The 15 Offerings of Summer:

How to Reverse the Summer Slump *in 60 seconds*

by
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The Stewardship Coach

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Why You Must Have a Plan for the 15 Offerings of Summer

Let's Get Ahead of the Curve! **When it comes to giving, summer is like a hairpin curve in the road.** If you have ever driven on a curvy road, you know that you have waited too late if you wait until you are in a turn to correct your speed for that turn. Highway departments put up signs ahead of the curve to warn you of the approaching adjustments you need to make to navigate the turn ahead successfully. If you run your car off the road, you are not paying attention to the danger ahead. To get ahead of the curve means you anticipate events, circumstances, and problems.

You have a curve in your giving road heading your way called summer. The typical Church sees summer as one of the most challenging on your budget. That challenging time comes when you are doing more and thus spending more. Year after year, churches face what is now infamously called, The Summer Slump.

Every summer is a challenge when it comes to giving. Back in the pre-pandemic days giving declined as attendance declined. While COVID changed attendance patterns, summer is still a challenging time for giving due to all the distractions. It's your financial curve that you must navigate. How can you navigate the curve of a decline in giving this summer? Here are some thoughts.

First, have a plan of action. If you know that something will happen, don't you prepare ahead of time for that event? Why, if summer after summer you experience a decline in giving, don't you act to offset this decline? The answer most churches would be forced to give to that question is they don't know what to do. Let's talk about a few simple steps to help you get ahead of the curve.

Spend May focusing on setting up recurring giving. If members set up their giving to be automatic and recurring when they leave for the lake, their donations show up on your "offering plate." Then,

Plan out and strategically position every offering of the summer. There are fifteen weekends or fifteen offering times from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Spending one to two minutes setting up an offering creates a powerful worship moment that will help you increase giving.

When it comes to summer, focus on what you are doing and boldly ask people to support it. By showing and telling your Church's story of life change, you inspire people to give willingly to support what your Church is doing! Your goal is to show people how a dollar given to your Church impacts the world for good.

Challenge your team to think of creative and effective ways to tell the story and then ask people to support that work. Each week review the effectiveness of your offering time.

The time you spend now will help you navigate the turn-in giving that summer creates. Let's get ahead of the curve and make this summer your best-giving summer ever!

Part One: Laying the Foundation for the Appeal

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 given!** Even more shocking is that the average Church sees as much as 90% of their giving 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.

You must take your message to this crucial group for your summer giving strategy to work. 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 summer giving, you must have the right target. My old boss, John Maxwell, says, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." Your leaders are the key to your summer 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 summer giving offering you will be launching. **My tool section will show you how to do this.**

A subset goal of this summer giving offering push is to motivate new donors to give to support your vision. Stressing this will help your current 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. Done right offerings allow you an opportunity to attract new donors as a result of your compelling vision and message.

While our primary objective is to help you avoid a summer slump in giving, your strategy can help you accomplish much more. However, if you have a strategy that attracts new donors, your path to financial stability is much brighter.

However, 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 we advise you get your leaders on board early in the process. We have found that when you treat leaders like leaders, they act like leaders!

With this in mind, let's start funding your 2022 summer!

The Right Message

How do you increase giving in summer? 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 staying strong financially in the summer will become more difficult. Using my playbook will give you a strategy for recovering lost giving.

If you have ever built a house or a new facility at your Church, you know the foundation's importance. The same is true for a plan for fully funding your summer offering. So, let's start by laying the right foundation, and it begins with crafting the message of your appeal.

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 will 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 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. I want a broad overview of what we are raising money for on one-page front and back.

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.

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 to effectively launch your summer giving strategy.

Back before COVID19, we had a captured audience every weekend. Some who are reading this have re-opened. You can thus use your campus and platform to communicate the message of your plan. Even when 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. I partner with what I feel is the best online provider,
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-paidaid 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 help you with your plan to fully fund your summer, 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 your message's vision.

