



OAKLAND HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH

FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN

BOARD OF DEACONS POLICY MANUAL

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THE OFFICE OF DEACON

While the Deacons of Oakland Hills Community church are nominated from the communicant membership of the congregation, and vetted and trained by the Session of Elders before being put up for election in an open, called meeting, we recognize that the standards and requirements for this call are specifically and explicitly given to us in God's Holy Word:

"Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

1 TIMOTHY 3: 8-13

We also recognize that Deacons — as all officers in the church — are a gift from God, and are specifically given by Him to attend to the physical, material, and spiritual needs of the saints:

"Therefore it says, 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.' (In saying, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."

EPHESIANS 4: 9-14

With this in mind, while we understand these men to be accountable to the Lord, the Elders, and the church (local and at-large), we also understand they are to be accorded a high level of respect and deference from the congregation for the work they do, the responsibility they own, and the thoughtful decisions they make.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Oakland Hills Community Church (hereafter: OHCC) Deacon's Policy guide was drafted in late 2017, and approved by the OHCC session in 2018, as a means to codify (to the extent possible) the work, the deliberative process, and the decisions of the OHCC Board of Deacons in their service to the saints and The Lord.

While the guide is intended to document and source the Board of Deacons' guidelines and policies for their work, as well as some specifics regarding decisions in situations that may recur in the church, it is neither exhaustive nor closed; the Deacons, and the church as a whole, recognizing that in our fallen world we cannot perfectly predict the spiritual and material needs of God's people.

The guide is written with three primary purposes in mind:

1. To glorify God through provision/mercy for His saints, and the wise use of His gifts

"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.'"
ACTS 6: 1-4

2. To ensure the equitable and consistent treatment of His saints

"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' while you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there,' or, 'Sit down at my feet,' have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"
JAMES 2: 1-4

"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith."
ACTS 6: 1-7

3. To provide guidelines for future church officers, who will likely face many of the same, or similar situations

“What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, ‘See, this is new’? It has been already in the ages before us.”

ECCLESIASTES 1: 9, 10

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

ROMANS 15: 4

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

This guide is primarily intended as a resource for Deacons and Elders of Oakland Hills Community Church.

However, as we are all called to mercy ministry (James 2: 12-17) the guide may prove useful to others as they come alongside the Deacons in personal mercy ministry. It may also help the lay people to better comprehend the application of diaconal ministry within OHCC.

“Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the Law that gives freedom. For judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you tells him, ‘Go in peace; stay warm and well fed,’ but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that? So too, faith by itself, if it is not complemented by action, is dead.”
James 2: 12-17

In using this guide as an aid to personal mercy ministry, we suggest following an instructional hierarchy proceeding from the general, to the specific: first attend to the principles outlined, then to the policies, and only then to any specific practice of OHCC. We suggest this hierarchy for three reasons:

1. Though we strive to define the biblical rationale for decisions, the guide itself is not intended to be biblically definitive, but principally, biblically grounded.
2. The policies laid out in the guide are derived from thoughtful and prayerful consideration of the practices within Christ’s church on the whole, observing the principle of “the wisdom of many, vs. only one.” The individual saint may or may not have the benefit of this kind of collaborative decision-making.
3. Specific decisions in diaconal ministry are based on specific circumstances surrounding specific people; basing your own mercy ministry decisions on those specifics could lead to a practice that is narrow in mercy, rather than broad.

When in doubt, and even as a matter of practice, we encourage the saints to speak and seek the counsel of one or more of the Deacons about matters of mercy ministry within the church.

DIACONAL STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In accordance with OPC polity, and the OHCC Constitution, the hierarchy of sources used to direct the activities and decisions of the OHCC Board of Deacons is

1. The Holy Scripture
2. Secondary Standards
 - a. The Westminster Confession of Faith
 - b. The Westminster Catechisms
3. Tertiary Standards
 - a. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Book of Church Order
 - i. Form of Government
 - ii. Directory for Public Worship
 - b. OHCC Constitution
 - c. OHCC Diaconal Policies and Standards
 - d. Like-faith-and-practice church standards and policies

