

First Parish in Malden Emergency Funds Policies

In late October, several members of the board met with Rev. Otto to review a resource mapping checklist brought to us by the UU the Vote program. One outcome of that discussion was a call for a congregational meeting to consider a budget adjustment to make financial resources more readily available in the wake of the November election. On November 15, the congregation held that special meeting and increased the amount of our Emergency Response budget line by \$25,000 – stipulating that the money could be spent on election reaction and Covid-19 related expenses. During the discussion at the meeting, the board committed to providing a clear process to ensure that those funds were spent wisely, and that the congregation would be informed of any expenditures.

Typically, expenses are approved using a Check Request, signed by a member of the staff or a committee chair and approved by the treasurer, Sarah McDonald. Given the desire for more transparency, we will be adopting additional review criteria for emergency funding.

Accessing Emergency Response Funds

Requests for emergency response funds will be reviewed based on four criteria:

1. Individual or institutional needs
2. Local impact
3. Alignment to the mission of the Church
4. A clear relationship to the present emergencies

Some examples of expenses we believe would be appropriate include:

- Donations to organizations the Church has supported in the past (Housing Families, Bread of Life, etc.) if they lose access to government funding during an unstable transition of power.
- Bail funds for protestors or counter-protestors aligned with our values, either directly or through BIJAN or the Massachusetts Bail Fund.
- Increased insurance costs and materials required to use the sanctuary for safe harbor during civil unrest.
- Rent relief, housing, or eviction support for community members experiencing financial hardships due to the pandemic or civil unrest.
- Should the UUA make a call for support of national movements, donations beyond the local area would also be considered.

Any member is welcome to submit a request for emergency funds on behalf of themselves, another person, or an organization in need. Contact Rev. Otto, Sarah McDonald, or the full Board to make or request help making a request.

- For expenses under \$500 Rev. Otto and Sarah McDonald will review and reply to requests.
- For expenses of at least \$500 the Board will review requests. This will typically be via email votes, unless the timing of a board meeting is convenient.

Spending Updates

- The Board will review emergency spending at each monthly meeting, which members are welcome to attend.
- The Board will update the congregation during Our Story whenever an expense of \$1000 is approved and after every \$5000 of cumulative expenses under this line item.
- Itemized accounting for this budget line will be available at this Spring's Annual Meeting. Members are welcome to contact the treasurer with questions any time.
- It will be up to the congregation to decide how much to allocate to Emergency Response in the next fiscal year. At present, we do not expect a Board recommendation above the \$5000 which was initially adopted in this year's budget because of the pandemic. This was the first year that an Emergency Response line has been part of the budget, and it has already been helpful in equipping staff to work and lead worship from home.