

# Benevolence Guidelines

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*Messiah Lutheran Church Benevolence Team*

*Revised June 9, 2024; Approved by Council July 21, 2024*

In order to respect the time and energy of our Benevolence Ministry volunteers and to meet the needs of neighbors-in-need in a “help without hurting” way, the Benevolence Team of Messiah has established the following guidelines with the understanding that there are always special situations requiring special needs.

## **Ways Messiah can and does assist:**

Messiah offers neighbors-in-need one to two blessing (food) bags per day.

Messiah provides a list of local agencies available for assistance. (See Compassion Coalition Emergency Services Quick Reference card.)

Messiah refers to Cokesbury’s The Fig Tree for help establishing priorities and agency contacts.

Transportation can be provided to The Fig Tree, when needed, with at least two Benevolence Team members transporting together.

Depending on availability gas cards, KARM cards, one-day KAT passes, and food gift cards may be distributed with discernment of the Benevolence Team member receiving the request.

For any gifts given over \$100, neighbors must complete a basic intake form and provide an ID such as a driver’s license, state ID card, social security card. A copy of the card will be made and attached to the intake form.

Assistance with electric, rent, phone bill or other will be considered with referral from other agencies.

Messiah will allow the use of phone by a neighbor in need for calls to family or to make or follow up on appointments. Time is to be limited.

Any financial assistance other than before mentioned items is based on individual need, availability of funds, and discernment of at least two team members.

## **Things that Messiah’s Benevolence team discourages:**

Cash gifts of any kind or in any amount.

Messiah is not a collection point for mail. Neighbors-in-need may not use Messiah’s address for receipt of personal mail for any reason.

Messiah will not permit the storage of any items for neighbors-in-need. Any items left on the premises will be promptly disposed of.

Messiah will not loan any items. If there is need for medical equipment, persons can be referred to the Parish Nurse for loan of such equipment.

Neighbors-in-need are always welcome at events and functions but must arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to an event and depart within 15 minutes of the end of the event. Loitering is not permitted on Messiah’s premises.

Overnight stays, i.e. setting up a camp, laying out a bedroll, parking or sleeping in car or camper are not permitted. Premises are patrolled by Knoxville Police Department. First time campers will be warned by KUB. Upon second occurrence, sleeper will be taken to Knox County Jail. KPD non-emergency number is 865.215.7450.

**Local Agencies and Organizations with which Messiah's Benevolence Team partners and supports financially and with volunteer time:**

Compassion Coalition (pays annual dues and shares financial assistance when requested)

Bridge Refugee Services (2024 – Assisting a refugee family get established; Contributions of time and household items are provided)

Care Cuts (Egg preparations, individual volunteers, financial support)

The Fig Tree (Use as a referral for our neighbors; Annual contribution of \$500 established in 6/2024)

KARM (advertises the Corners of Your Field program whereby we received KARM gift cards which are in turn given to our neighbors in need)