

SUCCESSFUL EASTER GIVING PLAN

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REVERSING THE DECLINE IN GIVING

The Successful Easter Giving Plan

By Mark Brooks

The Stewardship Coach

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How To Use This Manual

Let's see your giving increase this Easter! That is why you downloaded this manual. So my task is to help you accomplish that goal.

My 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.

I am driven by these goals for all my clients...

If you have followed me or purchased 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 manual

I have tried to give you all the tools you will need to effectively begin helping people give with joy and gladness. 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 end results will be. So, don't short change this process. The work you put in here will build a base not only for the weeks of this campaign but also for 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.

Three weeks of planning and three weeks of implementation, plus one. That is what you will find in the following pages. Our focus is on setting up the foundation for the "ask." Build a positive message for the "ask." Then the next week, celebrate the results and say thank you to those who gave. Let's begin by, **Setting the Stage for Success!**

Setting the Stage for Success!

It Starts With a Vision

In every study that has been 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 that drives me to give money to support your cause. Causes, needs and appeals drive the heart to open up the wallet and make contributions. The wrong use of a driver, even if the cause is right, 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. Not long ago I received two letters in the mail asking for donations. That same day I received a letter from my alma mater. Each of these were asking for gifts to meet specific needs. Those communicated needs were the “drivers” that will 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 are to 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. The driver, like your vision, has to be clear, concise and compelling or you will not succeed.

Don't make your driver sound desperate. While this economy has produced some challenges with regards to funding, no one wants to support a sinking ship. 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 to 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 that 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 to build out 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 to give cheerfully!

Crafting Your Vision for the “Ask”

We have made the offering the most boring moment of our worship! I fully believe that one reason why giving is declining in churches today is that we have failed to connect our vision to why people should give to our church. People give to that which matters. We must show them EVERY time we take up the offering that their gift does matter!

What difference will giving on Easter make? This is the question you MUST answer if you are to have a successful offering. So before you even start on the logistics of how to get people to give you must answer the question of why they should give. It is not enough to simply tell them they ought to give to fulfill Scripture. 99% of them already know they ought to give. You have to motivate them to WANT to give.

Decide what to focus on now to build towards a successful offering. The more compelling the “case” the more effective you will be at raising the dollars you want. Here are the elements we direct all our clients to use for every “ask.”

Crisis – I want my donors to know about...

Need – We can help by...

Ask – Your gift NOW will help us meet this need!

STOP!!!! Right now start working on the vision of your “ask.” Go to the Appendix and find the document entitled, **Crafting Your Vision for the “Ask.”**

Only AFTER you have completed this task are you ready to move forward. Only AFTER you complete this task will you be positioned for a successful Easter offering. So, what are you waiting for? Put this down and let’s get to work!

Special Offering Questions

Can you really raise money on Easter? I believe the answer is yes! Most of our focus has been upon attracting and reaching lost people on Easter. As Dr. Phil always says, “How is that working for you?” Seriously your audience on that day is almost exclusively your church members, their families, the few members on your roll who show up for Christmas and Easter and perhaps a handful of others. You are going to take up an offering so why not do it right? By setting the stage for an effective offering I believe you can and will see an increase in giving.

If we make the offering about a special need how does that work with regards to regular budget giving? This is a great question. It is important that we realize the difference between a designated gift and an undesignated gift. You cannot raise money for Bibles and then use that money to pay the light bill. That may come as a surprise to you but Google Jim Baker and see the story of what happened to him when he did basically the same thing.

Whatever you raise money for must go to that area!

My belief is that people give to a cause not a budget. So what we must do is show what a gift to your church accomplishes. If the “ask” is about helping you make budget show why that is important. Focus upon what you do with the money that people give you. Budget education should not happen only when you are trying to get the year’s budget approved!

So, if your Easter offering is simply for your budget, focus upon what budget giving does. Break out the specific pieces and highlight their importance. It is as simple as saying, “Do you realize that your gifts allow us to minister to dozens of children helping shape them to meet the challenges of the secular world we are called to live in?” The more effective you tell that story the more people will willingly give to support your work.

