

SUCCESSFUL EASTER GIVING PLAN

by
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The Stewardship Coach


THE STEWARDSHIP COACH
REVERSING THE DECLINE IN GIVING

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Table of Contents

Introduction

How to Use This Playbook – page 3

Setting the Stage for Success

It Starts With a Vision – page 4

Crafting Your Vision for the "Ask" – page 5

The Why Vision Worksheet – page 6

The Essential Tools for an Easter Digital Giving Strategy – page 7

Putting the Plan into Action

A week-by-week plan of action – page 8

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter and Email Samples – page 10

Appendix B: Offering Talks – page 17

Appendix C: Sample Envelope – page 20

How To Use This Playbook

Let's see giving increase this Easter! Can you raise money on Easter? I believe the answer is yes! That is why you downloaded this Playbook. So, my task is to help you accomplish that goal. Specifically, I want to help you raise an additional amount of dollars through your Easter offering equaling one week's additional revenue. We also want to attract new donors, starting them on the path to financial security.

My Long-Term Goals as The Stewardship Coach

- ✓ **Reversing the decline in giving one church at a time, starting with your church!**
- ✓ **Helping leaders get over their fear of talking about giving.**
- ✓ **Changing the predominant negative, giving climate in the Church.**
- ✓ **Getting people to give not once but again and again until they are consistent givers.**

These goals for all my clients drive me!

If you have followed me or purchase any of my other works, you will know that one of my giving mantras is:

Let's make giving easy and fun!

We want to make it easy for people to give your church money, but most of all, we want to make it fun. The "easy" part is easy to explain, and we will do that throughout this book. But how can giving away your money be fun? When donors see what giving to a church accomplishes, it can and will become fun to give! After all, Scripture talks about being "cheerful" givers. So, let's work towards that goal. We will talk more about this in the next chapter, but for now, I want you to realize that is our goal.

How to use this Playbook

I have tried to give you all the tools you will need to begin helping people give with joy and gladness effectively. The first sections deal with building out the basics. It will require some work on your part. The more thought you put into the process, the better the results. So, don't shortchange this process. The work you put in here will build a base for this campaign's weeks and the whole year and beyond.

The final section of the book is practical help. In this section, you will find a step-by-step calendar. An Appendix contains multiple samples of everything you need to see an increase in your giving.

Two weeks of planning and two weeks of implementation, plus one. That is what you will find on the following pages. Let's begin by, **Setting the Stage for Success!**

Setting the Stage for Success!

It Starts With a Vision

In every study done about what motivates people to give, you will always find belief in the organizations' vision listed first or at the top. I always teach my clients that every "ask" MUST have a driver. By a driver, I mean some cause, which drives me to support *your* cause. Causes, needs, and appeals drive the heart to open up the wallet and make contributions. Even if the cause is right, the wrong use of a driver can result in a misfire for your ministry. What driver are you using in your appeals?

Let me quote myself from one of my previous works,

Every appeal needs a driver. I received two letters in the mail not long ago asking for donations. That same day I received a letter from my alma mater. Each of these was asking for gifts to meet specific needs. Those communicated needs were the "drivers" that would either drive me to my wallet in support of them or cause me to throw the appeal away.

The more compelling the driver, the more likely you will get a response. We will only make a few charitable gifts in any given year beyond our regular tithe. Your donors are much the same. We give to those causes that most touch our hearts. Tell your donors why giving to this cause is important and impactful.

Your vision has to be *clear, concise*, and, most of all, *compelling*. The same is true for every appeal you make. Like your vision, the driver must be clear, concise, and compelling, or you will not succeed.

Don't make your driver sound desperate. Be careful not to make your appeal sound overly desperate. Base the appeal on real needs that will make a difference, not on your survival.

One final thought about appeals. It's a fact that your donors are selective about what they give over and above their regular tithes and offerings. I always say that you only have so many bullets in your gun that you can use. Asking for anything is using a bullet in your gun. So, make sure that what you are asking for is something you cannot fund any other way. No one likes to be continually asked for things, even if it is their church.

