

# Church & Donor Management Software (ChMS)

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Solutions from church and donor management software providers keep improving in their ability to help churches and ministries fulfill their mission! Their features to track and communicate with people, their web and mobile device interfaces, and their powerful database tools make this category of software a big help and a valuable asset for today's ministries in reaching many with The Gospel and discipling them.

## Church Software Historical Perspective

In the mid-1980s the number of these programs had grown to 262! Then some merged, some consolidated, and some went out of business, reducing the number to only 34. In the 1990s the Internet made it so easy for those writing solutions to share them that the number of solutions more than doubled! Our research this year found 53 solutions focusing on the church and ministry market, of which 35 qualified for this article (requirements include active marketing, minimum growth, and active development of their solution).

We always include new providers (those three years old or less) to give them a chance to build some momentum and compete with 'the big guys'. It also keeps all of the providers 'on their toes' as the up-and-comers sometimes develop new technologies that benefit many churches and ministries in new ways.

## Why Church Management Software?

The solution providers on the following pages meet the sophisticated and complex needs of churches and ministries. Tracking more than just simple CRM datasets like names, addresses, and phone numbers, many of these also help build community and track traditional and modern family relationships, spiritual gifts, talents, interests, attendance, nursery security, contributions, fundraising campaigns, volunteerism, small groups, and more.

Church and ministry offices can be stressful workplaces because of the many deadlines that must be met by an administrative staff that is typically smaller in number than what would be found in a similar-sized secular business. Church management software, if well written, can be a soothing balm. If it's powerful, capable, fast, and stable, the ministry team can rely on it to help them get the most possible work done—efficiently and with minimal stress. And if its abilities are broad enough, every ministry in the church or ministry can focus on just one database, increasing synergy and minimizing cost.

## Church Management Software Defined

Decades ago Steve Hewitt, then Editor-in-Chief of *Christian Computing Magazine* (recently re-branded as *MinistryTech Magazine*), labeled this software category tailored to meet the needs of churches as *Church Management Software*, or CMS. To help prevent confusion since there are now so many software categories called 'CMS', it is now referred to as ChMS. Parachurch ministries need to track similar data, so we invited those solutions into this article too. Following is a well-researched list of the leading ChMS providers at the time of this writing, with each stating at the top of the feature chart whether their focus is church, parachurch, or both.

## Not-for-Profit Accounting

Churches and ministries exist in a unique accounting niche that most software (and even most CPAs!) can't help with. But many ChMS packages *can* help in this area.

One of a ministry's most vulnerable areas is finance. All too often we hear about churches and ministries that have suffered embezzlement by a trusted team member. One of the best protections in an accounting system is a good audit trail, tracking the detail of every transaction and whose data cannot be altered in any way. For these reasons, some ChMS providers have written their own fully-integrated accounting system.

Some churches and ministries want a ChMS that has a fully-integrated accounting system, and we list the functions they look for in the chart. Others may not care if the ChMS provider has written its own accounting system, and for them it's good to know that most ChMSes can interface with 'third-party' accounting systems such as those in the chart that only provide nonprofit accounting solutions.

## Feature Chart

We've tried to give you the most comprehensive and quickest format possible of those ChMS database and accounting functions ministry teams request most. We removed features provided by all ChMS providers to help focus on solutions' distinct feature sets.

The chart lists solutions by the name their providers use to market them rather than by the company name. We include the company name in the section following the chart in which we give information on each provider such as how to reach them, how long they've been making their solutions available, how many organizations they currently serve, their support hours, and how often they update their software. We have trusted the software companies; all of the information in this article was provided by them and has not been audited.

The chart uses two symbols:

- The "■" symbol indicates features ChMS companies provide directly, and
- The "■" symbol indicates needs they meet through an outside (third party) source.

## Happy Hunting!

Shop wisely. We recommend doing your due diligence and checking with current users of the software you're interested in. Ask questions like:

- Does the software do what was promised?
- Is their support team capable and available?
- If you were faced with the same decision today, what would you do differently?

Feel free to contact any of the providers listed. They would love to help you in your ministry. Happy hunting!

