

Six Weeks To Giving SUCCESS



By MARK BROOKS

**A Step-by-Step Plan To Start
Your Giving Year Out Right**

THE STEWARDSHIP COACH
REVERSING THE DECLINE IN GIVING



The 2023 Version of Six Weeks to Giving Success

Ideas and Plans to Start Your Giving Year Out Right

By Mark Brooks

The Stewardship Coach

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You never have to recover from a good start. My mentor Dave Sutherland always said that. It's good advice. The first six weeks of the year could determine the success of your financial year. This playbook is entitled "*Six Weeks To Giving Success.*"

January is next only to July as one of the more challenging months of your giving year. Why is that?

- ✓ It typically takes people a couple of weeks to get over the holidays.
- ✓ Right as people start returning to church, their credit card bills arrive for all the Christmas gifts purchased, causing giving stress.
- ✓ In a typical year, you would lose at least one weekend due to inclement weather.
- ✓ Now, with COVID still with us, you can expect attendance to be lighter than normal.

This could be your most challenging January ever, so you need a good start.

How important is a good start? How important the first quarter of a football game would be in determining the winner. I searched the Internet and found some football nerd who had crunched the number for NFL teams one year. Amazingly $\frac{3}{4}$ of teams leading *after the 1st quarter go on to victory.*¹

I realize that is football, and we are talking church, but in my experience, the churches that struggle in the first quarter almost always struggle throughout the year. There is nothing worse than running from behind. It takes more effort to catch up, and you are constantly at risk of falling further behind.

Let's get ahead of the curve. If you know a curve is coming up in the road, you slow down before you are in turn to navigate the curve. We know this will be a difficult first quarter. Let's work out a plan to stay caught up by setting the stage for the first six weeks.

Foundational Keys for Success – The following are foundational keys to starting towards giving success. First, determine your:

Goals – I have a two-pronged goal for pushing for six weeks of stewardship emphasis. First, as your Stewardship Coach, it is to see that you have the full amount of funds you need to do what God has called you to do. The second is to help you help your members be good stewards. Next, you need,

Focus – Your focus should not be on raising funds but on raising vision! The best way to raise dollars is with a compelling vision. You'll never develop stewards without first attracting them with a vision they can rally around. Your giving success is directly tied to the vision you advance.

I advise that you focus on at least three areas of ministry for the New Year. One of my clients sent out a giving appeal, and one area they focused on was building a digital student ministry platform. The appeal was for general giving but listing specific areas where the money will go helps donors see the impact of their gift. What missions and ministry initiatives do you have coming up in 2023 that you can highlight? Nothing raises dollars like a compelling vision. Don't focus on money but on a vision of reaching people, and you'll see a better start to your New Year of giving. Then you need to,

Plan – Without a plan of action to accomplish the above, all you have is a dream. One major reason churches struggle financially is the lack of any plan. You can have the best goals in the world, but you will seldom see success without a plan.

One of my Brooks mantras is, get a story, work your story, tell people your story, and people will willingly give to support that story. Yet how will they know your story unless you have a plan to tell them? So, let me rephrase my original mantra to this: get a plan, and work your plan!

Don't worry; I have a detailed plan for you later in the playbook.

For playbooks filled with plans, many for free, go to <https://acts17generosity.com/store/>.

Finally, **Just Do It!** Remember that Nike line? The reason so many churches struggle financially is that they do nothing. The days of doing nothing and still making a budget are long gone. Often churches shy away from any talk about giving as they don't want to turn off guests. Guess what? That crowd is gone. They might come back, but that will never happen if your church cannot financially survive. So, start thinking about your first six weeks of the New Year and how you can set the stage for financial success.

This playbook aims to move people up the generosity ladder *and* solidify your first quarter giving by focusing on your church's vision for missions and ministry.

Let's end your giving year well and set the stage for your best first six weeks!

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Let's Start Drawing Up a Plan

Your first step is to craft a message that matters. 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 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* communicated effectively.

What is vision? My friend Herb Buwalda came up with 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. On one page, can you give a reason why you are asking people to give? To achieve this, you need to understand,

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; the better you craft that message, the more money you raise. Take time to think through how to craft a message for the vision driving this New Year appeal.

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, appeal to missions and ministry not making a budget!**
5. **Focus on what you have done and have yet to do.**
6. **Make the appeal appealing by personalizing the message.**

I try to tell a story in every appeal I write or make for churches. People love stories. The more appealing and compelling your story, the more effective your "ask" will be. The more specific your appeal, the more effective the "ask."

We aim to help them make the connection that a dollar given to your church impacts all lives everywhere. It's like putting fuel in your tank for the journey ahead.

See the Vision Worksheet to "work out" your "Ask."

Next...

