

CHURCHTECHSTACK FIELD GUIDE

Stop Overpaying for Church Software

The Church Software Savings Guide

Free and discounted tools your church qualifies for • What churches really pay • Contract traps to dodge • A one-week savings plan

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Prices and programs as of October 2026. Details change, so check the vendor's page before you buy.

Most churches overpay for software. Here's how to stop.

I'll confess something. For years I treated our church's software bills like the weather. They showed up, I grumbled a little, and I paid them. A subscription here, a "small" monthly fee there, a renewal I forgot about until the card got charged. None of it felt like a big deal on its own.

Then I actually added it all up. You probably know the feeling. It's like stepping on the scale after the holidays. The number isn't wrong, you just didn't want to know it.

Here's what I've learned since: most of us aren't overpaying because we're careless. We're overpaying because nobody told us the free programs exist, the pricing pages are written to confuse, and the contracts are written to keep us. That's fixable.

When I started ChurchTechStack, I wanted one place where a pastor or church admin could see real prices and honest pros and cons, without having to "book a demo" just to find out what something costs. This guide takes everything I've found and points it at one goal: keeping more of your church's money for ministry.

Every number in here comes from the vendor's own pricing page, an official program page, or real reviews from churches. If I couldn't confirm it, it's not in here.

Faithful stewardship isn't about being cheap. It's about making sure the money people give in faith goes as far as it possibly can. Let's go find some of it.

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What's inside

1. Free and discounted software your church qualifies for
2. Google for Nonprofits and up to \$10,000/month in free ads
3. TechSoup: the one sign-up that unlocks dozens of discounts
4. What churches really pay: the price sheet
5. Contract traps that quietly cost you money
6. Your Savings Scorecard + the Save Money This Week plan

Free and discounted software you already qualify for

Some of the best software deals for churches cost nothing but an afternoon of paperwork.

Big software companies run nonprofit programs, and plenty of them are open to churches. The catch is proof. Most US programs verify you through TechSoup or Goodstack, and both want to see IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) status.

Churches are tax-exempt automatically, but "automatically" doesn't come with a letter. So the first money-saving move is finding one of these two documents:

- **Your own IRS determination letter** (you get one by filing Form 1023), or
- **Your denomination's group exemption letter** showing your church is covered.

Programs that welcome churches

Program	What you get	Good to know
Google for Nonprofits	Google Workspace for Nonprofits, YouTube Nonprofit Program, and Ad Grants: up to \$10,000/month in search ads	Section 2 walks through it
Canva for Nonprofits	Canva Pro, free	Registered charitable nonprofits; Goodstack verifies. Church-run K-12 schools are excluded.
Microsoft for Nonprofits	Granted and discounted Microsoft 365, plus Azure credits	For staff and leadership. Members and congregants can't use the licenses.
AWS (via TechSoup)	Up to \$5,000 per year in cloud credits	Requested through TechSoup
Box	Up to 10 free Starter licenses, or 50% off plans; 75% off add-ons	Needs a TechSoup validation token
Asana	50% off Starter and Advanced	Verified by Goodstack
HubSpot	40% off new Professional or Enterprise plans	New customers, 1-year term; Starter isn't included
Mailchimp	15% off marketing plans	Ask before you buy. It isn't applied retroactively.
Adobe	Nonprofit plans for Acrobat and Express; Creative Cloud through TechSoup	IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) public charities
Intuit QuickBooks (via TechSoup)	Discounted QuickBooks	Open to religious 501(c)(3)s since 2014
Okta for Good	50 free Workforce Identity licenses, then 50% off more	501(c)(3), verified by Goodstack

Don't bother applying (as a church)

Save yourself the rejection email. These programs say plainly that churches aren't eligible:

- **Slack for Nonprofits** excludes "a church, association of churches, or other religious organization." Being faith-affiliated alone doesn't disqualify a separate charity that serves everyone and doesn't promote doctrine.
- **Atlassian** (Jira, Confluence, Loom) lists places of worship as ineligible. Their free editions are still open to anyone.
- **Autodesk (via TechSoup)** requires a "secular community designation."

What this can add up to

Canva Pro, free. Mailchimp, 15% off. Asana, half price. AWS, up to \$5,000 a year in credits. Google Ad Grants, up to \$10,000 a month in ads.

Not every church needs every one of these. But even one or two of these programs can cover a good chunk of a small church's software budget.