The Holy Scripture

1. We are all commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22: 37-40). Jesus constantly challenges our self-righteous and self-serving views of love for God and the poor (Luke 18: 22 – the rich young ruler), and defines our neighbor as any person we see who has need (Luke 10: 25-37).
2. The Deacons are set apart by God as a distinct set of officers in the church (Acts 6: 1-6) called to works of mercy, so the care of needy in the church (especially poor widows and orphans) will not be neglected; further to ensure that help for God’s saints will be administered equitably and without partiality - not favoring one group, family, or person above another (James 2: 1).
3. The Deacons are called upon to dispense diaconal funds generously (Psalm 37: 21; Prov. 14: 21,31; Luke 6: 30; 2 Cor. 9: 6-15), with cautious optimism in the grace and mercy of God, encouraging the rich of the congregation to continue giving generously (1 Tim. 6: 17-19) so that the light of the Gospel may shine brightly in the darkness of our community. (2 Cor. 8: 1, 2, 9, 20; Eph. 5:1,2)
4. Wisdom and discernment must always be practiced (Acts 6: 3), carefully apprehending and conveying the light of the Gospel along with each gift of mercy provided (Eph. 5: 3-21).
5. All sins—including greed, covetousness, and swindling are equally heinous in God’s eyes (Eph. 5: 3,5; 1 Cor. 5: 9-12; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11). Ananias and Sapphira were slain by God for their sin of prideful greed:

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your

own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”

Acts 5: 1-11

Therefore, Deacons must strive to be blameless (1 Tim. 3: 8-13), and Elders must remain ‘above reproach’ (1 Tim 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 6-9).

6. Although sparse, sufficient guidelines and examples are provided in Scripture to prevent situations of financial abuse. For example, we are instructed to be careful in providing ongoing financial support to widows (and by inference, others).
 - a. Younger widows should not be ‘on the list’. (1 Tim. 5:3-16)
 - b. We are warned not to give financial aid to some who are observed to be self-indulgent, idlers, busy-bodies, and gossips, thus enabling them to continue in poverty or unemployment (Eph. 4: 28; 2 Thessalonians 3: 10).
 - c. Those in need are encouraged to seek help from family members so that the church will not be unnecessarily burdened, likewise believing family members are admonished to care for their own family.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1

Tim. 5: 8

Confessional Standards

1. Westminster Confession of Faith: Ch. XXVI.1, XXVI.2, VVXI.3; Chapter XXX.1
2. Westminster Larger Catechism: Q. 122, Q. 131, Q. 135, Q. 136, Q. 141, Q. 142
3. Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q.1

OPC Book of Church Order (Form of Government & Directory for Public Worship)

1. F.O.G.: XI.1, XI.3, XI.4, XI.5, XI.7, XXV.6
2. D.P.W.: II.B.4.c, II.B.4.d

OHCC Constitution

Articles V.1, V.2, V.3.a.v, V.4, V.5.b

OHCC Policies and Standards

See “*Diaconal Policies,*” pages 9 – 13

OHCC DIACONAL POLICIES

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

GENERAL

1. As a plurality, the Board of Deacons will strive to take action only following the deliberation and consent of the majority of its members, within the following constraints:
 - a. No individual Deacon has the autonomy to act, authorize or speak on behalf of the entire Board
 - b. A minimum of two Deacons (or one Deacon and one Elder) are required to be present in meetings requesting diaconal assistance, both for protection of individual officers and to facilitate compliance with point 1.a

DIACONAL FUND

1. Control of the Fund
 - a. In conformity to OHCC's governing documents, and as authorized by the OHCC Session, the Board of Deacons has oversight and control of the Deacon's Fund, and any disbursement of monies from the fund will be according to the Board's judgement.
 - b. While the Board of Deacons may consider suggestions and petitions for diaconal support from others from any person within the church, they are in no way bound to act on those suggestions or petitions.
 - c. The Board will report to the Session, on at least a quarterly basis, expenditures from the Deacon's Fund as well as details of the related cases.
2. Acceptable Contributions
 - a. The fund will be comprised only of offerings and gifts made during the Deacon's offering, or otherwise designated to the Deacon's Fund by the giver.
 - i. However, funds cannot be further designated to a specific Diaconal need, except with the approval of the Session and the Board of Deacons. Any such funds received will be returned to the giver.
 - b. In any case where significant funds (over and above what is present in the Deacon's Fund) need to be raised to support a need, a special offering can be called with the approval of the Session.
 - c. Should the Deacon's Fund be closed, all monies in the fund will be reallocated to the OHCC General Fund, or disbursed according to the Oakland Hills Community Church Corporation By-Laws.
3. Acceptable Disbursements and Expenditures
 - a. With the exception of the individual Deacon allowance specified in PROTOCOLS FOR DISBURSING AID: 4.a, disbursements from the fund

will be made only upon deliberation, and majority approval of the Board of Deacons, following the other relevant protocols for disbursement outlined under “Operational Policies” below.

