

Giving at the Smithers Christian Reformed Church - 2024

The Smithers Christian Reformed Church incurs operational costs for local church programs as well as supporting local, regional and international ministries. It is important that the congregation is familiar with these costs and commit to these financial needs. In this way we can share God's blessings and use them to benefit others with spiritual, mental or physical needs.

Following are commonly asked questions regarding the church budget and giving in general. If you have more questions or want clarification, feel free to contact the church bookkeeper or a council member.

Budget

What items are covered by the Church Budget?

It covers all operating expenses, including light, heat and staff salaries. It also covers some local ministries and regional and global denominational ministries. To get a full description of the Smithers CRC budget or a copy of the budget please contact the bookkeeper or a member of council.

May I have a copy of the Church Budget?

A copy of the budget is available to all members and regular attenders.

How can we give to the budget? Where do I place my budget donation?

You can give several ways:

- *Auto-withdrawal can be set up with the bookkeeper;*
- *Cheques or cash for the budget can be placed in the slotted budget box near the mailboxes in the church foyer;*
- *Place a cheque marked "budget" in the weekly collection;*
- *E-transfer - provide your full name and address and direction that it's for the budget; or*
- *Use the Bridge App to give.*

If I place funds in the budget box, where do they go?

Funds placed in the budget box go towards the budget unless specifically marked for another cause – this includes cash or tokens.

Does my Sunday Morning Offering contribute to the budget?

Sunday morning offerings do not contribute to the budget unless that week's offering is designated for the budget. See the question below – does the church collect for other causes?

Why don't we have budget envelopes anymore?

Previously everyone requesting a tax receipt was assigned a numbered set of envelopes to track donations. A decision was made to discontinue those envelopes as most people weren't using them and they were costly to provide. Individuals who want their donations tracked may use tokens, cash in an envelope marked with their name, a cheque identifying the giver and the cause, pre-authorized bank withdrawals or the Bridge App. (See more information on the Bridge App below.)

What are the advantages of pre-authorized payments?

Pre-authorized payments allow for regular support to the church in the amount you choose at the time of your choosing, continued support to the church when you are away, regular and dependable flow of contributions, better budget and cash flow planning and reduction of paperwork and bookkeeping.

Do we still give funds to Ministry Shares? What are Ministry Shares?

Ministry Shares have been a part of our budget for a significant time. The Christian Reformed Church is a large organization and Ministry Shares have been a means of ensuring there is financial support for ministries that are broad in nature and have been endorsed by the wider CRC community. Local churches have been asked to contribute to these ministries to ensure they remain functional.

Faith-Promise Giving

Why have we continued with faith-promise giving?

We have chosen to continue with faith-promise giving as a reminder that we should be giving consistently and considerately to the church. We also want to bless our ministries as we have been blessed, not from the leftovers, but rather from the first fruits.

The faith-promise commitment will give church council a good indication that the provisional budget is in line with the congregation's desire for our ministries. As with any successful budget, the council's intent is to stay on budget throughout the year. This encourages the work of church staff and ministry and avoids the grey cloud that comes with a monthly deficit.

Where do I return the Faith-Promise pledge forms? Who reviews them?

Paper pledge forms are returned in a sealed envelope to the church bookkeeper. Digital Pledges are received by the bookkeeper as an email. Both versions are held in confidence. The forms will be reviewed and summarized to council to determine if each member or attender has considered making a pledge to the budget – not the amount they pledged.

The church bookkeeper will review the pledges mid-year and provide a summary to each individual or family that pledged with a reminder of the amount pledged and the amount received to date.

What if I don't want anybody to know the amount that I donate to the church?

Your pledge is confidential. However, if you wish to be discreet, please complete the form using the second option stating you do not wish to pledge an amount. Please consider how you have been blessed and contribute accordingly.

General Giving

Does the Church collect funds for other causes?

Weekly offerings are NOT generally for the budget unless specifically designated. The weekly causes are those that the deacons feel are aligned with our ministry perspectives and goals. Local causes such as the food bank, Rough Acres Bible Camp, GEMS, Cadets, national or international causes such as World Renew, Resonate and Canadian Foodgrains Bank benefit from these funds. An annual collection schedule is compiled by the deacons outlining the causes that will receive weekly offerings. These causes must qualify for charitable contribution status.

Can or should I donate to other causes not supported by this church?

Everyone must ultimately decide what to support, so giving to other causes is welcomed and encouraged. We do request that you support the pastor, staff and other budget items as we strive to carry out local ministry.

Are donations to the church eligible for charitable donation tax status?

Yes. If the bookkeeper can track your contributions, you will receive a receipt identifying the amount donated through the Smithers CRC. You are strongly encouraged to donate with the expectation of a tax receipt as tax savings can be significant and may even further benefit ministry causes.

What are tokens and how do I receive them?

Rather than placing cash in the weekly offering and/or not receiving recognition for your donation, using tokens is a way to make your weekly contributions trackable for a tax deduction. Tokens can be purchased through the church bookkeeper in varying amounts. They can be placed in the weekly collection as you like. Tokens are valid for a given calendar year. The token color changes at the end of each year. Any tokens that were not used in the year they were issued will be credited toward the budget on December 31 of the year of issue.

Is there an App we can use for digital transfers of funds to the church?

The Bridge App offers a wealth of information regarding our church in a digital format. Once you are an approved App user, click on the "Give" button, fill in the required fields, and choose "church budget" or one of the weekly collections listed. After clicking "continue", fill out your personal information and payment means. Your year-end receipt will include all your donations made using the app and other methods such as monthly debit, tokens and cheques.

If you are not an approved user, you can still give by going to our website, smitherscrc.com and selecting Giving under the Church Life heading. Here, you can see the available causes.

Church bookkeeper: Jenna Hessels

Deacons: Tom De Vries, Teresa Reitsma, Dave Ripmeester, Edward Jada, Dave Mayer, Nelly Rhebergen