

Community of Christ

GREATER PACIFIC NORTHWEST USA MISSION CENTER
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Subject: New Pastor document from MCFO

Dear New Pastor:

The following is information that will likely be very helpful as you settle into your new role as the pastor of a congregation within the Greater Pacific Northwest (USA) Mission Center (GPNW). Most of the content of this document has been gathered from materials available to Congregational Financial Officers (CFOs). Due to the size of some of the documents related to the following topics, I have chosen to create web links to them so that you can download them onto your computer and either view them on your screen or print them if you so choose. My first recommendation to you as a new pastor would be to make sure you have reliable internet access. Most of my communication with congregations and their leaders is done via email and web links. If you are not comfortable using the internet, make sure you have an assistant who can access the internet regularly for you. So without further ado, let us begin the list of topical information.

World Church Website

The World Church website contains a lot of information regarding events, beliefs, contact information, resources, etc. I would encourage you to take some time just to “snoop” around that website. You might be pleasantly surprised at what you find. It can be found at: www.cofchrist.org/

World Church Directories and Keeping the Mission Center Leaders in the Loop

One part of the World Church website that I use a fair amount is the directory listings. This includes the departments, offices and people that you may need to contact regarding congregational issues. If you have a technical issue such as with your building, contractors, legal issues, financial issues, risk management issues or any other related issues, please be sure to keep me (mission center financial officer (MCFO), the mission center president (MCP) and your congregational support minister (CSM)) in the loop. More often than not, I can provide an answer for you regarding whatever issue you may have and do so in a timely manner. If information is needed from World Church, I can often get a quicker response for you than you can by yourself. If you do need to contact World Church directly on a matter, the directories can be found at: www.cofchrist.org

World Church CFO Website

The Presiding Bishopric has set up a Congregational Financial Officer (CFO) webpage on the World Church website. There are all kinds of answers that can be found there, including but not limited to Risk Management, Legal, Shelby, Aaronic Ministries, Auditing, Estate and Financial Planning, Oblation and Membership Records. It can be found at: www.cofchrist.org/cfo/.

We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace.

CFO Handbook

The World Church has recently completed a thorough updating of the Congregational Financial Officer Handbook. It contains some very helpful information and procedures for audits, oblation and other financially related issues. It and other support documents can be downloaded at: www.cofchrist.org/CFO/handbook.asp.

Risk Management Website

The World Church has a Risk Management website that contains a lot of very useful information related to insurance and construction issues. It deals with what requirements there are for contractors that may be performing services for your congregation, there is a section on what insurance limits a group that is using your building is required to have, and even information on how to make your playground safer. The website can be found at: www.cofchrist.org/risk/.

Outside Groups Using Facilities

Any outside group that uses your facilities is required to have a formal written agreement with the church that has been prepared by World Church Legal Services. The agreement will require them to have specified insurance coverage in place. Exceptions to the insurance requirement include Community of Christ sponsored events and family events such as weddings. The Risk Management website has additional information on this subject. As always, do not hesitate to call or email me with any questions or concerns.

GPNW Website

The GPNW also has a lot of information on its website. Again, I would encourage you to take some time to just “snoop” around our website to see what resources are available for the benefit of your congregation. It can be found at: www.cofchrist-gpnw.org.

GPNW CFO FAQs

On the GPNW website there is a section for CFOs that may also be of interest to new pastors. There is a document containing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that can be found at: www.cofchrist-gpnw.org/mcfopage.html.

Shelby Access for Pastors

Shelby is the World Church database program that help manages all of our membership records and contributions, as well as several other functions. Pastors can have access to some of the information on Shelby to support them in their role. If you are interested in using Shelby, you just need to let me know.

Shelby Access for CFOs and Recorders

CFOs and Recorders can also have access to Shelby. I strongly encourage your CFO to have access to Shelby as it simplifies their job immensely, as long as they are comfortable with computers. I strongly discourage Recorders from having access to Shelby unless they are very comfortable with computers and the congregation has enough ongoing “recording.” The Shelby requirements for Recorders are probably the most difficult of anyone accessing Shelby. Things have to be done exactly right to ensure the integrity of the database. If a Recorder is only entering something once or twice a year they are going to have to re-learn how to do it each time they go to enter it. For that reason, I encourage Congregational Recorders to simply work directly with our Mission Center Recorder.

