

FUNDING SOLICITATIONS AT SEEKERS CHURCH

Background

Over the years there have been occasions when a member has requested contributions from the Seekers Church budget and/or made solicitations for individual contributions from the assembled congregation. Sometimes these requests were made during circle time preceding worship. Other times they were made during the announcements in worship. Sometimes they were made during the coffee hour. Sometimes the requests were made to augment funds that had already been included as a line item in the budget or as an organization already designated to receive funds from the Seekers' domestic or international giving budgets but on other occasions the requests were for an organization for which no request had previously been made. Other requests have been for other purposes, including personal needs.

Celebration Circle and the Stewards came to an informal understanding that solicitations in group settings should be discouraged. Instead, the person has been directed to members of the Mission Support Group (MSG) to explore whether the request fits the Growing Edge Fund (GEF) criteria. Or, the person has been urged to contact the Servant Leadership Team (SLT) to explore whether it fits the guidelines for financial support under the Holy Spirit Fund (HSF).

This informal practice has worked rather well, resulting in a significant reduction of such solicitations. Occasionally there will be a request from someone who is new to Seekers and hasn't been made aware of our process and there have been a few other exceptions. SLT recommends that we formally set a procedure and distribute this to Stewards and other members. to reduce confusion, conflicting guidance and potential embarrassment.

Recommended policy/procedure

- Solicitations should not be made for additional funds to an organization that Seekers is already supporting specifically through a direct line item in the budget or through the domestic or international giving budgets.
- A person requesting funds should be directed to contact the MSG to see whether the request would fit the GEF or to ask the SLT whether a request would be appropriate for the HSF. If the request doesn't fit either of these, the requestor may explore the use of technology, such as GoFundMe™, to request from those on the Seekers listserv.
- New solicitations should not be made in a group setting such as circle time, announcements in worship, or the coffee hour. If a request has already been made through technology to the Seekers listserv, any announcement in a group setting should solely remind those present that a solicitation has been sent through the listserv.
- Children and youth may solicit funds for a fundraising campaign of an organization (such as scouting or a school) in a group setting or during coffee hour. Other requests from children and youth should be directed to the MSG or the SLT.