- b. In determining the need for assistance, the Deacons will
 - i. Prioritize first the members of OHCC, then professing Christians who are members of Bible-believing churches, facing exceptional circumstances that threaten their ability to meet basic needs, including: food, shelter, heat, clothing, health care, transportation, the ability to maintain employment, and education).
 - ii. Similar assistance for non-professing people, or those who belong to churches not of like faith and practice to OHCC, will be considered carefully as outlined in the protocols for disbursement in Section 4.
- c. The cost of Deacon’s training materials and seminars are to be covered by the Deacon’s Fund up to 1% of annual receipts based on a Board of up to three Deacons. This percentage will be adjusted upward as the number of Deacons increases. More significant travel, lodging, or seminar enrollment expenses will be taken up and approved or declined by the Board, prior to disbursement, and always in the year in which they will be incurred.

COMMUNICATION

1. The Board of Deacons will practice regular and ongoing communication, via generally accepted and current means available (in-person, phone, email, and text messaging) to keep one another up-to-date on all circumstances and events related to cases (live or pending), as to facilitate the record-keeping of all details pertaining to those cases of people under the Deacons’ care.
 - a. It is expected that all Deacons will share details or changes in cases as they become available
 - i. Updates of developments in cases, or new cases, should be communicated in real time, as they happen rather than only at monthly meetings, with the intent that, as a Board of Deacons, we can initiate discussion to influence a situation while it’s happening rather than report only on the outcome.¹
 - b. While text messaging can be used for general communications, calling meetings, etc., it should not be used for discussing particulars of cases, deliberation on cases, or decisions. Such sensitive discussions should be kept to face-to-face meetings, conference calls, or emails, so that the appropriate records can be kept for reference.
 - c. The Board of Deacons will strive to come to agreement before escalating on. Likewise, should an individual Deacon include an Elder (Teaching or Ruling) in a diaconal topic or email, a follow-up to include all members of Session should be made; the rationale being that by including an

¹ Policy 1.a.i) adopted at OHCC Deacon’s Board meeting May 5, 2019

individual Session member, it has become a topic for Sessional discussion and input.

2. Vacations, work travel, and other absences.
 - a. In order to mitigate gaps in communication, it is the responsibility of the traveling/absent Deacon to make arrangements for another member of the Board of Deacons to cover his responsibilities, and as a courtesy, to ensure the other Deacons and Elders are aware of the arrangements.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

GUIDELINES FOR DISBURSING AID

1. These guidelines should be followed in the spirit in which they are intended knowing that exceptions for reasonable circumstances will occur, when deviation is necessary documentation will be expected.
2. Every effort will be made to ensure that financial aid is never delivered in the absence of spiritual counsel: Biblical encouragement/instruction, gospel witness, and Christian love.
3. Those seeking financial aid will be encouraged to first seek assistance from family before receiving assistance from the church. Whenever possible, we will also suggest bringing such family members into meetings with the deacons.²
4. Non-cash assistance (e.g., purchasing food, paying a bill directly on behalf of the recipient, etc.) is the preferred method of delivering aid.
 1. As such, wherever possible, when non-cash aid can be made from within the church (via donation, volunteer efforts, BYKOTA, or other church-ministry groups), this is the preferred approach vs. paying for goods or services from the Deacon's Fund.
5. Allowable amounts and thresholds
 - a. Each Deacon can disburse a maximum of \$75 of gift/fuel cards, in a single incidence, to a single individual or family without seeking the input of the Board (cf. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES: DIACONAL FUND 3.a).
 - i. This allowance will be distributed in \$25 increments—that is, the Deacon will strive to understand and meet the need \$25 at a time, up to a maximum of \$75.
 - ii. More substantial needs require an analysis the requestor's finances and financial practices, and discussion and decision amongst the Board of Deacons.³
 - iii. As an aid to assessing the financial situation of requesters, a worksheet is included in the "RESOURCES" section of this guide (see page 15)⁴
 - b. If the amount requested exceeds \$350 (sum total, not individual disbursements), the entire Board of Deacons will meet (in-person, via conference, or via email) to discuss before funds are disbursed, allowing

