

The 2 Minute Drill

**A WINNING PLAN OF ACTION
FOR END OF YEAR GIVING.**



**Does your church have a plan
for the last two months of the year?**

TIME
2:00

by
Mark Brooks
The Stewardship Coach

**The Two Minute Drill for Giving:
How to Build an Effective End of Year Strategy**

By

Mark Brooks

The Stewardship Coach

@StewardshipMan

<https://acts17generosity.com>

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Are You Prepared for the Two Minute Warning?

Are you prepared for the two-minute warning when it comes to increasing your giving? If you are a football fan, then you know what the two-minute warning is. In professional football, it is when the official stops play to tell the coach there are two minutes left in the game. The difference between winning and losing often comes down to which team performs the best in those last two minutes. Winning teams have set two-minute drills they run, which they repeatedly practice throughout the year. **The two-minute warning for a church is the start of end-of-year giving.** Consider this for nonprofits,

- 30% of annual giving occurs in December.
- 12% of annual giving occurs on the last 3 days of the year.

Churches are no different, seeing a huge upswing in giving in the last quarter of the year. Whether your fiscal year ends in the fourth quarter or not, the statistics clearly show that end-of-year giving can make a huge difference. That means...

Your 4th quarter might be the difference between making budget or not.

Since the 4th quarter is so important, NOW is the time to get ready for your best 4th quarter ever.

It starts by understanding that:

- ✓ **Preparation is the key to a successful 4th quarter of giving.**
- ✓ **The lack of preparation is one of the biggest reasons churches underperform in their end-of-year giving.** Now is the time to finalize our plans for end-of-year giving. Let's get started.

The basics of an end-of-year appeal – Here are some basic thoughts for you to think through.

- **Deciding what your "ask" will be.** Determine where you need the money the most, which is what the appeal needs to focus on. **See the Vision Worksheet on page 9.**
- **Craft the story behind the "ask."** Every "ask" or appeal must have what I call a driver behind it. In other words, what will drive or motivate me to give you more money?
- **Be positive!** You might be way behind on giving, but you want your donors to *want* to give, not feel like they *have* to give.
- **Make the appeal not about reaching some number but about advancing the Kingdom.**
- **Make it personal.**
- **Focus on one thing, not multiple things.**
- **Make it easy for them to contribute.**
- **Get your tools ready to support your end-of-year appeal.**

My goal for you is to raise at least one week's worth of offering for your church!

December 31 will be here before you know it. The time to plan for end-of-year giving is now. The sooner you start your planning, and the more effective your end-of-year giving results will be. Let's get started!

The Right Target for Your Message

Here is a reality in every church in America. **On average, 15% of your donors give 50% of all that is given!** Even more shocking is that the average church sees 90% of their giving coming from 20% to 25% of their donors! My team has analyzed more giving than any other stewardship firm in America. Our analysis has confirmed what we have always known; the few always give the majority of what is given.

For your come-from-behind strategy to work, you must take your message to this crucial group. This group has the spiritual maturity to hear your message, and they typically are the ones in a financial position to give more. If you are going to be successful with this campaign, you must have the right target. As my old boss, John Maxwell, says, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." Your leaders are the key to your come from behind giving strategy. I always start my giving initiatives by focusing on **Leaders First.**

Don't take this key segment for granted! Let me share two important points. First, your leaders, especially your giving leaders, will always be the most responsive to requests for additional funds. It is essential to take your message to the right target group if you are to have success. Yet, you never want to take them for granted, assuming they will always float the boat for you. The second important point is that your top donors will appreciate a giving campaign that includes *everyone* doing their part.

I always advise that you get your leaders on board early by informing them ahead of time about the special end-of-year offering you will be launching. **My tool section will show you how to do this.**

A subset goal of this end-of-year offering is to motivate new donors to give to support your vision. Stressing this will help your current giving leaders know that you are not taking them for granted and that your plan will encourage others to do their part.

Every year you lose donors either from death, transfer, or other reasons. We call this The Churn Rate. Like attendance, your church has a front door and a back door. Since you are losing donors yearly out the back door, you must continue to replace them with donors coming in the front door. Special offerings allow you to attract new donors as a result of your compelling vision and message.

