

2020–2021 Summit Budget Recommendation

The Summit Church directional elders recommend approving the 2020–2021 budget of \$35,324,003. Members will have the opportunity to vote digitally at summitchurch.com/members during the weekend of Aug. 29 and 30. [We encourage your questions](#) and want you to be as informed as possible as you pray and prepare to vote to approve the [budget for the coming year](#).

Your Generosity at Work

The Summit Church exists to create a movement of disciple-making disciples, in RDU and around the world. As disciples, we are called to be generous stewards of all God has given to us. Here are some ways your generosity is and has been at work at the Summit. Because of your generosity:

We have been able to flexibly shift in order to keep following the Holy Spirit.

As we press into the “new normal” of quarantine life, your generosity has allowed us to invest in Summit Online—our current primary strategy to reach all people with the gospel. We’ve also been able to help those affected by COVID-19, care for our missionaries both on and off the field, and encourage our brothers and sisters who are in prison.

We can continue our long-term plan toward regathering well.

Though we’re unable to gather in person, we’re still preparing for the future. This includes pursuing plans to build permanent locations for both our Alamance County and North Durham campuses as well as repairing and remodeling older facilities like our Blue Ridge campus.

We can follow the Holy Spirit, no matter what circumstances the future brings.

We look forward to the future with hope, not primarily because we are secure in our finances, but because we know and trust that God will provide for his people.

Voting on the Budget

To vote, you must be a [covenant member](#) of The Summit Church. As you prepare, here are the answers to a few frequent questions related to the annual budget process.

Why does the congregation vote on the budget?

The congregation is required to vote on the budget because of our bylaws, as we are a Jesus-ruled, elder-led, and congregationally accountable church. That means that while the elders provide leadership and oversight for the church, they are accountable to the congregation. Also, while church oversight is the responsibility of the elders, carrying out the ministry and mission of the church is the responsibility of the entire body (Ephesians 4:11–12).

As covenant members, it is our responsibility to 1) approve the budget, 2) to fund the budget through generosity, and 3) to carry out the mission of the church through our participation in ministry. When we vote on the budget, in essence, we are affirming the leaders who have recommended it, the mission it will fund, and our willingness to carry it out in the coming year. It is a vote of approval and participation.

How can I vote for the budget with confidence, knowing it's responsible, effective, and funding the right things?

This is an important question, and there are three important aspects to it—the process, the leadership, and our mission and ministry effectiveness.

1. The Process

Each year, we begin the budget process by forecasting our attendance and revenue. By looking at historical trends, we are able to better anticipate revenue for the coming year (and we have a fairly accurate record of doing so). This year, however, the coronavirus has made forecasting more difficult. So, while we had been seeing 8 to 10 percent revenue growth, the full impact of our growth *next* year is unclear. Because of this, our directional elders decided it would be wise to implement a more modest budget with a smaller projected growth rate of 5 percent. Almost all of this increase will be allotted for increases to our fixed costs. We stand ready to adapt to our changing financial situation as it becomes more clear in the coming days.

Regardless, we always work with a conservative estimate, and once we have that number, we set aside a percentage of the projected revenue for our **growth and expansion reserve**. The remainder becomes what we use to plan our **ministry programming budget**. Over the course of several months, our directional elders, executive team, ministry leaders, and accounting team work diligently through a process of planning and review to come up with a budget that meets all of our fixed costs and adequately funds all of our ministries and **sending** (missions).

2. The Leadership

While the directional elders oversee this process, there are many other leaders who are involved in the details, from our accounting team to the ministry leaders at each campus who oversee the specific ministry areas. Every area of our budget has multiple eyes on it because accountability is the highest priority. The Summit is an [ECFA-certified church](#) (Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability), so we go through an external audit every year.

3. Our Budget and Mission Effectiveness

Growth and Expansion Reserve - \$9.2M

Our **growth and expansion reserve** is used to pay on our existing debt and save money for future building projects. While launching campuses in mobile locations is a cost-effective way to begin reaching people, in order to sustain long-term ministry, the transition to permanent buildings is our goal.

Our growth and expansion reserve strategically enables us to build cash on hand, allowing us to be less reliant on outside financing to fund future building projects. We collaborate with financial consultants who work with some of the largest churches in the nation to help us continually update our long-term financial strategy. Our financial position is one of the strongest among churches of our size.

One of the greatest blessings we have is that our congregation is so generous that our per-person giving average is one of the highest for churches in the nation. We see this as your response to God's generosity, putting him first in everything, and believing in the mission he has given us. Our strategy of reserving a significant percentage of each year's annual income for debt reduction and saving for future growth helps us be better prepared to continue to reach people

today and in the future. **This year, we are setting aside 26 percent of our income for growth and expansion.**

Debt Servicing

During this fiscal year, we forecast our debt servicing to be \$2.9 million. Additionally, as authorized by the directional elders in April, The Summit Church applied for and received Paycheck Protection Program funds of \$2.3M (part of the government's CARES act in response to COVID-19). We do not expect any debt servicing on this payment, as we expect it to be fully forgiven. If you have further questions regarding the Paycheck Protection Program, please [contact us.](#)

Ministry Programming Budget - \$26.1M

Ministry programming is the budget it takes to run the church, pay the salaries and bills, and fund all of our ministries, including **sending** (missions). **This year, we have allocated 74 percent of our revenue, or total budget, for this area.** There are a lot of fixed expenses in this budget, but this is also the budget that funds our ministries.

We want to make disciples, not just converts, and that involves ministry for all ages, for families, small groups, and more. Our central and campus ministry teams work together with every member who serves to fulfill our mission of being a disciple-making church. If you have grown as a disciple at the Summit or know any of the 12,000 people who regularly engage with our ministries, that, in some way, is this budget at work. Of course, the people who carry out the ministry are the most important asset we have, but there are a lot of resources that are essential and helpful to all that is done in our very active church body.

Sending (Missions) Budget - \$4.5M

From our ministry programming budget, we have allocated 17.3 percent to sending (missions). At the Summit, we believe every member is sent, whether that's internationally or to serve our local community, even during the current pandemic. Because of your generosity, we have been able to give over 100,000 meals to marginalized families and direct over \$350,000 to our coronavirus relief efforts. And since 2002, we have sent out over 1,250 members to serve long-term in church planting. In all this, we are humbly thankful that God has taken what we've offered and done so much! **Our vision is to plant 1,000 churches by 2050, and we are over a**

third of the way there! God did that, but he used your faithful generosity through The Summit Church's budget.