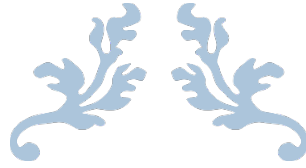


SNOWED OUT

A PLAN TO MAKE UP
A WEATHER IMPACTED
OFFERING WEEKEND



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SNOWED OUT!

A Plan to Make Up a Weather Impacted Offering Weekend



BY MARK BROOKS THE STEWARDSHIP COACH
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Winter is upon us and for those of you in the snow belt that means you need to be prepared for weather to curtail or cancel some of your services! It is not IF it will snow on a weekend but WHEN will that weekend happen? In the south the mere mention of bad weather keeps people at home on a Sunday even if the ice or snow did not happen. As we all know, the fewer people in the chairs the less in the offering plate. So, this manual is dedicated to help you weather inclement weather!

For those of you in Florida file this manual away for fall and hurricane season. Oh, and please don't gloat over your seventy-degree weather while the rest of us freeze!

Do you have a plan to make up for a lost offering? I am amazed at how many churches have cancellation plans for bad weather but have little to no plan when it comes to seeing giving stay steady.

Why is it that we have evangelism plans, discipleship plans, growth plans and mission plans and we don't think about a plan to fund the other plans? Whatever the reason, the failure of good stewardship planning has caused many churches to miss fulfilling the other plans. We always say that the failure to plan is in reality planning to fail.

The number one way in which churches fail to plan is last minute actions. I get phone calls almost weekly from desperate church leaders wanting me to help them with their giving. Since my mother taught me to be nice I avoid saying, "Why have you waited so late!" Instead, let me say it here, "Why are you waiting for a crisis in giving to start thinking about stewardship?"

So, again, it is inevitable that you will experience at least one weekend of poor weather that will impact your attendance. The reality is that when snow falls and your services are cancelled very few of your members will be diligent to make that lost offering up the next time the plate is passed by them. So have this manual handy so we can make up those lost dollars!

Good stewardship results require advance planning!

So, let's plan for that time so we can be ready. I always say, "Get a plan and work your plan." The first step is to take the first step, plan! Here are some thoughts to help you plan.

Key Tools for Bad Weather Weekends

Build the infrastructure now that will allow you to capture a lost offering. You need three basic tools to collect lost dollars when you are unable to pass the plate.

First, you need letters and emails already written and ready that only need editing. Don't worry the Sample section has you covered! I have clients that have hard copies already printed and on the shelf ready to mail at the first sign of bad weather.

Next you need to have printed and ready envelopes that are addressed to your office and contain a postage paid metered stamp. This way you only pay if they send it back. See the sample section! You might think snail mail is old school but it remains the number one means of collecting donations for charities in America. So, let's use what works.

Finally, you need to assure that you have an online giving system set up that is easy to access and use. Online giving is the key to capturing immediately dollars that will help you make up that lost offering. If you don't have online giving check out, <http://charisgivingsolutions.com/>

Key Steps for Collecting a Lost Offering

Just do it! Remember that phrase? A plan is only good if you work it. One of the first things I recommend is that you keep watch on the weather. A few years ago on a Friday a pastor called me and stated that bad weather was on the way. We immediately went into action. I recommend these steps.

Email blast Strategy – With online giving you can close the gap of that lost offering. I recommend sending out a series of email blasts. We sent out one email Friday afternoon, one on Saturday afternoon and another on Sunday afternoon.

Use the Postal Service – The USPS motto is, “Neither rain, sleet or snow will stop the U.S. Mail.” That is true unless you live in the south! So, if you know bad weather is coming mail the letter on Friday or Saturday. If the weather turns ugly on a Sunday mail the letter on Monday. Always have a postage paid self-addressed envelope in every appeal letter!

Raise awareness through your Social Media platforms. Tell the story through Social Media and provide a link to your online giving page. Unless the power is off at their house your members will be spending time on Facebook. So get your offering appeal in front of them! I have given you some sample ideas you can use in the sample section.

A Pre-Snow Strategy – The following steps work well when you know ahead of time that weather will impact your services. You might not have to cancel all the services but poor weather will keep many away driving down the amount in your offering baskets. Use this strategy to negate that.

I recommend a three-day blitz utilizing multiple platforms to help increase giving. Take this action as soon as it looks like weather might be a factor for your weekend services.

Friday – Do three things. First, send out a snail mail letter with a postage paid envelope inside asking people to give IF they are unable to make the weekend services. See the sample section.

Next, begin utilizing Social Media posts informing people that IF they cannot attend they can give online and give your online link. See the Social Media sample site below.

Finally, send out an email blast in the afternoon encouraging online gifts. See the samples below.

Saturday – Do two things. Throughout the day post reminders on Social Media about giving online IF members cannot attend a service. Then send another email blast out in the morning encouraging online giving IF members cannot attend.

Sunday – Do the same two things as Saturday but send the email in the afternoon.