Nick Nicholaou is author of [Church IT: Strategies and Solutions](#) and is president of MBS, an IT consulting firm specializing in church and ministry computer networks, VoIP, and private cloud hosted services. You can reach Nick at [nickn@mbsinc.com](mailto:nickn@mbsinc.com), and may want to check out his firm's website ([www.mbsinc.com](http://www.mbsinc.com)) and his blog at <https://ministry-it.blogspot.com>.



**ACS**

By ACS Technologies  
 Phone: 800.736.7425  
 Email: solutions@acst.com  
 Web: www.acstechnologies.com  
 Company Founded in 1978  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 40  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 8000  
 Number on Team: 400  
 Support: 9 - 8 M-Th Eastern; 9 - 6 Fri;  
 24-7 option  
 Last Major Release: 11/2017  
 Updates per Year: 8

**Aplos**

By Aplos  
 Phone: 888.274.1316  
 Email: sales@aplos.com  
 Web: www.aplos.com  
 Company Founded in 2009  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 7  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 5400  
 Number on Team: 44  
 Support: 8 - 4 Pacific  
 Last Major Release: 10/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Blackbaud Church Management**

By Blackbaud  
 Phone: 800.468.8996  
 Email: solutions@blackbaud.com  
 Web: www.blackbaud.com  
 Company Founded in 1981  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 1  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 10  
 Number on Team: 500  
 Support: 8:30 - 8 Eastern; Critical 24-7  
 Last Major Release: 10/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Breeze ChMS**

By Breeze LLC  
 Phone: 888.320.6030  
 Email: support@breezechms.com  
 Web: www.breezechms.com  
 Company Founded in 2013  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 5  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 5441  
 Number on Team: 33  
 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 10/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**CahabaWorks Church Software**

By CahabaCreek Software, a division of 2AB  
 Phone: 205.621.9649  
 Email: sales@cahabacreek.com  
 Web: www.cahabacreek.com  
 Company Founded in 1997  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 10  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1489  
 Number on Team: 10  
 Support: 9 - 4 Central M-Th; Email 24-7  
 Last Major Release: 12/2017  
 Updates per Year: 4

**CCIS Shield CMS**

By CCIS Church Management Software  
 Phone: 800.295.7551  
 Email: Sales@ccissoftware.com  
 Web: www.ccissoftware.com  
 Company Founded in 1981  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 38  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6740  
 Number on Team: 60  
 Support: 8 - 5 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 3/2018  
 Updates per Year: 3

**CDM+**

By Suran Systems  
 Phone: 800.891.4236  
 Email: sales@cdmplus.com  
 Web: www.cdmplus.com  
 Company Founded in 1987  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 32  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6500  
 Number on Team: 24  
 Support: 8:30 - 6 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 9/2018  
 Updates per Year: 3

**Church Community Builder**

By Church Community Builder  
 Phone: 719.266.2888  
 Email: marketing@churchcommunitybuilder.com  
 Web: www.churchcommunitybuilder.com  
 Company Founded in 1998  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 18  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 4400  
 Number on Team: 110  
 Support: 6 - 6 Mountain  
 Last Major Release: 8/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Church Windows**

By Computer Helper Publishing  
 Phone: 800.533.5227  
 Email: sales@churchwindows.com  
 Web: www.churchwindows.com  
 Company Founded in 1987  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 31  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 12000  
 Number on Team: 25  
 Support: 9 - 6 M-Th Eastern; 9 - 5 Fri  
 Last Major Release: 8/2018  
 Updates per Year: 1

**Church360°**

By Concordia Technology Solutions, a division of Concordia Publishing House  
 Phone: 800.325.2399  
 Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org  
 Web: www.church360.org  
 Company Founded in 1869  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 8  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1250  
 Number on Team: 25  
 Support: 7:30 - 5 Central  
 Last Major Release: 10/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via Web

**Churchteams**

By Churchteams.com  
 Phone: 817.405.9750  
 Email: support@churchteams.com  
 Web: churchteams.com  
 Company Founded in 2001  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 10  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 850  
 Number on Team: 8  
 Support: 8:30 - 5 Central  
 Last Major Release: 9/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**ChurchTrac Online**

