

# The Fully Funded Summer

Ideas and Plans to Fully Fund Your Summer Missions and Ministries

By

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Ministries**

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# **Table of Contents**

## **Introduction**

**Beat the Summer Slump! Page 3**

## **Building the Base for A Successful Summer Giving Campaign**

**Have a Plan and Work Your Plan - Page 6**

**What Motivates People to Give? – Page 8**

**The Building Blocks of Support – Page 11**

## **Putting the Plan Into Action**

**A Sample Summer Giving Plan – The Summer of Excelling Grace – Page 13**

## **Appendix - Sample Sections**

**Appendix A: Sample Letters – Page 15**

**Appendix B: Crafting Your Vision for the “Ask” Worksheet – Page 21**

**Appendix C: Offering Talks – Page 23**

**Appendix D: Postage Paid Offering Envelope Sample – Page 38**

**Appendix E: John 3:16 Mission’s Sample – Page 39**

**Appendix F: Automatic Withdrawal Samples – Page 44**

**Appendix G: Social Media Screen Shot Samples – Page 46**

## Beat the Summer Slump!

**If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning!** I thought of that phrase when a church I once attended sent me at their start of the summer giving appeal. They wrote the following...

Dear Members,

As we come to the end of our successful Capital Campaign, we now ask you to turn your attention to the Operating Fund. With the summer months bringing vacations and other Sunday activities, we, the members of the Finance Committee, want to remind you that our monthly expenses continue for things like lighting, air conditioning, maintenance of grounds and buildings, personnel costs, missions outreach, etc. This is typically the time that giving slows down and doesn't rebound until October causing a cash flow crunch which makes it difficult for the church to meet its monthly obligations.

If you are current on your Operating Fund giving, we appreciate your faithfulness. If you are behind on your giving, we ask that you try to bring this current. And, if you are able, please consider paying ahead on your pledge or paying your pledge in full now to ease the money crunch.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the members of the Finance Committee below to get more information. Thank you in advance for your consideration and commitment to **Name of church withheld**.

Wow! **Talk about non-motivating!** Would you give to this church? Does helping them pay for the air-conditioning cause you to want to dig dipper into your pocket and give more money to them? The second I read this letter I knew I had a keeper. I kept this letter to show to others so that you won't make the mistake they did! It would not surprise you to know that the above church did NOT meet their budget needs at the end of the year. Letters like this were one reason why.

They didn't ask me to but I re-wrote the letter and sent them my sample. Here is what I wrote...

Dear Friend of Community Church, **I made that name up I still want to protect the church above!**

**Can you believe that school is almost out and the summer is about upon us?** It truly does seem that time flies especially when you are busy. We have certainly been busy here at Community Church. What an exciting year we have already had thus far. The excitement and fun are about to ramp up with the approach of summer. While summer might be a slow time for some churches we crank it up here. Consider...

- Our VBS is set to be our best ever and starts the last week of June.
- Our Student Ministry team will be heading to camp in July. Last year we saw many conversions to Christ and we are believing God for a greater harvest at this year's camp.

- Our Mission teams will be literally around the globe in Africa and South America.
- We are also going to be holding a special mission VBS for inner city children of our town.
- All our regular weekly activities will be running as well.

So, you can see things are starting to get a little crazy here. **All of what we do is possible as a result of the faithful gifts of our members.** Without you none of the above would happen.

This summer we are holding a special giving campaign called, **The Summer of Love**. We are asking you to help us show the love of Christ with your gift. Giving to this special campaign will not only help us stay current on our regular operating expenses but it will also help pay for all our missions ventures listed above. Each of us can show our love with a gift this summer that will enable us to show our city, state, nation and the world that we love them and want them to know personally the love of Christ.

**Included in this letter are three envelopes, one for each month of the summer.** Use each one to mail in your special offering of help. So when you are at the lake or on vacation you can be assured that your gift will fuel ministry back home.

Let's show our love and support for what we are doing here at Community Church by supporting **The Summer of Love**. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Your pastor,

**Do you see the difference in the appeal?** One sounds desperate the other focuses upon the positive upcoming missions and ministry initiatives. Studies show that people give to that which they believe matters and will make an impact. While I want comfortable surroundings asking me to give to keep the air-conditioning on will not ultimately motivate me to give more. Changing lives for the Kingdom will.

**Giving to the church as percent of income decreased from 3.11% in 1968 to barely above 2.0 % currently an over 20% decline in the proportion of income donated to the church.** I believe that one reason why is we simply don't have good stewardship plans in place to meet this challenge. This book is an attempt to help you fully fund your summer.

**Summer is one of the most challenging times for churches to meet their giving requirements.** I have worked in the stewardship ministry for twenty years and have analyzed over five hundred churches giving patterns. EVEN in growing churches with healthy stewardship giving summer is always the most challenging time to meet the budget. The irony is that summer is also one of the busiest in terms of missions and ministry endeavors. If ever there is a time that you desperately need to make budget it is during the summer!

**This book is designed to help you fully fund your summer in a way that avoids guilt or coercion which never work anyway.** I am going to give you a positive plan that if you follow it

you will see giving increase this summer over past summers. Your missions and ministries are too important not to be fully funded.

My goal with this book is not only to provide you with information about how to build a plan but to actually help you get that plan started for your church. At the end of each section is an Action Plan listing out steps to take to fully fund your summer. Also the Appendix includes tons of samples. So, let's get started!

# **Building the Base for A Successful Summer Giving Campaign**

## **Have a Plan and Work Your Plan**

I wrote a book entitled, “The Top Ten Stewardship Mistakes Churches Make.” One of the chapters was on the lack of planning. My contention is that the vast majority of churches have no stewardship plan in place. What results is a sort of knee jerk reaction to stewardship. The results are that many churches struggle to make budget.

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

**Good stewardship results require advance planning!** So, let me ask you...

**What are your plans for a summer giving strategy?** For the client churches that I am tasked to help increase their giving my goal is for their plans to be finalized by mid-April so that they can begin enacting them in May.

**Do you have a plan and are you working your plan?**

**If It Is Not Owned By Someone It Doesn't Get Done**

It is not enough to decide you need a plan or even to work up a plan. Simply having a plan is not enough; you have to work your plan. For any task to get done someone must own it. If it isn't owned by someone it will get left undone.

**My question for you is who owns your stewardship plan?** Find a person that will champion your stewardship by owning it.

**Action Plan** – Following each section I will give you an action plan and a suggested timeline. This book is not meant simply to read but to serve as a foundation for acting upon what you read. By following the principles above you can fully fund your summer IF you ACT! So, let's get started...

- Earlier in this chapter I asked, “Do you have a plan and are you working your plan?” How did you answer that question? My suggestion is...

- If you serve in a church with other staff gives them a copy of this book and ask them to read through it. Then meet and discuss what ideas you received from the book. Spend time at each staff meeting for the next few weeks discussing a plan to fully fund your summer.
- Good planning starts with good evaluation. Look back over the last few summers at your church. What were the most challenging weeks in terms of making budget? What were the strongest? Are there patterns to the giving that you can detect? Design your summer giving plan in a way to meet those challenges.
- I wrote above that someone must own a plan for it to work. Who at your church will own your summer giving plan?
- Make a goal to have a written plan of action in place by May first!

# What Motivates People To Give?

**Don't skip this chapter!** I know you want just the plan but if you skip this section you will miss one of the key aspects of planning that could make or break your summer giving.