While our primary objective is to help replace at least one lost offering, your strategy can and will help you accomplish much more. If all we accomplish is raising one week's offering, then you might very well be right back in the same place in a few months. However, if you have a strategy that attracts new donors, your path to financial stability is much brighter.

The reality is that your leaders, both giving and ministry leaders, will comprise the bulk of what you receive in this special offering. This is why I advise you get your leaders on board early in the process. I have found that when you treat leaders like leaders, they act like leaders!

With this in mind, let's get started ending your giving year strong!

Part One: Laying the Foundation for the Appeal

How do you end the giving year well? For one thing, you can't merely sit around wringing your hands about the decline in giving. You must act. The longer you wait to act, the deeper the hole you will find yourself in. Any chance of closing out the year strong will become more difficult. Using my playbook will give you a strategy for recovering any lost giving and set the stage for success in the New Year.

If you have ever built a house or a new facility at your church, you know how important the foundation is. The same is true when it comes to a plan for end-of-year giving. So, let's start by laying the right foundation, and it begins with crafting the message of your appeal.

The Right Message

Your first step is to craft a message that matters. Dollars follow a vision. Your vision is what drives people to give you more money. Thus, every appeal needs a driver for the vision to penetrate and capture the hearts and, ultimately, the wallet of your donors. The more compelling the driver, the more likely you are to get a response.

Every "ask" needs a driver. What's a driver? The driver is the message or story you are communicating about *why* people should give to your appeal. There is no better driver to achieve generosity than a vision *if* it is communicated effectively.

What is vision? My friend Herb Buwalda came up with what I think is the best definition. He says, "Mission," answers the question, "Why are you here?" "Vision," answers the question, "Where are you going; What is God asking of you now to impact the mission?"

Let's make a case for your vision! When I work with a client for a significant giving initiative, I start by asking the Pastor to write out the vision behind whatever we are raising money for. Technically this is called a Vision Case Statement. On one page, front and back, I want a broad overview of what we are raising money for. I advise you to do the same thing for your end-of-year appeal.

The 3 C's of Vision Casting – Your vision must contain these three C's to be heard. Your vision must be,

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

Your message is your vision, and the better you craft that message, the more money you will raise. Take time to think through how to best craft a message for the vision driving this appeal to give to your end-of-year offering.

Check out my tool section for a worksheet designed to help you craft your vision and message.

The Right Tools

Your vision is the driver, but the best driver in the world is worthless without **effective vehicles to drive the vision to those you want to impact**. This section will share the essential tools you need to effectively launch your come-from-behind giving strategy.

Back before COVID19, we had a captured audience every weekend. While most churches are back to on-campus worship, attendance is still far below 2019 levels. So, even though we can meet on-campus, the best strategy is a 24/7 approach to the offering. In the 21st century, we must use multiple tools to achieve giving success.

What systems should you have in place?

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

These are the essential tools for implementing the plan I suggest. Having these tools in place will not only help you with your plan to recover a lost offering, but it will also help throughout the year.

Remember the old saying, don't put all your eggs in one basket? When it comes to a 21st-century communication plan, you must use all the tools in your toolbox to get your message out. In the next section of this playbook, I will give you practical steps to utilize the tools above to communicate the vision of your message.

The Right Plan of Action

What is your plan? The best message and tools, while essential, are worthless without a plan of action. Let me lay out my overall strategy when it comes to plans for special offerings.

Understanding the Uniqueness of a Special Offering

Let's start by breaking out the difference between a large offering like a capital campaign and a special offering. Smaller offerings or needs take a somewhat different approach. Your giving goal is much different for a special offering, and they do not require as much time and planning as do larger appeals. However, please note that special offerings *do* require time and attention. [You can't download this playbook on Saturday at 10 p.m. and find it useful!](#)

Special offering strategy - Here is an overview of a plan of action for a special offering:

- As soon as possible, craft the vision.
- Communicate several weeks out with your leadership. Why? Their gifts will drive the success of your offering! I'll show you how in the tool section of this playbook.
- Six weeks from the offering, start showing the ministry impact of the area of need across all your communication platforms. Show your story!
- One month out, start a more direct appeal through social media. Set it up through your online giving platform. With a 24/7 offering strategy, you can begin the offering any time, not merely on the weekends.
- Each Sunday in December, announce from the platform the end of year special offering.
- Send a series of direct mail appeals the weeks before the special offering.
- Take up the offering with boldness! In two minutes or less, craft an offering talk each Sunday from Thanksgiving weekend through the last Sunday of the year that gives a positive take on the need your offering will meet. The tool section will provide you with a pre-written offering talk for this.
- Thank those who gave to the special offering and update the offering's results and its impact. Thanking your donors paves the way for the next "ask."