² Policy 2 adopted at OHCC Deacon's Board meeting October 11, 2011

³ Policy 4.a.i. adopted at OHCC Deacon's Board meeting May 9, 2011

⁴ Worksheet referenced in Policy 4 adopted subsequent to OPC Diaconal Summit June, 2012

for emotional separation and “the counsel of many” toward clear, critical and analytical decision-making.⁵

6. Cases involving officers or employees of OHCC

- c. In any case where the recipient is an officer, employee, or the spouse or dependent of an officer or employee, the Deacons will first obtain the consent of the Session prior to disbursement, in order to avoid any appearance of impropriety or favoritism.
- d. Further, involved officers, employees, or their family members will be asked to recuse themselves from the deliberation process regarding that potential assistance.
- e. The criteria in points 1 and 2 above must be met, with extra care taken to ensure that the decision is wholly independent of any influence or visibility the officer, employee, or family members may have in the church.
- f. Any such assistance provided to officers or family is considered charitable, and does not constitute taxable compensation.
- g. Any such assistance provided to employees of the church will be treated as taxable compensation.

7. Cases involving non-members

- h. In situations where a non-member approaches the church for assistance, we will strive to show God’s mercy, but in accordance with the principles outlined in Policy 1 above, assistance will be provided only if the requestor agrees to come the next Sunday worship; as long as the requestor comes to worship, we will continue to attempt to help.
- i. However, if they refuse to come to worship, or do not show up the following week, help will not be provided, or there will be no further help.⁶

8. Long-term cases

- j. Long term cases require more frequent, direct involvement in the individual’s life to provide guidance, training and/or accountability. A schedule of meetings and follow-ups will be set, and a lead Deacon, Elder, and if appropriate, officer’s wife, will be appointed to the case.

9. Documentation

- k. Documentation will be kept for each disbursement from the Deacon’s Fund, and will include:
 - i. Name and contact information for the recipients
 - ii. Any relationship between recipient(s) and officers of, or employees of, OHCC
 - iii. Amount (or type) of assistance provided
 - iv. Purpose for which the assistance was given
 - v. How the need came to the attention of the Deacons
 - vi. Steps taken to determine that the need met policy criteria, and any documentation gathered as verification of need
 - vii. Deacons (and others) involved in the decision to grant assistance

⁵ Policy 4.b. adopted at OHCC Deacon’s Board meeting May 9, 2011

⁶ Policy 6 adopted at OHCC Deacon’s Board meeting October 11, 2011

- l. In cases where the recipient is an officer, employee of the church, or spouse or dependent of an officer or employee, every effort will be made to document all of the above as thoroughly as possible--even beyond what may be the norm for other recipients
- m. Documentation will be maintained by the Board of Deacons for a minimum seven years.

AMENDMENTS

_____ Major changes to processes and procedures contained in this document, or general standing practices, requires the contribution, consideration and vote of all members of the Board of Deacons, even those on leave or sabbatical.⁷

MINISTRIES AND SERVICES OF THE OHCC DEACONS

There are several ongoing ministries and activities that fall under the auspices of the OHCC Board of Deacons.

They include:

Diaconal Ministries

- **BYKOTA** - (Be Ye Kind One to Another - Eph. 4:32) - The mercy ministry of OHCC, whereby every OHCC member can use their abilities, gifts, and skills to show mercy and kindness to other members or friends in need. A skills inventory is maintained and volunteers can be matched with someone who has a need.
- **Deacon's Pantry** - A food pantry maintained by the deacons and BYKOTA volunteers, for the benefit of members and friends who have a food emergency.
Contact a Deacon if there is a need: Any member or visitor in need could be helped from the food pantry as a one-time relief or part of ongoing relief. If part of ongoing relief, a Deacon will be assigned to regularly check in and will periodically also ask about reliance on food pantry to determine sufficiency of relief.⁸

