

Our Mission

We are God's partially faithful, yet wonderfully gifted people. Together we are called to heal, educate and connect all our brothers and sisters to our loving and forgiving God. We believe that this call comes to us in Baptism, and is nourished through the Word, Eucharist, and *works of mercy and caring*.



Supporting Our Works of Mercy and Caring

The St. Mary's Church benevolence fund provides short term help for St. Mary's parish families who are experiencing periods of financial hardship.

Benevolence Defined

Benevolence is defined as an act of kindness or generosity. The St. Mary's Parish benevolence fund has been created to assist members of our parish facing unique situations of hardship or extraordinary circumstances as a result of extending discipleship and ministry to others in need.

St. Mary's Parish Benevolence Committees Defined

St. Mary's will have two committees to support its benevolence ministry to parish members.

1. The Benevolence Fund Raising Committee is charged with the role of collecting funds.
2. The Benevolence Review Committee is charged with reviewing and prioritizing the written applications that are submitted to St. Mary's Parish for consideration. The committee is made up of one Pastoral Council member, one Benevolence Fund Raising Committee member and one at-large member of the parish. Members are approved by the Pastor. The Pastor and parish staff do not review the requests.

Purpose

1. To nurture a spirit of compassion and caring for those facing unique circumstances in our parish.
2. To provide access to assistance while exercising impartial consideration for those parish members in need.

Fund Collection

1. Fund Raising for the benevolence fund will be conducted by the Benevolence Fund Raising Committee.
2. All funds received for benevolence purposes shall be used so.

Eligibility

1. Persons requesting funds must be registered members of St. Mary's Parish.
2. Applicants, who consider St. Mary's Church as their parish but are not registered, must complete parish membership forms before their request can be submitted for consideration.
3. Members may make a request to the parish benevolence fund once per year except in cases of extreme hardship.

Application Process

1. All requests, large or small, must be submitted in writing via the application form.
2. The application form must be returned to the parish office in a sealed envelope labeled: Attention – BENEVOLENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE or be mailed to the parish.

Confidentiality and the Approval Process

1. The Benevolence Review Committee shall take under advisement all applications that are submitted. Applications are reviewed and prioritized by the Benevolence Review Committee.
2. After review, the Benevolence Review Committee provides a general summary of all applications received, a balance of the benevolence fund, and a recommendation for approval of any/all of the requests to the Pastor each month. All personal information about the request is kept confidential.
3. The Pastor will accept or reject the Benevolence Review Committee's recommendations for disbursement of funds. If the Pastor elects to modify the recommendation, he will first consult the Finance Council. All approved applications will be given to the appropriate parish staff for payment.

Distribution

1. Any request for the basic necessities of life (food, gas money, etc.) of no more than \$100 will be directed to the Winona Volunteer Services.
2. For requests exceeding \$100, the application must be reviewed by the Benevolence Review Committee.
3. The parish bookkeeper/accountant will disperse checks that have been approved by the Benevolence Review Committee and Pastor.
4. Checks will not be issued to parish members. Checks will be made payable to the designated recipient (for example: housing, tuition) on behalf of the individual.
5. Payments will be distributed at the end of each month except in cases of urgent need to sustain the basic necessities of life.