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**. In this section, I will share with you the essential tools you need to effectively launch your six-week giving strategy.

Attendance across America is vastly different. I have clients that are hovering around 50% of their previous number but have a good online engagement that is strong. Their giving is steady because we think both live and live streaming. I have other clients whose attendance is nearly back to normal and growing. What we recommend must always be run through *your* grid to fit your church's culture and context. One of our goals is to see your recurring giving increase. So, whether you are back fully on-campus or in a hybrid mix, the best strategy is a 24/7 approach to the offering. In the 21st century, we must use multiple tools to achieve success.

What systems should you have in place? Here is advice from a recent blog post I wrote for OnlineGiving.org.

- 1. Dynamic website.** Your website is the first place most people will visit *before* they ever darken your doors. Your website landing page is like the front porch of your house. If you make it inviting, people will come in. And they will give if they can find your give button, so make it easy to find. Also, ensure your giving page communicates the vision behind why you ask people to give. Make sure giving online is easy to use. Take time now to check the appearance, ease of use, and, most of all, what your page is communicating.
- 2. Robust online giving platform.** Much of your end-of-year giving will come through some digital means. People today like multiple options by which they can give. We have found that the easier you make it for people to give, the more likely they will give. Our 13 different platforms provide you with the latest and best-giving platforms. Find out more at (615) 206-4000 or email us at support@onlinegiving.org.
- 3. Social media platform and presence.** To hear the message of your end-of-year appeal, you must go where your people are. Today people are spending hours daily pouring through social media posts. By sharing the stories of life change your church is seeing, you can help people see the value of giving to your church. Then by posting your giving page URL, <https://brentwoodbaptist.com/stewardship/>, people can easily and quickly give to support that life change.
- 4. Postage-prepaid envelopes.** I tell clients there is a reason non-profits still use snail mail. It works. It can work for you, too, by inserting envelopes in any snail mail appeals you send. Many members will write a check and send it back to you. Then you can use our check scanning feature, making it easy to post that gift. Find out more in this post, <https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/announcing-our-new-check-scanning-capability>
- 5. Extensive database of your donors.** How up-to-date is your database? Now is the time to clean it up to be prepared for the various mailings, emails, and text messages you will need to send for your end-of-year appeal.

6. **A mass email platform, such as Constant Contact or MailChimp.** There are many platforms to help you send out emails in multiple batches. Find the tool that suits your church database best.
7. **Weekly platform talks.** On-campus or live streaming, it is essential that each offering time has a talk connecting your vision to giving. The two minutes or less you invest in stewardship, encouragement, and education can help increase giving and produce new givers.

These are the essential tools for implementing the plan I suggest. Having these tools in place will not only help you get your New Year off to a great start, 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. I'll share with you sample ways to communicate, from snail mail to emails, all written and ready for you to insert your name or edit to fit your culture and context better.

Take some time and thought to a vision and message you feel led to communicate for the first six weeks of the year by working through the following Vision Worksheet.

Then see my **Putting the Plan Into Action Weekly Calendar Overview.**

Vision Worksheet

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

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

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Step Two: List 3 things you want to do in the New Year. Focusing on any mission and ministry 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?

Putting the Plan Into Action

Six Weeks To Giving Success Weekly Plan of Action

I Love My Church is a special offering push culminating on February 12th to move people up the generosity ladder *and* help solidify your first quarter giving.

January 1st – The Focus this weekend is Being Faithful. How do we accomplish this? By putting God first in everything, including our finances. We introduce a practical and easy way to be faithful in giving, recurring giving.

- ✓ Make sure you have a clear view of where *you* want this campaign to go.
- ✓ Think about how you will publicly announce the I Love My Church initiative and the I Love My Church Valentine's Day offering on February 12th for next weekend. I advise thinking like a movie preview, 2 to 5-minute info, update. You want to simply put it on their radar, telling them to watch for more.
- ✓ Make sure everyone on your staff/team has read through this playbook. You have my permission to send it to those within your church that need this information.
- ✓ Finalize a letter to send to your ministry leaders and giving leaders this week, informing them of the initiative and the I Love My Church Valentine's Day Offering.
- ✓ Check your website and online pages and work on additional pages to support the initiative.
- ✓ Plan out your social media strategy that you'll launch the next week.
- ✓ Spend time on the offering talk for the weekend.
- ✓ PRAY.

January 8th – The Focus of this weekend is Being Focused. Staying focused on a vision is the key to being faithful through any difficult time. We share the 2023 vision of where we are going and how each can help us make a difference. We announce the special **I Love My Church** Offering for February 12th.

