



Frequently Asked Questions about Giving

Are my donations tax-deductible?

- Hope Evangelical Free Church is a 501(c)(3) religious corporation. All qualified donations are tax-deductible.
- Payments for goods or services are not tax-deductible and will not show up on your giving history.
- Some methods of giving receive tax benefits before they are given, such as distributions from retirement accounts or donor-advised funds. These gifts will show up on your giving history but will be marked “not tax-deductible.”

What are donations to Hope Church used for?

- The **General Fund** is our main operating budget and the destination for all unspecified offerings. This budget supplies all our ministries with their needs, supports missionaries, pays our staff, and covers all operation costs.
- The **Benevolence Fund** helps us minister to the needs within the church body and through the community. Payments are distributed at the discretion of the pastors and elders, according to specific policies.
- The **Reserve Fund** is our savings for unexpected expenses and long-term goals.
- Hope Church has 5 other designated funds that we use throughout the year for specific purposes: The **Mission Fund**, the **Student Activity Fund**, the **Camp Scholarship Fund**, the **Food Pantry Fund**, and the **Capital Fund**.
- Please note that monetary gifts restricted to purchase an item that has not been approved by Hope Church will be discouraged. Every effort will be made to provide potential donors with causes with which they can identify. No restricted cash gift will be accepted if it is designated for a non-approved area/item or an area/item that is contrary to Hope Church’s policy.

How does Hope Church uphold financial accountability and stewardship?

- Hope Church is committed to honoring God's resources provided by generous people like you by practicing wise management, ethical business practices, and full accountability so that we can have maximum kingdom impact and be above reproach in our fiscal management. We accomplish this through a system of internal controls, along with budgeting and reporting processes.
- Physical donations are always handled by two unrelated church members working together. Cash and checks are kept in permanent locked deposit boxes and collected by elected Assistant Treasurers before each week's deposit.
- Receipts and/or written documentation are required for all expenditures.
- Staff and ministry heads, along with their supervisors, receive detailed budget reports every month.
- All accounts are reconciled monthly, and financial statements are presented to the Elder Board.
- The church membership receives a detailed financial report twice per year, in May and October.
- An annual internal audit is performed by 2 church members that who have been nominated and elected by the church body. Their findings are reported to the church membership in October of each year.
- Anyone may request a copy of Hope Church's most recent financial statements at any time. Call the church office at (815) 623-6545 or email treasurer@hefc.net to submit your request.

How do I access my giving statement?

- You will receive an email in January following each calendar year, which will include a secure login link to your online giving profile. After two weeks, the link will only work if you're already logged in to Church Center. You can access your statement at any time from your donor profile.
- You can access your donation history at any time by logging into your [Church Center](#) account or using the church app. Click on your picture in the top right corner, then 'Profile' and 'My Giving.' There you will see options to see your donation history, change your settings, or access your statements.
- Alternatively, you can call the church office at (815) 623-6545 or email giving@hefc.net to ask for your giving statement.

How do I update my giving information?

- You can access your donation profile by logging into your [Church Center](#) account or using the church app. Click on your picture in the top right corner, then 'Profile' and 'My Giving.' There you will see options to see your donation history, change your settings, or access your statements.
- Alternatively, you can call the church office at (815) 623-6545 and ask to speak with the Treasurer.

Can I make non-cash donations?

- **Items** that are donated to Hope Church may be tax-deductible for the fair market value of the item(s). By law, a charity cannot tell you what your donated items are worth. The treasurer's office can provide you with a letter recognizing your donation and you can fill in the fair market value. Please obtain pre-approval of any items you are donating, to verify that Hope Church can use them and won't be encumbered with more costs than benefits.
- **Planned giving** can be set up through your financial and/or tax advisor. They will help you determine the best way to make your planned gift. Some planned giving options may come from your annuity, trust, life insurance plan, retirement assets, or estate.
- **Real estate** ownership can be transferred to a charity, possibly with no liability on income or estate taxes on the appreciation. No gift of real estate will be accepted without prior approval of the Elder Board and being appraised by a party chosen by Hope Church who has no business or other relationship to the donor. Contact your real estate or tax advisor for more information on giving real estate.
- **Marketable securities**, such as transferring ownership of stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, are another way to maximize your giving. You may receive an immediate tax deduction for the fair market value of your securities at the time of donation, and you pay no capital gains tax on the difference between your cost and the fair market value. Please consult with your tax or financial advisor to determine the best method to give, and then contact the church treasurer's office for further instructions.