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 for plans for summer offerings.

Understanding the Uniqueness of a Summer Offering Plan

Let's break 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 PM and find it useful!

Summer offering strategy - Here is an overview of a plan of action for summer offerings:

- At least one month out, craft the vision.
- Set your giving goal for the summer. Suppose your operating budget is $520K a year. That means you need $10K a week to fully fund your operations. Count how many weeks from Memorial Day to Labor Day; typically, there are 15, and then multiply your weekly need by that number. Using $10K a week makes your summer offering giving goal to be $150K.
- Communicate beforehand 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.
- Beginning in May, start showing the ministry's impact on the area of need across all your communication platforms. Show your story!
- Each weekend in May, encourage people to sign up for recurring giving.
- Craft a specific plan for each of the three Holiday weekends, Memorial Day, The 4th of July, and Labor Day.
- Send a mid-summer direct appeal email or letter encouraging continued financial support for your summer mission.
- Take up the offering with boldness! In two minutes or less, craft an offering talk 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 updated the offering's results and 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 listed in this section as idea starters.

Crafting Your Vision for the "Ask"

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

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

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

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

1. **Don't make it about you. 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." 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.

You want undesignated gifts allowing you to funnel the money to the greatest need. So, you must understand,

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

"We are gearing up for our 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 accomplished last summer. 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 this summer. Focusing on any missions and ministries coming up allows donors to make a difference with their gifts. You want to show them that their gift *now* can make a difference.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why is it important to give to this now?

_____

_____

How can their gift *now* make a difference?

_____

_____

Basic Steps for Effective Appeals

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

The following are the 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 in this day of online giving, *and* given the COVID19 flipping of how giving is now predominantly digital, I would focus on using the USPS for any appeal. 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 non-profits 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. It is important to remember 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 Sample – Send in early May.

The following letter will be sent to your leaders, informing them of the summer offering push. Edit the following to best suit your message. You could also adapt this for an email.

Dear _____,

While we might not have all been back on campus, CHURCH NAME has been active, thanks to the generosity of people like you! During perhaps the most challenging time in our history, the CHURCH NAME family has risen to meet these challenges!

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

- Provide caring for families in need, including many of our single moms and hurting families in financial need during this season of COVID,
- Continue our Serve days throughout the summer within our community, being the hands and feet of Jesus!
- Provide the funding needed for our new "multi-site" Church with three campuses.

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

We have an exciting summer of missions and ministry ahead! We have so much more to do as we prepare for our mission to continue this summer. Consider these challenges of need: (Insert your own needs)

- We will be holding a virtual and live VBS this year. Your generosity helps assure VBS's success!
- List any outside mission endeavors, etc.
- We are passionate about raising NextGen leaders for CHURCH NAME and the Kingdom. Your gifts can make this happen!

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 that we will be starting a countdown of the 15 Offerings of Summer. We have a $XXX, XXX goal to fund all our summer work. That comes out to $XX, XXX a week. Each week we will highlight how generosity fuels our mission and ministry throughout the summer. Our goal is to keep everyone motivated to be generous. Through all of our platforms, from social media to the platform in the worship center, you will see and hear a positive message connecting the 15 Offerings of Summer to the mission we believe God has called us to.

Recurring giving is one key way we are working to fully fund this summer. If you have not already, please take the time to sign up for automated giving at our giving page **http://churchname.org/give.**

Let's pray that the 15 Offerings of the 2022 summer will be the best to the glory of God!

Blessings,

Pastor Mark

PS. The enclosed envelope is one of many ways by which you can give. Save this for when you are on vacation!

15 Offerings of Summer Playbook Plan

Use the chart to plan out your 15 offerings. The Who, How, What, When, Why column helps you decide the best way to communicate the story you are focusing on. Each offering is about connecting your summer vision to life change!