Before we start planning to fully fund your summer giving it is important that you realize what motivates people to give. Studies have shown that there are three primary drivers of why people give. They are:

1. **Belief in an institutions vision.**
2. **High regard for staff leadership.**
3. **Fiscal responsibility of the institution.**

Violate any of these three principles and it doesn't matter how good your summer campaign program is, you are doomed to failure. For your work on the summer campaign there might not be anything at present you can do to increase confidence in points two and three. However you can and should build your summer campaign around a vision that will unite all segments of your church.

## 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. I call that The Three C's of Vision.

## **The Three C's of Vision**

**Make it Clear** - Above all else do your members clearly understand what it is you are attempting to do? Is your vision clear? Can your members easily tell their work associates, neighbors and friends what you are doing and why? When visions are not clear people will not donate even in the best of economic times.

**Keep it Concise** - Donors have basically two questions, does this make sense and can you pull it off? Answer those questions and you will get their dollars. Remember the old KISS acronym? It stands for Keep It Simple Somehow. KISS is good advice for communicating your vision.

**Cast it Compellingly** - The most important thing of all is to make your vision matter in the hearts of your members. A compelling vision that motivates the heart will even in the worst of economic times cause dollars to come to your ministry. Show your donors how their gift will make a difference and they will rise up to support it financially.

If you don't hear anything else hear this. Have you ever said that in a sermon? Well, here is my if you don't hear anything else hear this statement. To raise the money you need this summer you must...

### **Make the Summer Campaign About Vision Not Meeting Your Budget**

**The number one reason most summer campaigns do not maximize their potential is because the emphasis is not about vision but about making budget.** Few of your members are motivated by hitting some arbitrary number. If you truly want to be successful build the summer campaign message around a vision that will inspire. Focus on what the funds you are asking to be given will be used for. People want to know that their gift will make a difference for the Kingdom. Your main task is to effectively communicate the vision of what your church will attempt to accomplish next year.

### **A Working Assignment: Write Out a Vision Case Statement for Your Summer Campaign**

Following the above principles write out three to five major points of why your summer campaign is so important for your church. For instance ask...

- What major initiatives you are launching this summer that the summer campaign will help fund?
- What is the major focus of your church for the upcoming summer?
- What are the positive things your church has accomplished that they will continue working on this next year?

These questions can begin your thinking about a vision case statement. The vision case statement becomes your talking points to rally the support of the congregation. Give them a compelling reason to give that is greater than simply helping you make budget this year. What

does the budget accomplish apart from paying the preacher and the light bill? The more compelling you make your vision case statement the more impactful it will be.

**Naming the Summer Giving Campaign** – You will want to choose a name for the upcoming stewardship campaign. Using your vision case statement as a starting point for your theme will give you a good start on the kind of name you want to attach to the campaign. The name should be simple, concise and yet appealing. Don't try to be too cute or catchy. However you do want the title to be memorable and impactful.

**Action Plan: Vision Cast Your Summer Giving Plan** – Remember people give to vision. Make your summer giving plan about reaching people not reaching the budget and your chances of fully funding your summer will be much greater. The following steps should be taken immediately...

- **Vision Case Statement** - Write a one page vision case statement for why your members should give to the summer giving plan. This should include listing missions and ministry endeavors. If infrastructural needs must be listed, i.e. utility bills, set them in a way that communicates how they support missions and ministry.
- **Create a Theme for your summer campaign** – This summer I am using the theme, “The Summer of Excelling Grace.” I am basing that upon, II Corinthians 8:7 that says, “But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge and in your love for us – see that you excel in this grace of giving.” Grace giving is generosity in action! We give so that our summer programs can share the grace possible for all who trust Christ. You can use my theme or develop your own. Remember the theme should encompass what you are attempting to raise funds for. Make the theme creative and memorable.
- **Wrap the message and communication of the summer giving plan around your vision case statement and theme.** The vision case statement and theme become your talking points for the entire summer. So, craft both well!
- **See Appendix A for a sample of how to craft your summers vision statement.**

## **Building Blocks of Support**

**The first step towards increasing your summer 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 summer giving plan.

**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 summer 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!

**Shameless Commercial!** – We interrupt this manual to bring you an important word from this pages sponsor, **Charis Giving Solutions**. Seriously if you don't have an online platform my company **Charis Giving Solutions** can get you up and running BEFORE Easter if you act now. To find out more you can visit our website at <http://charisgivingsolutions.com/> .

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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? See the Sample Section.
- Build a separate link off of your website where people that people can access to find out more information about the vision of the summer campaign AND can actually give. We at Charis Giving Solutions can help you set this up.
- Digitize all communications so that they can be used with email and Social Media. This is not difficult at all to do. All letters can and should be adjusted for email usage. One key to remember is that emails need to be shorter in length than regular letters.
- Use your existing Social Media sites to focus in on the summer campaign. You want to always make the link between what you are doing at your church and giving. For instance consider this Tweet, "Our church each year reaches hundreds of kids in our community through VBS. Your gifts make that happen. Consider a pledge today!" You can also set up through Twitter pasting in your web address and it will be shortened thus saving your character space.
- Use Facebook to show pictures of missions and ministry in action and put a tag line under them saying, "Your faithful gifts allow this to happen."

## Putting the Plan Into Action

### A Sample Summer Giving Plan – The Summer of Excelling Grace

The following section is designed to actually show you what a summer giving plan would look like. It is called The Summer of Excelling Grace. Our goal is to communicate that in the midst of a world of uncertainty and darkness there is light. Jesus is THE light of the world. We want to lift Him up high so that His light will shine and bring others into the light. Thus our theme and message trumpets that truth. This year I am building the message around the theme, “The Summer of Excelling Grace”

As you look over the calendar you will note that on almost every Sunday something has some mention about the summer giving campaign. We recommend use of not only the Internet and direct mail but also the platform to communicate the message of light and to encourage faithful giving. We also utilized lay testimonies of members telling their own stories of God’s faithfulness when they gave. Each message is to be positive, uplifting and yet challenge the church to give in support to the missions and ministry of the church that was providing hope to their community.

<p><b><u>Stewardship Plan Calendar</u></b> <b><u>The Summer of Excelling Grace</u></b> 2018 Calendar</p>
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#### May

**Early May Leadership Reach out** – Consider sending out an advanced letter to your giving leaders laying out the summer giving plan. See the sample section.

**5/6 Bulletin insert encouraging Automatic Withdrawal** – Insert into your bulletin a signup sheet for setting up automatic withdrawal. **See sample in Appendix**

**5/13 Tithing Testimony** – Enlist laypeople to give a one to two minute testimony of their experience in tithing.

**5/14 Direct Mail and Email blast about summer giving campaign commitment**

## **June**

**6/1**            **1<sup>st</sup> Direct Mail and email letter** – First Summer Giving campaign reminder letter with commitment card and envelope goes out to every person that made a commitment to give. Another letter goes out to those that did not make a commitment encouraging them to support Summer Giving campaign.

**6/3**            **Bulletin insert** – Focus on another missions or ministry initiative

**6/17**           **Tithing Testimony**

**July**            **Theme –Committing to the Harvest**

**7/2**            **2<sup>nd</sup> Direct Mail and email blast** – Reminder letter goes out with envelope to every person who made a commitment to the campaign.

