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- The single most important thing you can do to increase giving at your church is
- • to change how you take up your offerings. This has never been more important as
- we enter into what historically for the Church has been its most challenging time
- financially. The last thing we need as we adapt to COVID19 is for our giving to decline
- further. This paper is designed to help you avoid the typical summer slump in giving.
- 57% of churches have learned the importance of setting up their offerings. The
- . . . accounting firm CapinCrouse recently did a study that asked churches, what methods
- has your church implemented to collect, maintain, or encourage offerings? 57% said,
- <u>"Increased discussion around offerings during online services. Emphasized that</u>
- offerings are an act of worship, told stories of how the gifts are used, featured people
- or organizations that have benefitted from congregational giving, etc."
- •

#### **ng at your church is** en more important as challenging time or our giving to decline nmer slump in giving.

their offerings. The urches, what methods offerings? 57% said, <u>mphasized that</u> <u>used, featured people</u> g<u>, etc."</u>



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- If you want to improve giving start by setting every offering in such a way to help people
- see the need for giving, I utilize a format I call Elevator Pitching Your Offering. You
- might know the strategy as offering talks. An excellent offering talk takes as little as
- seconds to a couple of minutes. Yet I have seen churches increase their giving overnight
- by simply changing how they set up the offering.
- Now more than ever, you need to make the offering time a thought-out part of the
- service, much the same as the sermon and other aspects of worship. A well-planned
- . . . offering appeal will result in maximized donations. Spend some time weekly thinking
- about new and creative ways to improve your offering times. Work hard to make the
- •
- **The offering isn't dead, but it is different.** That is the lesson we need to learn. Now
- more than ever, we need to help people connect the dots of how a dollar given at your
- church helps build the Kingdom of God. If that doesn't inspire people to give, then we
- are not doing a good job telling our story.

such a way to help people g Your Offering. You g talk takes as little as ease their giving overnight ught-out part of the orship. A well-planned

e time weekly thinking 'ork hard to make the Iller!

we need to learn. Now wa dollar given at your people to give, then we



## Here are ten thoughts about how to make your offerings inspiring and more impactful.

1. Elevate the importance of the offering first with yourself and then the entire staff. Work to change the attitude that the offering is an inconvenience, and see it as an act of worship.

**2.** Don't be afraid to ask people to give. Never apologize for the offering. The offering is a time of worship. We never apologize for letting people give as an act of worship.

**3. Plan out every offering just like you plan out every message.** Spend time every week thinking through how to present the offering better

.4. Change the format and positioning regularly. Every once in awhile, do something different to break the routine.

**5.** Always give a stewardship or generosity message before the offering is taken up. Work to craft one-minute messages that underscore the importance of giving. Use the time the ushers come forward to make a case for the offering.





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6. Utilize testimonies before the offering as a means of inspiration. Laypeople expect you to tell them to give. When one of their peers talks about giving, they listen.

**7. Use creative tools like video and skits to make the offering fun.** There is a host of material out there. Use it. Be creative!

**8. Always be positive with every offering appeal.** Guilt never works, so don't try to guilt people into giving.

**9. Cast a compelling reason as to why people should give.** People give to that which makes a difference. Tell them how their gift matters, and they will give.

10. Regularly tell people what their gifts have accomplished and thank them for their gifts. Blow your own horn. Link the offering to the ministries the church is doing. People give to success! People also like to be thanked. Never take your donors for granted.I believe if you incorporate these ten steps, your offerings will dramatically pick up. Work and plan to make your offerings anything but boring! So with that as background, let's get started at elevator pitching your offerings!

# The Vision

## How to Use This Paper

This paper is designed to give you at least one offering message for each o the 16 weeks from Memorial Day through Labor Day. You can copy the pages to take to the platform with you to make it easy. It may be that the messages I have written will only serve as an idea pool for your own messages. Whether you use every message in this paper or use the paper t spur on your ideas, give your offerings some zip and zing. I believe that doing so will increase the amount of funds you receive. In the process, the offering might just become something you and your donors look forward to instead of dreading.

