

---

5 Proven Steps to a Predictable

# Church Budget



# Table of Contents

**About Faithlife** | 3

**About the Author** | 3

**Introduction** | 4

**Step 1:**

Find Your “Why” | 5

**Step 2:**

Build Your Budget | 6

**Today** | 6

**Tomorrow** | 8

**Step 3:**

Identify Your Opportunities | 9

**Step 4:**

Guard Against Forgetfulness | 11

**Mobile Giving** | 11

**Step 5:**

Say Thank You | 12

**Conclusion** | 12



Since 1992, Faithlife Corporation (formerly Logos Bible Software) has grown from a couple of programmers in a basement into the largest developer of Bible study software and a worldwide leader in multilingual electronic publishing. We partner with more than 500 publishers to make more than 120,000 Bible study resources available to customers around the world.

Innovation is key to Faithlife's growth. In the last few years, we've expanded from our flagship software product, Logos Bible Software, to a variety of tools to complement your faith and Bible study experience. In June of 2011, we launched Faithlife Ebooks, a Christian ebook store and ereader app. In 2012, we released Faithlife Proclaim church presentation software along with the Faithlife Study Bible and Faithlife.com, a social network that allows Christians from all over the world to connect and share ideas online.

Most recently, we've launched an entire suite of church administrative tools including Faithlife Sites, Faithlife Sermons, Faithlife TV, Faithlife Giving, and more! And we're still just getting started.

## **About the Author**

Jess Holland is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. Jess has eight years of vocational ministry experience, including five as a communications director. Her interests include coffee, all things British, and her dog Francis.

# Introduction

When you first decided to step into a ministry role (paid or volunteer), budgeting probably wasn't on the top of your mind. You're in ministry because you care about people. You want them to experience the full life God has for them. What's budgeting got to do with it?

Creating a healthy budget lets you plan wisely for the future. It lets you know what you can say yes to, what to say no to, and how well your budget supports your vision.

Conversely, not knowing if you'll have enough money to pay staff or keep the lights on is extremely stressful. Worrying about how to make up for a winter storm keeping people away or a summer slump in giving is like a weight around your neck. It takes your focus off caring for people and can easily lead to burnout.

One church told us,

*For years, our budget was written on the back of a napkin. Really! We had some savings, but we didn't know how much we should set aside—or even how much was in our account. Honestly, we were focused on making sure we had enough money to cover our current ministry. We had a small leadership team and a couple of staff, and none of us had any financial training. It took a handful of financial mistakes for us to realize we needed a budget. Especially one that wasn't on a napkin.*

What would your life be like if you had a predictable budget? What if you had the margin to absorb a dip in giving, building repair costs, or hiring new staff?

Here's the good news: you don't need to be a financial guru to have an effective, healthy church budget. You don't even need to know how to build an Excel sheet.

We've taken the guesswork out of the process, and after you complete this guide, you'll have a unique budget contoured to your ministry needs.

## STEP 1

# Find Your “Why”

Simon Sinek is the author of multiple best-selling leadership books including *Start With Why*. Sinek’s TED Talk about *Start With Why* is the third most-watched talk on TED.com with over 40 million views. Sinek says you must always explain the “why behind the what.” His main idea is that people are inherently drawn to a mission or goal not by statistics or numbers but by inspiration and motivation. Starting with the “why” is a way of thinking and communicating that allows leaders to inspire others.

This is an important concept when it comes to budgeting. Your church has a budget to work with because of the giving and generosity of others. The motivation for giving (what) comes from a compelling vision (why). And the “why” has everything to do with the heart of your congregation—including how the leadership team manages the budget.

When a person understands how their giving plays a vital role in a cause they care about, they will give generously. In fact, churches that regularly share the impact of giving through reports and storytelling will often see giving continue to increase. The opposite is also true: churches that are secretive about how finances are being used will often see a decline in giving. Transparency and shared vision are crucial to connecting your congregation to the “why.”

You can start by answering three simple questions to define the “why” for your ministry:

- **What is the mission of your church?**
- **How does generosity play a part in achieving that mission?**
- **What Bible verses best express your mission?**

Pretty simple, right? The “why” you just defined for your ministry will determine the way you cast vision around generosity. Don’t be afraid to share this with your church or involve your congregation in the process of defining how generosity will impact the church’s mission.

---

## STEP 2

# Build Your Budget

Where your congregation is today and where you want to go should influence how you create your annual budget.

## Today

First, let’s look at where you are today.