- ✓ Monday, January 9th either snail mail or email a letter to those you consider ministry leaders and the top 20% of your giving leaders. Trust me; you'll hit 90% of your faithful!
- ✓ Make sure all web pages are up and running, allowing you to show more information. You'll want to use links like this to drive people to the page. Here is a hint: have a giving button on that special page!
- ✓ Start a slow drip of posts on social media telling your story. Some posts might talk of your series, while others illustrate the power of generosity through the work of your church. Show and tell gets dollars!
- ✓ Review last weekend's offering talk. What can be improved? Plan this weekend's talk.
- ✓ PRAY – Pray that your leaders would catch the vision behind this.

January 15th – The Focus of this weekend is, Being on Target. How can you best make a difference? The local church! We show how *your* church is making a difference. This week is a broad overview of your church and how it helps members and those needing Jesus.

- ✓ Start reviewing the suggested emails/letters that are recommended. How would you take the idea presented in each of these and personalize it for your culture and context?

- ✓ Continue to think of how you can support the story you tell each weekend through social media posts in the coming week. Since the focus is on the mission, why not show that in action?
- ✓ Think through the offering time. In 2 minutes or less, you can make a huge impact on giving!
- ✓ Keep working on the plan, and above all, keep PRAYING!

January 22nd – The Focus of this weekend is, Being on Mission. Jesus has called us to reach everyone everywhere! We show how your church's impact extends beyond the walls, both physical and cyber. This broad overview introduces your church family to the possibilities of impacting their world and invites them to participate with you.

- ✓ Step up your social media campaign and highlight all you have accomplished this past year. At times say, "Thanks to the generosity of our members...."
- ✓ Send out the church-wide letter/email announcing I Love My Church and the I Love My Church offering information on Monday, January 23rd. See Sample Section
- ✓ PRAY!

January 29th – The Focus of this weekend is, Being a Testimony. We want to showcase faith in action locally and worldwide in missions and ministry. Share three things accomplished this year and link how they contributed to that through generosity.

- ✓ Mail the I Love My Church offering email/letter on Monday, January 30th.
- ✓ Keep communicating your vision across all platforms.
- ✓ PRAY!

February 5th – The Focus of this weekend is, Being Hopeful. Our world needs hope. When used as a noun, the word hope in the New Testament means "favorable and confident expectation, a forward look with assurance." By focusing forward on the future, we bring hope. We want to share at least three things their generosity can help support moving forward.

- ✓ Send the last email blast with an online appeal to give to the I Love My Church offering.
- ✓ Work on the appeal for Sunday's offering.
- ✓ PRAY HARDER!

February 12th – The Focus of this weekend is, Being Generous. Followers of Jesus live generously. We want to focus on the joy of generosity challenging members to move up the generosity ladder with a generous gift to the I Love My Church offering.

- ✓ Send thank-you notes/letters to those that gave to the I Love My Church offering. Don't just thank them, tell them what their gift accomplished.
- ✓ Make the announcement next weekend a big deal. Plan how you can celebrate the results and pour gratitude into your church.
- ✓ PRAISE!

February 19th – The Focus of this weekend is, Being Grateful! We want to give praise and say thank you. Announce the I Love My Church offering results, share what that will mean for mission and ministry, and thank everyone who gave.

Sample Section

Letter and Email Samples for the I Love My Church Campaign

January 9th letter to ministry and giving leaders announcing I Love My Church...for Jesus

Dear _____,

You are a key leader here and a key reason that we can do for the Kingdom what we do! You lead not only by faithfully attending but by serving and generously giving to this ministry. Without you and your faithful support, we could not do all that we do. So, from the bottom of my heart, **thank you for all you do!**

I am writing to inform you of our efforts to build upon our donor base. During February, we will launch a giving initiative called "I Love My Church." In the next few days, you will receive a letter to all our **CHURCH NAME** family. In that letter, I will encourage our entire church family to show their love for our church with a special offering on February 12th, just days before our nation celebrates Valentine's Day. One of the major purposes of this series is to teach people the positive benefits of giving. This is part of our effort to increase donors and giving for the coming year.

As we start the year, we must hit our budget numbers. As you know, these are not simply line items on a spreadsheet. Making our budget allows us to continue this church's exciting missions and ministry. Our goal is to ensure that all ministries are adequately funded in 2023. This is why I am holding this series called **"I Love My Church"** to help us achieve giving success.

You have shown your faithfulness in the past, and I know I can now count on your faithfulness. Please pray about giving an increase on February 12th to help us start this year out strong. Every gift given helps us do God's work here and worldwide. I know I can count on you to stand with me through this series. Thank you again for all you mean to me.

Your Pastor,

Dr. Pastor

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

January 23rd letter setting up giving campaign

Dear _____,

Valentine's Day is days away! Are you ready to show your love to that special someone? Americans love Valentine's Day. We must because we spend around \$24 billion on cards, candies, and flowers, showing our beloveds that we care. That is a lot of love. We consider it money well spent to say I love you to those that matter most to us and bring joy and fulfillment to our lives.