**7/9**            **Second quarter giving statements mailed**

**7/15**           **Bulletin insert**

**7/22**           **Tithing Testimony**

## **August**

**8/1**            **3<sup>rd</sup> Direct Mail and email blast** – Final letter goes out with envelope to all those that made a commitment to the campaign.

**8/12**           **Tithing Testimony and promotion of fall session of Financial Peace**

**8/19**           **Bulletin Insert encouraging strong close out on Summer Giving Campaign**

## **September**

**9/2**            **Final Fruit offering for Summer Giving Campaign**

**9/4**            **Send out thank you letters to all who gave to The Summer of Excelling Grace**

## Appendix – Samples

### Appendix A: Samples Letters for The Summer of Excelling Grace

#### May 14<sup>th</sup> letter setting up giving campaign

Dear Community Church,

**At Community Church our focus is, LIST YOUR VISION STATEMENT.** We are committed to bringing grace into the gracelessness of our world. This year we have seen over **XX people baptized.** Every one of them has a story. Here is one story.

**Insert a story of one person who was baptized or some other impactful testimony. This should contain three to four sentences!**

That is grace in action! **We bring grace to people like (Name of person) as each one of you through your prayers, service and giving play a part in the story of the XX we have seen come to Christ.** So, thank you for doing your part to help us reach that one person. We have seen great things but there is more to do. **There is still more grace that needs to be shared!**

**Will you help us share the grace of Jesus?** As we approach the start of summer we encourage you to remain faithful in your giving so that we can continue to share the grace of God. Frankly summer is a challenging time for us to make budget as many are away on vacations and our attendance is lower. Yet at the same time our needs to fund our missions and ministry endeavors increase! So, we need your help!

This summer we are launching a summer giving campaign called, **The Summer of Excelling Grace.** The theme is based from II Corinthians 8:7 that says we are to, “excel in this grace of giving.” We are asking everyone in our Community Church family to stay strong in their giving so that we can share the grace of Christ to our world. We are asking you to faithfully give to our **Summer of Excelling Grace.**

Every dollar helps us better fulfill our mission. Let’s make sure Community Church is fully funded this summer. **Will you excel in the grace of giving so we can continue to share God’s grace with others?**

Community Church Family, thank you for all you do in service and financial support. Let’s give generously so that we can share the grace of Christ to our town, region, state, nation and the world!

I am committed to doing my part to “excel in this grace of giving.” Are you?

Bro. Mark

**P.S. We have included an envelope to make your giving easy. Simply include your gift and mail it back or drop it in the offering the next time you worship with us.**

**P.S.S. Don’t forget you can simply and securely give your tithes and offerings through Community Church’s website <http://communitychurch.org>**

**Email version of the same initial letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

**At Community Church our focus is, LIST YOUR VISION STATEMENT. We are called to share the grace of God through Christ, to a world that desperately needs grace!**

**We shine the grace of Christ through your prayers, service and giving that helps play a part in the story of the XX we have seen come to Christ. So, thank you for doing your part to help us reach that one person. We have seen great things but there is more to do. There is still more grace to share!**

Our summer giving campaign is called, **The Summer of Excelling Grace.** We are asking everyone in our Community Church family to stay strong in their giving so that we can share the grace of Jesus to our community. We are calling upon you to help us share that grace! Give here to help us reach share the grace of God, <http://communitychurch.org/give>

One of the best ways to do this is by setting up your giving automatically! Sign up for recurring giving at <http://ourchurch.org/give>

Community Church Family, thank you for all you do in service and financial support. Let's give generously so that we can share the grace of Christ to our town, region, state, nation and the world!

I am committed to doing my part to "excel in this grace of giving." Are you?

Bro. Mark

**P.S. Don't forget you can simply and securely give your tithes and offerings through Community Church's website <http://communitychurch.org>**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Direct Mail Sample Letter

Dear Community Church Family,

**Happy Fourth of July!** The Fourth of July has come to mean a lot of things to we Americans. It means baseball, hotdogs and Chevrolet to some. To others it is a day off to lay around the pool or beach. The Fourth is a time for us to relax and spend time with our families, to eat and to watch parades and fireworks. Sometimes we forget the real meaning of the holiday, to celebrate the fact that our Founding Father's risked their lives so that we can be free.

Down through the years there have been many countless sacrifices to maintain our freedom. From Valley Forge, to Gettysburg, to San Juan Hill, to WWI, to the beaches of Normandy and Okinawa, to Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, brave men and women serve so that we can eat hotdogs and ice cream in peace and freedom. As we look at the rows of white tombstones in our cemeteries we are reminded that freedom isn't free. It was bought with the blood of patriots and kept by the sacrifice of countless men and women who serve around the globe.

We have an even greater freedom today than the freedom's our nation grants us. We are free in Christ. Our **The Summer of Excelling Grace** giving campaign has been all about sharing the grace we have in Christ. To date we have kept pace with our missions and ministry needs. I am writing you again to encourage your continued support of this crucial endeavor.

**We are half way through summer with still many more exciting things to accomplish so we must not stop now.** Please prayerfully consider continuing to give to **The Summer of Excelling Grace.** Every gift goes to continue our work of sharing grace not only to our community but literally around the world. Our desire is to see many more experience the grace we have as a result of being in Christ. Thanks for your consideration and faithfulness in giving. Your gifts are making a difference.

Your pastor,

Bro.

**PS. Remember you can give online by going to our website at [www.OurCommunityChurch.com](http://www.OurCommunityChurch.com)**

**Second Quarter Sample Letter** – Since you must send out a quarterly letter and the second quarter ends in July here is a sample letter for your consideration.

Dear Community Church Donor,

In sports the half time is when teams rest up, reflect on what worked in the first half and what didn't, and prepare to close out the game successfully. We have reached the half-way point in our yearly giving here at Community Church. As a result of you and many others faithful giving we have stayed in the game! While we read of many churches struggling we have, by your faithful giving and the grace of God, manage to not only survive but to thrive! We have accomplished much in the first half of the year. However there is still much more to be done.

Enclosed you will find your quarterly giving statement for the first two quarters of the year. I asked our financial team to allow me to insert a personal word to every donor. I wanted to say a simple thank you for your faithfulness in giving. I know you have multiple opportunities to give to other ministries and causes. The fact that you have given here is greatly appreciated.

As we move into the second half of the year we still have many ministry opportunities ahead of us. We are in the midst of our summer giving campaign, **The Summer of Excelling Grace** We have been blessed to see great things happen for the Lord and are looking forward to a great fall. We are already ramping up for an exciting new year. All of this is made possible through gifts like yours. Your faithful support now will help us continue our full ministry focus.

Each of us loves to be a part of a winning team. Here at Community Church our “game” is not that of earthly matters. We are in an eternal match against the forces of evil. We will prevail. The victory is ours through Jesus! Yet we dare not slack off at any point and lose the advantage that is ours. By staying faithful in our gifts we can assure that our second half will be just as impactful as our first. I know I can count on you as you have shown yourself faithful in the past. Together we will win the victory for Jesus!

Thank you once again for allowing me the honor of being your pastor and thank you for supporting this church through your gifts.

Your pastor,

Bro. Mark

**PS. Always remember you can set your giving up to be automatic by going to <http://communitychurch.org/give>**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Direct Mail letter

Dear Friend of Community Church,

**Millions are flocking to see the movie LIST A CURRENT MOVIE!** Have you seen it? Hollywood capitalizes on our desire for great stories and every summer 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 how light came to one person named, John Smith.