The tool section of this playbook contains samples for your review.

Part Two: Your Tool Box for Implementing Your Plan

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

Crafting Your Vision for the "Ask"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vision Worksheet

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

Step One: List 3 things your church has accomplished in the past year. You want to point to "wins" that show the impact of giving to your church. You want to *show* them that giving made a difference.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Step Two: List 3 things you want to do in the remaining year or at the start of the New Year. Focusing on any missions and ministry coming up allows donors to make a difference with their gifts. You want to show them that their gift *now* can and will make a difference.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why is it important to give to this now?

How can their gift *now* make a difference?

Here is a brief plan of action for an End of Year offering:

The following is my end-of-year overview. Not all of what I list might work for you. This basic plan of action, if followed, WILL greatly increase your end-of-year giving. I advise...

Social Media Push – Starting in early November, across all communication platforms, you want to focus upon your message, heightening awareness. A picture is worth a thousand words. Let's show the need before we make the "ask!"

Thank you email in early November – We always ask, we seldom thank. So, send out an email or letter thanking donors for your giving success thus far. This is not an appeal but cultivation and also serves for what we call warming your list.

First Direct Appeal Letter, Week of November 15 – I recommend that your direct appeal end-of-year letter be sent out no later than this date. This letter should have a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope in it for ease of use.

December Plan of action – I recommend that across all communications platforms, you ramp up information about the "ask." Now, we are specifically asking people to give. Before, we were priming the pump with awareness of need. Now, work to bring home donations to meet that need. Here are my ideas.

Utilize "Giving Tuesday." The Tuesday after Thanksgiving is being established across the country as a time where charities are asking people to give. You should piggyback on top of this with an email strategy asking for a gift that day.

Special Landing Page on your website – Consider purchasing a special page with a dedicated address. Titles such as Wells4Africa.com can be bought cheaply and forwarded into your giving pages.

Social Media – You want to put a face on the "ask" AND provide direct links to the giving page. I recommend starting with one a day early in the month and increasing the rate as we move closer to the end of the year.

Offering talks – Plan out sixty-second offering talks for each Sunday in December. Don't worry. I samples for you in this playbook!

Bulletin reminder – At least twice during the month, we will want to have a reminder that giving to the church is a tax benefit. Please note that this will only impact a few of your donors since the changes in the tax law.

Screen announcements – Have screen announcements about the end-of-year offering that can be utilized before and after services.

Email campaign – I recommend at least two emails. I would send out one on Monday the 27th and another on New Year's Eve, December 31, at 2 p.m.

That is the bare-bones basics of my plans for the end-of-year.

Basic Steps for Effective Appeals

COVID19 showed us how our offering must be a 24/7. To be effective, your offering plate must never be closed. An effective end-of-year strategy must include direct appeals, snail-mail, and email and text appeals.

The following are my basic steps I use to make my appeals more readable and thus more effective. You will see this in my samples that follow.

Direct USPS Mail Appeals – It might surprise you that I would focus on using the USPS for any appeal in this day of online giving. Why would I do this? Easy, **Snail mail still works!** Think about it, how many appeals do you get in the US mail? There is a reason nonprofits still send out snail mail; they work.

USPS Basics – Use these basics points to improve your snail mail appeals.

- Personalize the letter. The more personal the message, the more apt someone is to read it.
- Try and keep the letter to one page. The exception might be appeals sent to leaders.
- Use bold and underlined text to highlight key points. People skim, so highlight the important points.
- *Always* use a PS. Studies show people almost always read a PS.
- *Always* give your online giving portal address. Studies show that even Seniors will type in your giving portal if you provide one.
- Include a self-addressed postage-paid envelope in all my sends.

Email Basics – Many of the same principles above apply to email as well. One thing that is important to remember is that most emails are now read on a smart device.