Regular activities and services of the OHCC deacons

- **Visiting widows** - The deacons visit with widows on a rotating schedule to make sure they are cared for and to discover any other needs.
- **Care of orphans** - The deacons encourage OHCC BYKOTA volunteers to spend time working at an orphanage, doing foster care, or supporting the local AAA Pregnancy Center
- **Communion Services** – The deacons provide the elements, set-up and clean-up for Communion worship-service on a monthly basis. The elements are

⁷ Amendments adopted at OHCC Deacon's Board meeting Feb 10,2020

⁸ Elaboration on Deacon's Pantry adopted at OHCC Deacon's Board meeting Sept 9, 2019

provided by a specific Deacon on a pre-set annual schedule. The set-up and clean-up is a team effort with participation expected from all Deacons in attendance on any given Communion Sunday, lest prior, or emergency meetings/obligations requires a Deacon to be elsewhere.⁹

- **Administration for counting of Offering** – The deacons maintain a list of men of OHCC members that meet Biblical requirements, amongst others, of willingness to serve and evidence of discretion, to participate in counting the church-offerings on a weekly basis. The deacons publish an annual schedule and provide weekly reminders for scheduled counters (with instructions and responsibility for scheduled counters to seek substitutes themselves, from approved list, if unable to make it) .¹⁰
 - The deacons, in close correlation with the Treasurer and/or Board of Trustees, determines the necessary procedures and specific steps for counters to follow, staying up-to-date with most efficient systems and technologies.
- **Funeral committee** - the Deacon liaison to the Funeral Committee is to make the call to establish if there is need for financial help with luncheon (to OHCC members only) and report back to Deacons.¹¹
- **Christmas fruit baskets** - The deacons distribute fruit baskets to the needy, unemployed, disabled, widows, or widowers, etc.
- **Funeral fruit baskets** - The deacons send a fruit basket, or edible fruit arrangement to the family of the deceased.

Regular (or Annual) Financial Aid to Local Organizations

- Annual gift to the AAA Pregnancy Center
- Annual gift to the family of a fallen police officer (killed or disabled)
- Annual gift to the Farmington Hills Police Officers -- covers Christmas Dinner for officers on duty that day

⁹ Policy on Communion Services adopted at OHCC Deacon's Board meeting September 9, 2019

¹⁰ Policy on Administration for Counting of Offering adopted at OHCC Deacons Board meeting September 9, 2019

¹¹ Policy on Funeral Committee adopted at OHCC Deacons Board meeting September 9, 2019

ADDITIONAL DIACONAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Significant OPC policies are maintained by the OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM), several of which are online and referenced below:

Principles for the Ministry of Mercy:

https://opc.org/CDM/Principles_and_Materials_for_the_Ministry_of_Mercy.pdf

Principles of Diaconal Ministry:

https://opc.org/CDM/2016-03-14_Principles_of_Diaconal_Ministry_from_CDM_Manual.pdf

“If you are a Deacon” by Nathan Trice, from Ordained Servant:

http://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=409

OPC Deacon Summit (held every 3 - 4 years)

Deacon Summit notebook 1 - 2010

Deacon Summit notebook 2 - 2012

Deacon Summit notebook 3 - 2017 - <http://opc.org/CDM/DiaconalSummit3.pdf>

OAKLAND HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Diaconal Case Decision Worksheet

Date: _____ Retention date (7 yrs): _____

Name of person(s) requesting aid: _____

Contact info: Phone _____ email: _____

Known relationship to officers or employees of OHCC: _____

How did the need come to the attention of the Deacons?:

Amount (or type) of assistance provided: _____

Purpose for which the assistance was given: _____

What analysis of personal finances were conducted: _____

Steps taken to determine that the need met policy criteria: _____

What documentation was gathered as verification of need: _____

Deacons (and others) involved in the decision to grant assistance: _____

If officer, employee, (or spouse or dependent) were all policies set out under
OPERATIONAL POLICIES Article 5 followed, and if not detail why not

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Diaconal Worksheet for Growth and Change