Date	Focus of Offering	Who, How, What, When, Why?
May 29th		
June 5th		
June 12th		
June 19th		
June 26th		
July 3rd		
July 10th		
July 17th		
July 24th		
July 31st		
August 7th		
August 14th		
August 21st		
August 28th		
September 4th		

15 Sundays/15 Offerings

Offering Talks

You can increase your giving in 2 minutes or less by setting up every offering with an offering talk. Here are 15 talks designed to help increase your special offering giving.

May 29th

A Memorial Gift

This weekend is Memorial Day. The sad thing about many of our holidays is that we have forgotten why they exist. Memorial Day, celebrated on the last Monday of May, was first started to commemorate fallen Union soldiers who died in the Civil War. By the 20th century, it had been extended to honor all Americans who have died in all wars. It developed from there into a day for general expressions of memory for deceased relatives, whether they had served in the military or not. So the day is supposed to be remembering and honoring those who have gone before us.

A few years ago, the Christian singer Steve Green sang a popular song entitled "Find Us Faithful." That song says, "We're pilgrims on the journey of the narrow road. And those who've gone before us line the way, cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary, their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace. Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race not only for the prize but also as those who've gone before us. Let us leave to those behind us. The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives."

The song is based upon Hebrews 12:1, which says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Think about where we would be without those that have paid the price for our freedom. We owe so much to so many. We should take time out to remember their sacrifice. We should memorialize those who served our nation and family members who served us.

Many times we give a memorial gift in honor of someone. You may have noticed plaques in churches where pews or windows were given in the memory of someone. The focus of our giving should always be to be obedient to the Lord. Yet this morning, as we approach our time of offering, wouldn't it be special if our gifts were given a memorial statement of gratitude for those who have invested so much for us? As our ushers come forward for our offering, let's give gifts that would honor those that have gone before us.

June 5th

VBS Trivia

Does anyone here like trivia? I have a church history question for you about Vacation Bible School. To help you, I'll make it multiple choice. A woman named Mrs. Hawes, who lived in New York City, became concerned about the poor children running around in summer without anything to do. She started what was called Everyday Bible School. Most historians track this as the beginning of what became Vacation Bible School.

Here is the question, where was the first Everyday Bible School held?

- In a school.
- In a beer hall.
- In a church basement.
- Under a tree.

Mrs. Dawes started her Everyday Bible School in 1898, renting out a beer hall during the daytime. Vacation Bible School developed from a beer hall to sweep the nation.[1] Millions of children have been impacted for eternity through Vacation Bible School.

Thankfully due to your generosity, we have plenty of space and capacity for kids this summer for our Vacation Bible School. As we take time to focus on our offering today, I wanted to help you see that your gifts today help run programs like VBS, one of our key outreach events. This year, we believe God for XXX kids, and we need all the help we can get. In fact, if you would like to generously give your *time* see _____.

So, today as we focus upon our time of giving, let's give cheerfully, knowing our gifts will enable us to share the love of Jesus with the boys and girls of our community.

1. https://vbs.lifeway.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HistoryofVBS.pdf

June 12th

Yes, We Do Talk About Money Here!

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

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

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

We talk about money because we believe in what we are doing, and what we are doing matters! What matters is worth giving to. So, while we don't pressure anyone to give, we invite you to be a part of what we are doing with your generous gift this morning!

June 19th

Father's Day Gifts

Today is Father's Day! Thank God for fathers! Some of you have fathers still living, and for others of you, your father has gone. Yet living or passed, we celebrate their lives today.

What gifts do we get for our fathers? Traditionally, it has been ties. Given the pandemic, I am not sure if anyone wears ties anymore. This might account that it is projected that 2.2 billion dollars of the 12 billion dollars spent this Father's Day will be gift cards.[1.] I'm not sure a gift card requires much thought but apparently, that is the top way to show our love to our fathers.

How much love do you show for your heavenly Father when it comes to the offering? I am not trying to lay a guilt trip upon you as I ask that question. I simply want you to think about whether your gift is a thoughtful gift or something you throw in the plate or basket. We need to realize that the offering is when we show our heavenly Father the same honor we give our earthly fathers today.