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!

While you may not realize it you are a part of John Smith's story and the other people we baptized recently. Your faithfulness in supporting the ministries and missions of Community Church allows us to reach the John Smiths of the world. John Smith is only one story of many that are happening not just in our town but literally around the world.

**Baptizing people is always exciting but it is just the tip of the iceberg of all that we are doing this summer.** We saw XX of our students accept Christ at Summer Camp. Hundreds of children have been impacted through our VBS. We have sent out mission groups literally around the globe all to, **put your Vision statement here!** Together we at Community Church are making a difference. **We are committed to shining the light of Jesus into the darkness of our world!**

As hard as it might be to believe we are almost through summer. We have seen already many great victories but there is still work this summer left to do. Like a football team at halftime holding a lead we dare not coast in the second half. Community Church never has coasted and I am trusting we will press to the finish in our campaign **The Summer of Excelling Grace**

Summer is always a difficult time for the average church in America to make ends meet. However Our Church is far from the average church and through your generosity we are on pace to hit our financial goals. **Remember from Memorial Day to Labor Day, our weekly ministry budget need is \$X,XXX.** While we are on pace I want to encourage you to continue your faithful giving so that we can continue with our ministry and mission goals.

How many other stories like John Smith's will we be able to celebrate by summer's end? Hundreds and thousands of stories of changed lives for eternity will be told. Thank you for your generosity that helps make this happen. We can finish the summer strong if you will support **The Summer of Excelling Grace** to help us continue to share the grace of God through Jesus Christ Our Lord!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

**PS. Don't forget that you can set up your giving online so that if you are gone your gift is present. To sign up go to <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

## Thank you letter after summer giving campaign is completed

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 summer was another reminder of how blessed I am to serve the Lord here. Gifts to our **The Summer of Excelling Grace** campaign allowed us to collect over \$XXX,XXX to fund our summer 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 \$XXX,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 <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> 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.

Committed to shining the grace of Jesus,

Bro. Mark

**PS. Don’t forget you can give online at <http://communitychurch.org/give>**

# Appendix B:

## 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.

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**Why is it important to give to this now?**

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**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!

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**Why is it important to give to this now?**

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## Appendix C:

### Sample Offering Talks for Your Summer Offerings

#### May 27<sup>th</sup> Lost in Translation

**Somehow our holidays have become lost in translation.** Christmas is now more about Santa than the birth of Jesus. Easter is now more about candy, eggs and a bunny as opposed to the resurrection of Jesus. With most of our holidays it has become more about having the day off to relax rather than focusing upon what the holiday actually means. The same is true for Memorial Day.

Memorial Day started after the Civil War as a means to honor those that paid the ultimate sacrifice. As our nation fought more wars Memorial Day, which is always the last Monday of May, took on a larger role until ultimately it was made a national holiday. So tomorrow, Memorial Day, is our day to remember those people who died serving our country that we might retain our freedom.

We are a blessed nation because others were willing to pay the price often with their lives for our freedom. Too often we take for granted this freedom. So holidays like Memorial Day, are a good way to remind us of our heritage and what we owe those who paved the way for us.

The same can be said of our church. We come here and worship often without thinking of the sacrifices that make this possible. It starts with a Savior that gave his life on a cross so that we might have life. It is carried down through the ages by godly saints who gave generously to support the work of the church and who provided the funds to build the very place we now sit in. Like pausing on Memorial Day, to remember those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom we need to pause to thank those that gave before us.

As our ushers come forward to take up this week's offering let's continue that long line of support for this church. Others gave so that you could enjoy worshipping and serving here. Today is your chance to give so that those coming behind you might enjoy the same things you have. May the remembrance of those that gave to support this great work not be lost in translation upon we who now hold that torch.

## **June 3rd Fill the Tank!**

Can you believe it is summer? Summer is our time for taking vacations. How many of you have a road trip planned? Americans love their cars and we love to drive. For those of you taking road trips you spend time planning out the trip so that you can get to your point of destination with the least amount of distraction possible.

If you have kids your planning is a bit more meticulous than those that don't have kids. You have to pack food, something to keep them occupied so that you don't have to repeatedly hear, are we there yet? Advanced planning helps make the trip more enjoyable and successful.

Would you leave the house on an empty tank? Of course not. Why stop before you even get started to fuel up the car? To maximize your trip you plan ahead and that includes filling up the tank before you leave the house. The last thing you want is for your trip to be ruined by running out of fuel.

You might not realize this but here at YOUR CHURCH NAME we need fuel too. We have some amazing "trips" planned this summer. From actual mission trips to summer camps to VBS our summer is filled. To accomplish all that we have need to be fully funded. It costs money to hold these events. We depend upon the generosity of people like you to keep our tank full of funds so we can do all the amazing things we have planned. In addition to that we like to keep paying the electric bill so you can sit in a cool auditorium!

Your generosity keeps our tank full! When you give here you are assuring that our life changing mission gets accomplished. Just as you would hate to run out of gas on your trip we too want to get to where we feel God wants us to go. So this morning as we take up the offering help us keep our tank full so we can continue to make a difference not only here in our community but literally around the world.

## June 10<sup>th</sup> What Are You Fishing For?

**Are there any fishermen or fisherwomen here today?** If you are into fishing you are one of over 30 million people who claim that sport as their own. Any of you have summer plans to catch the big one that got away last summer? If you are you probably have all the gear. We have come a long way from the days that you simply cut a branch from a tree, strung some string to it, tied on a hook and dug up a worm. Today's fishers have all the bells and whistle to give them the advantage they need to catch that big one.

All of that equipment comes at a price. **\$16 billion dollars to be exact.** That is what one study found was spent on the various tackle and equipment to catch that elusive big one. Frankly it is probably cheaper to just go down to the local store and buy a fish than it is to take up the sport of fishing. Where is the fun in that though!

I think we forget sometimes that many of the disciples were first fishermen. In fact much of the early Gospel accounts is of Jesus calling them out from their fishing boats to come and follow Him. He called them to be fishers of men. At heart they were always fishermen. After meeting Jesus they fished for eternal catches. We, the followers of Jesus, are called to fish for men, women, boys and girls for an eternity with our heavenly Father.

This summer we are going fishing here at OUR CHURCH. Through camps, VBS, mission trips and doing what we do every day we are casting our Gospel lure into the troubled waters of the days we live in. Every time you give here you are helping us "catch" people for Christ. So this morning as we take up this offering help us cast another lure into the waters as we fish for eternity. There are fish that still need catching and your generosity will help that happen this summer!

## June 17<sup>th</sup> The 108<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Father's Day

**Did you know that today is Father's Day?** Let's give a hand to all our fathers here. Most of you knew already that it was Father's Day. **Yet how many of you knew that today is the 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Father's Day in America?** Here is the story as I found it on Google...

In May of 1909, Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Wash., sat in church listening to a Mother's Day sermon. She decided she wanted to designate a day for her dad, William Jackson Smart. Dodd's mother had died in childbirth, and Dodd's father, a Civil War veteran, had taken the responsibility of singlehandedly raising the newborn and his other five children.

The following year, Dodd wanted to celebrate Father's Day on June 5th, her father's birthday, and petitioned for the holiday to be recognized in her city. Needing more time to arrange the festivities, Spokane's mayor pushed the date back by two weeks, and the first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, according to the Spokane Regional Convention and Visitor Bureau. It became a permanent holiday when President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1972.

