

XYZ Church

XYZ Church is a fast-growing church in Columbus, Ohio. Over the past three years, since the popular Reverend Bill Smith has taken over leadership of the congregation, the church has more than doubled in size. It now has approximately 400 registered households. Reverend Mike Martin has also recently been added as a second minister. Since the Church was rather small in the past, most of its records have been kept on paper forms. However, the Church's Business Manager, Mary Collins, has suggested to Reverend Smith that a computerized system might help the Church better meet its information needs and manage its activities.

In addition to Ms. Collins, the Church employs a part-time administrative assistant, Jackie Gilbert. Jackie performs clerical duties such as filing, record keeping, answering phone calls, and typing the weekly church bulletin using Microsoft Word for Windows 7 on the Church's only personal computer. Simon Becker serves in a part-time, paid position as Choir Director, leading the ten member volunteer choir who practice on Wednesday evenings and sing during Sunday services. Three services are held each Sunday. The Church also uses volunteer Lay Ministers to assist Reverend Smith in Sunday services.

From a business point of view, one thing the Church must be concerned with is registering new members. When a prospective member wants to join, Reverend Smith holds a personal meeting with that person and his/her family to get better acquainted. Shortly thereafter, the household is mailed pre-numbered envelopes for use in the regular Sunday collections. Most contributions are made to the Church using these envelopes, although about 20% of each collection comes from "loose offerings" of cash and checks. A household also receives an additional envelope each month for use in the Church's capital improvement campaign to fulfill its campaign pledges. Contributions to this fund are collected in Church on the second week of each month. Envelopes are mailed to households toward the end of each month for use during the following month.

The capital improvement campaign has just been established for the purpose of purchasing a nearby property to build additional parking to accommodate the Church's growing membership. The cost of acquiring the property, paving it, and making it ready for use is \$250,000. The Church obtained a bank loan to finance this project, and it makes regular payments on this loan from members' monthly contributions. Households were provided with a pledge form to state their commitment of how much money they would contribute to this campaign over the next three years. As contributions are made, the remaining balance on a pledge is reduced.

Since XYZ Church is legally recognized as a non-profit organization, all member contributions are tax deductible. In January, the Church sends the head of household a summary report of all contributions made using envelopes during the previous year for use in income tax preparation.

The Church must also keep track of records of its ceremonies such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. A baptism is a form initiation ceremony into the Church for infants and some adults. Adults must first attend weekly preparation classes for three months before being baptized. Besides the parents, a new inductee into the Church also has sponsors called a Godmother and Godfather. For couples who wish to get married in the Church, at least one member of the couple must be a member of the Church. Couples go through weekly preparation classes for two months before the ceremony is performed.

XYZ Church is part of a larger network of churches of the same denomination. This denomination has one other church in the Columbus area and over 250 churches nationwide. The regional headquarters for the denomination is in Chicago. The Church's other regional offices are in New York and Los Angeles. XYZ Church must submit regular monthly reports to the Chicago office about its ceremonies and finances.

Ms. Collins and Reverend Smith have hired your small, information systems consulting firm to look into the possibility of developing an information system for the Church. This system will address the organization's revenue sources and its record keeping requirements.