

# Financial Principles and Policies of Christ Fellowship

*We believe that the way a church handles itself in the financial arena is a reflection of its integrity in every arena. We have, therefore, established strict guidelines to be above reproach, frugal, and honoring to God.*

## **Worship and Discipleship**

We believe giving to Christ's church is an act of worship, and that both our attitude toward giving and practice of giving indicates our level of spiritual maturity and commitment to Christ's mission (Matthew 6:19-21). Faithful giving also makes us more generous overall, freeing us from the bonds of materialism, allowing us to better show Christ's love to a watching world, and providing a platform for further spiritual growth.

## **Stewardship**

One of our first goals in handling finances is to be good and faithful stewards of all gifts entrusted to us. We know that all we have is God's (1 Chronicles 29:11-12), and that we are only temporary stewards of the money that is given to us. In all our dealings we maintain a sense of humility and gratitude for the material blessings God has provided, and a desire to be an example of Christian integrity. Our obligation, therefore, is to spend that money prayerfully, frugally, and wisely.

## **Primary Source of Church Income**

We are dependent on God through the faithful and generous offerings of God's people to underwrite the church's ministry, missions, ministry expansion, and benevolence needs. We believe God has called us to ministry within our means. God provides everything we need for accomplishing the tasks He gives us. We will not operate the ministry at a deficit. We will communicate financial needs truthfully without any manipulation, hype, or spin.

## **Global Ministries Giving**

Our general practice is to commit 10% of General Ministry Fund offerings to God's work in our world, country, and community. The church has a Global Ministries team that uses formal guidelines to review all mission requests. All expenditures are made under the oversight of the Elder Board.

## **Financial Bible Teaching**

We will teach biblical financial principles to our congregation through Bible studies, seminars, sermons, etc. The goal of this teaching will be to help people become financially free in their lives in order to serve and honor God more fully and faithfully. It is our desire to encourage all of our Lord's followers to grow in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7) and become faithful and generous givers to the Lord's work (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

## **Fundraising Events**

Because we are dependent on God through the faithful and generous support of God's people, Christ Fellowship discourages the use of fundraising events (banquets, bazaars, carnivals, festivals, bingo, craft sales, candy sales, product sales, raffles, fish fries, etc.) to help meet the church's financial needs. This includes funds for children's camp and youth retreats. Limited fund raising for mission trips is permissible with approval from the Global Ministries pastor or designee.

## **Giving Statements and Financial Information**

We send giving statements periodically and make church financial information available to encourage people's faithful and cheerful giving to the Lord's work through Christ Fellowship. All information about donors is kept confidential.

## **Methods of Giving**

We encourage people's generous giving by allowing them to faithfully give through whatever means is most helpful to them. Examples: weekend offerings, online (one-time or recurring) via electronic checks and debit/credit cards, giving envelopes, stock transfers, gifts of appreciated assets and investments, gifts in kind, etc. (We do not endorse going into debt to give to the church, so we ask that credit cards be used with caution and only if the balance will be paid before any interest charges are incurred.) The church will abide by all IRS donation regulations. No tax-deductible gifts may be used to pass money or benefits to any named individual. We make needs known for products and services so those in the church body who are in those businesses can provide those products and services at reduced or no costs. In addition, we use volunteers to do ministry as much as possible in order to reduce paid staff costs.

## **Oversight and Audits by a CPA**

We utilize a professionally recognized CPA firm to conduct annual audits and provide financial consultation as needed. Because we are a nonprofit organization, we are careful to follow those laws and guidelines that pertain to us as a corporation within the United States. This means that we are careful to follow those laws and guidelines within the Internal Revenue Service code and any other laws or guidelines dictated by other regulatory agencies. We occasionally conduct a procedural audit to insure we are following all applicable guidelines.

## **Benevolence Giving**

We believe the church should care for those in need. Thus, we have a benevolence program to help people that are attending our church as well as people in our community who do not attend our church. Traditionally we take an offering for our Love Fund, which is for Christ Fellowship attendees, during Christmas Eve services to fund the ministry for the following year. The Community Blessing Fund, which helps those outside our church family, is funded through a portion of our special Community Impact Ministries offering generally taken once or twice per year.

## **Financial Controls**

We exercise careful management and financial controls to ensure frugal, accountable, and appropriate spending. We have written internal financial policies that govern the way we approve expenditures and how we receive donations. For instance, spending is controlled by expense reports and purchase orders that must be approved based on levels of delegated spending authority. All checks require double signatures from a limited number of approved signatories. Our annual budget is developed and approved at multiple levels involving the person most directly in touch with the ministry expense and including review by the supervisor, our business administrator, senior pastor, and Elder Board. We avoid conflicts of interest (any member receiving personal benefit) involving transactions with church members by receiving competitive bids and evaluating comparable valuations. When we make a purchase, we will pay the invoice within 30 days, whenever possible. We do not intend to use or benefit from money owed to vendors.

## **Ministry Expansion Projects**

We seek to meet our larger financial needs associated with ministry expansion (e.g. building projects, equipment/systems, vehicles, land, campus multiplication, debt reduction, etc.) through communicating the plans and needs to God's people and other individuals through letters, presentations, campaigns, visits, etc. Christ Fellowship will accept designated gifts for board-approved ministry expansion projects and/or major expenditures.

### **Financial Records, Reports, and Disclosure**

Our intention at Christ Fellowship is to have full transparency in all financial matters. We provide a simplified snapshot of our financial status (general giving and expenses) in our weekend service Programs. Financial reports are available every month for anyone who would like a copy; these are available on the church's web site. Any individual who would like to review the church's financial records or would like to ask detailed financial questions is always welcome to schedule an appointment with a church leader equipped to respond to such inquiries. We respect the privacy of each staff member and have a process to guard against compensation comparisons among the staff; all salaries and benefit information are held confidential.