



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 14



How will this impact giving? That is always the question I am asking. Now, the question is, what will be the immediate and long-term impact of COVID-19 on giving? What will this mean for the long-term sustainability of your church? These are the issues I am wrestling with and what I will be sharing in this edition of the Coach entitled, ***The Sustainability Prong Part 2.***

COVID-19 has and will continue to impact your giving. You need to turn your attention to sustaining your church; both in the immediate, but also in, the future. I will deal with the immediate needs of churches first.

Let me illustrate the impact with a real story from one of my clients with an operating budget of just over \$500K. The first Sunday of suggested closures they took in \$500. A typical weekly offering is around \$10,000. Last Sunday, they took in, through online giving, people dropping off checks, etc., \$3,800. This church is in Georgia, where the pandemic has barely made an impact.

"I am probably going to be the only fulltime staff member left on salary." That remark came from a pastor in Oklahoma, again, where the pandemic is still relatively low. I have had similar discussions with pastors who have already laid-off or cut back the hours of staff and employees. All the above churches are in areas not yet severely hit by the pandemic. Yet already, they see massive declines in revenue with no end in sight.

Even with my world-class coaching, you are going to see massive declines in revenue! That is why last week I sent you the following points. I fleshed these out in a post for OnlineGiving.org. and at my blog site, <https://acts17generosity.com/blog/> Here is a part of what I wrote:

My Immediate advice for churches:

1. **Cut spending.** Immediately, all non-essential spending should be frozen in place.
2. **Cut your budget.** You are not going to hit your budget numbers. Why keep a budget that is impossible to meet? How much? I would start at 20%, at least, and be prepared for more cuts.
3. **Turn the thermostat down!** Seriously, have you reset the thermostat throughout your now-empty buildings? My point is to eliminate any waste possible. Even minor things can save you money.
4. **Think 30, 60, 90, 120 days out!** Right now, you need to think about survival. The next few weeks and months will be the worst. You must take care of the immediate, but don't lose sight of the future.
5. **Protect your Assets!** Your facilities are a vital asset not only for doing ministry today, but for securing a stable financial future for your church. If you have a loan, do whatever you need to do to stay current on that loan.

The longer you take to act on the above, the deeper the hole you will be in!

The long-term impact of COVID-19? Everyone is trying to figure this one out. Here are some things that I am thinking about as I probe this question.

- We have always rebounded from past crises, like 9/11 and The Great Recession. We will recover from this.
- Yet, some things will never be the same. Here are some changes I see:
- Now that we have gone digital there is no going back. Soon less than 10% of your giving will be non-digital.
- Expect Baby Boomers to be significantly impacted by COVID-19. Retirements will be delayed for many depending on how fast the Market recovers. This matters to you as Boomers are presently your largest donor group.
- The longer the shutdown goes, the more of your small business owners will shutter their doors forever. This will have a ripple effect beyond them to include impacting your giving.
- I anticipate capital campaigns to essentially be dead as we have known them. Why?
- First, Boomers make up 75% or more of all gifts to capital campaigns. With their looming retirement, campaigns were already going to be impacted.
- Expect Boomers to be overly cautious about giving away large chunks of what they now see as a volatile asset. They will protect *their* house before they give to support your new house!
- Younger generations were already building adverse. We just proved we do not need facilities to hold church. The very tool you used to stay connected will now be used as an argument against your plans for building more.
- Traditional capital campaigns will remain for another five years, with the average pledged running 0.5 times budget to 1 times budget. The days of 1 ½ to 3 times are gone!
- The wave of the future will be smaller churches with a small number of staff who outsource tasks, use buildings less and use technology to create community and mobilize people.
- The bottom line is that COVID-19 revealed many things that were already present but undetected.

All of the above trends were already present before the virus struck. My friend, Dennis Moses, in last week's webinar called this The Great Reveal. Here is one piece of advice. If you need any new facilities build them *now*, as your window of opportunity is closing fast!

Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach will be live this Monday, March 30th at 11 AM EST.

Here is the link <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>.

As always, please let me know how I can help you this week! I am here for you!



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This Week's Offering Talk

In anticipation of another week without physically meeting, here is this week's talk. Even though you are remote, you should still have a time to focus upon giving. We want to always help people understand how a dollar given at your church helps advance the Kingdom!

Honoring King Jesus

Today is Palm Sunday and once again our church family is meeting remotely. I wanted to share with you about the importance of this day in the life of Jesus. Read Matthew 21: 1-11.

Biblical scholars tell us that the laying down of palm leaves and garments to cover the road as Jesus rode by was the kind of honor only reserved for a King. For these people, Jesus represented their hope of a king that would bring them relief from the oppression of Roman rule. They, along with the Disciples, missed the fact that Jesus' first coming was not to rule but to suffer for the sins of mankind. That understanding would come later.