So now you know! Thanks to a church goer we now have a holiday just for dads! So, if your father is still alive make sure you give him a call and thank him for being your dad!

Days like this are filled with mixed blessings for some. Some mourn the loss of their father who is no longer with them. Some mourn for a father they never really knew. Whether your father is alive or dead, whether he was a good dad or horrible today we want you to know that you have a heavenly father who loves you. The Apostle Paul wrote this to the church in Rome, "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to Sonship. And by him we cry, "**Abba**, Father."

That term Abba, is an intimate term for God as father. It is the equivalent of our saying, "Daddy." Our mission as a church is to share with the world that God loves us and wants to be a father to us, literally our daddy. On a day when some have negative memories of fathers at least you can be assured that there is one father you can call daddy, Our Heavenly Father.

That is why we do what we do here to connect people to God so that they can say, Abba, Father. Every time you give here you make it possible for us to share that message with a world that needs a daddy. So, thanks for your gifts that truly do honor our heavenly Father.

## June 24<sup>th</sup> Our Trophies Are Eternal

**Does anyone here have any trophies?** We get trophies for everything now. From bowling, to softball and just about everything in between we love to get a trophy. In fact this might surprise you, trophy and award sales are now an estimated \$3 billion of year industry in the United States and Canada.

Today when it comes to trophies the most interesting conversation is about what has become known as participation trophies. We give a trophy to kids for just showing up and participating. There are articles bemoaning this and others praising it. It used to be that only the winners got a trophy. Now any and everyone has trophies on the shelf. I will let you decide if that is good or bad.

**We don't hand out trophies here but we do have trophies.** Our trophies are eternal. Our trophies are the changed lives we have been able to impact with The Gospel. Consider this summer already we have...

- List some accomplishment
- List another accomplishment

**Those are our trophies and we could not do that without you!** Every time you give here you help us gain another trophy. The trophies we are focused on last for all eternity. There is no better trophy than a changed life. So, while we don't give out participation trophies please know that your participation through your generosity does indeed produce trophies. Trophies of grace last for an eternity! That is something worth participating in!

## July 1st Freedom of Religion

**Around the world today many of our brothers and sisters in Christ are attending church fearful of their lives.** Recent church bombings in places like Egypt on Palm Sunday puts many Christians in constant fear. They fear not simply the freedom to worship as they like. They fear for their very lives.

**We must never forget that one of the driving reasons for this country was the freedom of religion.** Many of our forefathers came here to escape the persecution they were receiving in many countries in Europe. At the time of our countries founding most European countries limited free expression of one's faith. The Church was sanctioned and funded by the governments of the land. If your beliefs ran counter to the governments you faced persecution and hardships. Many people were looking for a place where they could worship in freedom. That place became America.

We have had our faults as a nation. We still do. Yet we became a beacon of hope to countless millions of people who were hopeless where they lived. We are still to this day that beacon of hope. If America isn't great why are people lined up to come here? One of the major reasons is our freedoms. One of the key tenets our Founding Fathers was that the State would not, could not, dictate to the citizens where or how they should worship.

That Separation of Church and State has been a driving factor that to this day assures we can worship here in this place as we choose. In our celebration this week of our freedoms don't forget this cherished freedom. We are blessed to be able to worship openly and without fear. Our brothers and sisters in Christ in places like China or Iran don't have the freedom of worship that we have.

Since the founding of our country men and women have given their lives to preserve our freedoms. Someone said, "Freedom isn't free." It cost the lives of many. They gave so that we could enjoy the fruits of this great land AND be free to worship as we choose. As we take up our offering this weekend your gift helps us continue our life changing work. You see though we have freedom of worship we live amidst many who have given up their freedoms to be ensnared by sin and darkness. Our task is to shine the light of Jesus to a world that needs hope. Every time you give you help us achieve this purpose.

The government doesn't tax you to support the Church like in many countries. We are not only free to worship as we see fit but to use our offerings as we see fit. You are free to give to the church of your choice. In fact your gift today is tax deductible. Do we live in a great country or what! So, let's celebrate the freedom of worship with a generous gift that will keep our vision and mission fully funded.

## July 8<sup>th</sup> Up in Smoke

**Did you have a great 4<sup>th</sup> of July?** OK, how many of you spent money on fireworks? How many of you ate a hot dog? How about grilling hamburgers? I am not going to ask about what you drank!

We love to celebrate and the 4<sup>th</sup> is one of our best celebrations of the year. I thought you might like to hear some 4<sup>th</sup> of July facts. Consider that we spent...

- \$7.15 BILLION dollars on food for the 4<sup>th</sup>!
- 150 million plus hot dogs were consumed.
- We spent almost \$400 million on chicken and another nearly \$400 million on ground beef for burgers. Nearly \$40 million was spent on ketchup alone!
- Over \$1 BILLION was spent on beer!
- Over \$71 dollars is the average spent per household on food for barbecues and picnics.

**What really makes the 4<sup>th</sup> spectacular is the fireworks.** 16,000 fireworks displays are held each Fourth of July. The average cost of hosting a municipal fireworks display is between \$5,000 to \$30,000. \$340 million is what will be spent on display fireworks in total. That is your tax dollars at work. **Over \$1 billion will be spent on fireworks as consumers will spend around \$800 million buying fireworks!**

Think about it, all that money simply going up in smoke. In fact it is estimated that average household spending for the entire 4<sup>th</sup> will run over \$350 dollars per family.

**\$350 dollars versus \$200 dollars.** \$200 is the medium amount that Americans give to a church annually. We spend \$350 on food and fun all of which is here today and gone tomorrow. Don't get me wrong, I am all about having fun AND celebrating big on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Yet think about what this says of our priorities. Many spend more on fireworks that go up in smoke than they do investing into the lives of others for eternity.

So, as we approach our offering time consider that what we do with the money that is given us never goes up in smoke. Your gifts allow us to do all the missions and ministry work we do. Let's give today so that we can help people find the eternal freedoms we have in Christ!

## July 15<sup>th</sup> Vacation Investment

**How many of you have already been on vacation?** Anyone go to the beach? How about a lake? Did anyone get away from the heat by going to the mountains? How many of you just stayed at home and took a nap? How many of you needed a vacation AFTER you took your vacation? Those that stayed at home and took a nap might have been smarter!

We love vacations. In fact we love it so much that we will spend on average \$1,978 on our summer vacations this year here in America. That is a 12.5% increase in spending over last year. The sad thing is about 74% of Americans have gone into debt for their excursion which means we will have to work harder once we get back to pay for that rest. On average Americans will rack up \$1,100 in debt going to see Mickey, the beach or The Eiffel Tower. Is that a good investment? I will let you decide that.

While spending money this summer on that dream vacation might not be a wise investment I do want to share with you about an investment that is worth your hard earned money. When you give here at our church you are investing in the lives of children and students. Did you realize this summer we will impact...

- State how many attended or will attend Vacation Bible School.
- State how many attended any summer camps for youth and students you held.
- List those you impacted in various mission trips, etc.

The impact you have made as a result of your generosity can't be measured in earthly dollars. Yet it is an investment far greater than an investment to spend time at the beach or that dream European vacation. Don't get me wrong I love vacation time and I do want you to have a great time on your vacation, though I would advise not going into debt over it. I just want to encourage you today to make a greater investment into helping us shape the lives of the next generation here at our church. When you give here you make a difference now and for eternity. That is a great investment!