So, before we can begin building a plan of action that will increase your Easter offering, we must create the vision behind the "ask" that will make people WANT to give and give cheerfully!

Crafting Your Vision for the "Ask"

Concepts and principles are helpful, but actionable plans raise dollars to fuel your missions and ministry. In all my playbooks, I give you tons of material and steps to simply insert your name or the name of the church and send them out. You can also use the tools listed in this section as idea starters.

Crafting Your Vision for the "Ask"

Let's get started with your plan's most essential piece, the vision that will become your Message leading people to *want* to give to your church. Remember, your vision needs to be,

1. **Clear** – Remember, Keep It Simple Somehow!
2. **Concise** – Can people repeat back in two to three sentences what you are asking them to give to? If not, then you need to work on the "ask."
3. **Compelling** – Does it touch their heart? If not, then the response will be less than you hope for.

To help achieve the 3 C's, consider these,

Six Key Points on How to Craft the Message of Your Vision

1. **Don't make it about you.**
2. **Be positive, not negative.**
3. **It's not about making your budget; it is about changing lives!**
4. **So, make the appeal about missions and ministry not making budget!**
5. **Focus on what you have done and have yet to do.**
6. **Make the appeal appealing by personalizing the Message.**

I try to tell a story in every appeal I write or make for churches. People love stories. The more appealing and compelling your story, the more effective your "ask" will be. The more specific your appeal, the more effective the "ask." For instance, you might focus on what your Student Ministry will be doing. By telling stories of students, your members know and love, you will generate a more enthusiastic response from your donors.

However, this playbook's strategy is to help you make up for at least one week of general offering giving. You want undesignated gifts allowing you to funnel the money to the greatest need. So, you must understand,

How to Make An "Ask" That "Feels" Specific – For instance, you could say,

"We are gearing up for our summer camp with our students. It costs \$xxx to hold this key learning event geared to disciple the next generations of leaders. Giving to our special offering helps us run programs like this training equipping students to live out their faith in today's complex world."

"You are not asking for restricted gifts. Instead, you are asking for help to "run" the programs. The codeword is "run" the programs. This keeps it in the unrestricted realm.

The Why Vision Worksheet

After deciding what the focus of your Resurrection Offering will be, use the following points as a guide for developing the story of that mission or ministry. The story illustrates the vision of our focus, showing the why or value of a gift.

Step One: List 3 things accomplished through our focus mission/ministry. You want to point to "wins" that show your church'. You want to *show* them that *giving* made a difference. Think of ways to communicate this across all platforms.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step Two: List 3 things you want to accomplish from now to summer. Focusing on any missions and ministry coming up allows donors to make a difference with their gifts. You want to show them that their gift *now* can and will make a difference. How best to tell this story?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Why is it important to give to this now?

How can their gift *now* make a difference?

Building Blocks of Support

The Essential Tools for an Easter Digital Giving Strategy

With Easter only weeks away, it looks like another COVID impacted Easter! As I write this, churches worldwide are faced with the reality that the pandemic will impact Easter once again, like last year.

We all know that Easter is the church's best-attended day of the year. You might not know that Easter is typically a strong offering day. At least Easter *used* to be a strong offering day when every chair or pew was filled with warm bodies. If your church is allowed to meet with limited attendance, you can expect the offering to be impacted. This playbook will show you how to assure a great Easter offering even if you don't meet for in-person worship.

Since attendance at churches meeting in-person is hovering around 30% to 50% of pre-Covid numbers, it has become imperative to have a digital giving strategy. My task is to help get you ready by answering,

What systems should you have in place?