By ChurchTrac Software  
 Phone: 877.704.0222  
 Email: support@churchtrac.com  
 Web: www.churchtrac.com  
 Company Founded in 2004  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 14  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 10200  
 Number on Team: 7  
 Support: 8 - 7 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: 4

**COMS and EFA for Windows**

By Specialty Software  
 Phone: 800.568.6350  
 Email: sales@SpecialtySoftware.com  
 Web: www.specialtysoftware.com  
 Company Founded in 1984  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 35  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6400  
 Number on Team: 5  
 Support: 9 - 5 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 10/2018  
 Updates per Year: 4

**Cool Life Ministries**

By Cool Life CRM  
 Phone: 800.988.8850  
 Email: sales@coollifecrm.com  
 Web: www.coollifecrm.com  
 Company Founded in 2005  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 2  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 7  
 Number on Team: 6  
 Support: 9 - 5 Eastern; Email 24-7  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Donarius ChMS**

By Nuverb Systems  
 Phone: 888.479.4636  
 Email: question@nuverb.com  
 Web: www.donarius.com  
 Company Founded in 1993  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 20  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2360  
 Number on Team: 1  
 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 6/2018  
 Updates per Year: 20

**ELEXIO Community**

By ELEXIO, a division of Ministry Brands  
 Phone: 888.997.9947, x1  
 Email: sales@elexio.com  
 Web: www.elexio.com  
 Company Founded in 2000  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 18  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1200  
 Number on Team: 50  
 Support: 9 - 5 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: 24

**Excellerate Church Management**

By Micro System Design, a division of Micro System Design  
 Phone: 888.371.6878  
 Email: pete@msdweb.com  
 Web: www.excellerate.com  
 Company Founded in 1989  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 20  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2598  
 Number on Team: 2  
 Support: 9 - 5 Central  
 Last Major Release: 8/2017  
 Updates per Year: 12

**Faithful Steward**

By Diakonia  
 Phone: 800.325.6642  
 Email: info@faithfulsteward.com  
 Web: www.church-software.com  
 Company Founded in 1992  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 24  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1086  
 Number on Team: 3  
 Support: 9 - 5 Central  
 Last Major Release: 4/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**FastFund Online**

By Araize  
 Phone: 866.840.7449  
 Email: sales@araize.com  
 Web: www.araize.com  
 Company Founded in 1997  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 21  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1200  
 Number on Team: 10  
 Support: 9 - 5 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 6/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**FellowshipOne**

By Ministry Brands, a division of Ministry Brands  
 Phone: 844.459.8525  
 Email: Sales@fellowshipone.com  
 Web: www.fellowshipone.com  
 Company Founded in 2004  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 14  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2000  
 Number on Team: 43  
 Support: 7 - 7 Central; Critical 24-7  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**FlockBase**

By FlockBase Software  
 Phone: 877.883.5625  
 Email: kevin@flockbase.com  
 Web: www.flockbase.com  
 Company Founded in 2007  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 11  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 2500  
 Number on Team: 4  
 Support: 9 - 5:30 Central  
 Last Major Release: 1/2018  
 Updates per Year: 1

**Fresh Vine**

By Fresh Vine  
 Phone: 888.708.1905  
 Email: contact@freshvine.co  
 Web: freshvine.co  
 Company Founded in 2008  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 7  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 380  
 Number on Team: 3  
 Support: 10 - 5 Central  
 Last Major Release: 3/2017  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**IconCMO**

By Icon Systems  
 Phone: 800.596.4266  
 Email: sales@iconcmo.com  
 Web: www.iconcmo.com  
 Company Founded in 1992  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 26  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3000  
 Number on Team: 9  
 Support: 8 - 5 Central  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Iglesia HOY**

By JRSoftware  
 Phone: 52.1.664.2515478  
 Email: informacion@iglesiahoy.com  
 Web: www.iglesiahoy.com  
 Company Founded in 1999  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 19  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3260  
 Number on Team: 6  
 Support: 8 - 6 Pacific  
 Last Major Release: 8/2018  
 Updates per Year: 4