- Captivating Subject line! If they don't open it, they can't read your message.
- Short and to the point! Again, the majority of emails are read on a smart device.
- Two to four paragraphs of two to four sentences. Be short and to the point.
- Use bold and underlined text.
- Clickable links to your giving page. You want to make it quick and easy to give.
- Multiple links to the giving page.
- Always have a PS! I almost always have the online giving link as my PS.
- Personalize it! Programs like Mailchimp make this easy.

Direct USPS Mail Appeal Samples – Send Monday, November 1

The following letter is designed to be sent out to your leaders, informing them of the special offering. Edit the following to best suit your message.

Dear _____,

In 2021 CHURCH NAME, saw scores of lives changed by the power of the Gospel, and *your* generosity helped make that happen. On behalf of countless lives changed, let me say thank you!

Because of the faithful generosity of our members, we have been able to: (Insert your own examples)

- List an outreach ministry your church supported,
- Report on children and youth outreach results.
- List any other victories accomplished as a result of members' generosity.

Thank you, NAME Church, for helping make all of the above and MUCH more possible!

You helped make all of the above possible through your generosity! We have so much more to do as we prepare for our mission to continue into the New Year. Consider these challenges of need: (**Insert your own needs**)

- We must upgrade all our technical gear to better minister to our three campuses.
- We must improve our Small Group ministry with these tools to continue personal ministry to you and your family and give us the opportunity for virtual opportunities in apartment complexes and other options.
- Funding is needed for Motion Student conference and local groups being held soon. We are passionate about raising NextGen leaders!

These challenges are an opportunity for our church to step up and continue being the hands and feet of Jesus!

I wanted to alert you to a special end-of-year offering push we will hold in the next few weeks through the end of the current year. We are challenging our entire church family to give a gift over and above their regular giving for a special Christmas offering.

Our end-of-year Christmas giving appeal has a two-fold goal. **First**, we have a goal of raising one week's offering. Achieving this will better position us for the New Year. Our giving goal is to receive an additional \$10,000 dollars (Insert your giving goal) above our normal offering. Your generosity will help us achieve that goal. The **secondary goal is to motivate others to join generous people like you.**

You will be hearing more about this in the weeks to come. Will you join me in taking the challenge by giving an extra offering for our Christmas offering?

Blessings,

Pastor Mark

PS. I have included a special envelope to make it easy for you to give, or you can go to our website at <http://ourchurch.org/give> and follow the simple steps to give.

Congregational Direct Mail Appeal Sample - Send Monday, November 15

The following letter is designed to be sent out to the entire congregation, informing them of the special offering Christmas offering. Edit the following to best suit your message.

Dear _____,

Are you tired of all the bad news? Do you ever find yourself changing the channel when negative news comes on? You are not alone. A recent Baylor Religion Survey found that the COVID-19 pandemic has made Americans significantly angrier, sadder, lonelier, and more worried. After nearly two full years of bad news, can you blame them?

I want to announce that there is Good News, Christmas is coming! The story of Christmas is a story of good news. The Gospel of Luke tells about the birth of Jesus. It records the story of nearby shepherds tending their flocks at night when an angel of the Lord appears to them. Here is what the text says, "the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. **I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.**"

In a world filled with bad news, **CHURCH NAME is committed to sharing the Good News of the Gospel to our community and world.** (INSERT A ONE-SENTENCE EXAMPLE OF A MISSION OR MINISTRY ENDEAVOR IN 2020). The faithful generosity of our members allows us to spread the good news of the Gospel. Give now at <https://yourchurchwebsite.org/give>

I'm asking our entire church family to prayerfully help us spread the Good News through our special Christmas offering! We accomplished much due to your generosity, but there is so much more to do. We are asking every member to give an extra gift over and above their normal giving to help us end this year well and position us for an even greater New Year of sharing the Good News.

The Gospel of Luke records this of the shepherd's visit to see baby Jesus, "When they had seen him, **they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." Let's spread the word and bring joy to those who are angrier, sadder, lonelier, and more worried. Every time you give here at our church, you help us spread that Good News not only in our town but literally around the world. Let's give generously today so that Good News can continue to spread.