Have you ever thought about saying I Love You to CHURCH NAME on Valentine's Day? Saying I Love You to an institution? Before you write that off as crazy, think about how many people express love for their old alma mater. We started the New Year with a challenge to "I Love My Church," focusing on why we are so blessed here at CHURCH NAME and why those blessings should cause us to express love for our church.

Consider just some of the things CHURCH NAME does. **List your bullet points here**

- In 2022, we increased the number of people we engaged with!
- We saw XX number of children and students accept Christ.
- Our mission teams virtually ministered to churches in Africa, Romania, and the inner city of Detroit.

By God's grace, we are making a difference in our world. You and I are the benefactors of multiple blessings resulting from CHURCH NAME. Without the loving support of our church family, none of the above would happen.

We are holding a special giving campaign called I Love My Church this February. We are asking you to help us show the love of Christ with your gift. Giving to this special campaign will help pay for all our missions and ministry ventures like those listed above. Each of us can show our love with a gift this February that will enable us to show our city, state, nation, and the world that we love them and want them to know the love of Christ personally.

We will be holding a special I Love My Church offering on Sunday, February 12th, as a token of our love for all God is accomplishing and wants to accomplish through CHURCH NAME. Included in this letter is an envelope that will make it easy for you to give. You can either mail it in or bring it with you to one of our services.

Let's show our love and support for what we are doing here at CHURCH NAME by supporting I Love My Church. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Your Pastor,

Dr. Pastor

PS. You can find out more about *I Love My Church...for Jesus* by going to our webpage at www.CommunityChurch.org or by following our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/communitychurch>.

Week of February 6th Email blast – Choose the best day to send this email *before* February 12th.

The second email blast is to be sent out Thursday, February 9th.

Subject line: How to Say I Love You!

Dear _____,

Have you ever thought about saying I Love You to CHURCH NAME on Valentine's Day? The last few weeks, we have been challenging ourselves to consider "*I Love My Church*," focusing on why we are so blessed here at CHURCH NAME and why those blessings should cause us to express love for our church.

2022 has been a year of rebounding back here at CHURCH NAME! By God's grace and our members' amazing generosity, we are more active than ever in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus.

Yet this New Year, we face new opportunities and some challenges. We must,

- Increase the number of people we engage with by improving our video quality with upgraded equipment!
- Launch our new student ministry digital initiative to connect with every student in town.
- Improve our Small Group experiences with advanced meeting technology.

I'm calling on our church family to step up in generosity once again with a special **I Love My Church** offering that culminates on Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 12th. Giving to this special initiative will help pay for all our missions and ministry ventures like those listed above. **Give now at** <http://ourchurch.org/give>.

Thanks to you, we are making a difference in our city!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

PS: We provide multiple ways to give to CHURCH NAME. Find out more at <http://ourchurch.org/give>.

Offering Talks

January 1st - Resolve to *I Love My Church*

How many of you have made New Year's resolutions? A recent article in *Inc.* magazine revealed that about 60% of us make resolutions, but only about 8% of us successfully keep them.

Here are the top 10 New Year's resolutions, according to the survey of 2,000 people:

1. **Diet or eat healthier (71 percent)**
2. **Exercise more (65 percent)**
3. **Lose weight (54 percent)**
4. **Save more and spend less (32 percent)**
5. **Learn a new skill or hobby (26 percent)**
6. **Quit smoking (21 percent)**
7. **Read more (17 percent)**
8. **Find another job (16 percent)**
9. **Drink less alcohol (15 percent)**
10. **Spend more time with family and friends (13 percent)**

Any guesses as to how long those resolutions will last? More than half of those polled said they failed their resolution before January 31st.

I have a better resolution for you to consider today. Let's resolve in 2023 to show our love for our church. That is the journey we will take for the next few weeks. We are following the words of Jesus when He said, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

For the next few weeks, we want to show you how living a life of generosity can help you live out your love for Jesus and His church.

Let me share one way you can ensure that God always comes first in your finances. Set up your giving to be automatic! Throughout January, we will be highlighting recurring giving. You can go to our website, give your site address, and follow the easy steps to automatically set up your giving.

Our goal here is to make the giving process as easy as possible for you, and setting up recurring giving is the easiest way. Regardless of your giving, remember that your generosity allows us to accomplish all we do. We can't do what we do without you!

January 8th - Did You Make Any Resolutions?

Did any of you make New Year's resolutions? An article in *Inc.* magazine revealed that about 60% of us make resolutions, but only about 8% of us successfully keep them.¹ Based upon that, how are you doing keeping your resolutions?