CFO and Recorder Appointments

Every year CFOs and Congregational Recorders are appointed by the MCFO and Mission Center Recorder (MCR), respectively. As far in advance of your election of officers as possible, please contact the MCFO and MCR with your recommendations for CFO and Recorder. We will issue a letter appointing (or re-appointing) the folks you have recommended unless we have reason to not support the recommendations. During your election of officers each year a sustaining vote must be taken for those appointed positions.

Copy of Budget and Audit (including Year-End Financials) to MCFO Each Year

Each congregation is to send a copy of their final financial reports for each year along with a copy of their audit report. Those audits are to be done each year in a timely manner. It is reasonable to expect the audit to be completed before the end of June the following year if not by the end of April. Specific audit procedures can be found in the new CFO Handbook as well as on the CFO portion of the World Church website. A copy of the annual congregational budget should be sent to me as soon as it has been approved. Budget planning should start sometime in late summer, early fall, with a business meeting to approve the budget sometime before the end of the year.

MCFO as Signer on Congregational Accounts

In support of sound financial procedures, it is important for the MCFO to be a signer on each and every congregational bank account. Please check with your CFO to ensure that that has occurred.

GPNW Allocations

Information regarding mission center allocations can be found in the CFO FAQs document mentioned above. Notification of allocation amount is usually done via email shortly following our fall mission center conference and periodically throughout the year. Prompt payment of allocations is greatly appreciated.

Registered Youth Workers

As the pastor, you are responsible for the management of your youth worker application process. We count on you to provide the forms for potential youth workers and to see that the interview and reference checks are completed. In addition, an annual training with your congregation's youth workers should be provided. A PowerPoint presentation to help with that process is available for download from: www.cofchrist.org/legal/RegisteredYouthWorkerTraining-2.ppt.

You may choose to designate a responsible person to complete the application process on your behalf. For the protection of our children it is imperative that these procedures be followed completely. The specific instructions for the process within the GPNW and the application form can be found on the GPNW website at: www.cofchrist-gpnw.org/mcfo/youthworkerapplication07222008withGPNWinstructions.pdf

It is helpful to encourage any and all who are interested or may be needed to work with children to become registered youth workers. It would be appropriate for all priesthood members to become registered youth workers as well. At least once a year we will send to you a list of registered youth workers for your congregation. If a person is a member of your congregation and is not on the list, they are not a registered youth worker and cannot be put in a role to supervise children.

Camper and Event Participant Financial Support

Congregations are encouraged to establish a fund either as part of their operating budget or in addition to their operating fund that is available to provide financial support to their members who are wishing

to attend camps and events. There are limited mission center funds available, so it is important for congregations to support their members in this way.

Music and Video Licensing Compliance

If your congregation is making photocopies of music, projecting lyrics on a screen or using music other than from a purchased hymnal that each person has in their hand, you may be breaking federal laws regarding licensing. A license can be purchased from organizations such as CCLI to comply with these laws. Showing videos at church breaches the private home use license on most videos. A CVLI license can help comply with those laws. For additional information on how to comply, please contact Mary Richardson, our mission center licensing expert. Her contact information can be found in the GPNW directory.

GoodSense & Financial Peace University

GoodSense and Financial Peace University are wonderful resources for personal financial management based on scriptural principles. It lends itself to small groups and can be implemented by congregations quite easily. We have several trainers within the mission center who are willing and able to help you introduce your congregation to this resource. Those trainers can be found in the GPNW directory.

Aaronic Ministries

I believe the health of our congregations is directly correlated to the health of the ministry of our Aaronic priesthood. The GPNW has an Aaronic Ministries Council that is working to support the Aaronic ministers in our mission center. For more information, please contact me directly.

Additional Questions or Issues

The members of the mission center staff are here to help you. If there is anything we can do to help, please let us know. You can find our contact information in the mission center directory.

Pastoring is a tough job. “Been there, done that.” So please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and all of the congregational leaders throughout the mission center. May your ministry continue to grow as you serve in this role.

Blessings,

Bishop Bill