1. **Dynamic website.** Your website is the first place most people will visit BEFORE they ever darken your doors. Make yours a good one! **Use your website's URL to drive people to your online giving page.** Your giving page's URL can be used to direct people to your site.
2. **Robust online giving platform, including app and text giving.** You should be working towards the majority of your giving coming in some type of digital means. At OnlineGiving.org, we offer every major online platform, including crypto-currency. <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>
3. **Social Media platform and presence.** Like it or not, social media is where many people spend a great bulk of their time. If you are not there, you miss an opportunity to connect with your people and those in your community.
4. **Postage-paid envelopes.** I know this sounds old school, but this can be a great tool if used properly.
5. **Extensive database of your donors.** A given is to have all your member's email addresses. Yet you need also to have the ability to break this list down by various subgroups like first-time givers, consistency, etc.
6. **A mass email platform, such as Constant Contact or MailChimp.** There are many platforms to help you send out emails in multiple batches. Some offer free services for a limited number of sends. Most cost only a few dollars a month. Find the tool that suits your church database best.
7. **Offering talks.** On-campus or live streaming, it is essential that each offering time has a talk connecting your vision to giving. I'll share more on this later.

With the above tools, you can begin building an Easter Digital Giving strategy that will help you see the kinds of Easter offerings you had before the pandemic. With Easter only weeks away, now is the time to prepare for your best Easter offering ever!

Putting the Plan into Action

The 2022 Easter Giving Plan Weekly Plan of Action

We will use a special Resurrection Offering push from Palm Sunday, April 10, to Easter, April 17 to move people up the generosity ladder *and* help solidify your second quarter giving to ensure summer missions and ministries. Use the following as an idea starter for developing your Easter giving plan, which we call The Resurrection Offering.

Week of March 13 – The Focus of this week is setting the Message. What will be the focus of your Easter offering? What is the story of that? How do we accomplish this?

- ✓ Using the **Why Vision Worksheet** on page 6, determine what you want the offering to focus on and the message.
- ✓ Think about how you will publicly announce The Resurrection Offering initiative.
- ✓ Make sure everyone on your staff/team has read through this playbook. You have my permission to send it to those within your church that need this information.
- ✓ Check your website and online pages and work on additional pages to support the initiative.
- ✓ Plan out your social media strategy, videos, print material, etc.
- ✓ PRAY!!

Week of March 20 – The Focus of this week is Preparation. We share the 2022 vision of where we are going and how each can help us make a difference.

- ✓ Make sure all web pages are up and running, giving you the ability to show more information. You'll want to use links like this to drive people to the page. Here is a hint: have a giving button on that special page!
- ✓ Finalize this week a letter to send to your leaders, both ministry leaders and giving leaders, informing them of the special offering.
- ✓ PRAY – Specifically, pray that your leaders would catch the vision behind this.

Week of March 27 – The Focus of this week is on Leaders. How can you best make a difference? The local church! We show how *your* church is making a difference.

- ✓ Monday, March 28, either snail mail or email a letter to those you consider ministry leaders as well as the top 20% of your giving leaders. Trust me; you'll hit 90% of your faithful! See page 10 for a sample letter.
- ✓ Start reviewing the suggested emails/letters that are recommended. How would you take the idea presented in each and personalize it for your culture and context?
- ✓ Continue to think of how you can support the story you tell each weekend through social media posts in the coming week. Since the focus is on the mission, why not show that in action?
- ✓ Start a slow drip of posts on social media telling your story. Some posts might talk about the offering, while others are simply illustrating the power of generosity through the work of your church.
- ✓ Plan out the offering talk that will announce the Resurrection Offering. See Appendices.
- ✓ Keep working on the plan and above all, keep PRAYING!!

Week of April 3rd – The Focus of this week is on Being Generous. Followers of Jesus live generously. We want to focus on the joy of generosity, challenging members to move up the generosity ladder with a generous gift to the Resurrection offering. This week will also continue our focus of asking leaders to lead with an advanced gift on Palm Sunday.

We start showing how your church's impact extends beyond the walls, both physical and cyber. This broad overview introduces your church family to the possibilities of impacting their world and invites them to participate with you.

- ✓ Step up your social media campaign highlight all that you have accomplished in this past year. At times say, "Thanks to the generosity of our members...."
- ✓ Send out the church-wide letter/email announcing the Resurrection offering information on Monday, April 4th. See Appendices.
- ✓ Plan out the offering talk for Palm Sunday. See Appendices.
- ✓ PRAY!!

