unity of Fairfax adopt the revised Benevolence Fund Guidelines appended below. There are only minor changes from the guidelines currently in place with the exception that the Finance and Operations Manager replaces the Community Care Coordinator, a position the Unity no longer has.

I request the Board move the November 15 meeting to another date. I am double booked with the Crucial Conversation: Political Division and Unity on that date. I propose moving the meeting to Monday, November 14, 16, 28 or 29.

## **Information Items**

YFM "I Scream Sundae" will be held immediately after church on 10/30/22.

Hybrid Board Candidates Q & A session will be held immediately after church on 10/30/22.

Eleanor Herman book signing and dialog based on her book *Off With Her Head: 3,000 Years of Demonizing Women in Power* will be held at 2pm on 10/30/22.

I will be in Indiana November 17 -21, 2022. Rev. Ron Karstetter is scheduled to be guest speaker on November 20. He has a pending matter which may require I find a different speaker.

Unity of Fairfax may be co-celebrating Christmas Eve with Celebration Center for Spiritual Living on December 24, 2022. There will be a service on Christmas Day.

Burning Bowl service will be held on December 31, 2022. There will be a service on New Year's Day.

# Unity of Fairfax Benevolence Fund Guidelines

## **Introduction and Purpose**

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The Benevolence Fund is an officially recognized and designated permanent fund, made available to congregants of Unity of Fairfax who are struggling financially due to exceptional circumstances. The purpose of the Benevolence Fund (referred to in the document as the Fund) is to meet people's basic needs on a short-term interim basis. Assistance from the Fund is intended to be a maximum of a one-time gift within a one-year period.

The receipts of this Fund consist primarily of contributions from members of Unity of Fairfax, as well as fundraising and other sources as outlined below. The expenses consist of funds disbursed to assist a congregant at the direction of the Benevolence Fund Committee. The Benevolence Fund is separate from Unity of Fairfax's general operating fund and does not have budgeted receipts or expenses.

The purpose of this document is to set forth the responsibilities of the Benevolence Fund Committee and the guidelines for operating the Fund. It is not intended to cover all circumstances under which funds may be disbursed.

## **Benevolence Fund Committee**

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The Benevolence Fund Committee shall consist of four members:

- The Senior Minister
- The Finance and Operations Director or corresponding position
- One Board member appointed by the Board of Trustees (hereafter referred to as the Board)
- One member of the Unity of Fairfax congregation whose name is submitted by the Senior Minister to the Board for approval

The Senior Minister and Finance and Operations Director will serve on the Committee as long as they hold those positions. The other two Benevolence Fund Committee members serve for a

term of two years, renewable for a second and third term and not to exceed six consecutive years.

Each member of the Committee must sign a confidentiality agreement which covers their term of service and beyond.

### *Annual Review and Report*

The Committee will have an organizational meeting in February of each year to evaluate the status of the fund, set monetary guidelines for disbursements in the coming year, prepare reports of disbursements from the previous year, review IRS guidelines to ensure compliance, and any other business as necessary.

### *Oversight and Accountability*

The Benevolence Fund Committee is accountable to the Board. The Committee will interface with the Board, when necessary, through the Board member appointed as a member of the Committee. The Board has ultimate responsibility and accountability for the Fund.

## **Source of Funding**

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The Benevolence Fund shall receive income from the following sources:

1. Through the receipt of designated giving by individuals and/or families wishing to donate to the Benevolence Fund.
2. Fundraising events held specifically for the Fund.
3. Senior Minister or designee from the Committee makes request to the Board for replenishment of funds when deemed necessary.
4. Other sources such as grants, gifts, bequests, etc.

### *Contributions to the Benevolence Fund*

The leadership of Unity of Fairfax encourages members to minister directly to other members of the congregation as they become aware of specific needs. However, gifts made directly by a member to a needy individual or family are not tax-deductible under IRS regulations.

To comply with IRS regulations concerning charitable contributions, all gifts to the Benevolence Fund must be unconditional and without personal benefit to the donor. In addition, contributions to the Fund may not be earmarked or otherwise designated for a particular purpose or recipients.

The administration of the Fund, including all disbursements, is subject to the control and discretion of the Benevolence Fund Committee as authorized by the Board. The Committee may consider recommendations for disbursement from anyone, but in no event is the Committee bound in any way to honor the recommendations.

Contributions to the Fund should be made payable to Unity of Fairfax with a designation that the contributions are to be placed in the Unity of Fairfax Benevolence Fund. Donations may also be made online through the donate button on the Unity website with a notation that the donation is designated for the Benevolence Fund.