Google for Nonprofits: up to \$10,000 a month in free ads

Google Ad Grants gives eligible nonprofits up to \$10,000 a month in Google Search ads. That's up to \$120,000 a year in advertising.

At Thrive, we have an Ad Grant, so I can tell you firsthand that it works for churches. It's also the program with the most questions, so here's the plain version.

Step 1: Get verified

Google requires IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) status. A church that's tax-exempt automatically but doesn't show up in IRS records won't pass. There are three legitimate paths:

- **Your own determination letter.** File IRS Form 1023 and apply with your church's EIN.
- **Your denomination's group exemption.** Apply with your EIN plus the parent body's letter showing the group exemption number. If Goodstack rejects it the first time, open a Goodstack ticket and ask for a manual review with that letter. One pastor who documented the process got approved that way in about a month.
- **A separate outreach nonprofit.** A separately incorporated 501(c)(3) that genuinely runs its own work (say, a food pantry or recovery ministry) can apply on its own EIN.

Step 2: Know exactly what you're agreeing to

Google's official Additional Terms of Service (last modified February 17, 2021) require you to ensure:

"Your organization does not discriminate against any person or group of people in either hiring/employment practices or in the administration of programs and services."

Source: support.google.com/nonprofits/answer/9004493

Some churches report seeing a longer version of this statement in the application itself, ending with "including on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity." Read the exact wording on your screen when you apply. Google hasn't published a religious-employer exception.

Churches land in different places on this:

- Some, like the churches Church Fuel works with, read Title VII's religious-organization exception as allowing faith-based hiring and apply.
- Some apply through a separate outreach nonprofit whose hiring and services are open to everyone.
- Some decide it isn't a fit and pass. ECFA's guidance is to pay full price rather than check a box you can't honestly check.

Whether your church can truthfully agree is your church's call. Answer it honestly.

Step 3: Make the grant actually bring people in

- Turn on Ad Grants from your Google for Nonprofits dashboard. Your website needs to meet Google's quality standards.
- Google Ads won't let you target people by religion. Ads about what you do for your community tend to work better anyway: food pantry, recovery groups, counseling, kids' camp, ESL classes, marriage classes, and "plan your visit" pages with service times.
- Keep your click-through rate at 5% or higher, and follow the account-structure rules. Accounts that slip can be paused.
- Unused budget doesn't roll over. Up to \$10,000 a month is use-it-or-lose-it.

TechSoup: one sign-up, dozens of discounts

TechSoup is the closest thing church admins have to a nonprofit Costco card. You verify once, then shop.

TechSoup is a nonprofit that partners with tech companies to offer donated and discounted software and hardware. Instead of proving you're a nonprofit to every company separately, you prove it to TechSoup once.

Who qualifies

Churches need IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) status, either on their own or under a group exemption. TechSoup is firm on this. Self-declared churches aren't eligible.

- **Own determination letter:** use your church's EIN.
- **Group exemption:** use your denomination's EIN and upload a group exemption letter on the parent body's letterhead, signed by an officer.

Signing up in five steps

1. Create an individual account in your own name.
2. Add your church: EIN, details and documents. Choose an organization type under "Religious Activities."
3. Wait for approval. TechSoup says up to 10 business days, often about 2. Your status changes from "Not Started" to "Qualified."
4. If they ask for more documents, email them to the address in their message.
5. Start requesting offers. Some partners, like Box and AWS, send you a validation token instead of using the TechSoup cart.

What it costs

- Core membership is free. Plus membership is \$200 a year.
- Most offers have a small admin fee, listed on each product and multiplied by the quantity you order. It's still usually far less than retail.

What churches can get

Microsoft, QuickBooks, Adobe Creative Cloud, AWS credits, Box, and refurbished computers are all open to religious 501(c)(3)s. A few partners, such as Autodesk, require a secular community designation, and TechSoup marks those clearly.

Judah's tip

Do TechSoup first. Once you're qualified, many of the programs in Section 1 go faster because the verification work is already done.

SECTION 4

What churches really pay

You can't save money on a bill you can't see. Here are the published prices, side by side.

Published prices from each vendor's official pricing page, October 2026. "Quote only" means they won't publish one, so get two competing quotes first.

