



Stewardship of Resources & People

This document last updated 8 April 2020

Stewardship During Covid-19

During Covid-19 it will be important to be good stewards of the resources God has given and gives the Church. This resource is intended to help Ministers, Servant Leaders and Trustees to reflect on their stewardship responsibilities of both people and resources during Covid-19. It is designed to:

- Support financial decision-making at the local level;
- Provide the movement with early information where there is difficulty; and
- Identify areas of need for support.

Stewardship Considerations

We are facing the biggest financial challenge in our history. If we take no action to monitor our giving and reduce expenses (even with the government wage subsidy) we will face sustainability challenges. Good stewardship is vital. Our ability to endure tough financial times relies on the hard work and generosity of our staff and our supporting body. During this time, we find ourselves in the position where we need more than ever the help and generosity of the church, its people and its employees.

Our key strategy is to understand our giving, income and expenses. We need to consider how we manage our giving, access the support being offered by the Government, and where appropriate reduce our expenses in a managed way. The largest part of our expenses and operating costs is salaries, so when brainstorming about how to reduce expenses, this is an obvious area to look at.

We do not take lightly requesting you to look at your church giving and expenses. We also know that, for some, the money pastors and church/trust employees receive is the sole income for a family and/or is crucial to keeping the family financially stable.

We are doing our very best to support our team and keep the movement afloat and ready to serve the community. ***For this reason, we ask that before your Servant Leaders or Trustees make any decisions that affect the livelihood of staff, they talk with Peter Benzie or Brett Jones who will offer support and guidance along with access to our wider movement resources.***

Stewardship Questions

The primary purpose of this resource is to assist Ministers, Servant Leaders and Trustees to ***gather information*** that will ensure wise decisions are made in the coming weeks. It is not

a commitment from you to do these things; this is information-gathering focused on being good stewards. The questions below are intended to help Ministers, Servant Leaders and, where relevant Trustees, to consider stewardship responsibilities during Covid-19.

1. What is the current monthly level of giving and income for your Church and/or Trust?
2. What ways can you encourage those who give in cash on Sundays, and who intend to continue giving, to move to online giving during the home isolation? What assistance do you need to achieve this?
3. What is the current monthly Church and/or Trust expenses?
4. What is the monthly gap between current giving, income and expenses?
5. What expenses are not required now that the home isolation period has begun?
6. What are the staff's work requirements during the period of home isolation? For some it may be more and for others it may be less.
7. Have you applied for the Government Employee Subsidy? What assistance do you need to apply for this (see WMCNZ guidelines for applications).
8. Because salaries are our largest expense, are staff in a position to receive a reduced salary that will help balance the difference between giving, income and expenses? If so, what is the minimum amount staff would be willing to receive while remaining an employee?
9. Would staff be willing to use a portion (or all) of their available annual leave to get us through the next period-of-time?
10. Are staff in a position to do computer-based work from home? If so, how many hours do you think they could do per week?
11. Are there staff that could help other churches during this time and have their work effort redirected to these areas?
12. Are staff in a position where they could take unpaid leave? If so, for how long?
13. Are there any staff in a position that they would like to stop working for the foreseeable future or even retire?
14. Do the Servant Leaders and Trustees have the human resource and legal knowledge to manage any changes? If they don't or are unsure, Peter Benzie or Brett Jones can assist with identifying the support required.
15. How do we help the staff who are impacted due to changes in their income?
16. Are there any congregation members in need of financial support during this time?

Please review these questions realistically with your Servant Leaders and where appropriate your Trustees.

If appropriate, we encourage you to seek any legal advice before making any decisions. Whilst they can't provide legal advice Peter Benzie or Brett Jones can assist you in finding those who can.

Employee/Staff Communication

It is important the Church and Trustees communicate with their employees regularly and clearly. These conversations must be held with the Church Employers (Servant Leaders) or Trustees.

The WMCNZ can support and advise Servant Leaders and Trustees but cannot instruct or communicate directly with their employees. At all times we encourage open, honest, face-to-face (via video) conversations with your leaders and their staff.

If you are currently a part of CAF (Central Accounting Facility) and identify a need to take steps to secure your ability to pay staff (including through the Government employee subsidy) please contact Brett Jones in the first instance.

The WMCNZ leadership wants to offer its full support to you, your Servant Leaders/Trustees and your congregation. As the weeks progress I am sure there will be many examples of God's grace and blessing to be shared and that we will have many opportunities to serve and give.