

Living Our Values

STEWARDSHIP
2024



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

in the city for good!

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

When I received the call to be your next pastor, I wondered about what the future would hold. What sacred traditions would I be invited into? What exciting new things would come about? The beginning of a new season is always full of anticipation!

As we have continued to get to know one another, many things have become clear – your passion for Jesus' inclusion and justice, your honoring of your sacred history and place in Saint Paul, and your desire to model a transformative faith in the living God. Central Presbyterian is very much alive and thriving.

As the Session and I considered the practical matter of our budget – where our finances come from, and how we spend them – we realized it was time for the congregation to take a look “under the hood.” I believe that Central is a good and faithful steward of the financial gifts that so many provide, but sometimes, from the pews, how it all works can feel a bit opaque.

As we once again ask you to give with intention and generosity, we would like to have a church-wide conversation about how our finances work and where we want to go as a congregation. Right now, Central's ministry is “overperforming” our budget. What I mean by that, especially in staffing and caring for the facilities, is that we receive more from those resources than we are currently investing. As you read farther into this document, you'll see particular areas where our budget urgently needs to increase to support areas of ministry that are core to our identity.

As we ask you to support those resources, please spend time reading this document and getting to know our budget and our shared values. And ask questions. This is your church, and we are better when we are engaged and thoughtful in our shared ministry to worship God and proclaim Good News to the world.

Peace,
Pastor Chris

WHAT IS A NARRATIVE BUDGET?

As you read on, you'll find a "narrative budget."

What is that?

Often we think about budgets as numbers on a ledger or a spreadsheet, but those numbers are deeply connected to people, places, and values. This document presents both our current and our goal budgets in the context of the areas of ministry they relate to and the values we hold.

Budgets are value-laden documents, evidence of how we put our convictions into action. We hope that you'll find a budget that is practical, forward-thinking, imaginative, and deeply rooted in Central's core identities, as we ask for your continued partnership in making our aspirations reality.



Worship & Hospitality

Current Funding \$51,150

Goal Funding \$53,650

While church is a 24/7 thing, Sundays are special.

Each week we have an opportunity to demonstrate the shape of God's love. That love is shown in worship through exceptional music and arts that engage a diversity of expression; teaching and preaching that are practical and prophetic; welcoming voices and hands; and food that nourishes fellowship.

Sunday mornings at church are a moment like no other. Members who have been in these pews for the better part of a century mingle with those who are finding their way into Central for the first time. Where else do you have the chance to use your voice and sing on a weekly basis, or hear and speak words that envision the world as it should and could be?

Our central goal will always be to provide for the welcome, worship, and fellowship of all that pass through these doors. The funding that goes into this area includes instrumental maintenance, paid musicians, providing food for fellowship and special events, and more.



Mission & Justice

Current Funding \$22,150

Goal Funding \$22,150

We gather together to be sent back out. This is what the church is for.

For generations through today, Central has been a place that has proclaimed God's love not only in both word, but also action. We are a hands-on church. From the building of Central Towers in the 1960's up through our current mission programs, like Wednesday Community Lunches, and our work around housing, food, and anti-racist justice, being "in the city for good" is in our DNA.

Mission funding covers the expenses of hosting community events, and allows us to be generous towards organizations, like Beacon Interfaith Housing, who are partners in ministry. It also covers some expenses for our locally-famous Wednesday Lunches, where everyone is welcomed into our building to share a meal.

A hallmark of a healthy, thriving church is one that considers the well-being of those beyond our walls, and we strive to put this into practice with our hands and feet.



Faith Formation

Current Funding \$3,500

Goal Funding \$5,500

Central is a place where people of all ages are formed as people of faith, integrity, and action. Children and youth learn the stories of Jesus and have opportunities to wrestle with an authentic faith with creative expressions. Safe space is made for people of all ages and backgrounds to ask questions and receive thoughtful teaching with openness and curiosity. Values of inclusion and justice, found throughout Scripture, are hallmarks of discipleship that lead to faithful action.

Weekly and monthly events and classes are also important places to connect with our community. Whether it's middle schoolers inviting their friends to a fun outing, or adults inviting their friends to a critical discussion of justice and theology, we often meet new friends through our faith formation offerings.

Week after week, we rely on staff and (lots of) volunteers to make this possible. Our Faith Formation budget provides curricula, creative materials, Bibles, and dedicated spaces for learners of all ages. As our numbers of children and youth have dramatically increased, and with the addition of a new adult formation class, an increase in this budget is essential to provide the resources needed.



Staffing

Current Funding \$350,000

Goal Funding* \$365,000 or \$380,000

While church is all of us together, the staff play a critical role. There are the things you see week to week – inspired music and worship leadership, a clean and safe building, delicious meals, transformative youth and children’s ministry, and more.

But for every one thing that you see, there are ten that happen behind the scenes. Coordinating regular building maintenance. Strategic planning. Rehearsals and worship preparation. Maintaining finances and records. Lesson planning. The staff at Central work at the highest level, and that takes time and dedication.

Our responsibility is to honor the work of our staff both in our words of gratitude and with fair compensation. Our goal is to expand funding to provide all staff members salaries that continue to adjust for the increasing cost of living, and so that all full-time staff members can begin to receive health care benefits.

* These figures represent two options for funding health care benefits. The lower value represents reimbursement to employees at the highest allowed federal level. The higher value represents full employer-sponsored health care through the PC(USA) Board of Pensions.



Building

Current Funding \$121,000

Goal Funding \$141,500

Our building is here to serve the mission of the church. For over a century, Central has stood as a witness to God's love in the heart of Saint Paul. Inside, generations have found an open-hearted and generous sanctuary, gathering for worship, public witness, and faith formation.