In the Living Bible, Proverbs 3:9 says, **"Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income, and he will fill your barns…."** What we give shows whether or not we truly honor God. Just as we pause today to give honor and tribute to our earthly fathers with a gift, let's pause and give our heavenly Father a gift with the first part of our incomes.

We give you multiple ways to give, so find your best option. We greatly appreciate your generosity which makes all that we do possible. Thank you!

1. https://muchneeded.com/fathers-day-statistics/

June 26th

How Your Gift Today Shapes Eternity

This morning, each of us has an opportunity to shape eternity and the destiny of scores of children and students! Here are YOUR CHURCH NAME; we exist to STATE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT OR MATTHEW 28:18-20.

This summer, we will be active in multiple missions and ministry opportunities. Here are just a few examples of what we will be doing…

- List any mission trips you have scheduled,
- List any other ministry initiative,
- Talk about what you will be doing for children,
- Talk about what you will be doing for students.

Why is this important? Studies show that the Church has a narrow window of opportunity to reach children and teens. 83% of all Christians made their commitment to Christ between the ages of 4 and 14. Studies have found that from age 19 and over, a person has only a 6% chance of becoming a Christian.

So, what is our opportunity today? This summer, the offering we are about to take up fuels our mission and ministry initiatives. Without the faithful generosity of people like you, we could not do any of the things I mentioned this summer. You enable us to better reach the next generation for Christ through your generosity. So, please prayerfully consider a generous gift this morning to help us make an eternal impact on the lives of our children, teens, and others. Your gift today WILL shape eternity!

July 3rd

Freedom Isn't Free

I don't know about you, but I get emotional every time I hear the National Anthem and see our flag. I realize how blessed we are to live in this great nation where we have such freedom. We are gathered here with no fear of reprisal as we are free to worship as we see fit.

We will celebrate our nation's birthday with Independence Day in just a few days. The Fourth of July has come to mean many things to us Americans. It means baseball, hotdogs, and Chevrolet to some. It is a day off to lay around the pool or beach with others. The Fourth is a time for us to relax and spend time with our families, eat and watch parades and fireworks. Sometimes we forget the real meaning of the holiday, to celebrate the fact that our Founding Fathers risked their lives so that we could be free.

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

We have an even greater freedom today than the freedom our nation grants us. We are free in Christ. His sacrifice purchased a pardon from sin and set us free to live a new and meaningful life as our flag symbolizes our freedom as a nation, so the cross symbolizes that we are free in Christ. The great hymn-writer Isaac Watts wrote in *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,* "When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride. Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small: Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

We can never give a gift to repay God for the sacrifice of His Son. The point of the hymn is not that we should try to repay God with our gifts. The point is that a sacrifice like that so freely given causes us to WANT to give back to Him freely, willingly, and out of love.

Let's keep this in mind as we approach our giving this week.

July 10th

Our Story is the Greatest Story of All Time!

How many of you have been to the movies this summer? Hollywood must know that we love to escape the heat and sit in darkness, getting our wits scared to death by monsters from the deep or aliens from outer space!

Maybe your genre is love stories and comedies. The point is that Hollywood knows we love a good story, and we will pay big bucks to see it. What is the going rate for a movie in our area? $10 bucks? Some of you I know get the Senior discount! Ok, but are there any of you out there like me that simply can't watch a movie and not have buttered popcorn and a diet Coke in your hand? What is that about! Will the diet drink negate all the calories from the popcorn?

