***North Harbor Community Church***

***Benevolence Fund Policy***

**Purpose**:

North Harbor’s mission is ***to lead people toward a growing relationship with Jesus Christ***. With that thought in mind the purpose of benevolence fund is **to provide immediate temporary relief for those experiencing unforeseen financial difficulty**. Our hope is that the gift of relief funds models Christ’s generosity, relieves the stress of financial crisis, and stimulates gratitude toward Jesus and his body (the church).

**Guidelines**:

North Harbor’s primary approach to dealing with poverty locally and globally is to develop relationships with like-minded agencies. We also understand that different situations require a different approach to helping those in need. The kind of help we provide can be summed up in three basic categories: **Relief** is the urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering. **Rehabilitation** speaks of restoring people and their communities to the positive elements of their pre-crisis condition. **Development** is an approach that facilitates a process of ongoing change that moves the people involved closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others, and creation. With this understanding in mind, North Harbor’s Benevolence Fund falls under the relief category and will only be used for that purpose.

**The amount budgeted annually for benevolence will be determined by the Board of Directors** when voting on a annual budget.

**Those desiring financial relief must communicate their need to North Harbor’s leadership** (staff, Directors, ministry leader, group leader, etc.) who will then contact the Board who will determine the amount to be dispersed.

**The North Harbor benevolence fund is to be used for those who are regular attendees** at North Harbor services. Regular attendees includes those who attend worship services at least once per month, serve on a ministry team, or attend a North Harbor community group. At North Harbor we feel that the true alleviation of poverty requires relationship, therefore **North Harbor will not designate benevolence funds for cold calls made to the office or sent via email**. In such cases the leadership of North Harbor will work to connect the person in need with an appropriate local agency which can meet the recipient’s need.

At North Harbor we believe that effective financial relief is seldom, immediate, and temporary in its distribution. Therefore, **before dispersing relief funds the Board of Directors or another appropriate representative will discuss the situation that gave rise to the requested relief by the recipient**. In this discussion the Board will try to understand if the situation merits relief funds or another approach.