A Post Snow Strategy – Sometimes the weatherman is wrong and those rain showers early Sunday morning turn into snow showers. When weather sneaks up on you it is still possible to make up that lost offering by following this strategy.

Sunday morning or Afternoon – Send out an email blast about the services being cancelled and encouraging members to faithfully give online. I would immediately post on all your Social Media platforms messages about the cancelled services with a link to your online giving page.

Monday morning – I would work a USPS mailing out to your members encouraging them to give that week to help make up the lost offering. I always recommend that every snail mail piece have a self-addressed postage paid envelope in it for ease of use.

Mid-Week email blast – I would encourage one more email blast such as those in the sample section to be sent out later in the week. With online giving your members can give at any time so your offering plates are literally taking dollars 24/7!

Social Media posts – I would encourage at least one Social Media post every day for the week following the weather related cancellations.

One key thing, always be positive with your appeals never negative. People don't respond well to guilt or desperation. State the obvious, a lost service means a loss of dollars. Then without reservations ask people to give to keep your missions and ministries flourishing!

These simple actions could keep you from falling a week behind in giving. Don't wait for the snow let's get ahead of it!

Sample Section – The following samples have been tried in multiple churches with great effect. I have regularly helped churches every winter close the gap of what might have been lost due to inclement weather. Each sample is ready to be used with minor edits.

Sample Letter Section – Use the following samples by editing them slightly to meet your needs. The first letter can be used after a snowed out Sunday. The second can be sent out on Friday before the weekend inclement weather hits. Simply edit to fit your needs.

Dear Phillips Family,

The snow fell but so did the power of God upon us this last Sunday! Not only that but the house was full of people eager to worship The Lord. I am continually amazed at the faithfulness of the Phillips family. When other churches shut down the second flakes fly you flock to the house of The Lord! We were truly blessed by the power of God once again!

Still many of our family were unable to brave the snow covered streets and sidewalks to come. The reality is that when our attendance is down so is our offerings. It would not surprise you to know that our financial needs remain the same if not greater when we are faced with inclement weather. Let's not let the snow stop our amazing progress!

Enclosed you will find an envelope for you to give your offering gift with. If you have missed any of our services, I ask you to use this to make up your inability to give. You can drop it in the mail or bring it with you next Sunday.

Would you like to assure that your gift is given no matter if it snows or not? You can set up recurring giving by going to our webpage and hitting the Give button. After you input your information look for the line that says Recurring Giving and check Yes. Set up the amount of your gift, when you want that gift to be withdrawn from your account or debit card and you are set! Then no matter if you are here or not your gift will be! Our giving link is http://www.phillipstemple.org/index.php?p=1_10

I am so blessed to be your pastor. Our giving has steadily increased year after year allowing us to minister to more and more people and do more and more missions and ministry. **Let's not let the weather keep us from continuing to bless the Dayton area and beyond with our gifts.**

Thanks again for your faithful service and generous spirit. Together we can become a people empower by The Holy Spirit to, worship God, work with one another, witness to the world and welcome all people!

Your Pastor,

James Washington

PS. Remember the site to give online can be found at
http://www.phillipstemple.org/index.php?p=1_10

Dear ECC Member,

By now you might be like me, doubting global warming! The recent weather has put a crimp in schools, businesses and churches as we start this New Year. We shut down our services for safety reasons and trust you enjoyed staying warm and dry with your families.

Every time we cancel a service we lose our ability to fund the missions and ministry initiatives we feel led to attempt for the Kingdom. We have some big dreams for 2014 and we don't want bad weather to keep us from realizing those dreams. We must stay current on our budgeted needs so that we can fulfill all our mission and ministry goals this year.

Consider what a gift to our church accomplishes. This past year we have...

- List something the church accomplished locally,
- List something you were able to do for children or students,
- List any global mission work giving supported,
- List anything else that would be an encouragement to give.

Truly when you give here at ECC it is a gift that keeps on giving!

So, I am asking you to consider making a gift to help us catch up for the lost giving. If you missed giving the Sundays we were closed now would be a good time to make that up. If you cannot attend for whatever reason you can use this offering to give. Some of you might be able to give a little bit extra to make up for those less fortunate. Every gift counts and will be put to good ministry use.

Enclosed you will find an envelope that you can mail in with your gift. Even if bad weather prevents us from meeting the U.S. Postal service will pick up your offering and deliver it to us!

Let me end by thanking you in advance for your support of our church. I count it one of my greatest blessings in life to be your pastor. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Your Pastor,

P.S. Don't forget you can give online right now at <http://www.ECC.com/give> Insert your giving link here.

The following letter can be sent out ahead of a projected storm. Again edit to fit your situation.

Dear **Insert Name**,

Another snow storm is heading our way this weekend. Due to inclement weather many churches may not have worship service this weekend. Here at Phillips, it is our desire to keep the doors open for worship, however, the snow may make it difficult for you to attend. Even though you may not be able to attend, you can still support this ministry through your offering.

There are two ways to give.