We provide multiple ways by which you can give. We have inserted an envelope for ease of use. Did you know that **giving online gets your gift that much quicker to missions and ministry?** One of the easiest ways to give is through our online site at <https://yourchurchwebsite.org/give>

Find the best way to give as God leads and help us continue to proclaim Good News!

Pastor Mark

PS. Remember, your gifts are tax-deductible, but they must be postmarked by December 31 or in our office by 5 p.m. that day! It is good stewardship to take charitable deductions for your tax write-offs!!

Email Samples – The following samples can be edited to fit your church.

Giving Tuesday email – Send at 2 p.m. EST Tuesday, November 30

Subject Line: Were you in line at 6 a.m. or online?

Dear _____,

It used to be that the holiday shopping period kicked off each year the Friday after Thanksgiving with what has become known as Black Friday. People would get up at crazy hours of the day to stand in line, hoping to get the best deal on the newest trinket or bobble for Christmas.

\$665 is the average amount spent by Americans from Black Friday to Cyber Monday in 2020! Most of those gifts were broken, lost, or forgotten within days after Christmas.

Now more and more people are shopping online, avoiding the crowds but still getting bargains. Last year on Cyber Monday, the Monday after Thanksgiving, \$10.8 billion in sales were racked up. Who knows what was spent yesterday online?

Not to be outdone, along came Giving Tuesday to remind us of what really matters helping people. Charities across the country are sending out emails asking you to support their cause. While I believe in the work they do, the best gift you can give today is to OUR CHURCH! You can give now at <http://ourchurch.org/give>

Why should you give to Our Church? We are changing lives day in and day out. We are making a difference in our community through all that we do. Give now to help us better reach our community. You can give your gift at <http://ourchurch.org/give>

Let me thank you for your support of OUR CHURCH! We are making a difference in OUR CITY, thanks to you!

Blessings,

Bro. Mark

Pre-Christmas Email Blast – Send December 20

Subject line: \$998 versus \$200; which is it?

Dear Friend of Community Church,

How much do we spend on Christmas compared to how much we give to a church? The answer is that Americans are projected to spend, on average, \$998 on Christmas and give about \$200 a year to their church! What does that say about what we truly value?

Let's change that average this Christmas with a generous gift to Community Church! This Saturday, we will celebrate the Birth of Jesus. Wouldn't it be great to give a gift in honor of what his life means to us?

Give now at www.CommunityChurch.org/give. Insert your giving link here!

What is so special about giving? Your gift will be used to fully fund all our missions and ministry initiatives for the rest of this year and get us off to a great start for 2022.

Give early at www.CommunityChurch.org/give

Whether at church or online, let's take up an offering worthy of our 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!

Email blast to be sent out on December 24. The tenor of this note is short and more one of thanks.

Subject line: Merry Christmas, OUR CHURCH Family!

Dear Church Family,

Valerie and I simply wanted to email you and wish you and your family a Christ-filled Merry Christmas! This email may find you on your way home from work, in line with that last-minute gift, or already comfortably at home and relaxing. Where ever you are, Merry Christmas!

As we gather with our family here in INSERT WHERE YOU WILL BE, we cannot help but think of you all and give praise to God for the honor of serving you. I pray this special time for we Christians will be a special time for you and your family. May God grant us all a very special time tomorrow as we pause to give thanks to our Immanuel!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

PS. If you are going out of town this Sunday, you can still give by using our online giving platform at www.CommunityChurch.org/give Thanks for your generosity!

December 27th email blast

Subject line: What does 83% mean for Our Church?

Dear Our Church Friend,

83%. According to a study by the International Bible Society, that is the percentage of all Christians that make their commitment to Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14. There exists a **window of opportunity**, therefore, to reach children during these key ages. If they don't accept Christ during those formative years, then it becomes increasingly more problematic they ever will. Studies have found that those aged 19 and over have just a 6% probability of becoming Christians.

Our Church is passionate about reaching children for Christ! Every time you give, you help us reach children. Your gift right now can help us fully fund our children's ministry right now. It's easy to give by simply clicking on this link <http://ourchurch.org/give>. **Insert your giving link.**

As we approach the end of the year, I want to assure our children and student workers that their ministries will have all the funds they need, not simply to end this year but to start the next. Your sacrificial gift will give everyone in our church an opportunity to invest in the next generation.