Mark Brooks – The Stewardship CoachMark@acts17generosity.com

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#### **Let's Not Forget**

- days?

- Day in May.
- honoring those that have gone before us. Let's not forget the sacrifices they gave for us.

- lighthouse for the Good News we have become. Let's not forget that.

As we take up the offering this Memorial Day weekend, I want to encourage you to give a gift that would be worthy of those that have gone before us. Let your gift be a memorial to their faith. Let your gift help pave the way for future generations to be impacted by YOUR CHURCH NAME. The best way to not forget is to give in the same manner as those we memorialize.



Has anyone realized that this is Memorial Day Weekend? Some of you. A few of you need reminding what day of the week it is, right? Memorial Day typically starts the summer off for us. What's typical these

Americans love Memorial Day in part because it gives most of us a three-day weekend. That used to be a big deal, but we have been on a three-month, three-day weekend, and the natives are restless! But I want to take just a moment at this time in our worship so we might never forget the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Memorial Day, celebrated on the last Monday of May, was first started to commemorate fallen Union soldiers that died in the Civil War. By the 20th century, it had grown to honor all Americans killed in all wars. Thus, we *thank* our living veterans on Veterans Day in November and honor our deceased veterans on Memorial

Memorial Day developed from the early days into a day for general expressions of memory for deceased relatives, whether they had served in the military or not. Families would go to gravesites of passed loved ones to leave flowers to memorialize that person. So, the day is supposed to be a day of remembering and

Speaking of sacrifices, have you ever considered that all that you enjoy here at YOUR CHURCH NAME is due to those who went before us? TELL BRIEFLY THE STORY OF YOUR BEGINNING AND THE SACRIFICES MADE THROUGH THE YEARS. Those people gave freely and sacrificially so that YOUR CHURCH NAME could be the



- remember the "graduation" from elementary to middle school or junior high?

No matter what you are graduating from or to, the graduate owes countless others who have helped pave their way. While you may not realize it, you here have poured into and paved the way for our graduates. You give your time, talents, and treasure to assure we can continually teach the next generation of Christians. Those gifts you have given so generously have helped pave the way for our graduates. Thank you for your generous giving an investment to our graduates!

- - to our church web page and follow the Give button to find out how easy that is.

#### No matter how you give, here in this offering, online, or some other means, we thank you for your gift and the investment into the lives of our current and future graduates!



All of us have stories about what COVID19 has caused and is causing us to miss. We have missed attending church, the movies, the ball game. The list of what we have missed would take me forever to read. I want this morning to focus on one annual event that, sadly, almost everyone missed, graduation ceremonies. How many of you missed a graduation ceremony due to COVID19? Lots of us.

We have our own graduates here. Some are finishing diplomas from high school and others for higher learning institutions. Still, others will be graduating from one level of education to the next. Do any of you

Today might be a good day to "graduate" in your giving. Perhaps for you, "graduating" might mean becoming a first-time giver helping us support not just our student ministry but so much more. Others of you might want to graduate to becoming more consistent in your giving or increasing your giving by a percentage. A good "graduated" step to take might be to set up your giving to be recurring. You can go



#### **Vacation Planning**

Is anybody going on vacation this summer? That might be another COVID19 casualty. For one thing, we seemingly just came out of a forced three to four-month vacation. Still, after being isolated, we are ready for some summer vacation, even if it is just camping out in the backyard!

Have you ever gone camping or to the beach only to discover you left something crucial out of your suitcase or car? How will you ensure that you have everything with you? You make a list! Then you just have to remember where you put the list.

- initiatives during this time. For instance, this summer, we will be,
  - List things like VBS.
- Share about Student Ministry.
- Talk about any other mission endeavors your church will be involved with.

All this is on top of our regular weekly schedule. We have a busy summer of outreach and ministry. Your generosity funds each one of these!