However let’s say you do want to put the focus upon one thing. For instance let’s say you want to build the “ask” around your student ministry. Let’s say your yearly budget for Student Ministry is \$10K. A part of that might be for your summer camp. Let’s say that this camp is 50% of the \$10K line item budget. If your offering raises \$2,548.16 you have just saved that amount from your budget. That is \$2,548.16 of leeway your Student Ministry pastor or volunteers have to work with.

The ultimate goal is to get people to give to your church so that your missions and ministry initiatives are fully funded.

So, decide now what you want to ask for and begin to build out the case for why people should give NOW to support that cause.

Building Blocks of Support

The first step towards increasing your offerings is planning. So congratulations you are ahead of most churches and Christian leaders who never give any advanced thought to the offering. To be truly successful however you need to make sure you have what I call the Basic Building Blocks of Support. Briefly here is my list of blocks that if you don't have now you need to immediately start working towards.

Database – Most churches today have a computer and a software program that manages membership. My point is for you to make sure your database is up to date and applicable for the 21st century. For instance do you have an email list of all your donors? If not collect them this Sunday!

I once worked with a church that ran 1,500 a weekend but did not have an email database. This was in the early 90's. For two consecutive weekends we passed a signup sheet down each row asking people to give us their email addresses. You can and should do the same.

Digital Footprint – This alone could be a book. In fact, stay tuned it is coming! For now let me talk about the basics that are a MUST for this Digital Age we live in.

Website – Websites are the new Yellow Pages in society today. It is essential that you have a robust and up to date website. It serves as a building block to your digital communications footprint. You will want to use your website to highlight your Easter offering.

Social Media – For now Facebook is the front porch of America. That might change but it is a truism now. Not only would I encourage you to have a Facebook page but I would consider other Social Media sites. In particular use the ones that your members use. At a minimum I think a church should have Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as their Social Media base. You will want to use your Social Media footprint extensively to highlight your Easter offering.

Online Giving – America and indeed the world has gone cashless and checkless. It is imperative that you have an online giving platform so that your members can easily give to your church. Churches without online giving are setting themselves up for failure!

Offering envelopes – While envelopes might seem old school they none the less are an effective means of collecting donations. However, it essential that your envelope has a postage paid meter stamp on it. **See the Appendix for a sample.**

Action Plan for Building Your Support Base – Is your church set up for giving success? If not it is way past time to implement the technology of this century. Your blocks of support should include...

- Review your online presence with the eyes of an outsider. Does your churches online presence enhance or hinder your ability to connect digitally with your community? Take steps to get your church into the 21st century!
- Let's start with your website. Is it up to date? Are you using it as a communications tool for members? What improvements need to be made to enhance your web pages presence?
- If you don't have online giving set up start the process TODAY to get your church set up.
- Make sure your website is mobile friendly. If you're not sure, log on to your site with your smartphone or tablet. If it does not appear right on that device then you need to get it set up for mobile connections.
- Do you have an email data base of your members? If not create information sheets asking for members email addresses and pass them out next Sunday.
- Make sure you have a Facebook page set up and active. Facebook is the front porch of America and a free creative way to tell your story. Make sure all members know about your page AND invite them to participate by posting pictures related to missions and ministries of the church.
- Set up a Twitter account for the church and begin advertising it to the entire church.
- Sign up for a service like Buffer that will allow you to schedule Tweets that focus upon the missions and ministry of your church. Then start tweeting!
- Snail mail is still the leading means by which charities increase giving. Are your offering envelopes set up for members to easily mail back a gift to you?

Did You Know?

Do you think the Red Cross ever apologizes for asking for money? No, they never do. What they do is tell you the amazing things they are doing and ask you to support them in that work. **The Church, your church, does amazing things!** Our problem is we don't tell our story.

I began a few years ago using this mantra to churches...

Get a story, work your story, tell your story and people will give to support your story!

All the church ever talks about is money! Have you ever heard that one? Actually it is not true. Most churches NEVER talk about money. We don't need to just START TALKING about money. What we need is to CHANGE THE CONVERSATION.

How Does The Church Change The Conversation About Money? I think we need to reset the conversation and the following are some key thoughts to that end.