On this day, they rejoiced and honored Jesus by laying down palms and their own garments. The Scriptures don't tell us who started this process. I imagine it was not a planned event but something that happened spontaneously. It built in momentum and created such a roar that the religious authorities of the day tried to shut it down. Think about this, someone started the process and their action ignited others to act, leading to this triumphal procession.

At this point in our services, we would normally pass our offering plate. We receive an offering each week because it is one way, we can honor our King, Jesus. While the means by which you can now give, online, changes our offering somewhat, giving is still an important part of all of our worship.

We don't know who was the first to lay down a palm branch or garment to honor Jesus. We do know that it spread like wildfire. That first act lead others to follow. What if your gift today was the first of an avalanche of others giving? Here is my question for all of us. Are you honoring King Jesus through your giving? Today, would you lay your offering at the feet of Jesus? You can give right now by going to (List how they can give).

Let me say thank you to all of you for your generosity! Your faithful giving is allowing us to continue to minister in the name of Jesus during this crisis. Let's, today, lay down our gifts now to honor our King, Jesus!

Bonus Section

If you have been reading this newsletter, you will know that one of my admonitions has been to write all your leaders a letter, spelling out what you have done and will do with regards to the COVID-19 crisis. Here are two samples for you to consider.

Dear Christ Church Leaders,

There is an enemy amongst us. It's not racist, sexist, bipartisan, nor religious. The COVID-19 virus has made its way to America and is affecting us all. Throughout the ages, the Church has been the symbol of hope in times like these. I just want you to know that Christ Church is determined to follow in that same path.

Our mission is to connect people with Jesus Christ, and I assure you that your staff is working harder than ever to make that happen. Your staff has had to change our church facility into a video studio.

- Your pastors, children's and students' ministry staff have been producing ministry content to keep our mission going strong.
- Your worship team is stepping up to the challenge and using their gifts to put out top-quality worship material for you to share with family and friends.
- Your congregational care and missions teams are putting together teams of volunteers to deliver groceries and help with the needs of the elderly.
- Your facilities staff has been thoroughly cleaning all areas with soap and bleach.

This enemy is a tough foe and has thrown roadblocks at us, but we continue to drive through them to accomplish our mission. The Finance Team is meeting this Sunday to make sure we stay fiscally responsible and remain good stewards of peoples' tithes and offerings.

I appreciate your faithfulness. Without your generosity, Christ Church would never be able to defeat the enemy that is attacking us all. We all need to pray for the health and safety of our community and world during this attack and let people see Christ Church as a light of hope that brings God's word to the world.

Blessings,

Alan

P.S. [giving link](#)

Dear Family,

I trust that if you are reading this you are exactly where our governor has ordered you to be—at home. As you know, after 10 days of gradual "social distancing," Governor DeWine has ordered a "stay at home" policy to be in effect until, at least, April 5, 2020. To my recollection, this is the first time I recall that the command to "*love thy neighbor as thyself*" is best practiced by "*staying away from thy neighbor and keeping to thyself*." 😊

However, it can be challenging for God's people to be isolated from one another. In fact, the Greek word for "church" (*ekklesia*) literally means "the assembling or the gathering" of people. Last week, our Leadership Team made a commitment to one another and our church. We wanted this to be a time that we all feel more connected to one another rather than dis-connected to each other. We made a promise to each other that we would stay connected to one another by every possible means.

Currently, here is what we are attempting to do to keep you connected to God and to our church family.

1. **You can find a message each week on the Hope Church YouTube Channel.** We encourage you to watch these messages and follow along in your Bibles as you would on a normal Sunday. In addition, we encourage you to share these messages on your social media sites and with your loved ones that may need some direction and encouragement. Go to www.hopeindayton.org to be directed to our Hope YouTube channel.
2. **You can expect to get a call from one of our leaders.** We are attempting to make sure that everyone is contacted at least once per week. We have asked several of our leaders to regularly call and check on the Hope family. We simply want to know you are getting along well; and not ill or in need of anything. Please don't interpret our calling as asking for anything or as an intrusion. We consider it a joy to look out for our church family and just want to make sure you are well (Hebrews 13:7). If you haven't been contacted, please contact tori@hopeindayton.org and she will make sure that someone is able to reach out to you.
3. **You can pray with us as we pray for you.** You can pray in structured and systematic ways. For example, consider going through the prayer items that I wrote about in my latest blog, or google "Prayer: A 14-Day Devotional by Tim Keller." You can also pray in an unstructured way as you use this time to clean, organize, do yardwork, etc. If you need someone to pray with, reach out to us at the church and we would love to pray with you.
4. **You can continue to give to the LORD and the ministry of Hope.** Many of you have been asking how you can give during this season. You can visit the Hope giving page by going to _____. Also, we know many of you choose to give by check. Enclosed you will find an envelope for you to mail your tithe/offering back to Hope Church.
5. **You can be assured that we will do everything we can do to help you through this season.** If you need anything, our leaders and staff will do everything we can to make ourselves available to you. You can reach us at the church office at (937) 434-7095.

We hope that you are doing well, and we look forward to gathering again shortly.

Jason