Historically when attendance is low, so are our offerings. As a result, summer has been one of our most challenging giving times of the year. However, one positive thing we learned as a result of COVID19 is that we can worship anywhere. That includes worshipping through giving.

We provide you with multiple ways by which you can give even if you are at the beach! The best way is by setting up your giving to be automatic. Then, you never have to worry about bringing the checkbook or cash for the offering. And, by setting up your giving to be recurring, you can check one last thing off of your checklist. You can go to our website and look for the Give button. Follow the instructions to set up your giving.

in the lives of our children, students, and volunteer missionaries!



This summer, I want to encourage you to put one more thing on your list before you go on vacation, your offering. This summer's offerings are crucial for us as we will be holding many of our major missions and ministry

### That neat thing about doing that isn't that you have one less thing to do. It is that you have just invested



### Living Up to the Biblical Ideal

- Gap." In their introduction comes this quote,
- From a spiritual standpoint, generosity, according to the Scriptures, is, among other things:
- A hallmark of a good life: "The generous will prosper" (Prov. 11:25)
- A natural response to God's generosity: "Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!" (I Chron. 29:14)
- 40)
- (Gal. 6:2
- the biblical ideal."
- living up to the biblical ideal.

This is one reason we take up the offering every week here. It gives you a chance to live up to biblical ideals. So, as we take up this week's offering, let's not be like "most" Christians. Let's live up to the biblical ideal

As we start our time of worship through giving, I want to ask, "Is your giving living up to the **biblical ideal?"** The Barna Institute released a study on America's giving patterns entitled, "The Generosity

• A benchmark of our love for God: "I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. When you did it to one of these, my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!" (Matt. 25:34-

• A principle way to obey Christ: "Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ"

#### )Those are high ideals. Yet after this quote, they state, "Most U.S. Christians today do not live up to

I don't know about you, but I don't want to be in the "most U.S. Christians" segment. I want for all of us that our giving would be a benchmark of our love for God. All of us must continually ask ourselves if our giving is



#### **Standing FOR Fathers**

Today is Father's Day! I'm going to do what we always do to honor fathers. In a minute, I am going to ask all our fathers to stand up no matter if you are here or watching online! And then, I want everyone to give these guys a hand wherever you are, either here or watching at home online. Everyone got that? Here we go, Will, all the father, 's in the place, please stand? Come on, everywhere; fathers stand up. If you are alone watching on the Internet, stand up. Right there, you get out of the recliner and stand up. OK, the rest of us, let's give these guys a hand.

- today we honor you!
- success later in life. So, it's worth honoring our fathers by standing FOR fathers!
- be translated, daddy! Think about that. We get to call the creator of the universe, daddy!

Let's honor our heavenly Father today with a great offering! Check out all the ways we have for you to give either here or online. Thanks so much for your generosity. Then don't forget to honor your earthly father this Sunday!



always think Father's Day is less celebrated than Mother's Day. One reason I think this way is that Every study shows we spend more on Mother's Day than we do Father's Day. I am OK with putting the money on momma, but I believe we need to put some honor on daddy. Mom, we are going to give you the flowers. Dad,

I am not sure why Father's Day seems to be less celebrated, as fathers play a crucial role in providing a stable home environment. Studies show that when a home has a father in it, those in that home have a higher chance of

Did you know that we have a Heavenly Father? Paul used the term Abba Father in the book of Romans, which back then was a term of endearment used about a father. The modern-day equivalent of this today could

So, here is my point as we prepare for the offering. While we work to honor our earthly fathers, doesn't it make sense to honor our heavenly Father? One way you can do that is through your generous gifts to our church. Proverbs 3:9, 10 says, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."



**Every Thread is Important** This week we celebrate the birth of our nation with 4th of July celebrations. There will be fireworks, barbeques, and lots of flag-waving all observing social distancing! We are far from perfect, yet all of us are blessed to live where we do. I love seeing the flag because it reminds me of the freedoms we have in this country.