It Is Not About Money It Is About Missions. The Church is in the business of bringing the Good News of Jesus to a lost and dying world. When a crisis like the Typhoon in the Philippines happened The Church was the first on the scene because The Church was already there doing missions thanks to Christians who gave at their local churches. When I give to my church I am giving to missions!

It Is Not About Money It Is About Ministry. Who visits you when you are in the hospital? It is not your Congressman! Who counsels you when you have a crisis? It is not Dr. Phil. Gifts to a church allow that church to do ministry. That ministry impacts people locally but it also impacts me. My gifts are returned to me through meaningful ministry that I can get nowhere else.

The amazing thing is that the church ministers to people whether they give or not. I can't get in my health club without paying my dues but no one at the church shuts the doors to people who haven't paid their dues. When I give to my church I am giving to ministry.

It Is Not About Money It Is About Obedience. Who are the ones complaining the most about churches talking about giving? Lost and carnal people complain. People who lack obedience to the call of Jesus complain about giving. True Christian disciples understand that giving is a part of being a believer. It is an obedience issue. When I give to my church I am being obedient to the call of Jesus.

The Red Cross never apologizes for asking for donations. Yet I have heard countless sermons on giving begin with the minister apologizing for talking on the topic. If we truly believe that what we

are doing is God's work then why would we hesitate to ask Christians to generously support it? Let's stop apologizing for asking for money to fuel missions and ministry. It is high time we set the conversation about giving in a new light and context. This Sunday **make giving about missions and ministry** and see what a difference it will make.

Create "Did You Know" Moments

One recommendation I am making is to insert into your plan of action a series of what I call, "Did You Know", moments. These can be a brief sixty second testimony from the platform, a letter, or a paragraph in your bulletin or newsletter for instance.

Here is a real example that we used in a client church of mine for a December 31st email blast.

(Subject Line) 30 College Students Accept Jesus

Do you know how hard it is for Muslims and Hindus to come to faith in Jesus? That is exactly what is happening on two college campuses in Nairobi, Kenya. The spiritual darkness is overwhelming, yet God is changing lives. [At least 30 college students in Nairobi have accepted Jesus this year through the efforts of Baptist missionary Chad Pumpelly.](http://www.fbcrockhill.org/give)

Your gift to FBC makes it possible for Chad to be there. Eleven percent of all that is given to FBC goes to support various mission efforts like those of Chad Pumpelly. This means you are helping take the gospel around the world while also impacting thousands of people right here in Rock Hill through the many other ministries funded by our budget. <http://www.fbcrockhill.org/give>

That is why I'm asking you to make a special online donation to FBC RIGHT NOW. This link will take you to our online giving page. Select "General Fund" to make a donation to all the ministries supported through our budget. <http://www.fbcrockhill.org/give>

Thank you for your generosity.

Pastor Steve Hogg

PS. Your gift is 100% tax deductible for 2015 IF you give by midnight! <http://www.fbcrockhill.org/give>

We told the story of what gifts to the church accomplished and this email generated \$12K on December 31st!

So, here is what I want you to do. List all the things your church has done, is doing and will do. List any denominational mission work much like the example above. List out how many hospital visits your staff makes, how many people your church feeds, how many students come to various events, etc.

Then think of creative ways to share those stories. Use multiple platforms to share the story. One great platform is Social Media. See the Appendix for various "Did You Know" samples.

Putting the Plan into Action

2018 Successful Easter Giving Planning Calendar

Feb/March Internal Theme – Preparation for Success – Start the week of February 26th

Week One: Let's Get Started! – Make sure everyone on your team or staff has read through the manual. Spend this week building out all the various support suggestions for making the offering a success.

This week's checklist

- Start working on the vision of why people should give this Easter. This list will serve as talking points, which we call, “Did You Know” moments.
- Start working on your sermon series.
- Secure all email addresses of members and attendees.
- Work to set up online giving if you don't have an account already.
- Set up your Social Media accounts. Determine who will be responsible for telling your story on these accounts.
- Make sure your website is up-to-date. Think about building a separate landing page for information about the offering. This is especially important if your offering is going to a specific ministry or mission.
- Put together a list of all your leaders, both ministry leaders and giving leaders. Have your financial people provide you with a list of top donors. This can be alphabetized to protect confidentiality.
- Produce envelopes that are addressed and have a postage paid stamp on them. You will want enough envelopes for each of the mailings, plus enough for your pew racks or chair pockets.

