Thinking about our 2024-2025 budget

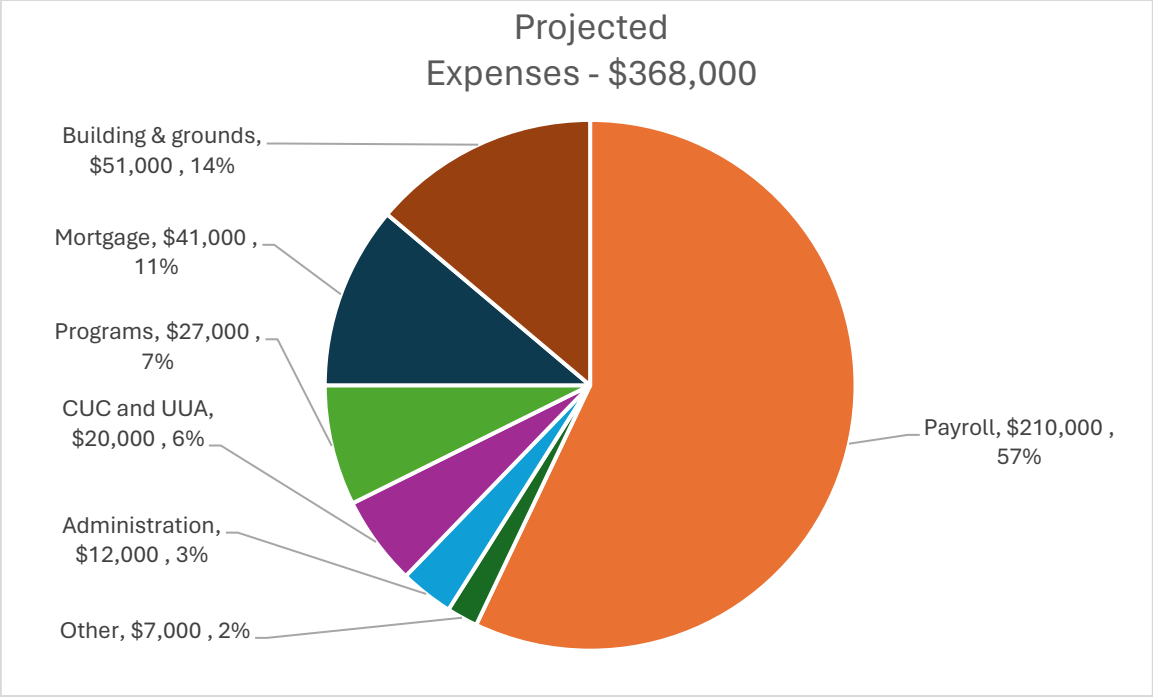
Our church exists and thrives only because members and friends care enough to invest themselves and their resources in what we do. Remarkably, “we” have been doing this in Winnipeg, through thick and thin, since 1891.

Our budget challenge is to identify resources to **support our community and its mission and values sustainably, efficiently, and effectively** (Mission into Action).

Expenses

Let’s begin with dollars needed to support core operations. Here is a preliminary projection of 2024-2025 expenses totaling $368,000, based on staff and committee input.

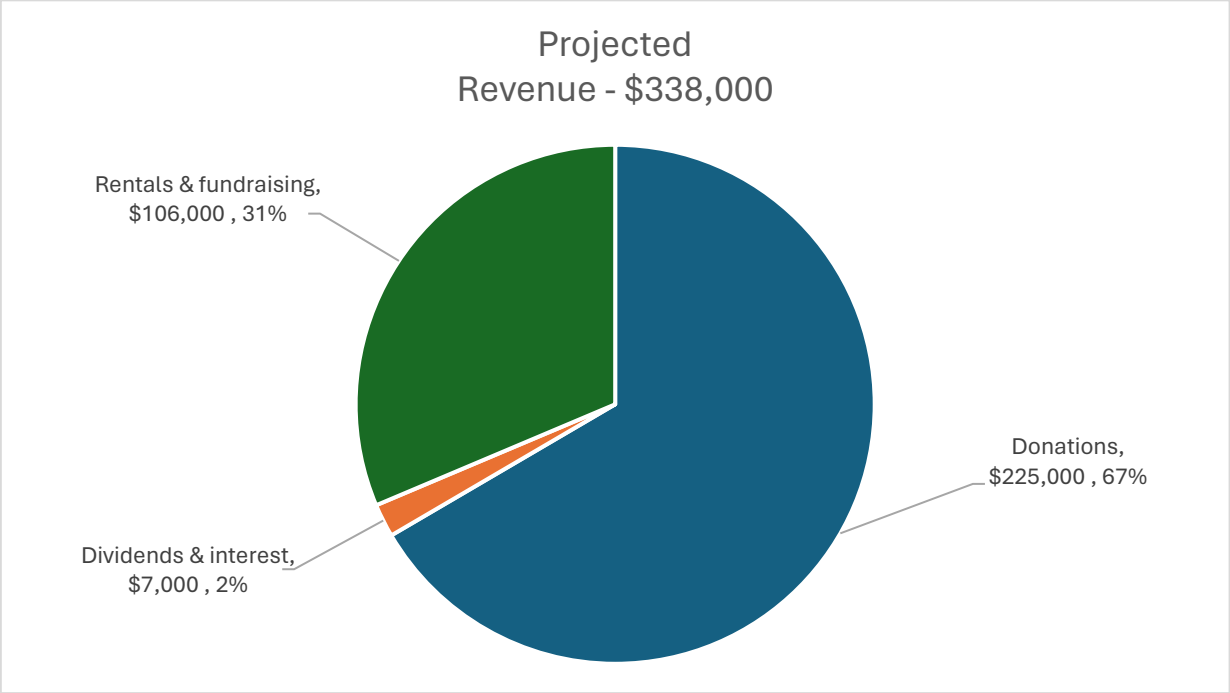
- Payroll: $210,000 (57%)
- Building and grounds: $51,000 (14%)
- Mortgage: $41,000 (11%)
- Programs: $27,000 (7%)
- CUC and UUA: $20,000 (6%)
- Administration: $12,000 (3%)
- Other: $7,000 (2%)