I have often wondered how many threads go into a flag. I suppose it depends upon the size of a flag, but there are probably hundreds if not thousands of threads, each making up the entire flag. Which thread is most important? That's impossible to know, but I suspect each one is important. Pull one out, and you still have a flag. But one by one, each thread contributes to the strength and beauty of the flag. So, each one of them is essential.

As we take this offering up, I want to remind you that every gift is essential. We give as God has blessed us. Some give what seems a small gift, and others give what might seem like a large gift. Yet it isn't the size of the gift that matters but the heart behind the gift. Each gift given here helps us weave the fabric of our church flag if you will.

- **statement.** Your gift is crucial in helping us achieve that goal.

Let's celebrate our freedom today with a generous gift towards God's work!

Your gift matters because what all of us can do together is greater than what a few of us can do. Your gift is one thread of many that comprise the "flag" of our church. Every gift becomes a thread in that flag, and every thread is important. We exist, **State your mission** 



### **Celebrating Freedom of Religion**

- telling us what to believe or how to worship.
- your Freedom of Religion!



Yesterday we celebrated the birth of our nation on the 4th of July. I am sure the signers of the Declaration of Independence would be amazed at America today. We are certainly not perfect, as our headlines tell us every day. Yet we have got one thing right, at least for now, the freedom to worship as we see fit without any government authority

Few realize this, but studies show that Christians are more persecuted than any other faith group in the world. Today our brothers and sisters in Christ in places like the Middle East, China, Pakistan, and North Korea feared for their lives as they gathered to worship, whether in person or online. None of us who gathered here today or watching at home even thought about that. Why? We live in America, the land of the free.

That is something to be thankful for! As we approach our time of offering, I thought of Psalm 107:21-22 that says, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And *let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving*, and declare His works with rejoicing." Let's do that this morning with our offering. Let's give as an act of thanksgiving celebrating our freedom of religion.

Remember, every gift you give today helps us continue our life-changing work! We have multiple ways by which you can give. Chose the best platform now as you celebrate



### **Every Time I Think of You I Give Thanks!**

- difference.
- summer that was made possible because you gave. This summer, we,
  - List children's events like VBS!
  - List events for students!
  - Lists any mission trips, or outreach,
  - On top of all that, we kept all our ministries going and growing.
  - throughout the summer heat!

All of the above was only possible because you gave. So from all of us, Thank You! Your generous gifts do matter, and we are grateful!



In writing to the Philippian church, the Apostle Paul began the letter saying, "Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God." That verse expresses how we feel about each of you! So, before we take up the offering today, I want to say thank you to every one of you who has supported us down through the years with your generosity. You may not realize it, but your generous gifts do make a

Let me just share with you a few of the great stories we have seen already this

• We also were able to pay the electric bill so that we could keep this place cool



#### Let's Each Do Our Part

Are you doing your part? The book of Ephesians talks about the importance of believers doing their part. Chapter four of Ephesians begins by admonishing us to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received." It then goes on to describe the various types of work to be done in the church. The point of the passage is to proclaim the unity of purpose and purity in our devotion to Christ.

- does its work."

Teams and organizations are only as strong as its weakest member. Yet even the weakest member can be strong, surrounded by others. Every person in the Kingdom of God is gifted and equipped by God to do the work of God. The same is true when it comes to giving. Some can give more while others give less. The point in giving is not the amount of the gift but the motivation from the heart. Paul told the church at Corinth that they should give, "according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." II Cor. 8:11,12

- and even around the world.
- willingness to help us continue to make a difference for Christ. Let's all do our part!



In talking about the importance of the church growing in Christ to fulfill its purpose, it says this, **"As each** part does its special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." New Living Translation The NIV translation states it this way, "as each part

Every week we take up an offering here. We do that in obedience to God's commands. We do that so that all of the work we do for the Kingdom can be fully funded. Every week we get a varying amount of gifts, some large others small. All of those gifts help us do what we do for you, your family, our city, state,

My question to you today as we take up this offering is, are you doing your part? Today give with a



#### **Are You Tired of the Offering?** If you were to go door to door across your neighborhood and ask people the one thing they don't like about church, do you know what most would say? That all we ever talk about is money. Well, here we go again, it's time for the offering!

