



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Good Samaritan Fund

The Good Samaritan Fund is funded by:

1. the assistance funds of predecessor church bodies in existence on December 31, 1987;
2. the investment income and net gain on the sale or maturity of investments of this fund;
3. gifts and bequests from individuals;
4. contributions from congregations, synods, and organizations; and
5. appropriations from the budget of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Assistance payments and emergency grants shall be made only to the extent that monies are available from this fund.

The Good Samaritan Fund is administered by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Synod Relations team of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and is empowered by the Church Council. The Good Samaritan Committee reviews requests for assistance and authorizes payments to be made in accordance with these rules. The granting of assistance in any form is entirely and solely at the discretion of the committee and the committee reserves the right to modify these rules governing the ELCA Good Samaritan Program at any time.

Purpose

The purpose of the Good Samaritan Fund is to provide, in cooperation with a rostered person's synod, financial assistance to persons who are confronted with short-term emergency situations.

Eligibility

Persons on the roster of this church who are members of the ELCA Portico Benefits program are eligible to apply for assistance from the program. This includes retired and disabled members [including those of the predecessor churches]. Also eligible are spouses, surviving spouses, divorced spouses, and their dependent, orphaned, or incapacitated children who have maintained membership in the ELCA Portico Benefits program. In order to qualify for assistance, the member, spouse, or child must demonstrate a serious financial need.

Guidelines used by the Committee in determining levels of assistance

1. The Good Samaritan Fund provides assistance for short-term, emergency situations. Monthly stipends to assist with living expenses are not available from the program.
2. The approval and concurrence of the bishop of the synod must be obtained before the committee will consider an application. In all cases, the committee will confer with the synod bishop before the grant is approved. Normally, there is cooperation between the synod and the Good Samaritan Fund in providing financial assistance.
3. Priority is given to maintaining Portico health coverage for rostered persons on leave from call and their families where the applicant is rostered. If the applicant is a spouse, former spouse, or child of a rostered person, approval of and financial cooperation with the synod on whose roster the rostered individual is or last was will be sought. The program will not make payments to Portico to reactivate an account already closed because of nonpayment.
4. No assistance with non-medical debt, retirement, or past due or current income tax encumbrance will be provided through the Good Samaritan Fund.

5. The Good Samaritan Fund is intended for those individuals for whom no other resources are available. For that reason, the application includes a complete financial statement. The committee will consider other available assets in making its determination.

Administration

All applications shall be made in the manner prescribed by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and shall include a written application and a financial statement detailing assets, liabilities, income, and estimated monthly expenses. An application for assistance is to be considered only if assistance is recommended by the bishop of the synod in which the applicant is rostered.

Assistance will normally be in the form of a lump-sum grant or a payment directly to Portico. Completed applications will be reviewed by the staff of the Synod Relations team, who shall have the authority to approve grants of \$1,000 or less. Requests for greater amounts of assistance will be forwarded by email to the members of the Good Samaritan Committee for consideration.

If a grant is awarded and the individual's financial situation improves [for example, someone on leave from call receives a call during the period in which the program has paid Portico], it is anticipated that a refund to the program will be made of the unneeded portions of the grant. If, at the end of a given period of assistance, the need continues, a new application should be completed and submitted to the committee. However, no guarantees as to the continuation of assistance are made nor implied.

Contact Synodical Relations with questions:

Synod Relations - Good Samaritan Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W Higgins Rd, Chicago IL 60631
Phone: 773-380-2703; fax: 773-380-1701; e-mail: Jennifer.Johnson@elca.org