If you want to keep your resolutions, you might be interested in another article *Inc.* magazine wrote entitled *7 Tips to Make Sure You Keep Your New Year's Resolutions This Year.*² They said, "This is what people who keep their resolutions do." One of the tips was, set yourself up for success.

By now, you might be thinking, what does this have to do with the offering? Often, Christians will resolve to give more in the New Year. They might resolve to increase the amount or the frequency of their giving. Like all New Year's resolutions, the best-laid plans often get sidetracked by the tyranny of the urgent or other distractions.

If you have resolved to generously give to support our life-changing work, we have multiple ways by which you can do that. The best is to sign up to have your offering become recurring. That way, you never have to remember the checkbook because most of you don't know where that is anyway. Your gift gets here whether you do or not. It's the surest way to fulfill a resolution to give.

Setting up recurring giving is easy to do. Go to **GIVE YOUR URL GIVING PAGE ADDRESS.** Then follow the instructions, and you will be helping us make a difference in our city and worldwide.

1. <https://www.inc.com/peter-economy/10-top-new-years-resolutions-for-success-happiness-in-2019.html>

2. <https://www.inc.com/amy-morin/7-tips-to-make-sure-you-actually-keep-your-new-years-resolution-this-time.html>

January 15th - Dreams Matter

Dreams matter. Tomorrow's holiday honoring Martin Luther King is proof of that. On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech in front of over 250,000 supporters at the Lincoln Memorial. The speech was ranked the best American speech of the 20th century in a 1999 poll.

One famous part of his speech is this,

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

While we still have a way to go to see the ultimate fulfillment of King's dream, some of us here can remember those days of segregation. In 1963, apart from Martin Luther King, few people would have ever believed that in 2008 America would elect its first African American president. That would have never happened without the dream that Martin Luther King launched on that August day in 1963.

King's dream became the vision that drove the Civil Rights Movement. His followers work to this day to see his dream and vision fully realized.

There is an old children's song that says this,

Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Here at YOUR CHURCH NAME, our mission is to share the Good News of Jesus' love with everyone, red and yellow, black and white; they're all precious in His sight! Every time you give here, you help us work towards fulfilling the dream of reaching the next one for Jesus.

Remember, we have multiple ways in which you can give today. Thank you for your generosity!

January 22nd - Does \$142 Say I Love You?

\$165! That is, the average Americans said they would spend last Valentine's Day on cards, candies, and flowers, all to say, I Love You.¹ All those flowers wilted, the candy was eaten, and most of the cards were thrown out. Is it worth it? We would all probably say yes! Telling someone you love is important, and sometimes giving a gift of love is a great reminder of our love.

Did you know that God loves us? Most of us know that. Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ is ultimately the first Valentine. He is God's Valentine to us.

The amazing thing is that He did that, asking for nothing in return. Isaac Watts, the former slave trader who wrote the hymn, Amazing Grace, wrote another classic hymn about God's love for us entitled "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Watts expresses amazement at the love of God in giving up His only Son for us through this great hymn. The last verse says it best,

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

This morning as we focus on the offering, we give not to earn God's love. God's love is already freely given. We give to express our love and gratitude for His gift, the ultimate Valentine!

1. <https://knowinsiders.com/how-much-will-americans-spend-on-valentines-day-33968.html>

January 29th - What's Love Got To Do With It?

Are there any classic rock and roll fans here? Who let the Boomers in? In the last few weeks, we have focused on our Valentine's Day offering called **I Love My Church**. It led me to think about love songs, and I wanted to know if any of you remember the song, **What's Love Got to Do With It?** Some or a lot. Does anyone remember who sang that mid 80's blockbuster? Tina Turner. The grandmother of Rock and Roll.

Sadly, Tina Turner's life shows love means little as she has gone through one relationship after another and based her success partly on sex and suggestion.

I should not be so hard on Tina. She isn't any more off about love than any other singer, be it Rock, Rag, Rap, or Country. Our airwaves are flooded with songs about love. Our bookshelves are filled with books about love and romance, and yet it seems that so few know what love is about.

Tina Turner asked, "**What's Love Got To Do With It?**" The answer is **everything**.

Love is not just something we say. It is something we do. We have begun our New Year, focusing on ***I Love My Church***. We've been learning about all the opportunities our gifts can make happen.

Here is a shameless admission; we're trying to tug at your heart. We want you to see the needs and opportunities we see as we attempt to *do* the work of ministry God called us to. **Why?** Because we know you have big hearts filled with the love of Jesus. Because you know that love has ***everything*** to do with it. Today through your gift, you have an opportunity to show your love for God through what you give.

When it comes to giving, *love* has everything to do with it!

February 5th – How Do You See the Glass?

Do you see the glass as half-full or half-empty? Filmmaker Woody Allen famously said, "**I see the glass half full...but of poison.**"¹ Woody Allen must have been prophesying about life in the 2020s!