Some churches have decided to eliminate the offering time during their services. They might mention how you can give, but that is about all. Some churches don't mention giving at all. Others who do take up an offering will go out of their way to explain that the offering is a time for members; guests need not participate. They do that in an effort not to offend the guest. They know most people are tired of any talk about money in church, and that includes the offering.

We take a different approach here. We take up an offering every week. We do this because the Scripture commands Christians to give as an act of worship. To NOT take up the offering would be to short change you an opportunity to participate in an essential part of worship, the offering. The offering is our time to show thankfulness and gratitude to God by giving back a portion of what He has given us.

The other reason we never get tired of taking up the offering is that every gift given helps us do all the amazing things our ministries and mission endeavors accomplish. Your generosity spans the globe allowing the advancement of the Gospel. Thus giving is our opportunity to do good through the blessings we have received from God.

I close with this rendering of Galatians 6:9 from the Living Bible that says, "And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up." We still have work to do, and your tireless serving AND giving will assure a harvest of blessing for you and our church!



#### **Investing in the Future**

How many of you have already spent money shopping for school things for your **kids?** Believe it or not, it is that time of year. All across our country, families are buying supplies, clothes, and other school-related things.

\$697 on average was what families in 2019 spent per household on school supplies from clothing to electronics. (1) If you think that number is high, then consider this,

\$58,464 on average is what U.S. parents shell out from primary school to the end of undergraduate studies on their kids' education. (2)

That's a lot of money! Why do we do that? Because, in part, we see that as our investment into their future. Here at YOUR CHURCH NAME, we are investing in the future lives of children and students. This summer has been an exceptionally busy one for us. We have held VBS, camps, as well as our regular weekly ongoing ministries to kids and teens. Week after week, we are working to educate and disciple the next generation of believers to stand strong in the world we live in. It's an investment in the future.

- kids and teens. So, thank you for your generosity as we invest in the future!

  - 2.



Every time you give here, a part of that gift goes to help us make that investment into the lives of

https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/09/this-is-how-much-families-are-spending-on-back-to-school-shopping.html https://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-is-how-much-american-parents-spend-on-their-kids-education-2017-06-30



#### Who Is Number One?

Any football fans in the house? The season is just around the corner. Your favorite team is practicing right now to prepare for the race to number one.

Every year at this point, we argue who is number one. Sometimes even the pollsters can't agree who is number one. Typically, the number one ranked team changes from week to week as upsets become more common. Ultimately, we won't know until the championship game on January 14, 2021, who will take home the trophy. Yet, that won't stop us from debating back and forth week after week about who is number one.

Here at YOUR CHURCH NAME, we know who is number one. We put God first in all we do. Our mission is to (read your mission statement.) We accomplish this one person at a time by making them our number one.

After God, you are the most important person to us. We exist to help you realize all God has for you. We exist for the person sitting next to you and for the person you live next to. Our number one is you!

- who are generous."

Today, as we take up this offering, let's establish who is number one in our lives by giving generously.



Every time you give during our offering, you are helping us reach the next one. At the same time, your generosity benefits you. Psalms 112:5 sums it up well by saying, "Good will come to those



### We Are First Responders

- as heroes in our country. If you serve as a first responder, would you please
- stand? Let's give these men and women a round of applause.

- aid, and in some cases, temporary shelter for those impacted by disasters.

When you see a disaster anywhere in the world, know that some element of the Church is there first helping the needs of people. The Church is the first to respond to disasters, for in many cases, the Church is already there. All of that is made possible by the generosity of people like you, our First Responders!

So, thanks for your generosity and how that enables us in a small way to help those in need.



