



A Note from the Shoreline Conference Finance Team:

As we move forward together as the Shoreline Conference, we are bringing together churches with different experiences and histories related to Ministry Share reporting. For some of our churches, the monthly ministry share reporting process outlined here will feel familiar. For others, this will be a new way of engaging in ministry share participation.

This document is intended to provide a common framework and shared understanding for all Shoreline churches as we move into a unified ministry share reporting system. Under previous models, some churches paid a fixed monthly amount based on financial information from prior periods, while others already reported and paid based on more current financial activity. The approach outlined here reflects our commitment to a system that is consistent, transparent, and responsive across the entire Shoreline Conference.

This document outlines:

- The ministry share reporting and invoicing process
- The monthly reporting timeline
- How invoices are generated and paid
- Answers to frequently asked questions, especially for churches transitioning into this system

Whether this process is new or familiar, our goal is to provide clarity, consistency, and support as we take this next step together as one conference. If questions arise, the Shoreline Conference Finance Team is here to help. **Please feel free to email questions to finance@shorelinefmc.org.**

Thank you for your partnership in the shared ministry and mission of the Shoreline Conference.

Blessings!

Shoreline Finance Team

Shoreline Conference Ministry Share Reporting Process

Ministry share invoices are calculated using monthly financial data reported by each church.

Monthly Reporting Timeline

- Churches report the prior month's financial activity using an online reporting form. Reports are due **no later than the last day of the following month.**
 - *Example: May financial data may be reported at any time in June, but must be submitted by June 30.*
- Shoreline uses the reported data to calculate the ministry share invoice for the following month.
 - *Example: May data reported in June is used to generate the July Ministry Share invoice. The invoice will be emailed on or around July 5 and will be due on July 16th.*

Invoicing and Payment

- Ministry share invoices are emailed on or around the 5th of each month. **Tip:** *Ministry share invoices are emailed through Aplos. If you do not see the email, please check your junk or spam folder.*
- Payment is due by the 16th of each month. Payment may be made via:
 - Zelle, or
 - Checks mailed to:
Shoreline Conference
PO Box 16
Spring Arbor, MI 49283

Reporting Method

- Churches submit their monthly financial information through an online reporting form.
- Each church is asked to designate **one primary financial contact email address.** This email will be used for:
 - Ministry share invoices
 - Reporting reminders
 - Finance-related communication from Shoreline

Ministry Share Calculation

- Ministry shares are calculated at **7.6%** of Adjusted Church Income
- 4.4% supports Shoreline Ministries and 3.2% is remitted as EPP to FMCUSA to support denominational ministries
- **Adjusted Church Income = Total Church Income – Exclusions**
Exclusions:
 - Capital Funds Revenue
 - Church Planting Funds Revenue
 - Ancillary Revenue
 - Bequest Revenue
 - Rent Revenue from another FMC church
 - Passthrough Revenue

Summary: Churches report the prior month's financial data online, Shoreline issues the ministry share invoice around the 5th of the following month, payment is due by the 16th, and invoices may be paid via Zelle or by check mailed to Shoreline Conference.

Ministry Share Definitions

Ministry Shares: Ministry Shares are the primary way local Free Methodist churches financially support both their annual conference and the broader work of the denomination. Through Ministry Shares, conferences fund their own ministry and administration and meet their obligation to the FMCUSA Equal Participation Program (EPP).

Equal Participation Plan (EPP): EPP ensures that all conferences contribute fairly to shared denominational and global ministries. While EPP is assessed to conferences, local churches participate through Ministry Shares, allowing the Free Methodist Church to pursue its mission together at the local, regional, and national levels. Through the funding provided by EPP, Free Methodists work together to address global and national mission work, leadership development, church health and oversight, disaster response and compassion ministries, and a shared identity and voice.

Revenue: In a church, revenue is the money and other financial support received during a period – primarily through contributions and ministry-related income – that increase the church’s resources and enables it to fulfill its mission. Revenue is **NOT** internal transfers between church funds or loan proceeds.

Capital Funds Revenue: revenue that is received by a church that is designated for long-term capital purposes, such as land acquisition, building construction, major renovations, insurance settlements, or mortgage principal reduction.

Church Planting Funds Revenue: revenue received by a church that is designated or restricted for the purpose of supporting the planting, development, or multiplication of other churches rather than for the operating expenses of the receiving church.