Donors making contributions to the Benevolence Fund subject to these conditions may be able to deduct their contributions if they itemize deductions on their federal income tax return. The leadership of Unity of Fairfax recommends that donors consult their individual tax advisor or CPA concerning the appropriate tax treatment of contributions they make to the Fund.

All record keeping and disbursements will be in accordance with all relevant and current IRS regulations.

Should at any time in the future Unity of Fairfax vote to close the Benevolence Fund, the designation or redistribution of all money in the Fund at that time will be decided by the Board.

## **Guidelines for Disbursement**

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### *General Guidelines*

The Benevolence Fund is intended to be a temporary help during a time of crisis or other hardship. Assistance from the Fund is intended to be a one-time gift. In unusual circumstances, the Benevolence Fund Committee may decide to help more than one time.

Disbursements from the Fund may not be in the form of a loan. No gift may be repaid, either in part or in full, in money or labor.

While not a requirement for every situation, a member requesting assistance may be asked to receive financial counseling. If this request is made, the Benevolence Fund Committee may elect to provide financial resources to help pay for financial or other counseling.

Those requesting help must be willing to give the Committee permission to follow up on any of the information provided to the Committee. The Committee will hold all matters in confidence.

### *Recipients of Assistance*

Recipients of assistance from the Benevolence Funds shall be:

1. Congregants (members and regular attendees) of Unity of Fairfax.
2. Employees of the church. The Fund will occasionally assist staff members in need, however, these gifts must be taxed as income according to IRS guidelines in Publication 526.

IRS guidelines exempt Board members and their families from receiving benevolence from Unity of Fairfax due to their position of substantial influence on the tax-exempt organization.

Current IRS guidelines should be consulted, but at the time the guidelines were written gifts from a Church Benevolence Fund were not considered taxable to the recipient.

### *Criteria*

The stated purpose of the Benevolence Fund is to meet people's basic needs during a time of crisis or hardship. Normally, these needs are defined as, but are not limited to the following:

1. Primary lodging (mortgage or rent)
2. Utilities (electric, natural gas, water, sewer, trash)
3. Medical expenses
4. Transportation to or from a place of employment
5. Funeral expenses
6. Initial evaluation and professional counseling
7. Vehicle repair of primary vehicle
8. Groceries
9. Basic clothing

## *Constraints on Disbursements from the Benevolence Fund*

There are several limitations in place on Fund disbursements, as follows:

Maximum disbursement. The maximum disbursement from the Fund is \$2,000. Assistance to any one recipient or household cannot exceed this maximum within a 12-month period. This maximum may be additionally constrained by the fund depletion limit. The Committee will review this maximum each year. (See also “unusual circumstances.”)

One time gift. The Fund is intended to be temporary help during a time of crisis or other hardship and is intended to be a one-time gift. (See also “unusual circumstances.”)

Fund depletion limit. To prevent depletion of the Fund, disbursements to any one recipient or household cannot exceed more than half of what is currently available in the fund at the time of the request. The Committee member circulating each request will let the members know the current balance in the fund.

Unusual circumstances. In very unusual circumstances, recipients and households who need substantial funds and who have the opportunity to make a life-changing decision may continue to be assisted up to whatever limit and number of times the Committee deems appropriate. Such cases must be reviewed carefully, and additional accountability must be sought.

## **Application and Approval Process**

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Individuals or families seeking assistance from the Benevolence Fund shall complete the following steps:

1. Obtain a “Benevolence Request Application” from the church office or from the church website at: <https://www.unityoffairfax.org/benevolence-fund>. The application must be completed fully, with all supporting documentation attached. To maintain confidentiality, applications should be submitted directly to the Senior Minister or the Finance and Operations Director, who are permanent members of the Committee.
2. The applicant will meet with the Senior Minister or Finance and Operations Director to review the application. The application will then be forwarded along with any relevant comments from the interview to the members of the Benevolence Fund Committee.
3. The application will be reviewed by members of the Benevolence Fund Committee. The Committee may contact the applicant for additional information or to schedule a meeting. The Committee may also contact utility companies, landlords, etc. to verify need. The preferred means of gathering additional information is for the Senior Minister or Finance and Operations Director to have further communication with the applicant and to relay the results of that communication to the rest of the Committee.
4. Review and approval of the Application, as well as written communication of the amount and form of assistance, shall be done by the Benevolence Fund Committee at the earliest practicable date, but generally within a maximum period of two weeks or ten business days.
5. The Committee will contact the applicant with the decision and any necessary explanation. If the Committee determines that the applicant is eligible for assistance, it will make the applicant aware of the amount and how the funds will be disbursed.
6. Disbursements will be made to third party service providers and not directly to the applicant. In all cases, the Committee reserves the right to award an amount less than the amount requested.