1. Visit www.phillipstemple.org/give and use our online giving tool - Or -
2. Use the postage paid envelope enclosed in this letter

Did you know that you can also set up your offering to automatically be withdrawn from your account to our account? You simply go to our website and check the box that says ***Recurring Donation*** in the online giving section. Then you never have to worry about remembering to bring your checkbook to church or giving when you are unable to attend.

Help us prove that snow cannot stop the work of God by showing your faithfulness with a gift now.

Thanks for your faithfulness,

Pastor Washington

PS. Remember your online gift can be made at <http://phillipstemple.org/give> so give now!

Sample Email Section – The following three emails can be used at any time but I advise a Friday through Sunday approach. If weather surprises, you late you can adjust the content.

Subject: Winter Warning at OUR CHURCH

Dear _____,

The weatherman is calling for a wintery mix for us here in OUR TOWN! We will do all in our power to keep the doors open for all our services. However please stay tuned for any last minute delays or cancellations in our schedule.

Don't let the weather keep you from giving! Every time it snows we take a huge hit in our offerings. This potential decline endangers our ability to do missions and ministry. Help us stay current by giving now at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

We appreciate your faithfulness and generosity. Let's pray the weatherman is wrong but just in case why not put your gift in our digital offering plate now? Again the site is, <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Thanks for helping us continue to make a difference in OUR TOWN!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

Subject: Go away white stuff!

Dear _____,

It's a sign that you have grown up when you dread snow and ice! What used to thrill us as kids now is seen as a hassle. The same is true at OUR CHURCH. Why does it have to snow on a weekend?

With the adverse weather we are experiencing in our region many will not be able to attend tomorrow yet their presence can still be felt? How? By giving to OUR CHURCH electronically you can continue to help us make a difference. **Give now at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>**

We have amazing plans for reaching our area that need to be fully funded. Missing a week's offering could seriously endanger those plans. Your gift now at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE> can help keep us on track!

I appreciate your faithfulness and support! Now go play in the snow!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

Subject: Snow Can't Stop Our Church! Or Your Gift Now Can Make a Difference!

Dear _____,

I love a good winter snow! Just not on the weekends! If snow kept you from giving today, you can give online at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Today's (Yesterday's) weather kept us from completing our full schedule. We were able to hold our 8:30 AM service but even that had limited attendance. We would rather our members be safe than drive in bad weather. We will look for you next week!

When we don't meet our offerings plummet! That is simply the reality of how it is. We have many missions and ministry initiatives set for 2016 that need to be fully funded. We simply can't afford to miss a weekend offering. Please consider giving online at <https://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Your faithful gift will make a difference! Thanks for your generosity!

Your Pastor,
Bro. Mark

P.S. Remember online giving is as easy as clicking on this link
<https://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Social Media Corner – If it snows take to Twitter and encourage them to give! Here are some tweets to file away for that snowy weekend.

Snow stopped our services but you can still give at <http://www.phillipstemple.org/give>

The Bible encourages us to bring our gifts the 1st day of the wk. If it snows and you can't get out try online http://www.faithfamily.cc/?#/Online_Giving/

It snowed this weekend but just like the US mail you can get your gift to us w/online giving. Go to <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Neither rain, sleet or snow can stop our generous givers! To give even while it snows go to <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Snow might have curtailed our attendance but you can still give at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Snow, snow go away and don't come back to cancel Sunday's offering! Don't miss your offering. Give online at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

We want our members to be safe so we have canceled services. You can still give at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

Use Facebook – If your members cannot get out due to snow or ice I can assure you that as long as they have power they will be checking their Facebook pages. The screen shot below, captured last year, is what one of my clients did when snow kept them from holding services. Note the link to their giving portal.



Christ Church shared a link.
January 5

Snow Day Worship Service! Check out Rev. Shane's sermon for today here: <http://vimeo.com/83353239>.

You can give your offering online at
www.mychristchurch.com/give



01/05/14 - Four Things God Can Bless in 2014

vimeo.com

Luke 13: 31-32 (NLT)

Here is a sample envelope for your consideration.

205 FARNOL STREET SW
WINTER HAVEN, FL 33880
WWW.HEARTCHURCH.ORG



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 78004 WINTER HAVEN, FL
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH
205 FARNOL STREET SW
WINTER HAVEN, FL 33880



My Gift



- ✓ Write the amount on the line marked "Tithe/Offering, Growth or Other"
- ✓ Place this envelope into the offering basket or in one of the wall boxes located throughout the church
- ✓ Drop it in the mail during the week
- ✓ Give online @ www.heartchurch.org



☐ Please check if address is new

Date _____

Name _____ Spouse's Name _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____ Home Phone _____ Cell _____

☐ Cash ☐ Check (No need to use an envelope. Simply make your check payable to HCC and drop into the offering basket or in one of the wall boxes located throughout the church.)

For Credit/Debit Card Online Giving, Please Go To:
www.heartchurch.org

Tithe/Offering	\$
Growth	\$
Other _____	\$
Total	\$