Every year Americans spend, on average, over **$3,000 on entertainment**[1]. And a lot of that is spent at the movies. **Think about it; we will spend over $25 bucks or more to watch a movie that isn't even true!**

Sometimes Hollywood does produce a movie about true events, as they did with "The Greatest Story Ever Told," produced way back in 1965. It was a huge hit and was nominated for 5 Oscars. It was about the life of Christ, which truly is the greatest story ever told. Do you know what makes it a great story? **It is a true story, and that story continues to this day!**

Jesus is not confined to a movie screen; He is impacting lives. This summer, as a result of your generosity, we are seeing the story of Jesus change the lives of children through VBS. He is changing students at camp. Through all of our endeavors here at OUR CHURCH, we are continuing to tell the greatest story. Your faithful generosity makes that happen! So, thank you!

As we focus on worshipping through giving, I want to encourage you to give to the greatest blockbuster of all time, the greatest story of all time, the life-changing story of the Gospel of Jesus!

1. https://www.creditloan.com/blog/average-american-spends-on-entertainment/

July 17th

Meet Our All-Stars

I'm not sure anyone cares, but this week is the National Baseball League's All-Star game. Will anyone watch? The All-Star game is always intriguing, seeing the best of the best.

Did you know we have All-Stars here at CHURCH NAME? Our volunteers are All-Stars. They come week after week, volunteering their time parking cars, working in the nursery, as host and hostess, and doing other tasks. Each one serving is an All-Star! Let me introduce you to a *few* of our All-Stars, **(IF POSSIBLE, SHOW PICTURES OF EACH IN THEIR SETTING)**

List several of your servant leaders:

- We have Mary Smith, who heads up our Pre-School on first base.
- We have Joe Jones, who heads up our parking lot team on second base.
- We have Jill Tucker, who heads up our Greeters on third base.
- Etc.

Let's give each of them a huge round of applause. Thanks to all our volunteers!

Do you know who else we consider All-Stars here? You! Your generosity funds our All-Stars staff's various ministries every time you give here. Without your support, they would not be able to do the amazing work. So, thank you for your generosity.

We have many ways to give here. Find the way that is most convenient for you. The MOST convenient way is by setting up recurring giving through our website. That way, you never have to worry about forgetting the offering again.

July 24th

What Are You Willing to Give Up?

How many of you have already been on vacation? We love vacations. According to a recent study, we love it so much that we are willing to give up other things we love to make sure our vacation happens. According to a study done by Travelport,

- 71 percent of respondents would forgo concerts,
- 64 percent would stop buying clothes,
- 63 percent would give up spa treatments,
- 60 percent would forego going to the movie theatre,
- 53 percent would give up playing sports and
- 36 percent would stop dining at restaurants.[1.]

After two-plus years of being couped up, Americans are investing in their vacations this year, even if it means giving up something they love! This leads me to wonder, would we be willing to give up anything so that we could give generously to support the life-changing work we do here?

Don't get me wrong, I love vacation time, and I want you to have a great time on your vacation, though I would advise you not to go into debt. I want to encourage you today to make a greater investment in helping us shape the next generation's lives here at our church. When you give here at our church, you are investing in the lives of children and students. Did you realize this summer we will impact…

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

The impact you have made due to your generosity can't be measured in earthly dollars. When you give here, you make a difference now and for eternity. That is a great investment!

We have many ways to give here. Find the way that is most convenient for you. The MOST convenient way is by setting up recurring giving through our website.

1. https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/travel-2022-trends-american-express-travel-post-what-traveller-will-give-up-for-vacation-152324282.html

July 31st

We Want to Say Thank You

Are you having a good summer? Has anyone already been on vacation? How many of you wish you were on vacation? Do you remember when you were a kid and had the whole summer off from school? Now that is a vacation! Alas, we now must work so that our kids can sleep in!

Summer is a busy time for us here at OUR CHURCH. We have tons going on. Let me list a few things…**Share stats of various ministries and missions you have going on.**

AND we are not done yet! We have a ton more coming up. Each of these is about helping connect people to a life-changing experience with Christ. We could not do any of this without you! Thousands of hours each week are donated in service by people like you. From greeting people at the door to wiping babies' bottoms, YOU make this church what it is! Thank you for your service! Let's give all our volunteers a hand!

