FAQ About Finances

What is our vision and intention as it relates to church finances?
More than anything, we desire to steward the resources God entrusts to us with full integrity and purity, far above reproach and totally free from the love of money. As overseers who will give an account to God, we obey Him and His principles in every aspect of our operations, including and especially our finances. We keep generosity at the forefront, acknowledging and trusting God as our ultimate provider, not man.

As a non-profit, our intention and legal obligation is to utilize our finances to further the stated mission of our organization. For us, that mission is to obey the Greatest Commandment and fulfill the Great Commission. Anything and everything we do with the church's money is done so with a clear conscience in an effort to cultivate our love for Jesus and advance His Kingdom.

Big picture, how do we manage our church finances?
Off the top, our church gives away 20% of our tithes and offerings, 10% goes towards paying towards our staff support accounts while the other 10% goes towards other like-hearted ministries that are furthering God's work. This 20% figure does not factor in other 'accounts' that may receive donations - for example, when we receive donations for a mission trip, 100% of those funds are given towards that intended trip. That said, the remaining 80% of our 'general fund' income is the basis for our church budget, where we allocate resources according to how we can best accomplish our mission. That includes securing the equipment and venues needed for Sunday services and office space, facilitating other one-off events, funding the day-to-day operations of our church's various ministries, and hiring staff that take responsibility in leading different aspects of our church body. Please don't hesitate to reach out to Larry if you ever have questions about a particular expense or lack clarity on how it serves a purpose! Finally, as a general precaution and in light of the seasonality of some giving, we keep at least 3 months of operating expenses in savings.

How much do employees of the church get paid?
As with any organization, there are a few variables that influence what an employee makes at Antioch NWA. For us, those factors include how many hours they work (i.e., part-time or full-time), how many years of relevant experience they have, the median household income of our region, and whether the nature of their job is primarily ministerial (i.e., pastoral) or non-ministerial (i.e., administrative). Along these lines we have a payscale that determines the salary of each employee, which you can view here.

In order to be above reproach and set apart from any worldly standard, there are a few factors we have decided will *not* in any way impact an employee's pay. Those include:

- The seniority of an employee's position (e.g., lead pastor vs. executive pastor vs. college pastor, or director of operations vs accountant vs admin assistant)
- An employee's compensation at previous work places

- Church metrics (i.e., how many people go to our church, how much money our church brings in, etc.)

How do we decide what to give to?

Just like with the 80% we spend, we want the 10% that we give away outside of our church to lead to people knowing and following Jesus. We can be more assured of this objective when there's already a prior relationship established, so we favor giving towards needs amongst either the Antioch Movement or those we personally know. Geographically, we sow into our local region, our nation, and internationally. We also set aside 2% of the 20% for the possibility that financial hardship arises within our own church body, in order that we can offer support in those circumstances. From this framework, it is Larry's role to gather information on different organizations and Antioch teams that are in need of financial support and create a proposal to Mitchell who looks for any red flags, biases, or causes for concern and adds a final stamp of approval on where our giving is going outside of our church.

How are the financial responsibilities of the church distributed?

Heading up our church's financial stewardship is a responsibility that primarily falls in Larry's court. Larry is the one that organizes and oversees our incomes, expenses, and savings, analyzes trends, projects for the future, illustrates and communicates financial data to our church, staff, and board, and manages our organization's banking and financial software relationships. Sarah is also a helping hand in managing receipts and expenses and managing our bank accounts. However, for the sake of checks and balances, Larry does not have all authority and is not without accountability.

In terms of authority, Larry is the bottom-line decision maker; his approval is needed for anything money related. Meanwhile, Mitchell, along with our church organization at large, is accountable to our Board of Advisors, who thoroughly review our finances at least annually. In terms of accountability, Larry shares access with Maggie to our church's expense history to ensure integrity, and the executive volunteer team exists to certify the accuracy of our books and legitimacy of our processes.

Who has access to what financial information?

As a church, we have two main philosophies about sharing financial information. The first relates to our expenses and incomes, i.e., the organizing and budgeting of our money. In this category, our leaning is to be open and transparent for the sake of building trust and increasing accountability. We would rather be an open book than operate in secret, happy to share whatever insights about our finances that would be helpful and appropriate. This FAQ page is one example of how we seek to include and involve more than just the staff in our financial stewardship.

Our second philosophy relates to specific donor information (e.g., who gives what amount and how often, etc.). Here, our stance is to keep things on a 'need to know' basis only in order to protect and honor our donors and church members. Functionally, that means that only Larry has access to donor info. In the event of a necessary financial planning meeting or evaluation from our Board, church incomes are anonymized and / or aggregated prior to discussion to maintain the privacy of this information.

How did we come to these financial decisions?
Like most things, through much prayer and outside input. Mitchell, as the lead pastor of our church, gives the final 'okay' to organizational decisions. As the one who will give an account to the Lord for the direction and stewardship of our flock, Mitchell's role is to seek God earnestly and honestly in these matters. He also relies on the church-planting experiences, leadership skills, and Biblical convictions of our Board of Advisors and Antioch Movement, as well as the unity of our staff.

Have any lingering or unanswered questions? Let us know!