Revenues

How can we pay for these costs? First choice is to generate current income, depicted below. Projected 2024-2025 Operating Revenue, $338,000:

- Donations: $225,000 (67%)
- Rentals and fundraising: $106,000 (31%)
- Dividends and interest: $7,000 (2%)



Dividends and interest from endowment and savings provide just 2% of revenue. We project one third of income to come from rentals and two-thirds from general donations (excluding restricted donations for refugees, capital, endowment, Harvest, or Minister's discretionary fund).

Choices

Projected income falls $30,000 short of costs, a deficit.

Volunteer choices.

Not counted above is the huge value of dedicated volunteers working in all corners of our operations, for which otherwise we might have to pay tens of thousands of dollars more. The choices of these wonderful volunteers directly affect our budgeting needs.

Beyond volunteer choices, we need to make collective and individual choices about money.

Pledging choices

Two-thirds of our projected revenue comes from pledges and donations of individual members and friends. Whether we exceed or fall short of that projection very much depends on the choices you and others make. We are indeed fortunate that individual choices of countless members and friends over the years have allowed us to thrive since 1891. But we can never take such generosity for granted. It must be renewed each year by each of us.

Please consider how much you can contribute to make our renewal sustainable.

Thoughts on our upturn

- Our church is a passionate, inclusive caring community with proven resilience in the face of adversity and a mission the world needs. To complement our many volunteers, we have employees serving caretaking, A/V, Zoom, web, rentals, RE, music, and ministerial support for pastoral care, programs, Sunday services, community connections and membership.
- We have kids back in church, covenant groups and other programs, pastoral programs meeting regularly (in addition to events arranged by program volunteers), membership workshops, more continuity in sermons, music and choir restored, and 100 or more persons attending services in person and by zoom. We have foundations to build on.
- We want to invest more in professional support, and Stefan has facilitated reflection on options for a ministerial future.
- Our employees benefit the church community and its mission and deserve our support for that reason.
- They also have the potential to bring in revenue – not only rentals, but also programs that draw folks in and keep them participating – and giving. The programs that serve our needs can serve a wider public, some of whom might choose to join us.
- In addition to supporting our employees, we need publicity, invitations, and welcoming to widen the circle of participation. A new sign out front can help that effort.
- We also need to continue to cultivate in old and new participants the generosity that sustains us. Generosity is not just dollars, but includes them, when we are able.
- How much? The Fair-Share Contribution Guide helps weigh together personal resources and commitment. Some churches recommend a “UU tithe” — 5% to the church, and 5% to other charitable organizations.
- It may also help to think of more concrete targets. For example, if you participate in our church but don’t yet pledge or donate, please consider a starting commitment of $10 a month to cover the dues we pay on your behalf to the CUC and UUA. If you can add more, that will begin to share the costs of the building and programs that you enjoy, the employees who support them, and the outreach to impact our community.

- If you have been giving the same amount over several years, consider whether your resources permit an increase of, say, 10% or more to reflect the rising costs we face.
- If you have the resources and generosity to donate to United Way or other agencies serving the community, consider increasing your donations through our Share the Plate program. You will thereby support organizations that carry out our values. But you will also foster direct relations between these groups and our church, while supporting the church as well.
- Some folks have precarious income. No pledge or donation is too small. Giving what you can when you can, with a generous spirit and a volunteering hand is abundant generosity that lifts us up.

These thoughts are but starting points for your own reflection. One piece of advice from the Bloomington, Indiana UUs is to “make your pledge in an amount you feel good about in your current circumstances.... Give until it feels good.”