**Do we have any first responders here today?** First responders are trained to respond in the event of an emergency as the first to arrive, providing help. With the events of the past few months, first responders have once again come to the forefront

**Did you know you are a first responder?** Every time you give here at YOUR CHURCH NAME, you help us in our mission of providing help to those in need. A portion of what you give here goes to various agencies that our church supports. Those agencies rush to provide help literally around the world, providing food, water, medical



#### **School Crossing!**

slow down!

As parents, we want the best for our kids. Those of you with kids appreciate warnings about driving slower, keeping an eye out for crossing zones, etc. We want our kids to be safe and without worry. We are sending our kids to school in hopes that their education will provide for them a bright future. We value our kids.

I want you to know that here at YOUR CHURCH NAME; we value kids as well. We are here to help parents raise the next generation of believers. Your children are valuable to us, and we want to input into their lives biblical principles that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

We know we have a brief window of opportunity to make that impact. Why is that? Studies show that 83% of those that make a commitment to Jesus do so between the ages of 4 and 14. Studies have shown that those from age 19 and over have just a 6% probability of becoming Christians.

- generous gift today can help us achieve that goal.



So, we want to use our time with kids to help them come to that life-changing decision of accepting Christ. You are helping us do that. Through your service and support, we are reaching the next generation of believers. Every time you give here, you are helping us support our work with kids.

We are going to keep investing in the future through our work with children and students. Your



#### **Because of you!**

- summer has once again, seemingly, flown by.
- ministries even if we were forced to use different strategies and methods.

(Here either tell the story of one missions or ministry happening or,) Let me list out a few things we have seen already,

- to do that. Thank you!
- made. Your generosity, in part, allows us to do this. Thank you!
- you! Or, say,

generosity.



Is anyone else surprised that it's the end of August and summer is about over? Good, I am glad I am not the only one. It seems like summer just got started, and here we are on the brink of fall, and before you know it, merchants will begin playing Christmas music to enhance our buying. The

We here at YOUR CHURCH NAME have had a great summer! It's been different as we have continued to adjust to the virus. We started our summer committed to continuing our missions and

• XXX kids were enrolled in our Vacation Bible School, and because of your generosity, we were able

• XX students attended camp from our church with X number of significant decisions being • List any other ministry or mission outreach and say, Your generosity makes this happen. Thank

• Not only did we do all that, but we kept going everything else we do here week in and week out. Again, without you, our generous donors, we could not do any of this. Thank you!

Because of your generosity, we can do all we do here to impact people for Christ. Thank you! Because of you, we are making a difference. We encourage you with this offering to continue that



#### **Our Labor is Not in Vain**

How many of you realized that tomorrow is Labor Day? Labor Day typically closes out the summer holidays for us. How many of you get the day off? Now how many of you know what the meaning of Labor Day is? Something about labor, right? As with many of our holidays, the meaning is being lost in our rush to enjoy a day off. So here is a brief history lesson for you.

Labor Day has been a federal holiday since 1894. According to the website of the United States Department of Labor, "Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country."

With a lot of holidays, we tend to forget the real purpose of the day and simply rejoice that we are off work. However, it is worth remembering that this country has been made great and continues to be great through the contributions of workers like you. Where would our nation be without our workers?

Have you ever wondered what would happen here at our church if we did not have workers? I can tell you that there would be a lot more kids in this service right now! We can't do what we do without workers. To take a line from the Department of Labor's website, our workers have made incredible contributions to the strength, prosperity, and wellbeing of our church.

- vain.

We here at **Your Church** take giving seriously. I can assure you that a gift here goes to support and extend the Kingdom. It is not money given in vain. So, I encourage you to give a gift today to support the work of the Lord.



Paul implored the church at Corinth by saying, "Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain," I Corinthians 15:58. As continue worship with our time of the offering, I want us to consider if we are giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord? Are you serving anywhere here? What labor have you given to God's work? Then what about giving? Can you say that you always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord when it comes to your offerings? Paul says our labor in the Lord is not in

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# Thank you!

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