Week Two: Starting the process – The following key items should be addressed

This week's check list:

- Continue working on the vision of why people should give on *Easter*.
- Send out a letter to all your leaders announcing the *Easter* campaign. See sample in Appendix.
- Continue working on your messages for the series.

Begin using Social Media accounts to highlight the missions and ministries of your church. Use tag lines like, “Thanks to your generosity, ministries like this can happen!”

Continue working on “Did You Know” moments that focus on what the church is accomplishing.

Week Three: Getting Ready for Launch –

This week’s check list:

Send out first letter announcing Easter offering with return envelope. See Appendix for sample.

Work on the final touches of your sermon for Easter and the preceding weeks.

Finalize the offering message and who will deliver it. See Appendix for samples.

Prepare any bulletin inserts and information in newsletters, website, etc.

Continue using Social Media accounts to highlight missions and ministries.

Make sure online giving is set up and ready to go.

Work on “Did You Know” moments that focus on what the church is accomplishing. Will this be a bulletin insert, slides on a screen, a video presentation, a testimony, etc..? Decide who will be responsible for sharing the moment.

Week Four: Palm Sunday

This week’s check list:

Finalize the offering message and who will deliver it. See Appendix for samples.

Prepare any bulletin inserts and information in newsletters, website, etc.

Continue using Social Media accounts to highlight missions and ministries.

Did You Know -Focus on a mission or ministry initiative either with a bulletin insert or video

Week Five: Easter Week! Get ready for the offering! Spend the last week preparing for an effective offering.

This week’s check list:

Send out second letter announcing Easter offering with return envelope. See Appendix for sample.

Finalize the offering message and who will deliver it. See Appendix for samples.

Prepare any bulletin inserts, newsletter comments, webpage, etc.

Continue using Social Media accounts to highlight missions and ministries.

- Work on *Did You Know* moments that focus on what the church is accomplishing.
- Make sure envelopes are in every pew rack or seat pocket!
- Send email blast – Send an email blast in the afternoon before Easter with an embedded link to your giving page asking people to give right then! See Appendix.

Week Six: Easter Giving Follow Up

This week's check list:

- Send out Thank You letters to all who gave to Easter. See the Appendix for samples.
- Send out email blast for last minute appeal to give. See the Appendix for samples.
- The Sunday after Easter report from the platform the results of the offering and thank everyone!

Appendix A:

Crafting Your Vision for the “Ask”

Worksheet

Purpose: To document the vision for (insert defining vision statement) and make a compelling case for giving to your church in the next few weeks.

Principles / Benefits: Guidance for developing the case for giving to your church.

1. Effectively communicates leadership’s vision for the church.
2. Reflects the church’s mission.
3. Identifies genuine needs and offers practical steps for meeting those needs.
4. Ensures that everyone in your church’s family receives consistent messages about the church’s vision and priorities.
5. Presents a positive image of the church.
6. Builds on the church’s potential.
7. Demonstrates how sacrificial gifts will unleash the church’s potential and turn vision into reality.
8. Provides a clear link between the church’s mission, its vision, and support opportunities.

Points: The following points will serve as a guide for developing the case statement:

1. Who we are
2. What has been accomplished
3. Our Purpose
4. Specifics of our vision for the future – how these decisions were made
5. Why are these needs crucial to your ministry?
6. Cost of realizing this vision (if known – anticipated cost and fundraising goals could appear in subsequent program publications.)
7. Why now (demonstrate the sense of urgency)
8. What will it take
9. A call to complete and sacrificial participation
10. You can make a difference!

Reasons to give: Think through the following needs your church has in the coming weeks. Use the list on the next page as a beginning working document to help clarify the “ask.”

Mission Initiatives – List any specific mission your church supports that would receive dollars to help meet their needs. An example might be:

- 10% of all gifts will go towards support of international missionaries.
- Our Mission teams will be literally around the globe in Africa and South America.