If there is hope for America, it is in reaching the next generation for Christ!

You can give now by going to <http://ourchurch.org/give>. Insert your giving link.

Thanks for helping us reach this 83% window of opportunity with your generous gift. Together we will make a difference!

Blessings,

Your Pastor

PS. Did you know that you can set up your giving to be automatic? To find out how go to our giving page and follow the simple instructions at <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE>

December 31 Last email blast to be sent at 2 p.m. EST

Subject line: Will Your Team Win in the Last 2 Minutes?

Dear,

Many of the bowl games we watch in the next few days will be won or lost in the last two minutes! The teams that win will be the teams with the best plans. It might surprise you to know, but these last few minutes of the year are crucial for OUR CHURCH.

We are focused upon reaching our city for Jesus, and every gift given in the next few hours will better help us accomplish this! I am asking each of our members to consider making one last end-of-year gift. **You can give easily by going to <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

We are set to have an amazing year in 2022, and your generous gift will not only help us finish this year well but set the stage for what is to come. **Please consider giving at <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

Thanks for your generosity. The game OUR CHURCH is involved in makes an eternal difference because it is not a game. We are on the front lines of making a difference for the Kingdom! **Your gift now will help us accomplish this! <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

Thanks for giving!

Your pastor

Want to start the year out, right? Set up your 2022 giving to be automatic. You can schedule your entire 2022 giving to be easy, safe, and automated by following the recurring giving steps at <http://ourchurch.org/give>

Offering Talks

How Many Turkeys Does It Take?– November 21

In case you missed it, this week is Thanksgiving. **How many turkeys does it take to feed Americans on Thanksgiving?** Before you grab your phone to Google that let me make this a multiple-choice question. Is the answer,

- A. 46 million,
- B. 56 million or
- C. 66 million?

How many say A? How many say B? How many say C? How many of you cheated and Googled it?

The correct answer, according to one study, is 46 million. According to the National Turkey Federation, the average weight of turkeys purchased for Thanksgiving is 15 pounds which adds up to around 675 million pounds of turkey consumed in the US. That is a lot of turkey!

While the main dish for most, Turkey is just one of many food choices we will consume over Thanksgiving weekend. In fact, the average household spending for Thanksgiving weekend is projected to be \$342. In total, Americans will spend almost 3 billion dollars on food for Thanksgiving.

Clearly, we love Thanksgiving. It might be more accurate to say we love to eat, and Thanksgiving gives us an excuse to splurge on our diets. I will do my fair share of splurging.

In the midst of all this eating, we can lose sight of the reason we hold Thanksgiving. It is supposed to be a time of reflection and, well, Thanksgiving for the blessings we have received from God. So, take some time out of your feasting and stop to truly thank the Lord for all of His blessings in our lives. You might even ask those at your table to share one blessing they are thankful for.

Did you realize that your offering today is an act of Thanksgiving? Throughout Scripture, we see that the people of God would often bring what was called an offering of thanks. Psalm 50:23 says, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors me." Psalm 116:17 says, "To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord."

These acts of worship reminded them of God's provision and protection. It was a way of showing thankfulness. When we view our gifts as an expression of Thanksgiving, it changes our view of giving. So, let's use today's offering as an expression of our Thanksgiving to God for all he has done for us

1. <https://www.republicworld.com/lifestyle/festivals/how-many-turkeys-are-eaten-on-thanksgiving-day-see-details-here.html>

Your Gift Matters – November 28

Did anyone get up early Friday morning and stand in line to be the first in the door for that special sale? Some of you. How many of you stayed home and shopped online? Did any of you do both? The response here shows you the changes in how commerce is done in America.

Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, has traditionally been all about standing in line at a brick-and-mortar store to get the best deals on all your Christmas gifts. Now more people shop online than they do at physical stores. Brick and mortar stores still see huge numbers of people shopping, but now we like options for purchasing our Christmas gifts.

Here at YOUR CHURCH NAME, we give you several options on how to give. **List the various options.**

We don't care how you give. We just want you to give. Let me give you three reasons why.

First, your gift today honors God and is an act of worship. We encourage everyone, members and guests, to consider a gift in today's offering as a way of saying thanks to God for all He has done for us.

