



Church director saves thousands after switching from Blackbaud to Aplos



CASE STUDY

Nathan Noorlun, CPA,
Operations Director at Vancouver Church

► Challenge

Before Nathan came on as the operations director for Vancouver Church in Washington, an entity with an 800-person congregation as well as a private school, the church had been using Blackbaud's accounting software for several years. But when the school broke off to become a separate entity and Nathan was tasked with managing the finances of the church, he found the software substandard for churches. It was expensive, user unfriendly, and out-of-date. Nathan needed a cloud-based system that was flexible and easy to learn for new hires, as well as a system that specialized in fund accounting. It was time for a distinct shift.

► Solution

"When I spoke with Sean and Alex at Aplos, I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, based on how our software provider had treated us previously," Nathan said. "We weren't confident in a mid-year import, so we decided to run both softwares simultaneously for a couple of months, then make the switch at the start of the fiscal year, depending on how much we liked Aplos. Alex was accommodating with every bit of the import, and we went live with Aplos on April 1st."

"Alex made the transition very easy," Nathan added. Vancouver Church's bookkeeping team said that the learning curve was low with Aplos too, and Nathan seized the opportunity to restructure their chart of accounts. In the previous model, the pastoral benefits, salaries, and support staff were all in the same account, but with Aplos, they were able to differentiate the funds and departments.

Receivables

\$3M

Located in

**Vancouver,
WA**

Members

800

Staff of

27

Org. Stats



Receivables



Vancouver, WA



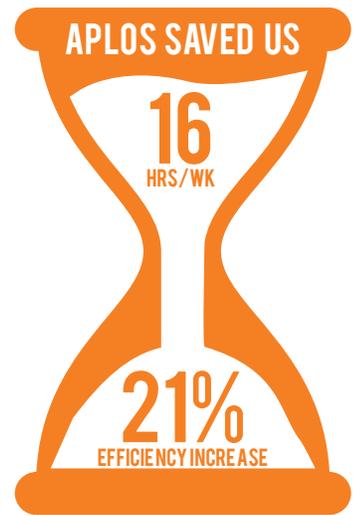
800
members



staff of 27

They needed to divide the bookkeeping team between the church and the school, which they found easier than expected. "Our finance director, Gordon, became 100% dedicated to the school, and I stepped into the church's accounting functions with Aplos. I post payroll, do bank reconciliations, and perform high level monitoring and reporting. I'm having my co-worker Beth doing entry of deposits, and I'm training her on month-end processes, like journal entries for prepaid expenses. With Aplos, I've saved money by having a smaller team dedicated to the church's finances, and it wasn't difficult to do."

The lead pastor was not in the system often, and tended to only see the high level reports. Due to the lack of clear or concise reports from Blackbaud, it made reporting difficult. This in turn affected the quality and nature of that reporting. With Aplos, Nathan no longer had to perform the manual exporting process from the old software by putting it into an excel sheet and then presenting it.



Aplos is easy to use and cloud based so you can access your information from anywhere.

► Results

"I consider what we're doing a revitalization project, which involves building trust with our board of trustees," Nathan said. "Aplos' reporting has made this so much easier. Since the switch, that trust has increased dramatically." He also mentioned the effect it's had on the department heads, since now he can create income statements by department.

Nathan has also had conversations with other churches, recommending Aplos. "My old church down the road still uses Quickbooks, and I've already warned them of the stress they're going to deal with when they become a multisite," he said. "Their chart of accounts is a mile long. I've already offered to help walk them through the switch if they decide to go with Aplos." Nathan wants to create a legacy, and is preparing to go to the congregation for a large ask. They need to take care of their facility, as well as deal with the two-million dollar bond that was required for the construction of the school. With Aplos, he's able to create a capital fund and utilize project tags. He predicts a lot happening with Vancouver Church in the future, and he's happy to have Aplos there every step of the way.



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