HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW OUR YEARLY BUDGET IS DONE?

STEP 1: The Finance Office does a study and then projects the income for the upcoming year based upon the giving and attendance patterns of the past three years. The detailed results of that research are shared with the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee then establishes the preliminary income target for the new fiscal year by the end of May. (The Finance Committee is made up of nine volunteer members of the church elected by the congregation at the annual church business meeting. Each year, three new members are elected to serve for three years on a rotation basis. The job of the Finance Committee is to recommend a new budget to the church for the upcoming fiscal year. The Finance Committee then meets at least monthly to review income vs. expenditures based upon the budget that has been approved by the church. As needed, the committee requests information from Team Leaders and committees about specific costs and spending patterns during the fiscal year. It reviews all income and outgo of finances related to the church.)

STEP 2: In June, the different specific committees (church elected) related to the budget and different ministries of the church, led by pastors and staff, study their needs for the upcoming year and develop their proposed recommendations for our Sugar Land, Missouri City, and Richmond|Rosenberg campuses.

STEP 3: By the end of June, the Team Leaders (Executive Staff) evaluate proposed ministry budgets and needs, and jointly make a united recommendation to the Finance Committee on behalf of the staff. Specific committees related to the budget process also make their recommendations to the Finance Committee.

STEP 4: The Finance Committee meets with each Team Leader and Committee Chairman to hear their individual requests and detailed rationale for those requests. The Finance Committee evaluates the proposals made in light of anticipated dollars available and comes to a final agreement on their recommended new budget. Then in August, the Finance Committee re-evaluates the financial target for the next fiscal year and finalizes what the new proposed budget will be.

STEP 5: A copy of the recommended budget by the Finance Committee is made available to all members of the church in early September via digital distribution. A Q&A meeting is conducted by the Finance Committee on a Saturday before the vote for all interested members to attend. All Team Leaders and related committee chairmen are in attendance to answer questions.

STEP 6: On the final Sunday of September, a vote is taken during all Sunday morning services on all campuses to adopt the new proposed budget.

FINANCIAL PRACTICES OF OUR PASTORS AND STAFF

Each year at the annual church business meeting in late January, three members of the nine-member Finance Committee rotate off the committee, and three new members are voted by the church to join the Finance Committee. At the Finance Committee meeting in February, our Lead Pastor, Mark Hartman, attends the committee meeting to welcome our new committee members and review with them his commitment to follow a rigid standard of fiscal conduct by the Lead Pastor and his staff.

The Lead Pastor's comments each year to the Finance Committee include the following statements:

1. Our members trust us. The staff must prove themselves worthy of that trust every day of every year. We will always be honest with you and our church and fully cooperate with the Finance Committee to retain the church's trust.
2. Neither Pastor Mark nor any member of the staff will knowingly withhold any financial information from the Finance Committee. Everything our staff does and all that our staff spends will be on the table and visible for the Finance Committee to see. Pastor Mark requests that if any member of the Finance Office observes any practice that could be financially illegal or immoral, to report that activity directly to the Finance Committee.
3. Pastor Mark reminds the Finance Committee that he does not have access to any information about who gives to the church's budget or how much any member gives. He asks that such information remain confidential and not be available to the staff so that no one would be preferred over another because of what they give.
4. Church funds may only be dispersed according to the policies of the Finance Committee. Pastor Mark has no access to church funds. Pastor Mark, just like every other member of the staff, has to fill out check requests and provide receipts and justification for any expenditures. Pastor Mark cannot create or sign checks and does not want the ability to do so.
5. Pastor Mark expresses to the Finance Committee that one of his goals is to walk through his ministry and one day come out on the other side with no one able to honestly say that he misused church funds in any way. Pastor Mark considers our gifts to this church to be a sacred trust.
6. Pastor Mark expresses to the Finance Committee that the committee and the staff have been called by this church to work in tandem with each other to accomplish the church's purpose of loving and leading all people to life change in Christ. He asks the committee to love and work with our staff as partners in ministry. He expresses a willingness to hear alternative ideas to his own and, together, find the best answers for the church. He asks the Finance Committee to have no other goal than accomplishing God's mission for this church alongside our staff.
7. Finally, Pastor Mark asks the Finance Committee to help maintain the commitment he has made with the church to never spend more than we bring in; that we will keep our church fiscally strong and responsible.