I won't sugar coat it; 2022 was another challenging year for us here at CHURCH NAME. Yet, we have chosen to see the challenges of 2022 not as poison but as an opportunity to further the Gospel. Consider this:

- Though still below our pre-Covid numbers, we have seen an increase in attendance.
- We are engaging now with more people than ever in places we never dreamed of.
- List some outreach or activity your church accomplished recently.

Your generosity helped us turn challenges into opportunities! Thank you for giving!

I Love My Church has been our focus since the start of the New Year, with a special offering culminating the Sunday before Valentine's Day. We are challenging our entire church family to give a gift over and above their regular giving for a special offering we call "**I Love My Church.**"

"**I Love My Church**" aims to make our first quarter financial needs so we can continue ministering in Jesus' name. We invite you to join us in taking the challenge by giving an extra offering for our "**I Love My Church**" offering.

I am not sure how you see the glass, but I know how Jesus sees it. Like the story of the woman at the well, Jesus offers a thirsty world living water. He said, "**Everyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst.**" Let's show our love for our church and support its mission so we can continue to offer living water to our thirsty world!

1. Taken from www.azquotes.com

February 12th - A Challenge of Epic Proportions

How many of you have ever heard the term, **I double dead dog dare you?** Does anyone ever use that dare? You might be wondering why I'm asking you about this phrase as we begin our time of worship in giving. Let me explain.

We are in the midst of a special offering on top of our regular giving called **"I Love My Church."** We are challenging our entire church family to help us raise finances to meet our mission and ministry needs in the first quarter. We've challenged some to give for the first time and others to give an extra amount. That's the challenging part.

As I started thinking about this challenge and other challenges I have received in my life, the phrase, **I double dead dog dare you came to mind.** While I didn't think that was an effective appeal for setting up our offering time, it did make me wonder where that phrase came from. So, I did some research.

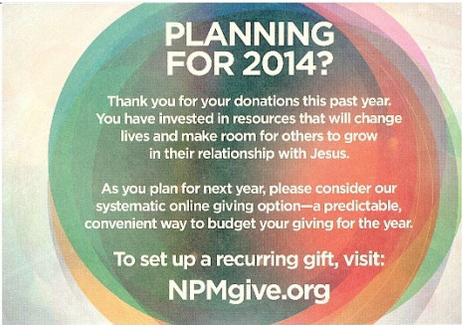
The double dead dog phrase has its roots back to the 1800s. It was made popular in our day in the 1980s in the movie *"A Christmas Story."* In that movie, set in 1940, one child double dead dog dares another child to touch a frozen flagpole with his tongue. That did not go well. Please do NOT try that at home!

Here at CHURCH NAME, we don't believe in dares. I am not going to double-dog dare you to give. Yet when I searched for the phrase, there was a line of explanation that said, **"A double-dog-dare is a challenge of epic proportions."**¹

These last few years have been a challenge of epic proportions for all of us. Our **"I Love My Church"** special offering is a challenge of epic proportions. Your extra gift or first gift will enable us to continue all our missions and ministries this quarter and beyond. We are making a difference, and your generosity is spurring that on!

Let's show our love for our church by giving generously to the "I Love My Church" offering!

1. <https://grammarist.com/phrase/double-dog-dare/>



PLANNING FOR 2014?

Thank you for your donations this past year. You have invested in resources that will change lives and make room for others to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

As you plan for next year, please consider our systematic online giving option—a predictable, convenient way to budget your giving for the year.

To set up a recurring gift, visit:
NPMgive.org

How to Make January Recurring Giving Month

January is a good month to push recurring giving. While dated, the sample gives you an idea of how to put recurring giving in the mind of your donors. This sample was in a yearly statement from North Point in Atlanta.

How important is recurring giving for your stewardship platform? I wrote about this recently in a post entitled, *4 Advantages of Recurring Giving*. Here are my top 4 advantages:

Advantage #1 - Your giving will increase. Churches that offer and highlight recurring giving always raise more money than the churches that do not offer this giving platform. One reason why giving increases is revealed in advantage two.

Advantage #2 - It assures there is always an offering. COVID-19 has and will continue to impact attendance and, thus, the offering. Recurring giving is never impacted by anything. As a result, your giving goes up. The last thing you need to start your New Year off is to get behind in giving due to COVID or inclement weather. Recurring giving will help you offset this.

Advantage #3 - It helps offset the summer slump in giving. Summers are notoriously one of the worst seasons for giving. By setting up recurring giving, you can avoid the summer slump in giving. Also, remember that January is the second most challenging giving period.

