

The Business Side Of Church

Wise advice concerning tax matters ...

Irrespective of size or location, all churches need to comply with basic government rules and filing requirements in order to maintain charitable status. This can be a real challenge for smaller and more isolated congregations, which tend to have few, if any, employees and rely mainly on volunteers. The church treasurer role can be a particularly demanding one.

It isn't often we speak well of the taxman, but in Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency is actively working on making the "business side of church" less onerous and genuinely striving to better understand the unique service needs and compliance challenges of small and rural charities. Initiatives include offering webinars, more on-line resources and streamlined reporting requirements. There is even a sample of Annual Charitable Return (T3010 B) for a small church on their website. For more information on this see <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/chrts/cmmnctn/src/menu-eng.html>

In a similar vein, at The United Church of Canada, we are working on "being easier to do business with". This involves streamlining procedures, simplifying forms, and improving the quality of on-line documentation and reference material and making it more accessible. Workshops that used to be held only in major urban centres will increasingly be available to all via webinar (internet broadcast/presentation). Whenever possible, we design for dial up internet users too. May we all live to see the day that high-speed is universal.

The goal is to reduce the burden of administration - for all, but especially small and rural churches. We welcome any comments or suggestions.

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