Church management (ChMS)

Tool	Starts at	What to know	More
Planning Center	People: free; paid modules priced by usage	Modular. Costs grow as you add modules and people.	Details
ChMeetings	Free up to 50 people	100 people \$12/mo; 250 people \$25/mo	Details
Flocknote	Free up to 40 members	Complete plan from \$75/mo	Details
Rock RMS	Free (open source)	You'll pay in hosting and setup time	Details
ChurchTrac	\$29/mo (75 names)	125 names \$39; 250 \$59; 500 \$79	Details
Breeze	\$72/mo (1,000 contacts)	Flat price. Worship Tools add-on \$29/mo; texting: 250 free per month, then \$10 per 500.	Details
Church Community Builder	Quote only	Annual contracts are standard	Details
MinistryPlatform	Quote only		Details

Online giving

Tool	Starts at	What to know	More
Planning Center Giving	Free up to 10 gifts/mo; cards 2.15% + \$0.30; ACH \$0.30	Monthly fee by gift count: 75 gifts \$15; 200 \$32; 500 \$69; 1,000 \$115; 1,500 \$179; unlimited \$239	Details
Tithe.ly	\$0/mo; cards 2.9% + \$0.30; ACH 1% + \$0.30	All Access bundle \$119/mo	Details
Givelify	\$0/mo; 2.9% + \$0.30 per gift		Details
Subsplash Giving	\$0/mo + processing	The app and bundles are quote only	Details
Pushpay	Quote only	Check scanning from \$0.29/check	Details

Worship presentation

Tool	Starts at	What to know	More
EasyWorship	\$210/yr Basic	Premium \$330/yr	Details
Proclaim	\$269.99/yr (On Air)	Unlimited seats. Pro Media \$399.99/yr; Partner Media \$999.99/yr	Details
ProPresenter	\$29/mo per seat	Free trial	Details

Livestreaming & video

Tool	Starts at	What to know	More
OBS Studio	Free (open source)	The workhorse behind a lot of church streams	Details
Vimeo	\$12/seat/mo (Starter)	Standard \$25; livestreaming starts at Advanced, \$75	Details
BoxCast	\$109/mo Standard, billed annually	\$119 month-to-month. Deluxe \$169/\$189; Advanced 4K \$249/\$279	Details

Texting & email

Tool	Starts at	What to know	More
Mailchimp	Free up to 250 contacts	15% nonprofit discount; paid plans start with 12-month intro pricing	Details
Clearstream	\$35/mo (1,000 credits)	\$59/mo for 2,500 credits	Details

Three quick savings, from the numbers above

Real math, published prices

Giving fees add up fast. Say you take 200 card gifts a month, averaging \$100. At Tithe.ly's 2.9% + \$0.30, that's \$640 in fees. At Planning Center Giving's 2.15% + \$0.30, plus its \$32 monthly fee for 200 gifts, it's \$522. That's \$118 a month, or about \$1,400 a year, from one switch. Run your own numbers, because this flips at different gift counts.

Bank transfers beat cards. Planning Center Giving charges \$0.30 on an ACH gift, any size. Nudge a \$500 monthly giver from card to bank transfer and you save about \$10.75 a month on that one person.

Annual billing pays. BoxCast Standard is \$119 month-to-month or \$109 billed annually. That's \$120 a year for clicking a different button.

Contract traps that quietly cost you money

The most expensive software is the one you can't get out of.

I've never met a church that signed a contract planning to leave. But ministries change, and the fine print decides what that change costs you. Here's what real churches have reported, plus the vendors' own terms.

Pushpay

- A church reported a required three-month cancellation notice, so they paid two giving providers at the same time (Capterra review).
- Another reviewer said they were locked into \$350 a month after their givers had already moved elsewhere (GetApp).
- There are complaints about auto-renewing multi-year contracts that are hard to exit.

Subsplash

- Subsplash's own legal terms say contracts auto-renew yearly with early-termination fees.
- One church reported a \$400 exit cost and donations held for about two months (Trustpilot, February 2026).
- Another saw a \$40/month jump from add-ons and couldn't drop services during a two-year contract (Capterra).

Vimeo

- A church reported a renewal price increase of more than 400% without notice (r/churchtech).
- PetaPixel reported in September 2026 that Vimeo can move accounts to more expensive plans based on usage.