Ancillary Revenue: revenue received by a church from secondary, business-type activities – such as operating a school, day-care, or coffee shop – that are incidental to the church’s primary ministry mission. Ancillary revenue is generated through exchange transactions instead of from donations.

Bequest Revenue: revenue that is received by a church as a charitable gift from a donor’s estate after the donor’s death, typically as a one-time contribution that may be restricted or unrestricted. Bequest revenue is NOT ongoing donations or pledges made during a donor’s lifetime, investment or interest earnings generated after the bequest is received, or proceeds from the sale of church property or other assets.

Passthrough Revenue: money a church collects and remits on behalf of others when a church is acting solely as a conduit and **does not exercise discretion or control over use of the funds**. Pass-through revenue typically includes participant payments for events, training, conferences, or mission trips and is **not eligible for charitable contribution receipting**. Exception: For this purpose, missions-related contributions may be classified as pass-through revenue, even if they are receipted and the church retains discretion and control, as long as the funds are used to support mission trip participants.

Tip: If your church records passthrough funds through a liability account instead of income and expense accounts, don't forget to add those amounts to Total Revenue on this form before listing them as excluded passthrough revenue.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is Shoreline choosing to use a monthly ministry share system instead of the familiar fixed rate system many of us are accustomed to?

A: That's a great question, and it's the biggest change churches feel in this new process. Under the old system, your ministry share amount was fixed each month because it was calculated using financial information from the past. That made it predictable, but it also meant your payments didn't always reflect what was actually happening in your church right now. The new system uses recent financial data, so your ministry share amount may fluctuate month to month. When giving is higher, the ministry share may be higher; when giving is lower, the ministry share adjusts downward. While this takes away a fixed monthly number, it creates a fairer and more responsive system that aligns your ministry share with your church's current financial reality.

Q: How are we supposed to budget if the amounts change each month?

A: Most churches already experience monthly variation in income. This system simply mirrors that reality on the ministry share side. Many churches budget using an annual projection and then monitor ministry share as a percentage of income rather than a fixed dollar amount.

Q: What if we have a really strong or really weak month?

A: That's actually one of the benefits of the new system. A strong month contributes more; a weak month contributes less. Over time, those fluctuations tend to balance out, rather than locking you into a number that may not fit your current situation.

Q: This feels riskier than the old way.

A: It does feel different because it's more transparent and responsive. The old system felt stable, but that stability came from using old data. The new system trades predictability for fairness and real-time accuracy.

Q: Does Shoreline Conference accept electronic payments for ministry share invoices?

A: At this time, Shoreline Conference does not offer an online invoice payment option as we work to keep administrative and operating costs as low as possible for churches. However, we do accept **Zelle payments** and encourage churches to use bill pay through their local bank as a convenient way to streamline payments. The Shoreline Finance Team is also happy to help churches explore other expense management tools (such as Ramp, which allows ACH payments to vendors) if additional options would be helpful.

Q: Can we submit corrected numbers if we discover an error after submitting the form?

A: Yes! If you notice an error *before* you pay your ministry share invoice, you're welcome to submit corrected numbers by email. When you submit your monthly report, you'll receive an email confirmation. The confirmation email includes a copy of the information you submitted. If you later realize something needs to be adjusted, simply reply to that confirmation email and choose "Reply All." That way, everyone who needs to be aware of the correction will stay informed.

To help us keep records clean and accurate, please don't submit a new form to correct a previously submitted one, as this can create duplicate entries in our system. If you have any questions, feel free to email us as finance@shorelinefmc.org.

Q: Can more than one person receive ministry share invoices and reminders?

A: To keep the ministry share invoicing process consistent and efficient, each church is asked to designate **one primary email address** to receive invoices and reminders. If additional individuals need access to the invoice, we recommend setting up automatic email forwarding rules so the information can be shared internally.

Q: What happens if we miss the reporting deadline?

A: We ask churches to submit reports by the end of the following month so invoices can be issued on time. If you anticipate a delay or miss the deadline, please email us as soon as possible. We're happy to work you to keep things on track.

Q: Who should complete the monthly income form?

A: Any designated church leader or finance team member may complete the form. Many churches assign this responsibility to their treasurer or administrator, but the choice is up to the local church.

Q: Who should we contact if we have questions about our invoice or reported numbers?

A: Please feel free to reach out to finance@shorelinefmc.org with any questions related to monthly income reporting or ministry share invoicing.