Advantage #4 - It makes your giving more consistent, helping you plan better. One church illustrated this a few years back by saying, “Recurring giving has taken the angst out of our staff meetings. We used to fret over how to pay our bills, especially in summer. Now our giving is consistent, which allows for better planning.” Stressing recurring giving can do the same for your church.

How do you accomplish this? Here is the simple message we work to use across all our platforms.

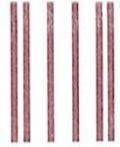
“Are you resolving to put God first this year in your finances? The best way to accomplish this is by setting up your giving to be automatic. We offer an easy, safe, and secure way to do this. Go to <https://www.seacoast.org/giving/> and follow the simple steps.”

This message, or one like it, can be supported by pictures in an announcement, screenshots, social media, and all print pieces at the church. Take advantage of the advantages of recurring giving!

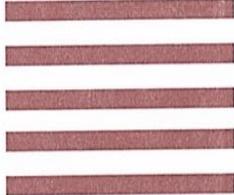
Sample Envelope

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

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



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



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

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



Are you looking for a newsletter that gives you incredible help in increasing generosity? I write the best weekly newsletter in America called **The Stewardship Coach Newsletter!** My members get this informative and packed generosity tool every Monday morning. Find out how you can get started receiving, **The Stewardship Coach Newsletter!**

Silver Level: Membership at this level gives you America's leading weekly newsletter on all things generosity related, **The Stewardship Coach**. This is a great tool for church leaders that want to stay abreast of the latest generosity news, information, and best-case strategies.

"The Stewardship Coach newsletter has been a tremendous help to our church. I encourage pastors and church leaders to take advantage of this powerful resource."

Pastor Nick Floyd Cross Church Northwest Arkansas, an Outreach Magazine Top 100 Church

Each newsletter contains the following:

- Weekly thoughts from me, **The Stewardship Coach**, on the state of generosity and its impact upon your church with practical advice you can implement immediately!
- **Weekly offering talks!** Some sites charge as much as \$99 a month for this!
- Social Media advice, strategies, and suggestions to connect with donors and increase giving!
- Interviews with leading experts in the field of generosity and much, much more!

The cost is \$9.99 monthly or \$99 for a year's subscription.

"I share Stewardship Coach with 70 of my leaders weekly. It is a good tool with relevant ideas we can grow from."

Dr. William M. Campbell, Jr.

Union Bethel A.M.E. Church

Do you need more? Then check out my,

Gold Level: Designed for the church leader who wants to implement a yearly approach to generosity. This level aims to help your church establish a Digital Giving Strategy giving you financial stability for the present and future! A key for this level is the Coach's

"We used the Stewardship Coach's manual for our Easter offering. The weekly tasks helped us organize what needed to be done for a successful campaign. Using the Stewardship Coach's plan, our offering was \$17K above our normal Easter offering."

Stephanie Dalton, Executive Pastor, Bethel Harvest Church

Gold members receive:

- **The Stewardship Coach Newsletter** is sent to them weekly with key thoughts, offering talks, interviews, samples, and more, PLUS,
- All my seasonal manuals like “The Successful Easter Giving Plan,” “The Fully Funded Summer,” “The Maximized Annual Campaign,” “How to Increase End of Year Giving,” and more sells for \$9.95!
- A review of your giving trends using our Generosity Assessment tool.
- A scheduled conference call with The Stewardship Coach giving you a personalized generosity assessment.
- Unlimited email access to answer all your generosity questions and review any direct giving appeals you write.

The cost is \$365 a year.

Do you need even more? Then check out my,

Platinum Level: Let me coach you to become a Top 100 generosity church! I regularly coach many of the nation’s top 100 churches in terms of size. I can help you become a **Top 100 generosity church.**

you get,

- **“The Stewardship Coach,”** newsletter, my weekly coaching piece that includes...
- **Weekly offering talks!** Some sites charge as much as \$99 a month for this!
- All my **seasonal giving manuals**, like “The Fully Funded Summer” and many others.
- The **Generosity Treasure Chest** of all my past articles, hundreds of offering talks, recorded group teaching time, and MORE!
- Twice a year **Generosity Assessment** with our deep-dive financial analysis of giving trends.
- **Group Coaching** every week, focusing on key topics of generosity with a Q&A time personally with the Coach.
- **Personal Coaching** through email and monthly teleconferencing.