[Start by filling out your yearly costs and income per item listed below:](#)

### Costs

---

- **Facilities**

- Mortgage/Rent
- Utilities
- Maintenance
- Supplies
- Repairs
- Building Projects or Remodels

- **Staff**

- Salaries
- Insurance and Benefits
- Personal Development

- **Administration**

- Office Supplies
- Copiers, Computers, and Other Equipment
- Software and Subscriptions

*continued...*

- **Individual Ministries or Programs**

- Kids Ministry
- Women's Ministry
- Men's Ministry
- Small Groups
- Missionary Support
- Church Plant Support
- Denomination or Association Fund
- Volunteers
  - Development
  - Swag (t-shirts, cards, mugs, etc.)

- Materials
  - Books, printing, ads
- Benevolence
- Events, Retreats, and Conferences
- Parties/Celebrations

- **Savings and Investments**

- How much are you setting aside for savings?
- What could you change to decrease or eliminate debt?
- What investments could you make?

## **Income**

---

- **Giving**

- Recurring
- One-time

- **Special campaigns**

- **Other revenue streams**

- Building rental
- Other

*continued...*

# Tomorrow

Second, let's look at where you want to go. What dreams won't be realized if you don't have your budget under control? What ministry is your church passionate about that you can't wait to get started? Write down the top three things you'd love to implement with financial margin.

**1**

**2**

**3**





## STEP 3

# Identify Your Opportunities

Now that you have a clear idea of what your annual budget looks like, identify where and when you'll communicate giving. Choose specific calendar dates where you'll address giving. Here are a few recommendations:

- **Weekly**

- Create a giving slide to put up on the big screen during service.
- Include a reminder in your weekly bulletin.

- **Monthly**

- Send out an email with an update on giving.
  - Include a story or video about how the church's generosity impacted the community.
  - Always include a thank-you note that encourages people to continue or start giving.

- **Seasonally**

- Remind people to set up recurring giving before they leave town for summer break and before winter hits, especially if storms prevent people from attending church.
- Plan for an [end-of-year giving campaign. Nearly 30% of all of 2018's donations came in during the last month of the year. December 29, 30, and 31 accounted for 11% of the year's total donations.](#)

*continued...*

Remember the church with its budget napkin? Here's the rest of the story:

*Our financial mistakes were a wake-up call to step back and address our budget. We realized that we needed a finance team that could help us make wise decisions about our resources. We'd been hiring for the positions we thought would make room for growth: a kids minister, worship pastor, etc. But what we actually needed most was an administrator because they would lead us to sustainable growth.*

*Now we have a thriving budget, and our kids ministry is exploding! What's amazing is that now we have money to put behind the way we care for kids in our church. The financial margin we have makes it possible for us to dream big about where God's leading our church, and we have peace of mind knowing we're being good stewards of what God gives us.*

## STEP 4

# Guard Against Forgetfulness

What if you could know the church's budgetary needs would be met even when people are on vacation or when a terrible storm hits and you have to cancel Sunday worship? This kind of stability is essential for a predictable church budget.

## Mobile Giving

The church budget may be on your mind often, but remember how far it is from your congregation's. They're thinking about everything from job trouble to relationship problems to getting the kids out the door for school. They need (and want) reminders, but even more, they want tools that simplify their lives.

Technology, like [mobile giving](#), ensures people can give when and where they feel led. [Recurring giving](#) alleviates the friction of having to remember to bring a check or cash to church.

Best of all, with great giving technology, you can return your focus to the mission of your church—and enjoy margin to start something new like a community outreach program, foster care, or small groups ministry.

---

## STEP 5



# Say Thank You

Never underestimate the value of thanking people for giving and supporting the vision and mission of the church. With so many other organizations vying for the time and attention of your church community, this little extra step can go a long way in helping your congregants stay on track and feel as though their gifts are appreciated and being used well.

We've heard of pastors calling every single giver just to thank them, and we've also heard about church staff who follow up with just 3–5 people each week to thank them for their gifts. Whatever method you come up with, make sure you take the time to say thank you and to reinforce how important their giving is to the kingdom work your church is doing day in and day out.

---

## Conclusion

Ministry takes money. When your church is operating from a healthy, predictable budget, you'll be on track to enjoy financial margin that can increase your ministry reach. Ask God to give you wisdom and bless your efforts as you manage what he gives your church, and don't be afraid to invest in great technology that can help simplify your administrative work and allow you to get back to focusing on ministry. If you're ready to explore your options, schedule a time to talk to one of our specialists about Faithlife's suite of church management tools. We're ready when you are.

—  
**To learn more or to schedule a demo,  
visit us online at [Faithlife.com](https://Faithlife.com).**

[Learn More](#)