

Sample Local Church Policy: Verifying Faithful Tithe Returning for Church Office Eligibility

Purpose

To implement the 2025 Church Manual requirement that those nominated for church office be returning a faithful tithe, while upholding the highest standards of confidentiality, fairness, and pastoral integrity.

Scope

This policy applies to the local church nominating committee process and the individuals responsible for verifying tithe eligibility.

Guiding Principles

- Stewardship is a spiritual matter and must be approached with prayer, compassion, and care.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- Determinations should be limited to a simple "eligible / not eligible" report — not detailed financial information.
- The process must avoid subjective judgment or coercion.
- Legal obligations (e.g., PIPEDA, GDPR, state laws) must be respected.

Definitions

- **Faithful tithe returning:** A pattern of consistent giving in accordance with biblical and denominational principles (normally 10% through the local conference/mission/union or as directed by the conference), as evidenced by recent months of giving history. This determination should not be based on income comparisons or require tax documents or income verification.
- **Treasurer:** The church officer who maintains donation records and executes this policy in collaboration with a second designated individual.

Verification Process

1. **Designation of Reviewers:**
 - The church treasurer and one additional, unrelated verifier shall be appointed to verify eligibility.
 - The second verifier may be the nominating committee chair, an assistant treasurer, or another church officer.
 - The pastor may serve in this role *only if* they agree to limit his/her access to giving records and receive eligibility status in summary form.

2. Review Parameters:

- Eligibility is based on a pattern of returning tithe through regular church channels (typically via the local conference).
- The determination should reflect recent, consistent giving — generally over the past several months — and should not attempt to calculate percentages based on income or request documentation such as tax returns.
- The treasurer and verifier will provide a **yes/no** response to the nominating committee regarding each proposed name.
- No dollar amounts, giving totals, or personal circumstances will be disclosed.

3. Clarifying How Faithfulness is Evaluated:

- The standard for determining faithfulness should focus on *consistent tithe returning* over time, not an analysis of income-to-giving ratio.
- Treasurers and reviewers should never request or examine tax returns, pay stubs, or other income documents to estimate a member's earnings.
- This approach protects privacy and avoids introducing unnecessary scrutiny or economic comparison into the process.

4. Confidentiality:

- Names, reviews, and outcomes must not be discussed beyond the two reviewers and the appropriate nominating leadership.
- All printed or digital records used for verification must be kept secure and deleted after the process is complete.

5. Handling Exceptions:

- If a nominee returns tithe through another official church entity (e.g., different conference), the committee may request proof from the individual or contact the receiving entity (with consent).
- If a nominee disagrees with a determination, they may appeal to a mutually agreed-upon third party (e.g., conference treasurer or executive committee delegate).

6. Education and Support:

- The church board should ensure that members are educated regularly about biblical stewardship and the storehouse principle.
- The purpose of this policy should be communicated in a spirit of grace, not legalism.

7. Legal Consultation:

- This policy should be reviewed and approved in consultation with the local conference's legal or risk management counsel to ensure compliance with data protection regulations.

Legal Disclaimer

This policy does not constitute legal advice. Each church is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable laws and should consult with the appropriate legal professionals within their conference, mission, or union.

This sample policy is provided to help local churches faithfully apply the new Church Manual guidance in a way that respects both the spiritual intent and the legal/ethical implications of the amendment.