

Diocese of Ontario

COMMON MINISTRY & MISSION (CMM)/ASSESSABLE INCOME - FAQs

Q. What is CMM?

A. As a worldwide family of churches, the Anglican Communion has more than 70 million adherents in 38 provinces spread across 161 countries. The Anglican Church is an interdependent church, where parishes, dioceses and provinces help each other to fulfill their ministries by offering mutual support in terms of financial assistance and the sharing of resources. In our diocese, Common Ministry and Mission (CMM) is how we refer to our system of sharing in the work of the wider Church, and it is based on a “fair share” process of comparing parish by parish actual (assessable) income.

Q. Who determines how Assessable Income is calculated?

A. The calculation of assessable income has been periodically reviewed and studied by small groups established by Synod. The most recent ratification took place at Synod 2004, and the current system was upheld by a vote, which included representatives from all of the congregations in the diocese, and continues to be considered as fair and as simple a system as can be achieved.

The system used by the Diocese of Ontario adheres to the set of recommended best practices endorsed by the Office of Development of the Anglican Church of Canada as recently as 2006.

Q. What is the basis for the Assessable Income calculation?

A. During the formal reviews and discussions around our current system, many possibilities were examined. A variety of statistics were reviewed for possible use in developing a fair share formula; Average Sunday Attendance (ASA), number of identifiable givers, and number of families and individuals on the parish list are some examples. Ultimately, it was agreed by Synod that the ability of a parish to raise funds would form the basis for the calculation, and the best measure of this ability would be the income actually raised. Therefore, a parish’s share of next year’s CMM is based on last year’s actual (assessable) income raised.

Q. Is all parish income subject to CMM, or are there exemptions?

A. Not all income is subject to CMM, there are some exemptions. Income raised for capital expenditures is one such exemption. Synod also allows other exemptions by ‘designating’ extraordinary situations from time to time that warrant it. Some examples are: Primates World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), Forward in Christ Mission (FICM), Residential Schools Settlement Fund contributions, and income used to finance curacies. Other refinements to the system pertain to generally accepted arithmetical processes more than to the system itself. For example only the net income from a fund raising project is assessable. Similarly, if a parish holds an educational event like a one day bible study where participants contribute \$10 to cover the cost of lunch and coffee, the \$10 would be deducted in the determination of the net cost of the event, not included as income on the ‘green sheet’.

Q. Why is income for mission and outreach deemed assessable?

A. All parish activity, by definition, is mission and outreach in nature. If a parish collects contributions for the purpose of parish mission and outreach, then the resulting donations received legitimately form an integral part of the measure of a parish’s ability to raise funds (assessable income). This ability is compared with other parishes’ ability and is used to determine

each parish's fair share of CMM. Funds used to contribute to other registered charities are not considered assessable.

Q. But we raised \$400 for the local food bank, so does that mean we can only send them \$300 and the rest has to go to CMM?

A. Funds designated by a donor for a specific use should always be allocated in full for that specific use. It would be inappropriate to do anything different. If a parish has an outreach Sunday for the local food bank and raises \$400 for that purpose, then that is the amount that should be sent to the Food Bank. However, keep in mind that Canada Revenue Agency only allows charities to transfer funds to other registered charities.

Q. Our congregation partnered with three other Churches on a refugee outreach initiative and raised \$40,000 in total, but only \$10,000 can be attributed to our own congregation's ability to raise funds. Is the whole \$40,000 now assessable because it went through our bank account?

A. No. Undoubtedly there will be times when we find ourselves collecting funds on behalf of another group, or participating in an event in partnership with another group, or some other unusual one-time situation that can legitimately be argued is not a regular part of a parish's life even though it found its way into the accounting records. When this happens, the Diocese encourages congregations to bring their concerns to the Financial Officer in order to address these special circumstances.

Q. It feels like we are being penalized for outreach efforts, is this fair?

A. It is important to pay healthy recognition to the fact that CMM itself represents a significant component of any parish's mission and outreach, which congregations can use to recognize and celebrate the wonderful ministries parishioners are making possible through their generous gifts. The diocese strongly encourages congregations to show CMM as part of the outreach section of their budget, rather than as simply an administrative cost. For further assistance in this matter, the diocesan budget has been produced in narrative format and we are glad to make copies available to anyone and everyone in your congregation if this is helpful.

Q. My congregation is struggling financially, why can't the Diocese help us by reducing our CMM?

A. The diocese acknowledges that there is no perfect system for sharing of diocesan costs by parishes/congregations. Whatever system is in place there will always be those who feel they are not being treated fairly. Experience has shown us that it is when congregations encounter financial difficulties that they begin to call into question their CMM contributions. The reality is that CMM cannot realistically be considered the root cause of a congregation's financial problems. Accordingly, eliminating or reducing it would not prove to be a panacea for financial woes.

Thanks to every congregation's CMM investment, the diocese is able to employ trained staff who will work with congregations when difficulties arise to address the root causes of financial strain. Through the office of the DEO, the Financial Officer, and the Stewardship and Congregational Development Office the Diocese is ready and willing to work with all congregations, one-on-one, to develop a plan to address financial challenges and to set parishes back on the road to healthy vibrant ministry.