We depend on volunteers giving their time, but those missions and ministry initiatives take money. Your generosity makes this happen. You generously give your money fueling what we do. So, before we take up the offering, I want to thank you! Thank you for investing in the lives of children. Thank you for investing in the lives of students. Thank you for investing in missions here in our town and worldwide. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! **Your generosity is changing lives forever!**

August 7th

Summer Is Almost Over, but We Are Not Done

Can you believe that summer is almost over? I know that technically summer does not end until mid-September. Yet, in just a few weeks, schools will be back in session, and for all practical purposes, summer will be over.

Have you had a good time this summer? Did anybody go to the beach? How about the lake? Did anyone just take some time off and do nothing? You know sometimes nothing is good. You just need some downtime—time off from the hustle and bustle of life and its demands.

Sometimes when we go on vacation, we need a vacation from our vacation! That is why a lot of people are now taking staycations. People who do this might do some activities nearby, but they stay at home and sleep in their beds. Did any of you take a staycation?

Whether you stayed at home or went away, our vacation time is almost done. **At Your Church Name, we are far from done!** We have the following key events coming up…

List whatever activities you have coming up.

Every time you give here, you help fund these vital ministries! We depend upon your faithful giving to do everything we do, including keeping the building cool! As you might imagine, our giving is greatly challenged with many people going during the summer months. Would you consider making that up this morning if you missed an offering this summer? Your gift today will help us reach more people with the Good News!

August 14th

First Things First

Who doesn't like to be first? We always want to be first, from winning a race, match, or game to standing in line. First place is the place everyone wants to be in. Yet sometimes, we willingly forego being first.

We do this because first place is not just the place for winners, but it is the place of honor. When you have company at your house, don't you offer them the first of everything? When it comes to getting in the food line, who doesn't want to be first? Yet we offer our guests the first serving. We even open doors for people so they can go in first. First is a place not just for winning, but it's a place of prominence and honor. Putting someone or something first in your life shows what you value.

Proverbs 3:9,10 says, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the **firstfruits** of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

It is not as if God needs our money. After all, the Scriptures say he owns the cattle on a thousand hills. God wants what our money represents, our heart. Giving to God of the first of all we have shows our love for Him. When you give, you show God has first place in your heart.

So, today as we focus on the offering, let's show that God is first in our lives by giving an offering that obeys and honors Him! Find the easiest way to express your love to God by giving your first fruits!

August 21st

Is It Worth the Cost?

Have you ever heard someone say, "We are delaying having kids until we can afford it?" How much is that? According to a recent study, it costs between **$12,800 to $14,790 every year**.[1] The same study showed that the more kids you have, the more the cost. Multiply that over 18 years, and what will the cost be? We are not even talking about college costs yet!

Here is the question. Is it worth the cost? Ask a new mother that question. Ask a dad after his first daughter/dad date or after the first soccer game. Ask a parent after their child graduates if all the costs of books, cleats, musical instruments, clothes, medicine, etc., were worth it. The answer is yes! You can't put a price tag on raising kids. Our children are our future, and there is no cost too high.

We have pulled out all the stops this summer to create the best children's and student programs possible. Here is what we have seen,

- List Children's ministry results from the summer.
- List Student ministry results from the summer.

You can't put a price tag on that! We could never accomplish this without your generosity. Every time you give here, you help us achieve results like this in the lives of children and students. As a result of your generosity, *you* are investing in the next generation of Christian leaders. Thanks for being so faithful!

We have many ways by which you can give. Find the way that is best for you. Thanks for showing that the next generation is worth the cost!

1. https://costaide.com/raising-child-cost/

August 28th

Let's Finish Strong

Are you ready for some football? Say goodbye to your husband's wives; football season has arrived!

Have you ever watched a football game and seen players raise four fingers in the air at the start of the 4th quarter? The players are reminding themselves that they have one last quarter to bring home a victory. It is a reminder for the team to not let up but to give it their all until the final gun sounds. It's a reminder to finish strong.