Why is it important to give to this now?

Ministry Initiatives – List any specific ministry of your church that would receive dollars to help meet their needs. An example might be:

- Our student ministry spring break retreat is weeks away and we want to impact as many students as possible, your gift can make this happen!
- Our VBS is set to be our best ever and starts the last week of June. Planning and work are starting now and we need to fully fund this!

Why is it important to give to this now?

Appendix B:

Letter and Email Samples for Easter Offering Campaign

Four to three weeks in advance of offering send a letter to ministry and giving leaders announcing an Easter Offering push.

Dear Community Church Leader,

It might surprise you that I addressed you as a leader. You are a leader! You lead not only by faithfully attending but by serving and by generously giving to this ministry. Without you and your faithful support we could not do all that we do. So, from the bottom of my heart, **thank you for all that you do!**

I wanted to write you and inform you of our efforts to increase giving and to build upon our donor base. This coming Easter we will be encouraging not only increased attendance but an increase in giving. This is part of our yearly effort to increase donors and giving for the coming year.

We have a great vision INSERT YOUR VISION STATEMENT. Faithful gifts to this ministry allows our vision to be successful. Our goal is to ensure that all ministries are adequately funded in 2018. This is why we will be focusing upon the offering this Easter to help us achieve giving success.

You have shown your faithfulness in the past and I know I can count on your faithfulness now. Please pray about giving a gift on Easter to help us continue this year financially strong. Every gift given helps us do God's work here and around the world. 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. Simply go to <https://www.communitychurchonlinegiving> and follow the easy steps. Setting up your giving online not only makes giving easy it ensures your gift more quickly gets to work supporting our missions and ministries!

Letter setting up Easter giving campaign – Send three weeks before Easter

Dear Friend of Community Church,

Easter is days away! Easter; the Christian celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, has become big business. **\$18 billion** dollars were spent last year on all Easter related goods. **\$2.6 billion** was spent on candy alone! That is a lot of sugar. The average American spends **\$150** 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 waist line and a mouth full of cavities. This Easter I want to show you a better way to spend your money by giving to Community Church.

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

- In 2017 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.

The faithful and generous gifts of our church family make all of this and much more possible!

This Easter we are going to 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 gives us the assurance 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 let's give the greatest offering ever as a means of expressing our gratitude and thanks for the greatest gift ever! Included in this letter is an envelope that will make it easy for you 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

2nd Direct Mail letter sent the week before Easter Sunday

Dear Friend of Community Church,

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 block buster movies. Those movies are usually based upon some fictional story that has 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 one of the major reasons why I love this church!

This Easter we will be asking all in attendance to give a gift to support the work of Community Church. 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 either 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 all 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

Pre-Easter Email Blast

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

Dear Friend of Community Church,

How much do we spend on Easter compared to how much we give to a church? The answer is Americans spend on average \$150 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 through 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 Community Church Family,

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 being forced to scale back due to declining offerings we are poised to continue our work for the Lord. None of this would be possible without the favor and blessings of God 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. The greater **list your city** area and beyond is blessed by your faithful gifts.

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 as 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,

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 seriously all gifts given to our church. You can be assured that your gift is used to fund the many missions and ministry endeavors of our church. I have included in this packet a document that outlines what we do with the funds that we receive. Community Church maintains the highest standards of integrity when it comes to the tithes and offerings of our members and attendees. 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!**

Just 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. In fact 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 and it 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 further gifts to Community Church. We believe there are hundreds of other stories 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 Community Church Friend,

Yesterday we celebrated the fact that Jesus is alive and took up one of our best offering of the year!
We will be using this offering to further our work of missions and ministry. 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 be better able to 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 willing 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 C:

Offering Talks

Yes We Do Talk About Money Here! – The week before Palm Sunday

“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 do 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 what are plans are 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 and that what we are doing matters! What matters is worth giving to. So, while we don’t put pressure on anyone to give we do invite you to be a part of what we are doing with your generous gift this morning!

