

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church Diaconal Assistance Policy

Internal Mercy Needs

The deacons at Emmanuel seek to ensure the mercy needs of those within the congregation are met. As part of an effort to be proactive in identifying needs that exist, deacons will periodically ask Community Group leaders about whether they know of mercy needs within their groups. Based on Community Group leader input, deacons may approach individuals about ways in which the church can provide assistance if they so desire. In some cases, however, deacons may be unaware of needs. If you have a need, or know of someone else who has a need, that cannot be met by friends or a community group, please contact the diaconal ministry team at Deacons@emmanuelarlington.org.

- Examples of mercy needs include (but are not limited to): counseling/psychiatric needs, financial hardship due to unemployment, illnesses or other causes, disabilities or injuries requiring physical care, domestic violence.
- The diaconal ministry team will attempt to understand the nature of the need and how to best utilize and organize the resources of the church to assist. In addition, the session will be notified about requests in order to aid them in their responsibilities of prayer and shepherding care.

While decisions about the type and extent of assistance provided will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the unique needs of the individual and the resources available, key guiding principles will include the following:

- To not provide financial aid if personal resources are available. There needs to be financial constraints that would warrant, for example, a counseling session subsidy.
- To serve in partnership with an individual's community group or relational networks within or outside of Emmanuel to help meet needs.
- To provide a long-term plan for self-sufficiency and thus not create dependence.
- Resources will be focused upon members/attendees of Emmanuel or those outside of the church whom we are in direct ministry contact as a church.
- Financial aid will typically be in the form of checks payable to specific needs (eg. landlord, counselor) rather than cash.

External Mercy Needs

In addition to meeting the needs of those in our congregation, Emmanuel desires to show God's mercy to those outside our fellowship. One way we do this is by intentionally partnering with secular non-profits addressing physical needs in our community. Mercy Organization Liaisons are encouraged to contact the diaconal ministry team if they notice, or are notified of needs or requests, and to also inquire if there are any urgent needs or opportunities. We hope to continuously find opportunities to use our financial resources for his Kingdom work. Guiding principles by which the diaconal ministry team will distribute funds to those outside the Emmanuel community include the following:

- Financial giving will be focused towards organizations with which Emmanuel has established intentional partnerships, such that resources follow relationships.
- Priority is given to individuals/families served by our partnering organizations and with whom we have a direct relationship with (eg. ESL clients, AACH's Adopt-a-Family clients, A-SPAN's Client Companionship clients).
- Priority is given to needs or requests of organizations that are for specific needs or even a tangible item (eg. Children's program for Sullivan House, New washer/dryer for A-SPAN).
- Priority given to expenses that arise from programs/events initiated by Emmanuel (eg. Easter Celebration at Sullivan House).