## July 22nd It Takes a Team to Make an All Star

**Did anyone watch baseball's All Star Game last Tuesday night?** A few of you. That is not surprising as viewership has been declining for the last few years. Last year for the first time in fifty years less than 10 million people watched the game. This past week's game probably attracted about the same amount of people. Major League executives have been trying for years to reverse the decline in interest. Since 1970 fans have been able to vote for their favorite players and whoever wins the vote at their perspective position is named the starter for the game. So some years a starter really isn't having a stellar year but because he is a fan favorite he gets the start.

Frankly the whole All Star thing misses the point. A team is made up of more than one or even a few All Star players. Some of the greatest players of all time never made it to the World Series. A team is only as strong as its weakest member. So while we love to celebrate the top players without others supporting them none of last weeks All Stars would ever have made it to that level.

The same is true here at our church. You see those of us on the platform and we get most if not all of the attention. Sometimes we get the blame as well! However, behind us is a host of "players" that makes possible what we do. From the parking lot, to the nursery, to our greeters, to our ushers, it takes a team effort to accomplish all we do each weekend. Without our team those of us on the platform could not do what we do. So, thank you to all our volunteers! Let's give them a round of applause.

As we approach our offering time I want you to know that what fuels what we do here is not only our volunteers but the generosity of our members. Some give a lot because they have been blessed with a lot. Others give as the Scripture says, "according to their means." As the Apostle Paul says, "...if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."

Your willing gift, combined with other willing gifts, fuels our entire team. Your gifts allow us to make a difference in our community, state, nation and around the world. You are All Stars in our book! **So, let's give as a team knowing that what all of us can do together is greater than what one of us alone can do!**

## July 29th There is Still Time

**August is almost here!** Do you know what that means? For you parents it means you will hear less comments like, “I’m bored!” That is the good news for you parents. The bad news is you will be spending a ton of money buying clothes, school supplies etc. For you those of you still in school it means your days of sleeping in are numbered. For those that love football in just a few weeks the pigskins will fly again!

If you are like many people seeing August staring you down means you have to get busy getting ready. In the midst of all that you still want to enjoy the summer. There is time for one last trip, one last barbeque, and one last time to enjoy summer fun. So use your last time of summer wisely with the time you have left and make the most of every opportunity.

**For we here at OUR CHURCH there is still time left as well.** We have been busy working to fulfill the mission that God has given us. We have seen a lot of lives impacted this summer. Your generosity has helped in a huge way make this possible. Yet there is still more to do. There are more lives to reach and impact with the Good News. We aren’t done yet and there is still time and more opportunities!

Paul said to the Ephesians, “Be very careful, then how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity.” While summer might be nearing an end we still carry on with our mission and ministry. Every time you give here you help us succeed in that mission. We wisely use what you generously give to make the most of every opportunity. So as our ushers come forward use this time to make the most of the opportunity you have to support real life change with your generous gift!

## August 5<sup>th</sup> How to Love Giving Your Money Away

“Just when we really get going in worship we have to stop and take up the offering.” That was the comment a staff member, at another church, made a few years back when asked about the offering time at their church. It might not surprise you that with that attitude, giving had declined the year before at this church. Sadly this attitude permeates the Church today.

We never apologize here for taking up the offering. **The main reason why is, the offering is not an interruption to worship. The offering IS worship!** When you give you are showing your love for God and your obedience to Him. After all we are commanded to be generous. The offering allows you the opportunity to obey Him and to worship Him.

Let's be honest. For most of us we struggle with giving away our hard earned money. We have bills to pay and stuff we want. Giving is often far down on our list of priorities. How can we love giving away what we, frankly love, our money?

There are several things that I can think can help us love to give. For one thing when we give we are giving back to God only a portion of the many blessings He has given us. Realizing His graciousness to us allows us to be gracious in our giving.

Here is another reason we can love giving. God has promised us that when we give He will bless us. You can talk to generous people and none will ever tell you that they owe God. Jesus said, “Give and it will be given to you.” That is just one of tons of promises on giving in the Bible.

Finally, let me share with you another reason to love giving. When you give here your gift is used to impact people for Christ. Just this summer we have seen...

- List several victories you have seen this summer.

Knowing that my gift makes a difference makes me feel good. Thinking of giving in these terms makes giving more fun and will over time create within you a love of giving. So, this morning let's worship through our offering with generous gifts.

## **August 12<sup>th</sup> The Process of Giving is Easy Not the Principle**

**We try hard to make giving here at our church easy for you.** By that I mean we offer multiple ways that you can give. You can of course give through the offering that we are about to take up. You can also give online AND you can give via text message. You can even set your giving up to be automatic. Our goal is to give you options thus making the PROCESS of giving easy.

**Let's be honest, the principle that we Christians should give is never truly easy.** After all we tend to cling to our money. Having money in our minds is what brings us security. Why would we give away that which we trust in for our security? We thus struggle to give. Money is typically the idol that most of us struggle to give up to God.

**King David set an example of how giving should cost us something for it to be truly worship.** Let me tell you his story of sacrificial giving. David wanted to build an altar to the Lord for sacrifices and approached the owner of a field about buying it from him. The man offered to give it to David and even offered to provide free of charge the animal for the sacrifice. David replied, "I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing."

David understood that an offering needed to cost him something to truly be an act of worship. The offering is worship and it SHOULD cost us something. The greater the cost the greater love that is shown. We show our love for the Lord by giving back a portion of what He has given us.

So, this morning you can use whatever means of giving you desire to make it easier to give. Yet give sacrificially showing your love to God EVEN when it is not easy to give. God has promised if we give HE will open up the windows of heaven to pour out a blessing upon us!

## August 19th What Do You Value?

Do we have any Fantasy Football fans in here? Guess what you are not alone. Today there are over 59 million people playing fantasy sports in the USA and Canada. Fantasy football leagues are forming up now with the start of the National Football League about to kick off. In the next few weeks players will draft their teams and start competition.

For those of you wondering what Fantasy Football is you basically pick different players to make up your fantasy team. Then each week your players score points for you based upon their real game playing results in the National Football League's games. All your player's points are totaled up and that is your score. You are matched against an opponent in your league to see if your team beats their team. The team owners with the best record then reach the playoffs until a champion of the league is crowned. Some play just for fun while others play to win money.

\$556 dollars on average is spent by fantasy sports players annually. That amount is nothing compared to the fact that almost \$100 billion dollars will be spent this year gambling on college and professional football games.

Then take into account the salaries of players. The average salary of an NFL player is \$1.9 million dollars a year! Of course that average gets skewed because a few big name players have multiple million dollar yearly contracts. Rookies start out averaging "only" \$365K a year.

Contrast the average NFL player with the average starting salary of a school teacher in America which is \$36,141. The average for all teachers varies from state to state but it runs from the low \$40's to high \$40's. Think of that, some NFL players get paid more for one game than most teachers make in a year. One group imparts education for life the other group imparts entertainment for a few hours. I don't know about you but that seems to me that our priorities are not right. How we pay people shows the value we assign to them.

So on average fantasy football fans will spend \$556 dollars on a game. Yet the medium gift to a church in a year is \$200. One venture imparts a bit of fun and excitement. The other changes eternity. How we spend our money shows what we value.

