
Warm Hearts, Helping Hands

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters,
if you say you have faith
but do not have works?
Can faith save you?
If a brother or sister is naked
and lacks daily food,
and one of you says to them,
"Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,"
and yet you do not supply their bodily needs,
what is the good of that?
So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.*
James 2:14-17 NRSV

*Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.*

John Wesley



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What is this about?

There are a number of our church families who are in financial need. Some have lost jobs or have taken jobs with less income than they once had. Some are food insecure, or face mortgage or other bills that they will have difficulty paying.

But there are also members who would be willing to help these families and are in a position to do so.

The idea of **Warm Hearts, Helping Hands** would be to use the existing Pastor's Discretionary Fund to connect the two; and to keep this ministry in the minds of church people who could help, and of those who could be helped.

How will it work?

Simple. Persons willing and able to contribute can do so, marking their contribution "**WHHH**" and placing it in the offering.

The pastor will be alert to families in need and inquire discretely about them. Families in need may also identify themselves directly to the pastor. The pastor shall hold the details of all needs in confidence.

When a need is confirmed the pastor may

- Send a payment directly to a utility, landlord, mortgage hold, or other vendor;
- Purchase or partially subsidize payment for SHARE food parcels;
- Provide gifts cards to grocery stores or other outlets as appropriate.

No payments will be made directly to individuals, or to the pastor. No checks will be written to Cash.

It is the pastor's responsibility to keep an account of money spent from the fund without disclosing confidences.

Who may benefit?

This effort is meant to assist members and constituents of Gray Memorial United Methodist Church, and occasionally those whom people in the congregation know directly. For now it is not meant for others coming to us for help.

The pastor and the pastor's family are prohibited from deriving any benefit from WHHH.

How much are we talking about?

The needs I already know about are in the hundreds of dollars, any may be recurring.

We need contributors who can

- give large amount (several hundreds at a time) *or*
- give regularly throughout the year.

Note that contributions toward **Warm Hearts, Helping Hands** *cannot* replace regular giving toward the church's own expenses. It must be second-mile giving.

How do I start?

Just start! Already we are helping church families with significant needs. If you can help financially, we could use your help immediately. If you *need* help, please do not hesitate to talk to the pastor.

There is no pledge card or other commitment device for this ministry. All contributions will be recorded and credited as they have been. Names of those receiving help will be kept only by the pastor, and will not be made public.

So — just do it!

The rules...

These are the guidelines under which **Warm Hearts, Helping Hands** shall operate:

1. The church shall solicit from its members funds to augment the amount budgeted, regularly reminding them of the need among us. Monthly giving shall be encouraged. Funds donated shall be credited to this account. Contributors will not know who the recipients will be, and cannot specify contributions for specific recipients.
2. The Treasurer shall keep the pastor apprised weekly of the balance available in the account.
3. Individuals and families in need will be encouraged to discuss their need privately with the pastor. Church members and friends will be encouraged to inform the pastor of needs among us of which he may be unaware. The pastor will discretely inquire of those thought or known to be in need. The pastor shall hold details of needs in confidence.
4. The pastor shall direct the treasurer to issue checks based on assessment of needs and the amount available; or shall use the church credit card as appropriate, notifying the treasurer immediately of such transactions. Payments shall be made to creditors or other vendors as appropriate. No payments will be made to individuals, or to the pastor. No checks shall be written to Cash.
5. As appropriate the pastor may use Warm Hearts, Helping Hands to partially or wholly subsidize the purchase of groceries from our SHARE program for our members and families. The pastor shall assume the responsibility for coordination with those who are managing our SHARE program.
6. The pastor may use Warm Hearts, Helping Hands to offer limited help to those from outside our congregation as his/her discretion. The restrictions above shall apply.
7. Under no circumstances may Warm Hearts, Helping Hands be used for the benefit of the pastor or any member of the pastor's family.
8. Our food pantry shall be stocked for persons not a part of our congregation with emergency bags of non-perishable food items purchased with money donated for the food pantry. Clients receiving these shall be urged to participate in our SHARE program. Funds remaining after the pantry is stocked shall revert to Warm Hearts, Helping Hands.
9. The pastor shall keep an accounting of all disbursements authorized from the Warm Hearts, Helping Hands, reporting monthly to the Leadership Council. The accounting to the Leadership Council shall not identify those helped.