April 10 – The Focus of this weekend is Being Hopeful. Our world needs hope. In the New Testament, the word hope, when used as a noun, means "favorable and confident expectation, a forward look with assurance." By focusing forward on the future, we bring hope. We want to share at least three things moving forward that their generosity can help support.

- ✓ Mail the Resurrection offering email/letter on Monday, April 11th. See page 14 for a sample.
- ✓ Keep communicating your vision across all platforms.
- ✓ Send the last email blast with an online appeal to give to the Resurrection offering.
- ✓ PRAY HARDER!!

April 17 – The Focus of this weekend is Being Grateful! We want to give praise and say thank you. Announce the Resurrection offering results, share what that will mean for mission and ministry, and profusely thank everyone who gave.

- ✓ Monday, April 18 - Send thank-you notes/letters to those that gave to the Resurrection offering. Don't just thank them, tell them what their gift accomplished.
- ✓ Monday, April 18 – Send one last email appeal. See sample on page 19
- ✓ Make the announcement next weekend a big deal. Plan out how to celebrate the results and pour gratitude into your church.
- ✓ PRAISE!!

Appendix A:

Letter and Email Samples for Easter Offering Campaign

On Monday, March 28, in advance of the offering, send a letter to ministry and giving leaders announcing an Easter Resurrection Offering push.

Dear _____,

At the pandemic's start, a leading church expert said that 1 out of every 5 churches in America could potentially close their doors forever due to the lockdowns. I've got good news for you. YOUR CHURCH NAME doors are still open, and we are reaching more people than ever!

We have seen some challenging times in the last year, but our church has stood tall throughout it. By the grace of God and people like you, the doors of CHURCH NAME remain open. **Thank you for all you do for our church!**

We will be holding a Resurrection Offering; we have the potential for one of our largest watched/attended services ever. We will use our offering time to increase generosity and attract new givers. Specifically, we want to:

- **Raise at least an additional week's offering.** This will assure our spring ministry setting us up for a successful summer.
- **Increase the number of first-time givers.** We want to start people on the generosity journey.

Our goal is to ensure that all (Insert Student/Children etc.) ministries are adequately funded in 2022. This Easter, the Resurrection offering will help to continue to offer our community and world hope.

I ask all our leaders to make an additional advance gift to our Resurrection Offering on Palm Sunday. Some might give an additional 10% increase. Some might even double their normal offering. If we increased our normal offering by a small amount, we could raise an additional week's offering. On Easter morning, I want to share an amount already given to motivate the entire church family to give generously to help us keep our doors open and our ministry active. I know I can count on you to stand with me. Thank you again for all you mean to me.

Your pastor,

Dr. Pastor

PS. Don't forget that you can make your gift easily by using our online service. Go to <https://www.communitychurchonlinegiving> and follow the easy steps. Setting up your giving online not only makes giving easy, but it also ensures your gift more quickly gets to work supporting our missions and ministries!

A letter setting up Easter giving campaign – Monday, April 4 – Note the letter that follows utilizes a made-up story of life-change. Find your own story and use it here. Also, note the PS mentions an inserted envelope for ease of use. See the Appendix for a sample.

Dear _____,

Americans love a good love story. Perhaps that is one reason why we love Easter. Hollywood capitalizes on our desire for a good love story, and every year, they release blockbuster movies. Those movies are usually based on a fictional story with little to no meaningful message. I want to tell you a story that is real. It is the story of John Smith. **Use a real-life story to insert here!**

Most of you don't know the name, John Smith. John lives in our city, and through friends who invited him to our church, he realized he needed Christ as his personal Savior. Not long ago, he made that commitment, which changed his life forever. I was honored to baptize John along with others. Each of these people, like John Smith, has a story to tell, and now, thanks to Christ, their story will have a happy ending! Now that is a real love story! Stories like this and many others happening at Community Church are among the major reasons I love this church!

This Easter, we will be asking all in attendance to give a gift to support Community Church's work. Christ gave His all for us. Should we not be willing to give a portion of what He has entrusted to us? The faithful gifts from members like you do so much, and the John Smiths of this world benefit!