Secondly, when you give, you are blessed. Consider what Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."

Third, your gift blesses others. Every time you give here, you help us fulfill the mission and ministry that God has called us to do. Our church impacts hundreds not simply here in our community but around the world—your gift matters.

No matter what form your gift comes in, whether cash, check, or electronically, you can be assured that we use that gift to extend the Kingdom of God here locally and globally. So, thanks for your generosity. Your gift matters for you and for those you bless with your gift!

It's Time for Good News! – December 5

A recent Baylor Religion Survey discovered that the COVID-19 pandemic has made Americans significantly angrier, sadder, lonelier, and more worried. More than one-third reported feeling these emotions more strongly compared to before the pandemic. I'm sure there are multiple reasons we feel this way, but I contend one leading cause is the News. We have been fed a continual diet of bad news from newspapers to social media to the Main Stream media for almost the last two years. I contend it's time for Good News!

Our mission here as a church is STATE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT. That mission is grounded in our faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. We are entering into one of our most sacred times as a church, Christmas. The story of Christmas is a story of good news. The Gospel of Luke tells about the birth of Jesus. It records the story of nearby shepherds tending their flocks at night when an angel of the Lord appears to them. Here is what the text says, "the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. **I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.**"

In a world filled with bad news, **CHURCH NAME is committed to sharing the Good News of the Gospel to our community and world.** The faithful generosity of our members allows us to spread the good news of the Gospel. This month, we ask our entire church family to prayerfully help us spread the Good News through our special Christmas offering! We accomplished much due to your generosity, but there is so much more to do.

Every time you give here at our church, you help us spread that Good News not only in our town but literally around the world. Let's give generously today so that Good News can continue to spread.

Give a Gift That Lasts – December 12

I saw a study that reported the following about our Christmas shopping habits.

- 60% of US consumers start their Christmas shopping before December. How many of you are in that category?
- 62% of US shoppers buy gifts in the week before Christmas. How many fit here?
- 60% of shoppers in the US prefer to shop online. How many of you would agree?

How many of you are finished with your Christmas shopping? How many of you haven't even started? This year it is projected that Americans will spend about \$1,000 on Christmas. Here is my question. How many of those gifts will last? Few of the gifts we give last long, and none last forever.

BUT, a gift here at YOUR CHURCH lasts forever! We exist (insert your vision statement or use the following) to proclaim the Good News of Jesus working to build up His Kingdom. Every time you give a gift here, you help support that mission. Consider that this year:

- List events such as, Our VBS reached over 100 kids, many of who don't have a church home.
- We took 35 students to camp this summer, teaching them life-long principles and training them to be the next generation of leaders in the Church.

Those are just a few of the examples of what your generous giving helped us accomplish. Thank you!

We are not done yet! While we only have a few more days this year, we plan on an amazing New Year of missions and ministry. Every time you give in our offering, your gift helps us achieve all that God has called us to do. We are building up the Kingdom of God, and your gift helps us do that. Giving here truly is a gift that lasts. So, thank you for your generosity that impacts eternity!

Keep the Focus on Christmas – December 19

We are exactly six days from Christmas! Does that evoke excitement or fear in you? For the kid in us, it evokes excitement. The adult in us worries about all that is left to do. Sadly too many of us get caught up in the hustle and bustle of this season so that our focus gets diverted. Our focus can too easily be upon completing our list rather than the true reason we celebrate this time of year, the birth of our Savior!

In our commercialized world, it is easy to forget the true meaning of Christmas. Our country is becoming ever more secularized. Christmas is being obliterated so much that now instead of our kids having a Christmas break, it's called a Winter break. You hear Happy Holidays but rarely hear Merry Christmas. At OUR CHURCH, we never will lose focus on what this season means, the birth of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. Christmas is named for Him who came to show us the way to God.

So here is a word of advice, slow down this next week and enjoy the true meaning of the season. Stop and listen to those carols. Read the text of your Christmas cards proclaiming the birth of our Messiah. Take in the lights while thinking that Jesus is THE light of the world. Do what you can today, but don't let the rush of this season cloud out the joy meant for this season. Let's keep the focus on Christmas!

