What Is a Reasonable Rent for Shared Church Space?

If your church is considering a new lease or renewing an existing one, the District Committee on Church Location and Building (CLB) is available to help. **Leases involving church property require District review and approval (¶ 2524)**, and the Committee also has a sample lease that can be a helpful starting point (https://novaumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Lease-General_2025.docx). We are glad to work with churches early in the process—before an agreement is signed—when changes are usually much easier to make.

One question I have been asked several times through our work is, "What is a reasonable amount for a church to charge when another congregation, preschool, or organization uses its building?"

The short answer is: **there is no single "district rate."**

In reviewing a number of leases from churches across the district, we have seen a very wide range of rental arrangements. Limited-use agreements with another congregation may involve only a few hundred dollars per month, while arrangements involving extensive weekly use, dedicated classrooms or offices, storage, kitchens, and other common areas may run into several thousand dollars per month. Preschool and childcare leases are generally higher because they often involve weekday occupancy, dedicated space, utilities, playgrounds, storage, licensing requirements, and considerably more wear on the building.

These figures are drawn from multiple leases reviewed by the CLB and are offered only as broad, anonymized reference points. Individual rental amounts and lease terms remain confidential, and these ranges should not be understood as appraisals or recommended rates for a particular church.

Perhaps the more important question is not simply, "What are other churches charging?" but **"How did we arrive at our rental amount?"**

When setting or reviewing rent, a church should consider:

- How much space is actually being used?
- How many days and hours each week will the tenant be in the building?
- Is any space dedicated exclusively to the tenant?
- Are utilities, custodial services, parking, storage, security, kitchen use, or other services included?
- What additional costs and wear does the tenant create?
- What would comparable space cost in the local community?

- Is the church intentionally providing a below-market rate as part of its ministry?
- How and when will the rent be reviewed or increased?

There is nothing inherently wrong with a church choosing to subsidize another congregation or community ministry. But that should be an intentional ministry decision, rather than the result of continuing a rental amount established many years ago without reconsidering whether it is still appropriate.

Longer-term leases should also include some method for periodically reviewing or adjusting rent, whether through annual increases, scheduled reviews, or another agreed-upon method.

If you are unsure whether an agreement needs District approval, or would like a copy of the sample lease, please contact the District Committee on Church Location and Building. We are happy to help.

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