Giving is an Act of Worship - Palm Sunday

Today, in churches around the world, we celebrate Palm Sunday. This day, the week before Easter, is when we focus upon Jesus Triumphant 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 Jesus directed the Disciples to go into a town and find the donkey tied up and to 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 exactly 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 really 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 in fact the offering is an act of worship. Psalms 96:8 says, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due 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 the way 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!

So, I am going to ask our ushers to come forward to help us continue in our time of worship by giving back to God a portion of what He has so richly given to us. Let's from now on view the offering time as another part of our act of worship.

Christ Is Risen! Easter Message

Have you ever thought 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? Paul said to the church at Corinth in the fifteenth chapter that, “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 up as a testimony of one who at 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 are making a difference spreading the good news that Jesus is alive. Our message is giving hope to countless people. We are committed to giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

The question for all of us as we approach this offering 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 be used to advance and extend the Kingdom of Christ. Let’s give ourselves fully today with a worthy offering.

Appendix D:

“Did You Know” Moments

The following are samples of churches telling the story of what they are doing in missions and ministry. Use these to create ideas of your own.



Through your gracious Greater Things giving the Cross Church Compassion Center has become a ministry that serves the greater NWA community in so many ways. The Compassion Center is changing lives! See your gift in action by visiting the Compassion Center Monday – Saturday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
<http://ow.ly/mBaen>

A graphic titled "5 WAYS TO GIVE" with five icons: a bowl (WASH), a laptop (DONATE), a key (WORK), an envelope (MAIL), and a circular arrow (AUTOMATIC). Below the icons are the labels: WASH, DONATE, WORK, MAIL, AUTOMATIC.	Give Cross Church ow.ly 1709 Johnson Road Springdale, AR 72762
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A Facebook post from South Biscayne Church. The header shows the church's profile picture and name, "South Biscayne Church", with "Tuesday" and a globe icon. The main text reads: "Your giving goes to #SBCLifechange!! Thank you! Click here to support life change now! <http://www.southbiscayne.com/#/giving>". Below the text is a photograph of two men in a boat on the water. The man in the foreground is wearing a blue t-shirt with "CHANGE" written on it and has his right arm raised. The man behind him is wearing a green cap and sunglasses. At the bottom of the post, it says "Like · Comment · Share" and "36 people like this." with a speech bubble icon and the number "1".

Appendix E:

Here are some Twitter suggestions that are all under 140 characters. You now can have up to 280 characters. If you have online giving add your web address to these for an even more effective Tweet! Change OUR CHURCH to your name.

This month Americans will spend billions of dollars on Easter candy. Why not make a difference with a gift to your church?

\$150 the avg. spent on Easter in U.S. \$200 the avg. Americans give to a church! Let's change that this Easter!

\$18 Billion was spent on Easter related goods last year. How much goes to the Church founded by the One Easter is about?

120 million pounds of Easter candy are consumed each year! Cost was \$225 million. Do you spend more on candy than you give to the church?

This Easter why not give something that will last longer than candy? Give to OUR CHURCH! Your gifts help us reach our world!

This Easter we are taking up an offering that will change the world! Get your gift in to be part of this life changing event!

16 Billion Jelly Beans are made for Easter. None change the world but a gift to OUR CHURCH does! Give this Easter!

This week Americans will spend millions on Easter candy. Why not make a difference with a gift to OUR CHURCH?

Buying Easter candy just makes you fat! Giving to OUR CHURCH gives you joy and a sense of accomplishment!

Every day OUR CHURCH is making an impact. Give this Easter to support our work! Give at...

Your gift does matter! What all of us can do together is greater than one large gift. Give this Easter!

We want to have the largest Easter offering ever so that we can do even greater things in missions & ministry. Give this Easter!

Set up recurring giving. Even if you go to grandma's house for Easter your offering will be here!
<http://yourchurch.com/give>

You don't have to wait until Easter morning to give. Give now at <http://yourchurch.com/give>

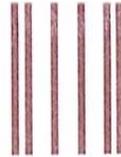
Going to be away from church this Easter? Remember to give by giving now
at <http://yourchurch.com/give/>

Thanks to all who give so generously to OUR CHURCH. Through your faithful gifts we are reaching your town, the US & the world! Thank you!

Appendix F:

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

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