Don't get me wrong, I am not against sports or Fantasy Football. I simply want to point out that we spend our money on things we want to spend money on. Where we spend our money and what we spend our money on tells a lot about us. As we take up the offering you today have an opportunity to invest into the future of girls, boys, women and men as we seek to advance the Kingdom of God in our city. How you give says a lot about what you value.

## August 26<sup>th</sup> Cost or Investment?

**School is back in session!** For parents that is a sigh of relief. For students it is a sigh of dread! Either way going to school costs money even if you attend a public school. Consider that this year Americans will spend, over \$84 BILLION dollars on back to school shopping. Families with children plan to spend on average \$687.72!

A recent study broke down the spending this way...

- \$10.2 billion will be spent on clothing
- \$8.8 billion will be spent on electronics
- \$5.6 billion will be spent on shoes
- \$4.9 billion will be spent on school supplies
- 45% said they would buy a laptop computer, while 35% said they would buy a tablet

The same study reported on the spending of college students and found that they would spend \$7.5 billion dollars on snacks and food. I was like, what does that have to do with educational spending? I guess an empty stomach late at night distracts the mind from concentrating.

**Do you think the American families, who will on average spend \$687.72 on back to school shopping, see that spent money as a cost or an investment?** We might cringe at the cost but we see it as an investment into the future of our children. Parents know it is our responsibility to equip our children to do well in school. We find a way to pay for what we value and we value a good education. We know that investment will pay dividends. The fact remains that the more education a person has the more they will likely make as an adult.

**Do you see our offering time as a cost or an investment?** Your attitude in giving is reflected by how you answer that. Those that see giving as an investment give freely and generously. Those that see giving as what it costs them give sparingly, if at all.

**We believe in the value of a good education but we also believe that without a spiritual foundation knowledge is meaningless.** From the nursery through our Student Ministry we attempt to teach spiritual values that WILL impact children for the rest of their lives. Our offering helps support that work. Your gift is thus not a cost to you but an investment into the future of the Church. So give today generously and with joy knowing your gift matters! **Giving is not a cost it is an investment!**

## **September 2nd Where Would We Be Without our Laborers?**

This Monday is Labor Day here in America. It is the day we celebrate what makes our country great, workers. Where would we be if everyone decided that they were tired of working and just wanted to lay at home and watch TV? Our nation's greatness comes on the backs of our faithful workers.

The same is true here at YOUR CHURCH NAME. You see those of us on the platform each weekend. What you don't see are the scores of volunteers who serve to make all that you see happen. From the parking lot to the nursery to the sound board we can do what we do only because of our volunteers who work so hard. Where would we be without our laborers? We simply could not do what we do. So, let's give all our volunteer workers a round of applause!

As we approach the Labor Day celebration, I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth when he said, "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, 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."

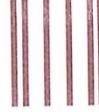
Our volunteers who labor here don't labor in vain. Their labor is not for themselves but for building up the Kingdom by pouring into the lives of others. Together we are making a difference for eternity. So today as you leave take a moment to thank those that labor here at YOUR CHURCH NAME.

It takes a lot to accomplish what God has called us to do here. In addition to the hundreds and thousands of volunteer hours it also takes money. Every time you give here you help make our vision of reaching our area with the Good News of Jesus possible. So, thank you for your gifts. Your faithful gifts supports the work of our volunteer laborers. Through serving AND giving you can make a difference for the Kingdom!

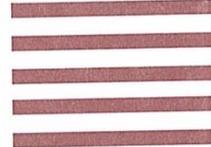
# Appendix D: Postage Paid Envelope Sample

Below see the sample offering envelope used by one of my clients.

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



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



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

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



### My Gift



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



Please check if address is new

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

For Credit/Debit Card Online Giving, Please Go To:  
[www.heartchurch.org](http://www.heartchurch.org)

# Appendix E: Samples of John 3:16's Summer of Hope Campaign

John 3:16 is a mission feeding homeless people in Tulsa that my wife and I support. Each year they send out a summer appeal letter. The following are scanned copies of their 2012 endeavor.

John 3:16 Mission  
P.O. Box 1477  
Tulsa, OK 74101-1477



Your Summer of Hope Commitment forms are enclosed! When you return them with your summer gifts, please be sure to sign the Mealtime Blessings. Along with nutritious meals, you'll help provide life-transforming hope—all summer long.

G020



May 22, 2012

Dear Mark & Valerie,

When Jesus was a guest for dinner, He spoke, saying, "...when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed..." (Luke 14:13-14)

As we prepare to serve the hurting men, women and children who will come to us this summer from the streets of downtown Tulsa, times continue to be tough. Recent reports indicate increasingly large numbers of people in our area are living below the poverty line. In this challenging economy, your support means so much to us and to the Tulsans who are coming to us with heartbreaking needs.

With the faithful support of friends like you, we'll receive many gifts later this year to help us care for the people who come to the Mission during the fall. **But the fact we face every summer is that donations drop off just about now. June, July and August can be a barren time here at John 3:16 Mission.**

We're preparing as best we can for these lower-income months—but we need your help, because men, women and children seeking food, shelter and other vital care can't wait. They need help all summer long! And with the ongoing economic instability, more are trudging up Denver Avenue on their way to our Mission for help every day.

They need nutritious meals. A place to sleep. They need education, work training, rehabilitation and Christian counseling to help get their lives back on track.

As a John 3:16 Mission supporter, we know you understand how important all these services are to our work here in the Tulsa area. **That's why we're asking you to make a special three-month commitment, so this can be a Summer of Hope for our homeless and neediest neighbors.**

We appreciate your generous Tulsa spirit and would like you to consider making a generous gift today, one more just like it in July, and another in August.

**Or simply make one large gift for the entire summer, and send it today. This will save**

(over, please)



Location: 506 N. Cheyenne Avenue  
**IT'S EASY! Give online at [john316mission.org](http://john316mission.org)**

20422

180

**you time, and will help us greatly in facing this summer's unique challenges.**

Either way, your help will truly be a blessing to this ministry and will be put to work immediately to provide these vital services during June, July and August:

**Over 58,000 nutritious meals.** Because much of our food is donated, your gift also provides the labor, utilities, equipment and facilities to prepare and serve meals for just \$1.92 each.

**More than 6,500 nights of safe shelter.** It's not safe to sleep on the street or even in abandoned buildings at night especially when the Oklahoma sun is sizzling. At the Mission, people get a cool, clean, safe place to rest.

**24,500 articles of clean clothing.** For many of those we help, the clothes they wear and the few things they carry with them are all their own. They get dirty quickly, especially during the summer.

**2,800 hours of prayer and Christian counseling.** Especially now, those who come to the Mission need food for their souls as well as their bodies. We offer encouragement through Bible study and worship, and pray that our ministry will help provide healing and transformation.

**16,800 hours of recovery, education and work training.** These programs are the heart of our Mission's plan to help those who truly want to rebuild their lives. Often this desire to change starts with a simple meal or a night's shelter.

As the tough economy persists, what a difference your Summer of Hope Gift Commitment will make in the lives of our neediest Tulsa neighbors.

Whether you can send one larger gift today or a special gift each month, be assured that your donation will be put to work as soon as it arrives!

Please help us continue to reclaim lives and restore hope during the next three months by making your Summer of Hope Gift Commitment to help hungry, homeless and hurting Tulsans today.