Caring for this historic building is a big task. Maintaining the Richardsonian Romanesque exterior and Akron Plan interior honors our legacy as a sacred space. As a place used by hundreds every week, maintaining safety and accessibility is paramount. With regular maintenance, utilities, and major projects, there's plenty to keep us busy.

Funding regular maintenance is critical. Repairing broken toilets and light fixtures; addressing carpet-tripping hazards; fixing a leaky A/C unit; or replacing a broken stove: all that just scratches the surface of what it looks like to care for this building. Unfortunately, our current budget often falls short, leaving repairs postponed or undone, which results in higher costs in the long run. A funding increase would ensure that small projects stay small and repairs get done promptly.

In addition to general maintenance, we have already completed three phases of a six-phase plan to restore the exterior of our historic and beautiful church. In the coming months, Central will begin a capital campaign to raise funds for these important major repairs.



Administration

Current Funding \$51,150

Goal Funding \$52,950

Copier leases; bank fees; software licenses; interest payments; computer and tech equipment; and cases and cases of paper: behind all the regular church stuff is the stuff that makes that stuff work. Administrative costs like maintaining office equipment, purchasing supplies, and using reliable technology are just a few of the things that take resources. Central's publicity and marketing materials are also included in this category.

Our goal is always to keep administrative costs as low as possible without sacrificing quality. The staff of Central is exceptionally good at working efficiently and staying within a narrow budget successfully. This small increase in administrative funding reflects the reality of inflation.

FUNDING SOURCES

Where does our budget come from?

In 2023, our budget is **\$598,654**. That comes from two sources.

Our primary source of annual funding comes from your annual gifts. In 2023, we budgeted for **\$443k** in giving, representing **74% of our income**. That comes from sources like online regular giving, Sunday offerings, direct bank transfers – all options for giving to Central. It also includes items like contributions to Wednesday Lunches, which help offset the cost of those meals.

We also have investment income that we're able to draw from annually. That totals \$155k from investments of approximately \$1.5 million. Right now, we use both interest and principal, drawing approximately \$60k each year to support the program costs of the church. Our goal is to phase out that principal draw over the coming few years in order to maintain an endowment that will support the work of ministry for years to come.

Finally, we receive periodic grants for capital improvements, often from the Minnesota Historical Society. As we are registered on the National Register of Historic Places, significant grant money, matched by church contributions, are available as we look forward to ensuring the beauty and longevity of our facility.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

You've likely heard rumblings about a "capital campaign" for awhile now. You may even have taken part in some intentional conversations about it. What is it, and why does it matter?

Our building is approaching 150 years old. It has served us faithfully and is overall in good, safe, condition. It also continues to be a landmark in our neighborhood and a historically significant building.

But time takes its toll. Over the past decade, we have identified areas of concern on the exterior that need to be addressed for safety, aesthetics, and to prevent much larger costs in the long term. This includes façade work that has already begun, refurbishing the front steps, and (most critically) doing structural repairs to the bell tower.

This work will be in addition to the routine maintenance that such a large, historically-significant building needs. Fortunately, we have already received, and anticipate receiving generous grants from the Minnesota Historical Society. Those grants, measuring in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, do require matching funds from Central. In order to receive those grants, we will be asking you give towards that campaign in the coming months and years.

We know that we will be asking for your generosity more than once. At this moment, all we ask is that you give intentionally and within your means – ensuring our annual budget is our current priority.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It all adds up.

Yes, the dollars add up, but so do the time and energy and love that go into making this place one that celebrates God's love, forms one another as disciples, and sends us back out to live God's love in the world. We're here because we believe that, in a world that prioritizes self-interest, Jesus' self-giving love can transform our lives and the world.

What does that mean for giving?

In order to sustain the ministry of Central, our patterns of giving must change. In simple terms, that does mean more money, but it also means investing in patterns of giving that help us responsibly plan for the next year and beyond.

Let's put some numbers to it.

The budget presented here is between \$640k and \$660k (see the section on Staffing for an explanation of that variation). That means an increase of \$40k to \$60k, or a 6.5% to 10% increase.

To get there will require both continuing to draw from our investments for the time being, as well as asking for your generosity.

So what are we asking for?

1. Make a pledge.

By making a commitment to give, you help the Session plan thoughtfully and accurately for the coming year. Your commitment will help us remove the guesswork from budgeting. A pledge card is attached, and you can also go online to www.centralforgood.org/give to make a pledge.

2. Give what you can.

We will never ask you to give financially (or otherwise) in a way that will be to your detriment. But making a plan and following through is an act of discipleship. Even a \$5-a-month gift is generosity that we need.

3. Give regularly.

Monthly giving, rather than one large gift during the year or a few periodically, helps us meet monthly financial obligations like utilities and payroll. We have a number of options for giving, including through ACH transfer and credit cards. (Note: ACH fees are lower.)

4. Increase your gift.

If you've been a steady giver, thank you. Consider how an increase in your gift might reflect our shared mission and goals. While our goals are significant, they're attainable if we work together. If every family or individual who is a part of this congregation increased their annual gift by \$306 (that's a little over \$25/month), we would meet our budget goal for 2024.

Thank you.

We say it every week, and we always mean it: Your generosity makes possible the witness and ministry of Central, both within these walls and as God sends us beyond them.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have questions regarding current or proposed budgets,
please contact:

Pastor Chris Chatelaine-Samsen
(651) 224-4728 ext. 102
chriscs@centralforgood.org

If you have questions regarding the methods of giving,
please contact:

Anna Sanchez, Church Administrator
(651) 224-4728, ext 100
office@centralforgood.org