Without the faithful generosity of people like you, we would not be able to accomplish what we do for the Kingdom! This coming Easter, we want to have a tremendous response to our offering. Enclosed is an envelope that you can bring with you this Sunday or put in the mail. Either way, please pray about being a part of this special time of giving to further support our work here at Community Church.

How many other stories like John Smith's will we be able to celebrate this year? Hundreds and thousands of stories of changed lives for eternity will be told. Thank you for your generosity that helps make this happen. Let's celebrate Easter with a God-honoring gift!

Your pastor,

Dr. Pastor

PS. You can also give online at www.communitychurchonlinegiving

Here is another option for your consideration for a letter setting up Easter giving campaign - Monday, April 4.

Dear _____,

Easter is days away! Easter, the Christian celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, has become big business. **\$21 billion** was spent last year on all Easter-related goods. **\$3 billion** was spent on candy alone! That is a lot of sugar. The average American spends over **\$180** on Easter.

Isn't it true that we spend our money on what we value and love? Americans spend billions of dollars on Easter candy that is here today and gone tomorrow. About all we have to show for eating that candy is an expanding waistline and a mouth full of cavities. That sugar might make us feel good for a moment, but it will not deliver the hope needed in these challenging days we live in. This Easter, I want to show you a better way to spend your money by giving it to YOUR CHURCH NAME so we can continue to bring hope to our world.

Consider just some of the things Community Church does: **List your bullet points here**

- In 2021, we saw XX number of children and students accept Christ.
- Our mission teams went to Africa, Romania, and the inner city of Detroit.
- We trained XX number of people.
- We ministered to XX number of people.
- We did all this as well as weekly, providing worship and ministry for hundreds.

We want to see more of this in 2022! Our church family's faithful and generous gifts make all of this and more possible!

This Easter, we will be unashamedly taking up an offering to support our missions and ministry initiatives. We are asking you to help us show the love of Christ with your gift. During Easter, we focus upon the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus that assures us of Eternal Life. It is God's gift to us. This Easter, why not give a gift back to support Community Church as we attempt to share the love of Christ to a lost and dying world?

This Easter, with our Resurrection Offering, let's give the greatest offering ever as a means of expressing our gratitude and thanks for the greatest gift ever! This letter includes an envelope that will make it easy to give. You can either mail it in or bring it with you to one of our services.

Let's do our part to support what we are doing here at Community Church by giving a generous gift this Easter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Your pastor,

Dr. Pastor

PS. You can give online by going to our webpage at www.CommunityChurch.org Pre-

Easter Email Blast – We recommend sending this out a few days before Easter.

Subject line: \$150 versus \$200; which is it?

Dear _____,

How much do we spend on Easter compared to how much we give to a church? The answer is Americans spend, on average, \$180 on Easter and give about \$200 a year to their church! What does that say about what we truly value?

Let's change that average this Easter with a generous gift to Community Church! This Sunday, we will celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus and take up what we trust will be the largest offering of the year.

Give now at www.CommunityChurch.org/give

What is so special about this Easter offering? This offering will be used to fully fund all our missions and ministry initiatives for the rest of this spring and summer.

Give early at www.CommunityChurch.org/give

Easter at Community Church is going to be a great celebration. Let's take up an offering worthy of our living Lord in support of His church!

Your pastor,

Dr. Pastor

PS. If you are going out of town, you can still give by using our online giving platform at www.CommunityChurch.org/give. Give now!

Thank you letter after Easter giving campaign is completed sent to members and those who have previously given

Dear _____,

The Apostle Paul opens his letter to the church at Philippi by saying, "I thank my God every time I remember you." I know how Paul felt as every time I think of our Community Church family. I thank God for you and that God allows me the privilege to be your pastor.

This past week was another reminder of how blessed I am to serve the Lord here. Gifts to our Easter giving campaign allowed us to collect over \$XX, XXX to fund our future missions and ministries! Praise the Lord, and thank you, Community Church family. When other churches are scaling back due to declining offerings, we are poised to continue our work for the Lord. None of this would be possible without God's favor and blessings and the faithfulness of our Community Church family.