**MinistryPlatform**

By Think Ministry  
 Phone: 678.404-2467  
 Email: sales@thinkministry.com  
 Web: www.ministryplatform.com  
 Company Founded in 2008  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 10  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 541  
 Number on Team: 14  
 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 10/2018  
 Updates per Year: 6

**Parish Data System (PDS)**

By ACS Technologies  
 Phone: 800.736.7425  
 Email: solutions@acstechnologies.com  
 Web: www.acstechnologies.com  
 Company Founded in 1978  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 40  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 8000  
 Number on Team: 395  
 Support: 9 - 8 M-Th Eastern; 9 - 6 Fri  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: 8

**ParishSOFT Family Suite**

By ParishSOFT, a division of Ministry Brands  
 Phone: 866.930.4774  
 Email: parishsoftsales@parishsoft.com  
 Web: www.parishsoft.com  
 Company Founded in 1998  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 20  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 11400  
 Number on Team: 65  
 Support: 8:30 - 7 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**PowerChurch**

By PowerChurch Software  
 Phone: 800.486.1800  
 Email: info@powerchurch.com  
 Web: www.powerchurch.com  
 Company Founded in 1984  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 34  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 38000  
 Number on Team: 17  
 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 11/2017  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Realm**

By ACS Technologies  
 Phone: 800.736.7425  
 Email: salesteam@acst.com  
 Web: www.acstechnologies.com  
 Company Founded in 1978  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 5  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 6646  
 Number on Team: 370  
 Support: 8 - 8 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 11/2018  
 Updates per Year: 26

**Servant Keeper**

By Servant PC Resources  
 Phone: 800.773.7570  
 Email: sales@servantpc.com  
 Web: www.servantpc.com  
 Company Founded in 1994  
 Years Marketing ChMS: 24  
 Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 35000  
 Number on Team: 30  
 Support: 9 - 6 Eastern  
 Last Major Release: 2/2017  
 Updates per Year: Ongoing via web

**Shelby Arena**

By Shelby Systems, a division of Ministry Brands  
Phone: 800.877.0222  
Email: sales@shelbyinc.com  
Web: www.shelbysystems.com  
Company Founded in 1976  
Years Marketing ChMS: 11  
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 650  
Number on Team: 95  
Support: 7 - 6 Central  
Last Major Release: 11/2018  
Updates per Year: 4

**ShelbyNext**

By Shelby Systems, a division of Ministry Brands  
Phone: 800.877.0222  
Email: sales@shelbyinc.com  
Web: www.shelbysystems.com  
Company Founded in 1976  
Years Marketing ChMS: 42  
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 1600  
Number on Team: 95  
Support: 7 - 6 Central  
Last Major Release: 10/2018  
Updates per Year: Monthly

**Shepherd's Staff**

By Concordia Technology Solutions, a division of Concordia Publishing House  
Phone: 800.325.2399  
Email: softwaresales@cts.cph.org  
Web: www.shepherdsstaff.org  
Company Founded in 1869  
Years Marketing ChMS: 26  
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 3300  
Number on Team: 25  
Support: 7:30 - 5 Central  
Last Major Release: 9/2018  
Updates per Year: Quarterly

**Software4Nonprofits**

By Cooperstock Software  
Phone: 416.423.7722  
Email: info@software4nonprofits.com  
Web: www.software4nonprofits.com  
Company Founded in 1999  
Years Marketing ChMS: 19  
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 8000  
Number on Team: 3  
Support: 9 - 9 Eastern  
Last Major Release: 10/2018  
Updates per Year: 6

**TouchPoint**

By TouchPoint Software, a division of Pursuant  
Phone: 901.654.7179  
Email: sales@touchpointsoftware.com  
Web: touchpointsoftware.com  
Company Founded in 2008  
Years Marketing ChMS: 10  
Ministries/Campuses Currently Using: 554  
Number on Team: 15  
Support: 8 - 5 Central  
Last Major Release: 11/2018  
Updates per Year: 12