The cost is \$99 a month. To find out more and to sign up, go to:

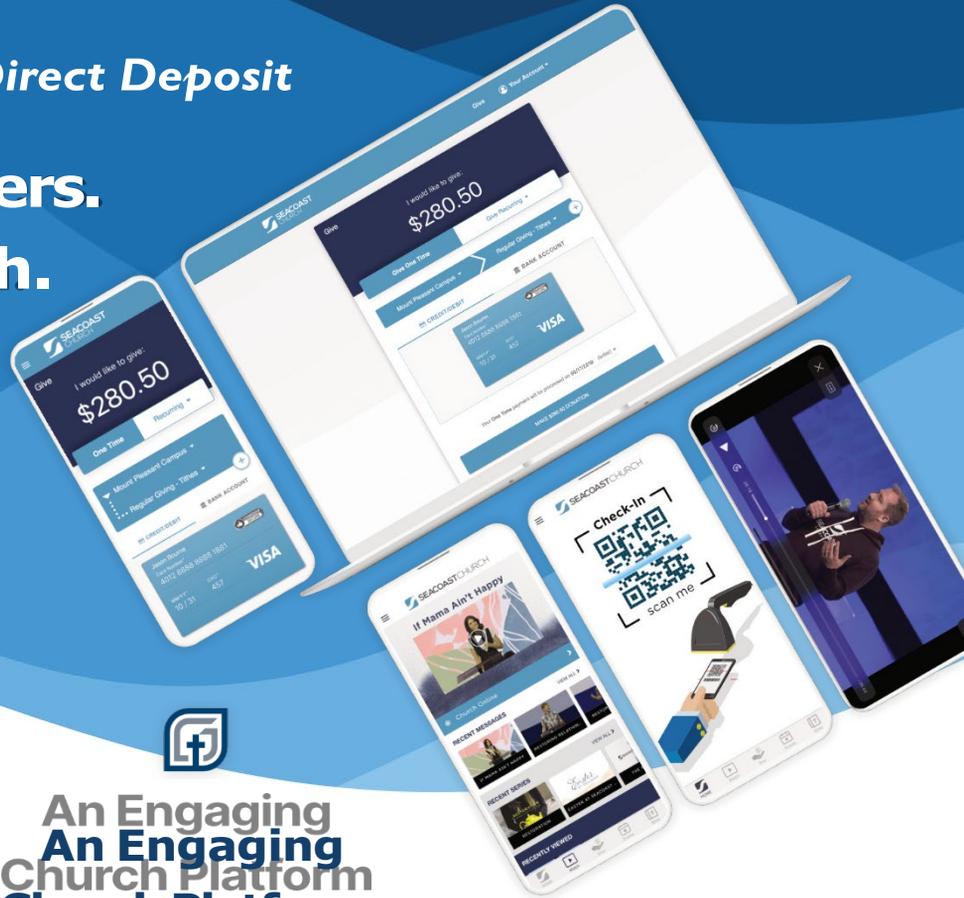
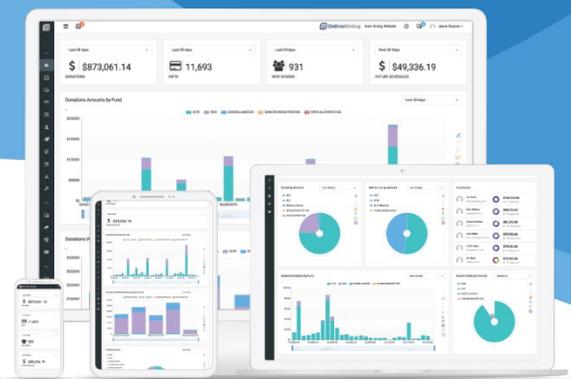
<https://acts17generosity.com/memberships>



 Now Accepting Crypto Donations

 Check Scanning with Direct Deposit

Grow Recurring Givers. Engage your church.



An Engaging Church Platform

- ✓ Innovative & Integrated Tools for Ministry.
- ✓ **13** Easy Ways to Give, Engineered for Growth.
- ✓ **10** Cutting Edge ChMS Integrations.



Giving

Increase your growth independent of weekly attendance. Give on any device with 13 methods available to the church including Web, Mobile, Text, Kiosk, Chatbot, Scanned Checks, Facebook, Embedded, and more.



Mobile App

A beautiful custom mobile app for your church with advanced ChMS integration. Uniquely crafted for each church and engineered to connect and engage your members daily.



Form Builder

The Custom Form Builder engineered for churches makes it easy to visually

- ✓ Deeply Integrated Custom Mobile Applications.
- ✓ Ministry Connected AI Powered Chatbot.
- ✓ Text Marketing Designed for Ministry.



Text Marketing

Enhance church communication by sending inspirational messages, reading plans, group reminders, and donation requests. Engage your congregation with text message event registration and more.



Chatbot

The new vital platform for reaching and retaining guests. Connect the congregation and grow your church. Text based Christ acceptance, baptism sign-ups, connection cards and more.



build web and mobile-friendly custom- forms deeply integrated into your Church Management System.

Metrics

Get the whole picture with donation insights with intuitive metrics based on ChMS data retroactive five-plus years that include all forms of giving, digital and non-digital.