I wanted to write and thank you for your sacrificial giving. While numbers like \$XX, XXX are exciting, what is even more exciting is the continued ministry that it allows us to accomplish. Every gift given to Community Church is wisely and prudently used to extend the Kingdom. Your faithful gifts bless the greater **list of your city** area and beyond.

Let me end by quoting the rest of Paul's opening thanksgiving and prayer to the Philippians, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

May this prayer of Paul be true for our church as it was for the church at Philippi. I look forward to seeing you this Sunday with Bible ready and hearts receptive to hear what God wants to say to us.

Your pastor,

Mark

PS. Remember, the easiest way to give is through setting up your gift to be automatic. To find out how to go to our web page at <http://communitychurch.org/give>, follow the directions for recurring giving.

The following letter should be sent to those that were first-time donors on Easter

Dear _____,

Thank you for your recent gift to Community Church this Easter. According to our records, your recent gift to Community Church may have been your first gift. I wanted to take the time to thank you for your generosity. Your gift allows us to fulfill our purpose to **List your vision statement here**. So, thank you for helping us accomplish our mission.

I also wanted to write and let you know that we take all gifts seriously. You can be assured that your gift is used to fund our church's many missions and ministry endeavors. I have included a document that outlines what we do with our funds in this packet. Community Church maintains the highest standards of integrity when it comes to our members' and attendees' tithes and offerings. You will be receiving quarterly and year-end giving statements of all your gifts to Community Church. If you have any questions about your giving record, you can contact our church financial office at (XXX) 555-3817 and ask for _____. You can also email us at office@communitychurch.com

Your gifts to Community Church do make a difference. Our gifts do make a difference. Here is an example of the impact we are making. **List your own story below!**

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of preaching a funeral for one of our members who died very suddenly after being diagnosed with lung problems. He died just two weeks after the diagnosis. Yet he was ready. For you see, back in May of 2007, he accepted Christ as his Savior, which radically changed his life. He was baptized here at this church and grew in faith here. This didn't just happen. It happened in part because faithful people supported this church through their gifts. **I firmly believe that gifts like yours allow us to tell stories like this!**

So again, thank you for your gift and for considering different gifts to Community Church. We believe hundreds of other stories are yet to be told, and your faithfulness will help us see them become a reality. May God bless you!

Sincerely,

Dr.

PS. I have included a special CD of a sermon that you might find helpful.

We recommend you include something in the letter or envelope to first-time givers that shares what your church is about.

The following email can be sent out immediately after Easter.

Subject line: Did you miss it?

Dear _____,

Yesterday, we celebrated that Jesus is alive and took up one of our best offerings of the year! We will be using this offering to further our missions and ministry work. Gifts given to Community Church allow us to spread the news that Jesus is alive!

Did you miss yesterday? **You can still give now or give again by going to www.CommunityChurch.org/give**

Your gift now will help us better carry out our goals of reaching our area and the world for Christ. **Please consider a gift now by giving online at www.CommunityChurch.org/give**

Every gift given will go towards advancing the Kingdom. Your gift matters and will help us reach our ministry goals for the year.

I appreciated your generous support of Community Church, and I am blessed to be your pastor!

Dr. Pastor

PS. You can also set up your gifts to be recurring so that if you are gone, your offering still helps support our life-changing work. Go to www.CommunityChurch.org/give. Check the recurring button to set up your automated giving. This makes giving easy AND saves paper!

Appendix B:

Offering Talks

We Bring Hope! – The week before Palm Sunday, April 3

"All the church ever talks about is money!" Have you ever heard that? If you regularly attend church, you know, that is not true. **Yet every week, we pass an offering plate.** So, we do at least for a few minutes talk about money here.