May God bless you for caring,



Rev. Steven P. Whitaker  
President & Sr. Pastor

**P.S. To save time and help make this a Summer of Hope for our needy Tulsa neighbors, send one generous gift today. Or use the three enclosed commitment forms and matching envelopes to send monthly donations. (Be sure to sign the Mealtime Blessings to encourage someone in our program!)**

*Thank you for your compassion!*  
*-S.W.*

John 3:16 Mission  
P.O. Box 1477  
Tulsa, OK 74101-1477



**SUMMER OF  
HOPE  
2012**  
PLEASE REPLY BY JUNE 30!

**This was the envelope that it was mailed in. Notice the appeal to reply by June 30<sup>th</sup>!**

**Inside were envelopes for each month...**



**SUMMER GIFT COMMITMENT**

By signing this form, I commit to helping hungry, homeless and hurting Tulsans this summer.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I've signed the attached Mealtime Blessing and enclosed it with my gift of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**JUNE**

- To save time and help the Mission be prepared, I'm enclosing my entire summer gift.
- Please charge my credit card. (See back of form.)

- I'm sending my June gift today, and will match it in July and August.

Please send me periodic email updates. Here is my address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Please return this form with your check made payable to John 3:16 Mission

To give a gift online, go to [john316mission.org](http://john316mission.org)

6/12  
REV STEVEN P WHITAKER PRESIDENT & SR. PASTOR  
JOHN 3:16 MISSION INC  
PO BOX 1420  
JENKS OK 74037-1420



**REJOICE**

"...you will fill me with joy in your presence..."

~PSALM 16:11

00903521 00M6B324 7

**SUMMER GIFT COMMITMENT**

YES, Steve, I'll make sure that food, shelter and other vital services are available at John 3:16 Mission.

I've signed the attached Mealtime Blessing and enclosed it with my second gift of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**JULY**

- Please charge my credit card. (See back of form.)

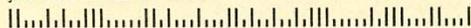
Please send me periodic email updates. Here is my address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Please return this form with your check made payable to John 3:16 Mission

To give a gift online, go to [john316mission.org](http://john316mission.org)

6/12  
REV STEVEN P WHITAKER PRESIDENT & SR. PASTOR  
JOHN 3:16 MISSION INC  
PO BOX 1420  
JENKS OK 74037-1420



**GIVE THANKS**

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory..."

~1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

00903521 00M6B324 7

**SUMMER GIFT COMMITMENT**

YES, Steve, I'll make sure that food, shelter and other vital services are available at John 3:16 Mission.

I've signed the attached Mealtime Blessing and enclosed it with my third gift of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**AUGUST**

- Please charge my credit card. (See back of form.)

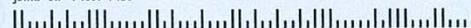
Please send me periodic email updates. Here is my address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Please return this form with your check made payable to John 3:16 Mission

To give a gift online, go to [john316mission.org](http://john316mission.org)

6/12  
REV STEVEN P WHITAKER PRESIDENT & SR. PASTOR  
JOHN 3:16 MISSION INC  
PO BOX 1420  
JENKS OK 74037-1420



**TRUST**

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him..."

~ROMANS 15:13

00903521 00M6B324 7

May God bless you  
today and every day.  
From a caring  
friend named

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE—FIRST NAME)

Please charge my gift on my credit card:  VISA  MC  AMEX  DISC

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  
To charge by phone, call (918) 587-1186.

**More great ways to help:**

Have you included the Mission in your will?  Yes  No  
Would you like information on this and other planned giving opportunities?  Yes  
If you would like to donate food, equipment, or household goods and furniture,  
or volunteer your time, please call the Mission at (918) 587-1186.

**MATCHING GIFT**

Ask your employer if a corporate  
giving program will match your gift.  
For more information please call  
(918) 587-1186.

No person is denied services based on  
race, creed, sex, disability or national origin.

If gifts exceed expenses, extra funds will  
be used to care for hungry, homeless and  
hurting people throughout the year.

We never sell or rent our supporters' names.

**Thank you!** Your gift is tax deductible to the  
full extent of the law. We will send a receipt  
for your records.



180

May God bless you  
today and every day.  
From a caring  
friend named

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE—FIRST NAME)

Please charge my gift on my credit card:  VISA  MC  AMEX  DISC

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  
To charge by phone, call (918) 587-1186.

**More great ways to help:**

Have you included the Mission in your will?  Yes  No  
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180

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today and every day.  
From a caring  
friend named

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE—FIRST NAME)

Please charge my gift on my credit card:  VISA  MC  AMEX  DISC

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  
To charge by phone, call (918) 587-1186.

**More great ways to help:**

Have you included the Mission in your will?  Yes  No  
Would you like information on this and other planned giving opportunities?  Yes  
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**Thank you!** Your gift is tax deductible to the  
full extent of the law. We will send a receipt  
for your records.



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## Appendix F: Automatic Withdrawal Samples

### Bulletin Insert or paragraph for newsletter

How many checks a month do you write? In all probability if you are like most Americans you are writing fewer checks now than just a few years ago. Did you know that our nations Federal Reserve is now processing a third of the checks they did twenty years ago? Paper check usage has declined from 61% of all payments in 2000 to around 20% today. So, if you are writing fewer checks you are not alone.

To start the process simply go to **insert the web link to your churches website**. Click on the Give Button and follow the easy step by step process. Should you have any questions you can contact **Insert Name** at **insert email address and telephone number**. They will be more than happy to help you get started.

Giving online is easy, safe and secure. Your gift will quickly come to our account here at **insert the name of your church** to be used for missions and ministry. With online giving even if you are on vacation your gift still shows up. This consistency in giving will allow us to do more ministry and be more effective in our endeavors.

**Sample Online Sign Up Envelope** – Most online giving platforms allow you to up recurring giving on the site. However for some people this is challenging and difficult. To make it easy for people to sign up for recurring giving consider what one of my clients produced for the pockets of their chairs. Even if attendees did not utilize the envelope it is a non-threatening reminder of setting up recurring giving.

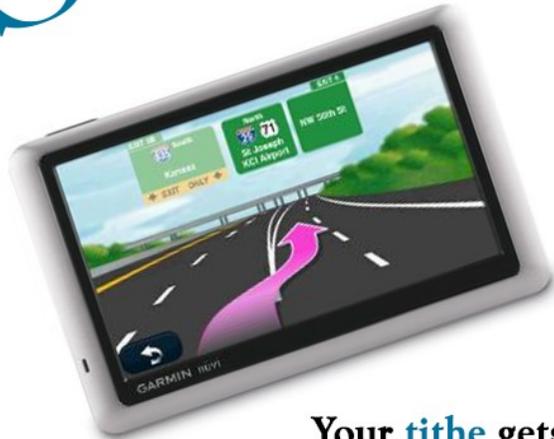




## Appendix G: Sample Screen Shots For Social Media and Screens

Summer  
—of—  
2014  
Sharing

Your **GPS** gets you  
to your destination.



Your **tithe** gets FBC  
to God's destination.



Apply sunscreen  
and tithe...

You should do  
both while on  
vacation.

2014 Summer  
of Sharing



first baptist  
Rock Hill

2014 Summer  
of Sharing

Tithe  
from  
the Beach



Did you know you can tithe from the beach? You can! Just download our church app or go to our mobile website on your smart phone. Or better yet, set up recurring giving so that you don't have to remember to tithe while this is your view.  
[http://bit.ly/FBC\\_Give](http://bit.ly/FBC_Give)