

11 Keys to Smart Church Finances

1. *The Right Stuff:* www.ucc.org/finance for one-stop help!

A **NEW** UCC Church Finances webpage organized for quick access to answers you're seeking.



2. *Equipped Leaders* Financial leadership in the church exists to serve the church's mission. It must be mission-oriented, responsive, transparent, and must maintain complete integrity. Only then will givers have the confidence to entrust their gifts and dreams to your church! Learn about **responsibilities** of key financial leaders, **separation of duties**, **bonding** and more on the new webpage.

3. *Effective Procedures* Intuitively, church members know that sound financial management is important but they may not know what is required. Clear, well-designed, workable procedures help staff and volunteers perform their tasks well, safeguard the church's assets, and enhance the trust and confidence needed for full participation in and support of your ministry.



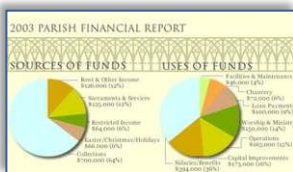
Start with **Best Practices for Handling Church Offerings** – a must for every church – then learn the essentials of **Internal Controls**, how to perform an **Internal Audit**, and much more on the webpage. Link to invaluable tools developed by our UCC Conferences and ecumenical partners.



4. *The Right Accounting System* Let's be honest... church accounting can be complicated. The "right" accounting system is user-friendly and fits your church's needs. Manual or computerized, it must allow you to manage your finances, track progress to your goals, and produce timely, accurate reports that communicate. The Church Finances webpage offers some ideas and invites you to share your recommendations to benefit other churches.



5. *Reports That Communicate...* put people at ease and in control. With multiple funds (some restricted), special non-profit terminology, and cash-vs.-accrual issues, special attention to creating clear, complete reports and educating your leaders will be rewarded. The Church Finances webpage provides guidance and links you to free UCC Cornerstone Fund **Making Friends with Church Numbers** and **Church Numbers for Treasurers** workshops.



6. *Inspirational Budgets* How your church builds and presents your "church budget" – and even what you call it – can motivate increased generosity. Learn about **The Mission Spending Plan** and **Narrative Budgets** on the Church Finances webpage. Explore the many sample budgets to find one that's right for you.

"Every dollar in a church budget is a dollar that someone has given freely... driven by a wish for the church to exist. The church budget... is a celebration of organized generosity." – Inspiring Generosity

7. *Multiple Sources of Funding*

ASK! Begin by nurturing strong **annual giving**. What giving guideline does your church propose – proportionate giving? Tithing? Practice year-round stewardship with an annual stewardship emphasis that is fun and encourages broad participation. Do you offer multiple giving opportunities? Do you cultivate **major gifts** and **planned giving**. Does your church have an **Endowment Policy**? When was your last **capital campaign**? Is there a special program worthy of a **grant writing** effort (maybe a community garden start-up)? The Church Finances webpage connects you to resources.

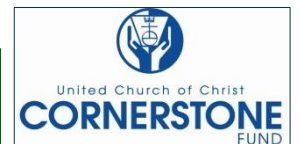


8. *Commitment to Giving*

The church exist for mission. People give to mission and ministry that transform lives, locally and beyond. Is your church “**5 for 5**” – giving to **Our Church’s Wider Mission** Basic Support and the four special mission offerings (One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need and the Christmas Fund)? What message does your church’s commitment to giving send to your members about their giving? The Church Finances webpage suggests some guidelines.

9. *Informed Investing*

Finding trustworthy **professional guidance** to steward resources, from small savings accounts to large endowment assets, can be a heavy responsibility – especially when **socially responsible investing** is a top priority. UCC Congregations can invest with confidence with the UCC Cornerstone Fund and United Church Funds. Find them on the Church Finances webpage.



10. *Empowered Borrowing*

There are times when churches need to borrow, often for a capital project or to start a new ministry. Borrowing can be challenging and expensive, especially in times like these when banks are restrictive in their lending policies. But UCC Congregations have better options... two extraordinary UCC Financial Ministries can help. The **Church Building and Loan Fund** offers the Partners in Building program to guide churches in their first building project. **The Cornerstone Fund** offers Certificates of Deposit to local UCC churches and members; then provides loans to churches for building projects.



11. *Problems Addressed / Accomplishments Celebrated*

Every system experiences problems. Finances contract and expand, staff and volunteers change, programs are added and phased out. Smart leaders learn to recognize, name and seek solutions for what isn't working. Smart leaders engage the congregation and community in celebrating accomplishments!