Have you ever wondered what we do with that money? This morning before we take up the offering, I thought I would share with you our plans this summer to help you understand what we do with the money we give you. ***List your missions and ministry activities for the summer. Here are my suggestions.***

- **VBS** – Every year, we hold Vacation Bible School here. We typically have around 100 kids for a week. Many of these kids don't come regularly here. Many come from broken homes where they get little to no love. We love on them and tell them that God loves them and has a plan for their lives. It costs us money to hold this event. So, yes, we ask you to give to support that!
- **Student Camp** – Every year, we take our students to camp. At camp, we teach them there is a better way to live their lives than to follow the path of the world. We teach them how to follow Christ in a Christ-less society. Student camp is one tool we use to mold the next generation for Christ. It costs us money to hold this event. So, yes, we ask you to give to support that!
- **Mission Trip to _____** - This year we will be sending teams to _____. We will be doing a multitude of things. *Share specifics of what your teams will do.* It costs money to go there and do what we believe God wants us to do. So, yes, we ask you to give to support that!

We talk about money because we believe in what we are doing brings true hope to a world looking for hope! So, while we don't pressure anyone to give, we invite you to be a part of what we are doing with your generous gift this morning!

Paul in I Corinthians 15 writes assuring the church that the Resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith, giving us the victory through Jesus our Lord Jesus Christ. He then says, "Therefore, my dear brothers...." Your labor is not in vain. Your giving is not in vain when you give here.

Giving is an Act of Worship - Palm Sunday, April 10

Today, in churches around the world, we celebrate Palm Sunday. This day, the week before Easter, is when we focus upon Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Jesus rode into the city on a donkey that had never had anyone ride it. People came from all over the city to celebrate his coming to Jerusalem that day.

What we often gloss over is how Jesus got that donkey. The Scripture says that he directed the Disciples to go into a town, find the donkey tied up, and bring it to him. He told them that if anyone asked why they were taking it to tell them, "The Lord needs it." That is what happened. They found the donkey, and as they were untying it, the owners said to them, "Why are you untying the donkey." "The Lord needs it," they said. That was it. The Lord needed a donkey, and the owners gave it to the disciples. Wasn't that an act of worship to give a donkey for the Lord's use?

What about you? Do you have anything that the Lord needs? We would have to say no that God doesn't need anything from us. Yet, he does ask us to give to Him. We are to give Him our lives and even our possessions. It is for us an act of worship.

This is why we take up an offering every week. Some might think that our worship has stopped, but the offering is an act of worship. Psalms 96:8 says, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name; bring an offering and come into his courts." Our weekly offering does not interrupt worship; it is worship! When you think that your gift today is an act of worship, shouldn't that change how you give? It might mean it changes the amount you give! Or it could mean that you were not going to give, and now you realize that to fail to give is to fail to worship. You see, viewing the offering as it truly is meant to be viewed, as worship, should change what you give. Today make sure that your offering is indeed an act of worship. Just as we strive to do our best in singing to the Lord the praise that He is due, let's strive to make sure our gift today represents our best!

We give you multiple ways to give here. Find the way that works best for you. Let's view the offering time as another part of our act of worship from now on.

Christ Is Risen! Easter Message April 17

Have you ever thought about what life would be like if Christ had not risen from the grave? Without the Resurrection, we would not have a viable faith. If Christ did not rise from the grave, what hope do we have? Why are you here if the Resurrection is some myth? In the fifteenth chapter, Paul said to the church at Corinth, "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith." Then he says, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead." Paul offers himself as a testimony of one who first doubted Christ but later saw the resurrected living Lord.

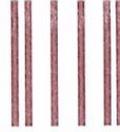
Paul concludes I Corinthians chapter fifteen by saying, "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." As we prepare for our offering and our ushers come forward, I want you to know that giving here at our church is not in vain. You are not wasting your money by giving here. We are actively working to serve our community and our Lord. Through your faithful gift, we make a difference by spreading the good news that Jesus is alive. Our Message is to give hope to countless people. We are committed to giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

As we approach this offering, the question for all of us is, what does your gift today say about what you truly believe about the Resurrection? Can it be said today that your gift represents you giving yourself fully to the work of the Lord? Today we invite you to join us in giving a gift worthy of this day. Your gift will not be in vain, but it will advance and extend the Kingdom of Christ. Let's give ourselves fully today with a worthy offering.

Appendix C:

Here is a sample envelope from one of my client churches.

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



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