Full sourced reviews: [Pushpay](#) · [Subsplash](#) · [Vimeo](#)

Eight questions to ask before you sign anything

1. How much notice do we need to give to cancel?
2. Does it auto-renew? For one year or several?
3. Is there an early-termination or exit fee? Get the number in writing.
4. Is the renewal price capped?
5. How do we export our data (people, giving history, media), and in what format?
6. How fast are donations paid out if we leave?
7. Which features are add-ons that aren't in the "starting at" price?
8. Is this an introductory price? What is it in month 13?

SECTION 6

Your Savings Scorecard

Grab your last three months of bank statements and a cup of coffee. This takes about an hour.

List every piece of software your church pays for. Be honest. That forgotten \$9/month app counts too.

Software	Monthly cost	Renewal date	Notice to cancel	Cheaper or free option?	Yearly savings

Totals	Amount
Current yearly software spend	
Savings from free & discounted programs (Sections 1-3)	
Savings from switching or right-sizing plans (Section 4)	
Total yearly savings	

Save Money This Week

Five days, about 30 minutes a day. By Friday you'll know where your money is going and you'll have started getting some back.

Monday

Find the paperwork

Find your IRS determination letter or your denomination's group exemption letter, and write down your EIN. If you have neither, decide whether to file Form 1023. Almost every program in this guide starts here.

Tuesday

Fill in the scorecard

List every subscription, its cost and its renewal date. Put a calendar reminder 120 days before each renewal, because some contracts need 90 days' notice.

Wednesday

Apply to TechSoup

Free Core membership. Approval usually takes a couple of days, and it unlocks Microsoft, QuickBooks, Adobe Creative Cloud, AWS credits and Box.

Thursday

Grab the free stuff

Apply for Canva for Nonprofits. Ask Mailchimp for the 15% discount before you renew. Decide as a team about Google for Nonprofits (Section 2).

Friday

Cut and compare

Remove seats for people who've left. Switch annual-friendly plans to annual billing. Run your actual giving numbers through two giving platforms' fee tables. Check whether a free tool (OBS Studio, ChMeetings' free tier) covers what you're paying for.

Then do one more thing: tell your finance team or board what you saved. It's a good win, and it builds trust the next time you need a budget line for something that really matters.

Keep more for ministry

Every dollar we save on software is a dollar that can go to a family in crisis, a kids' ministry that needs supplies, or a missionary who needs support. That's why this matters to me, and I suspect it's why it matters to you.

If you want to keep going, every tool in this guide has a page on [ChurchTechStack.com](https://churchtechstack.com) with verified prices, sourced pros and cons, and a "watch out for" box. Comparing options? The [Finder](#) builds a shortlist for your church's size and budget in about two minutes.

And if you've got a story about a price hike, a contract nightmare, or a discount I missed, hit reply on the newsletter. I read every one.

Grace and peace,
Judah

Sources

- Google for Nonprofits Additional Terms of Service: support.google.com/nonprofits/answer/9004493
- Google for Nonprofits eligibility: support.google.com/nonprofits/answer/2659443, [/1699858](https://support.google.com/nonprofits/answer/1699858), [/3215869](https://support.google.com/nonprofits/answer/3215869); Ad Grants FAQ: [google.com/grants/faq](https://support.google.com/adgrants/answer/10000000)
- Church Fuel, "Google's Terms and Conditions": help.churchfuel.com/article/38; ECFA, "Legal and Integrity Issues Hidden in Charity License Agreements": ecfa.org
- Group-exemption verification account: cmarlinwarfield.com
- Microsoft for Nonprofits eligibility: microsoft.com/en-us/nonprofits/eligibility
- TechSoup eligibility, membership and fees: support.techsoup.org; techsoup.org; Autodesk eligibility: techsoup.global
- Canva: canva.com/nonprofits/eligibility-guidelines · Mailchimp: mailchimp.com/help/about-nonprofit-discount · Asana: asana.com/industry/nonprofit · HubSpot: hubspot.com/nonprofits · Box: box.org · AWS: aws.amazon.com/nonprofit credit program · Adobe: helpx.adobe.com · Okta: okta.com/industries/nonprofits
- Slack: slack.com/help/articles/204368833 · Atlassian: atlassian.com/teams/nonprofits and Atlassian Community staff reply (Nov 2024)
- Prices: each vendor's official pricing page, checked October 22, 2026. Reviews: Capterra, GetApp, Trustpilot, r/churchtech, PetaPixel, Subsplash legal terms, linked on each tool page at churchtechstack.com

Prices and programs as of October 2026; details change. © 2026 ChurchTechStack. Feel free to share this guide with other churches.