And, in all your gift-giving, please prayerfully consider a gift not only for our offering today but for our special Christmas offering. We want to end this year strong, setting ourselves up for a great New Year. We use your gifts to spread the message of Christmas to our town, state, nation, and indeed the world. So, please consider a generous gift today.

Start the New Year Right – December 26

Can you believe that Christmas is over and that this is the last Sunday of the year?

As we approach the New Year, have you made any New Year's resolutions? Studies show that most resolutions are broken or forgotten within weeks. Part of the problem is that we truly are not serious about that which we resolve to do. For instance, you might have resolved to lose weight and work out more. Yet Monday morning rolls around, and it is cold outside, so you skip the workout to sleep just a few more minutes. Then you grab a donut because you are in a hurry. Before we know it, our resolution is shot!

Along with resolutions like working out more and losing weight, we often resolve to live better or be a better Christian. Resolutions like that are valuable and needed in our lives. It reminds us that God is always to be first in our lives. Jesus said, "But **seek first** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." These words followed his advice about not worrying about the necessities of life. The advice is that when we put God first, all else will fall into place for us by our heavenly Father.

We take up an offering every week to allow us to show that God is first in our lives. Scripture commands us to give, and when we do, we trust God with our finances by putting him first. God has promised us that when we give faithfully, he will open up the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon us. Those blessings come as we seek him first by putting him first. There is perhaps no better illustration of that than giving to His work.

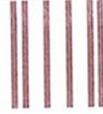
So, we encourage you to resolve to put God first this year. A great way to do that is with today's offering. Give to show that God is first in your finances. Give to start the year out right.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GETTING AN OFFERING TALK DELIVERED TO YOU EVERY WEEK? In my newsletter called "**The Stewardship Coach**," I write a fresh talk weekly. Find out more at,

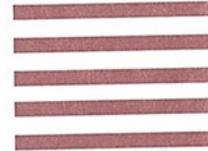
<https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/silver/>

Sample Envelope

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





The Stewardship Coach Platform – In 2006, my friend Glenn Sauls and I developed the directed coaching model for raising funds. We realized that what pastors and church leaders didn't need or want was a canned programmatic approach to raising funds. They needed a partner and not just for a capital campaign but weekly help. To better meet the needs of church leaders I created, The Stewardship Platform. Church's get expert help for a price they can afford. Here are my

platforms:

The Stewardship Coach Print Platform – Access to The Stewardship Coach newsletter and my seasonal playbooks to build out your stewardship platform.

<https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/silver/>

The Stewardship Coach Digital Platform – Access to all print materials, plus access to all my teaching videos. These members also have email access to me. <https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/gold/>

The Stewardship Coach Personal Coaching Platform – This is like hiring me as your Minister of Stewardship. It's a personalized approach. This is a great plan for any church 12-24 months out from a major capital project. <https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/platinum/>

These are all priced from \$9.99 to \$99.99. Find out more at: <https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/>.

Do you need to raise money over and above your regular operating budget? I'm your Huckleberry!

I helped Joel Osteen raise \$100 million, so I know I can help you! I've re-done my plans and pricing for capital campaigns, and it starts at \$99 a month!

The Digital Campaign – This is my online group teaching program. Starting in August, I'll teach 8 sessions on the keys to a successful capital campaign *and* provide email support for those that attend. It's designed for the smaller church or a church that has done multiple campaigns. The price is \$99 a month with a 12-month minimum commitment. Go to: <https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/diamond/>

Then, for more personalized coaching, I have three levels priced at:

\$12K – All Virtual – All the support, all the coaching, 24/7 access to me, and dedicated personal one-on-one time weekly. Billed monthly, this is a great plan for seasoned leaders who simply need a bit of help.

\$24K – Onsite and Virtual – This plan provides you with at least two onsite visits plus 24/7 virtual support for larger projects with greater need.

\$36K – For larger projects or first-time campaigns, this plan provides more onsite support with larger projects. This is my full three-year engagement plan.

If you are interested in raising over and above money, email me at mark@acts17generosity.com

Want to White Paper The Coach? I have now begun to provide both the print and digital platforms to various groups who then, in turn, provide it for free to their clients. If you would like to know more about that, go to: <https://acts17generosity.com/partnerships/>.

