



Miracles Everywhere Campaign Guide Supplement The COVID-19 Relief Fund

A guide for raising funds for relief and recovery from the pandemic.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Next Generation Disciples. Hope Centers. Hurricane Recovery. Missional Partnerships in Tanzania. COVID-19 Relief and Recovery.

Why Extend Miracles Everywhere to Include COVID-19 Relief?

When people hurt, United Methodists help. Our communities and our congregations are hurting. The Covid Relief Fund has been created to assist those who have been most impacted by the pandemic and fund ministries for our congregations to reach far into communities to provide resources and support. Your congregation will be a part of the recovery, a larger united mission built on our connection.

At this time when many of our members and local churches are themselves struggling financially, why create a new fund within Miracles Everywhere? There are three important answers to this question:

1. Quite simply, our region is hurting. And when people hurt, United Methodists step up to assist: with shovels and hammers, with hugs and prayers, with food and supplies, and with funding. During recent past disasters and crises, Greater New Jersey has led the way in raising money and doing the hard work of relief and recovery. From 9/11 to Superstorm Sandy, our congregations embody Christ's hands and feet in the world. Relief may look differently as our ability to provide hands-on assistance may be limited in the short term, our response must be the same: we are called to move our mission further and make miracles for people in need.
2. At this time our congregations can connect with to the wider world, to each other, and to our region in real and meaningful way. During this difficult period when many feel helpless and alone, an urgent mission campaign to assist the last and the least will give congregations a safe way to support their neighbors and neighborhoods, provide a lifeline to our sacred connections of mission and ministry, and unite us as United Methodists behind one goal.
3. While many people are hurting economically from the impact of the stay at home orders, many are not. Many are willing, able, and eager to share their blessings with their neighbor. It is our obligation as faith leaders to help our congregations grow in their spiritual disciplines, including generosity, and to gather and share the first fruits of God to those in need. .

We give because God first gave to us. God gave us life; salvation and our giving is a testimony to all that God has blessed us with. Here are two things to keep in mind as we give:

1. God does not expect equal gifts but equal sacrifice. In Luke 21:1-4, Jesus tells the story of the widow's mite. In the story, a wealthy man expects God and others to be overwhelmed by his generosity. In reality, he gave only a very small portion of his wealth. A widow on the other hand, poor and humble gave two pennies. Jesus said her gift blessed God more because of her great sacrifice. Faithful giving flows from our heart not our wallet. Miraculous giving flows from God's abundance, not our fear of sacrifice.
2. God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). If giving is duty, it is not from a Christ-like heart. We give to bless God and to bless others. Joy grows from blessing God and others. We invite this to be a joyous time in the church, not a burden; a time of hope and possibility.

How Will the COVID-19 Relief Fund Donations Be Used?

The COVID-19 Relief Fund will provide urgent relief to:

- Individuals who have lost jobs, for their groceries and utilities
- Local churches and Hope Centers to meet their communities' needs with food pantries and soup kitchens, senior care, and other frontline outreach
- Innovative new missions and ministries that emerge to help our neighbors and neighborhoods recover from this terrible virus

The applications for individual aid, church/Hope Center grants, and new mission grants will be available on the GNJ website by the end of May. Funding distribution will begin immediately thereafter and continue on a rolling basis.

How Do We Start?

The official launch of the GNJ COVID-19 Relief Fund will be during online worship services on May 3, and continue through May 5, which has been declared a national mini-Giving Tuesday for virus-related fundraising.

A suggested timeline:

April 30	Share the worship slides, two song videos and video with the technology volunteer who helps you produce online worship.
May 1	Share the small group curriculum with your small group and/or Bible study leaders and encourage them to take this week from their regular schedule to focus on our response as United Methodists to this COVID-19 crisis.
May 2	Use the social media post resources and new logo and graphics on your church's Facebook page to introduce the Fund's launch. Call three leaders who frequently comment on your posts and ask them to share the post on their own pages.
May 3	Use the offertory invitation script during your online worship: it contains options for taking a 2 nd Mile offering or just introducing the Fund and encouraging donations. Be sure to let members know that while the Fund will go on for some time, the matching challenge is only May 3-5. Encourage them to give today through Tuesday, online or by text, to double their impact for COVID-19 relief.
May 5	Share the new Facebook posts from the GNJ Facebook page to your church's page. Ask those lead followers to share them as well. Remind members that the match for online and text gifts will only extend to Tuesday!

What Comes Next?

Just as with the decision to participate, the decision on how to continue belongs to your church's leadership. Options include:

- Include a monthly 2nd Mile Offering to the Fund in your online worship.
- Plan to launch a full "Miracles and More" campaign when the shutdown is lifted as a way of celebrating your congregation's return to the pews. Incorporate the mission-oriented giving of Miracles Everywhere with the capital, operating, or emergency fund needs of your church and run a hybrid campaign that raises pledges for both simultaneously. This is a proven method for creating more generosity that continues into the future.
- Be on the lookout in the GNJ Digest for inspirational mission stories from the Miracles Everywhere campaign to share in your worship, and celebrate your congregation's contributions to this testimony.
- Check out The Relay for ideas on safe mission and ministry that can still happen during this time. Keep your congregation's hearts and hands engaged in your church.

Overview of the Resources

There is a wealth of resources available to conduct a donation drive for the COVID-19 Relief Fund on the Miracles Everywhere website at: www.gnjumc.org/miracleseverywhere.

- Offertory Invitation Script
- Small group curriculum for one week
- Two song videos to use in your online worship
- Video for download and use in online worship and/or social media posts
- Graphics, logos and worship slides

For questions, assistance, or future needs related to Miracles Everywhere, contact:



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