Many a game is won or lost in the fourth quarter. Sometimes games are won in the last two minutes or seconds. That is why college and professional teams practice over and over what is called their two-minute drill. It is designed to give them the winning score in the game's last two minutes. Why? Because the difference between winning and losing is in how strong you finish.

We are nearly through our summer giving initiative. Our goal was _____. As a result of your generosity, we accomplished all we did this summer. We saw amazing life change, but there is still more to do!

Just as a football team raises four fingers in the air to denote the start of the fourth quarter, we need to stay faithful in our giving to finish our summer giving strong. We still must fund our ministries and work. We are not playing for some trophy that will ultimately tarnish or be trashed. We are about the Kingdom work of our heavenly Father. Our work has eternal consequences, and we cannot slack off or rest from our calling. Let's finish strong by giving generously today.

Remember, we give you multiple ways to give here. Find the best way for you, and thank you for your generosity!

September 4th

What You Do Matters

Labor Day is upon us! If you are like me, you are wondering where summer went? Labor Day is the traditional end of summer weekend. It is officially the day we celebrate the contributions workers have made to our country's strength, prosperity, and well-being. Our nation's way of saying, "Thank you for your hard work!"

Labor Day has been a federal holiday since 1894. According to the United States Department of Labor website, "Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to American workers' social and economic achievements. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to our country's strength, prosperity, and well-being."

I want to take an opportunity to say thank you to all who serve and labor here. Without you, we could not do all the amazing things we do, so thank you! What you do here matters! It matters to the lives of the children you minister to. It matters to the lives of students you are helping navigate through the difficulties of their teen years. It matters to our guests who just want to know where to park and where to go. All our workers are laboring for the Lord matter!

Paul implored the church at Corinth by saying, "**Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain,**" I Corinthians 15:58. That is a great reminder to all of us. You might not be on the platform visible each Sunday, but your presence, service, and generous contributions help fuel all we do here. Our "labor" together is not in vain. We are changing lives one person at a time, and you are part of that!

As a result of all your labors, we have seen great successes this summer. We rejoice in what we saw accomplished for the Kingdom. The faithful service and generosity of our members allowed this to happen. Yet there is more to do. This fall is filled with activities and events. Carrying out our vision is always our focus. Your generous gifts will allow us to achieve our goals for the fall. All our large and small gifts help fuel our work here.

So today, I want you to know your service matters, as does your gift in this offering. So give like your gift matters!

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/print-platform/.

Sample Envelope

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.

Each newsletter contains:

- Weekly thoughts from me, **The Stewardship Coach,** on the state of generosity and its impact upon your Church with practical advice you can immediately implement!
- **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 generosity and much, much more!

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

https://acts17generosity.com/memberships

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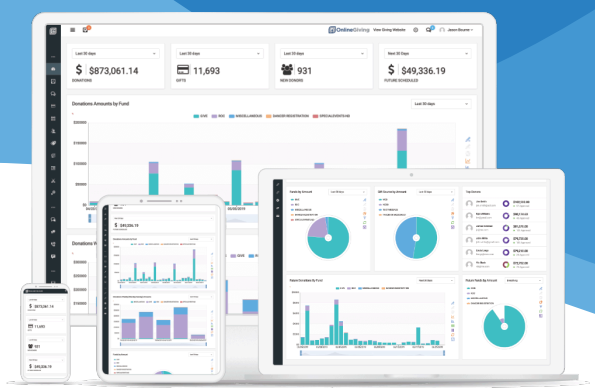

An Engaging Church Platform

- Innovative & Integrated Tools for Ministry.
- **13** Easy Ways to Give, Engineered for Growth.
- **10+** Cutting Edge ChMS Integrations.
- Deeply Integrated Custom Mobile Applications.
- Ministry Connected AI Powered Chatbot.
- Text Marketing Designed for Ministry.

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

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.

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.