

## **Policy 004**

# **Lay Ministry Policy and Procedure**

### **Members Helping Members**

#### **POLICY:**

The Lay Ministry at Northwoods is the outward, practical, physical manifestation of the spirit of community we strive to create. When a member has a struggle, the Lay Ministry works to find ways to bring Northwoods' love and support to them in a meaningful way through the provision of temporary, short-term relief, assistance and/or support.

It is the policy of Lay Ministry under Congregational Life Ministry, to offer help only after ascertaining directly that such help is needed and desired by the recipient. The Minister and Lay Ministry Chair are responsible for this procedure. The Minister or Lay Ministry Chair or designees, if both are absent, must be aware of and approve support activities for Northwood's Members in one of the following three areas of service within Lay Ministry:

1. Short term general support activities
2. Helping Hands Website
3. Pastoral Care

**NOTE: In the Minister's absence, the Director of Lifespan Faith Development is the designee to interface with the Lay Ministry Chair, who coordinates Lay Ministry and the Pastoral Care Members.**

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

- **Volunteer** – A congregation member or friend of NUUC providing support to someone in need as directed by the Lay Ministry Chair or Minister.
- **NUUC** – Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church
- **Pastoral Care** – A pastoral or spiritual care giver offers friendship that intentionally seeks to "walk with you along your path." The focus is emotional support and spiritual care. In difficult

and demanding times such as a critical illness or other life traumas, we may experience high stress, reducing our ability to cope. During such times, the help of others may be very valuable. Family members and friends are often very important support, but sometimes the presence of a person who is more emotionally detached from the situation can be very helpful.

## **PROCEDURE STEPS:**

### **Basic Lay Ministry Responsibilities**

- A) The Lay Ministry team consists of the Lay Ministry Chair, Minister, Helping Hands Administrator, Pastoral Care team and other volunteers who have indicated their willingness to help the Chair and Minister provide lay ministry or pastoral care.
- B) **The Minister must approve the activation of all requests for Lay Ministry and /or Pastoral care support.**
- C) Only the Chair will direct the spending of funds to send flowers or cards to members when there is a serious illness or death.
- D) The Chair and volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of all care requests and the support provided to members. The Lay Ministry support volunteer shall be given enough information to adequately provide the needed service.
- E) **When the member or member's family gives permission to the Minister or the Chair to share confidential information, only then is the volunteer released from the responsibility of confidentiality in the specific case.**
- F) The Committee shall meet at least once per quarter to discuss progress, incidents, allotment of Committee duties, and any other necessary business.
- G) The Chair shall make the congregation members and friends aware that Lay Ministry services are available.
- H) The Chair shall maintain a file of congregation members and friends who are willing to help provide support. The list shall be updated regularly, with a goal of quarterly revision.
- I) The Chair shall maintain a reference file of church and community resources.

### **Lay Ministry General Support Activities**

- A) The Lay Ministry general support may include, but is not limited to:
  - Provision of emergency meals when needed (i.e. new babies, sick or recovering from surgery),
  - Provision of transportation to medical appointments, to run necessary errands, or to church;

- Tending to someone who is temporarily homebound;
- temporary help with care of children;
- Cards and e-mailed notes to members and friends at appropriate times;
- Babysitting on an emergency basis;
- Memorial Services support if requested
- Wedding Services support if requested

This support shall be offered as Lay Ministry is able to find available service providers. **Direct financial support of an individual or family is NOT the responsibility of Lay Ministry. Such requests or discovered needs will be forwarded to the Minister.**

B) Knitting Ministry may deliver the following based on a list provided by the Minister/Chair

- Comfort shawls
- Baby blankets
- Graduation blankets

C) Volunteers will reassess needs during visits and report to the Chair. A Helping Hands Website may be set up to coordinate needed support.

D) When Lay Ministry receives a request, which is long term or different in nature than the scope that NUUC can provide, Lay Ministry will try to provide referrals to community services.

### **Helping Hands Website**

- A Helping Hands (HH) website will only be set up upon the request of the person needing help or their designee.
- The Helping Hands Administrator will work with the person in need to determine the type and duration of support needed: (i.e. transportation, meals, house work,) The HH Administrator must inform the Minister/Chair before the member website is activated.
- The HH Administrator will help determine the type of support needed and attempt to find volunteers to give support.
- If one or more volunteers are available, the HH Administrator will coordinate efforts directly between the volunteers and the person needing help.
- HH Administrator will regularly follow up with volunteers to ensure support is being given per stated needs on the website.

- F) Volunteers are invited by the HH Administrator to sign into the Helping Hands website through a link to provide and to schedule Support.
- G) Volunteers who are signed onto the website report back to the HH Administrator as needed.
- H) When care is completed, the HH Administrator deletes the website and reports completion to Lay Minister Chair.
- I) Lay Ministry Chair reports back to Minister concerning the activities and results of the case.

### **Pastoral Care Activities**

- A) The Pastoral Care team provides **spiritual** support to those who are in a critical or emotional situation. Conversations between the Pastoral Care Member and the congregation member are kept highly confidential. In the case of an emergency outside assistance will be contacted.
- B) The Minister interviews prospective members to determine suitability to be on the Pastoral Care team.
- C) Pastoral Care Members must have training in pastoral care either by outside resources or as determined by the Minister. This may be in the form of:
  - In house training
  - On line training
  - Other agency training programs (i.e. Chaplin Training, UUA Trauma Ministry or Grief Support training)
- D) Pastoral Care Members **do not**:
  - Take members to doctor visits,
  - Make meals
  - Do housework

If these needs are requested, the Pastoral Care Member informs the Lay Ministry Chair.
- E) Pastoral Care cases are assigned by the Minister.
- F) The Pastoral Care Member will identify themselves as a member of the Pastoral Care team when meeting with the person /family requiring help.
- G) Each Pastoral Care Member is to provide updates to the Minister and/or the Lay Ministry Chair. Some examples may be, but not limited to:
  - Recent trauma such as death in the family.
  - Visits to those who are ill and/or in the hospital.
  - A discussion to determine if Lay Ministry care is required and/or pastoral care should end.

H) The Pastoral Care team meets once a month with the Minister to review their cases and to determine:

- If Pastoral Care is still required.
- Duration of care.
- Method of care.
- If the Pastoral Care team Members are taking care of themselves during their Pastoral Care case.

**OTHER INFORMATION** – (Attachments, records, other comments as needed):

A. Request outreach: Google Doc Form – [goo.gl/Lb4XZx](https://goo.gl/Lb4XZx)

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