1. What are the immediate material needs you are struggling or find impossible to meet?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. Do you see this as an ongoing/long term issue, or temporary?
3. What steps have you already taken to resolve the need? (e.g., looked to personal savings/finances, sought help from family/friends, etc.)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
4. How can the Deacons (or other church members) help you resolve this?
5. Would you be willing to sit down with the Deacons to go over your finances, and financial practices (e.g., budget, investments, etc.) Y _____ N _____
6. What are your strengths, skills, and abilities? Can they be used to help resolve the issue, or to serve the church?
7. How would you like your life situation—including this issue—to be in 4-6 months? (Think about what would need to be different in order for this, or similar issues, not to reoccur).
8. What are things you can do to move you in that direction (short term goals)?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
9. How can the Deacons or other church members help you in that pursuit?
10. Would you be willing to have a support person/mentor encourage you in your goals?

11. When and where can we get together next to check on how things are going?

NOTE: The below policy document was discovered at an OPC deacon's conference in (DATE). Because of the similarities in belief and practice, it was used by the OHCC Board of Deacons as a framework for our guidelines and practice. It does not, however, define or restrict our practice.

Cornerstone Presbyterian Church Benevolence Policy

Cornerstone Presbyterian Church has established a benevolence fund, referred to as the deacons' fund, to help meet the material needs of others. The church believes helping to meet the material needs of others fulfills part of the church's purpose found in the Holy Scriptures.

Control - The board of deacons, as constituted in conformance with the church's governing documents, has total control over the money in the deacons' fund. The board of deacons will disburse the funds according to its judgment. The deacons may consider suggestions to help others from anyone, but the deacons are not bound in any way to honor the suggestions. The board of deacons will make reports of deacons' funds expenditures no less frequently than quarterly to the session. In any instance that the recipient is an officer or employee of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church or a spouse or dependent of an officer or employee, the deacons, believing it is prudent to avoid any appearance of impropriety, commit to obtaining the consent of the session, with any officers or employees receiving aid and their family members recused from involvement in the decision to provide assistance.

Acceptable contributions - Only designated contributions to the deacons' fund will be allowed in this fund. Contributions made to the deacons' fund designated for a specific need will be returned to the donor. In the unlikely event the church decides to close this fund, all money in the fund at that time will be transferred to the church's operating fund.

Acceptable expenditures - Expenditures from the fund will be made upon consideration of the board of deacons and approval by a majority of the deacons. In determining the need for assistance, the deacons will prioritize assisting professing Christians who are members of Bible-believing churches and facing exceptional financial circumstances that threaten their ability to meet basic needs (including food, housing, clothing, health care, education, the ability to maintain employment, and transportation). Assistance for such needs will be considered for people who are not professing Christians or members of any church. Every effort will be made to offer assistance from the deacons' fund in conjunction with Biblical encouragement, Christian love, and gospel witness. Non-cash assistance will be the preferred means of providing aid (such as by purchasing food or directly paying a bill on behalf of the recipient). In any instance that the recipient may be an officer or employee of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church or the spouse or dependent of an officer or

employee, all of the above-stated criteria must be met, and the decision must be made wholly independently of the influence of the recipient and his or her family members. Any assistance provided to an officer of the church under this policy is presumed to be made for charitable purposes and does not constitute taxable compensation to the officer. Any assistance provided to an employee of the church under this policy will be treated as taxable compensation.

Required documentation - Documentation for each gift from the deacon's fund will include: (1) The name and contact information for the recipients; (2) the cost of the assistance; (3) the purpose for which the assistance was given; (4) how it was determined that the need met the above-stated criteria, along with any documentation gathered as verification of need; (5) how the recipients were selected; (6) any relationship between a recipient and the officers of, key employees of, or substantial contributors to Cornerstone Presbyterian Church; and (7) the composition of the board of deacons at the time of the assistance. In the instance that the recipient is an officer or employee of the church or a spouse or dependent of an officer or employee, every effort will be made to document need for the assistance as thoroughly as possible, even beyond what may be reasonable for documenting need for other recipients. Documentation will be maintained by the board of deacons for a minimum seven years.

PARKING LOT

Requiring further discussion and decision:

- Have separate procedures for walk-ins

- How to handle tie-breakers

- How to vote with incoming inexperienced deacons

- How do we deal with long term ongoing cases

- Continue research and discussion regarding making loans out of Deacon's Fund and paying for work done by those under Deacon's care (as defined in previous minutes)