

# RECOVERING YOUR LOST OFFERINGS

The Coach's 2022 Annual  
Close the Gap Playbook

by  
**Mark Brooks**  
The Stewardship Coach



# **Recovering Your Lost Offerings**

## **2022 Close the Gap Playbook**

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## **Setting the Course for Recovering Your Lost Offerings**

**How is giving at your church?** That is the question I always ask church leaders. It was the question I asked in last year's come from behind playbook. I'm The Stewardship Coach, so it will always be the first question I ask about your church. The fact that you are reading this shows that giving is a challenge at your church. Let's change that with this updated 2022 edition.

**"10% to 20% decline in giving has been my projection of the range of giving declines that most churches will see from the lockdown of COVID19."** That was the projection I made in the summer of 2020. While a few churches did better than this, our data reveals we were correct in our initial assessment. While giving has rebounded most churches are still running behind pre-Covid numbers. But, frankly, you don't care about national trends. You care about your church. You are in good hands. My life goal is this,

### **To Reverse the Decline in Giving One Church at a Time, Starting With Your Church!**

The goal of this playbook is to help you **receive an amount equal to one week's offering**. A pre-COVID19 type of offering. Let's raise an offering to assure missions and ministry continues unabated throughout the fall.

That's what, ***Recovering Your Lost Offerings*** is designed for. My goal is to see you utilize the principle and plans of this playbook to reverse your giving decline. I believe in the local church and its mission. So, let's work to fill up your offering plates, even if they are only digital offering plates. This playbook is designed to be implemented at the close of summer, giving you additional dollars for ministry and missions through your fall season.

But, first, no matter how far behind in giving you are, it is essential that you,

**Don't panic.** Panic leads to desperation. Desperation leads to poor decisions, and poor decisions lay the groundwork for future problems. This playbook is designed to provide you with a plan of action that will negate any panic you feel. To that end, we will work to make the message of your plan positive.

**I am going to help you craft a plan around your unique mission and ministry.** People give to that which matters. Non-profit fundraisers talk about making a case for the "ask." I will help you make a case for *why* you are asking your donors to give to your church.

Let's **connect the dots!** We want to show people the incredible things your church is doing to advance the Kingdom of God. By telling your story of life change, you show how a donor giving a dollar to your church impacts the world. That's what I mean by connecting the dots!

Before we do that, we need to spend some time preparing the message you will communicate to help you recover your lost offerings.

The first part of this playbook deals with the fundamental principles needed to help you recover any offering you might have lost. The last section not only gives you a step-by-step guide on how to accomplish this, but it also gives you tools that you can use. Let's get started recovering your lost offerings!

**I am your Indiana Jones when it comes to revering the lost offerings!**

### **The Right Target for Your Message**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**With this in mind, let's get started recovering your lost offerings!**

## **Part One: Laying the Foundation for the Appeal**

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

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

### **The Right Message**

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

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

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

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

**The 3 Cs of Vision Casting** – Your vision must contain these three Cs to be heard. Your vision must be,

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

**Your message is your vision, and the better you craft that message, the more money you will raise.** Take time to think through how to best craft a message for the vision driving this appeal to recover your lost offerings.

**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.** In this section, I will share the essential tools you need to launch your come-from-behind giving strategy effectively.

Back before COVID19, we had a captured audience every weekend. Churches are back to on-campus worship, but attendance is still far below 2019 levels. So, even though we can meet on-campus, the best strategy is a 24/7 approach to the offering. In the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 work with what I feel is the best online provider, <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>
3. **Social Media platform and presence.** Like it or not, social media is where many people spend the 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-prepaid envelopes.** I know this sounds old school, but this can be a great tool if used properly.
5. **Extensive database of your donors.** A given is to have all your member's email addresses. Yet you need also to have the ability to break this list down by various subgroups like first-time givers, consistency, etc.
6. **A mass email platform, such as Constant Contact or MailChimp.** There are many platforms to help you send out emails in multiple batches. Some offer free services for a limited number of sends. Most cost only a few dollars a month. Find the tool that suits your church database best.
7. **Offering talks.** On-campus or live streaming, it is essential that each offering time has a talk connecting your vision to giving. I'll share more on this later.

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

**Remember the old saying, don't put all your eggs in one basket?** When it comes to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century communication plan, you must use all the tools in your toolbox to get your message out.

## The Right Plan of Action

**What is your plan?** The best message and tools, while essential, are worthless without a plan of action. Let me lay out my overall strategy when it comes to plans for special offerings. The following plan of action uses Labor Day weekend as the target giving date. However, the principles here can be adapted to fit any timeframe.

### Understanding the Uniqueness of a Special Offering

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

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

- At least one month out craft the vision.
- Communicate three weeks out with your leadership. Why? Their gifts will drive the success of your offering! I'll show you how in the tool section of this playbook.
- Two weeks from the offering, start showing the ministry's impact on the area of need across all your communication platforms. Show your story!
- One week out, start a more direct appeal through social media. Set it up through your online giving platform. With a 24/7 offering strategy, you can begin the offering any time, not merely on the weekends.
- Two Sundays from the offering, begin announcing from the platform the special offering for Labor Day.
- Send a series of direct mail appeals the week before the special offering and continue through the day after the special offering. Again, I will show how to do this in the tool section of this playbook.
- 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 update the offering's results and its impact. Thanking your donors paves the way for the next "ask."

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

## **Part Two: Your Toolbox for Implementing Your Plan**

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

### **Crafting Your Vision for the "Ask"**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Vision Worksheet

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

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**How can their gift now make a difference?**

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### **Here is a brief plan of action for a Labor Day offering:**

- Finalize the three offering messages used for the special offering and who will deliver them. Focus on what the church is accomplishing and, most of all plans to accomplish in the fall. I have samples for you later in this playbook.
- Prepare any bulletin inserts, newsletter comments, webpage, etc. You want the message of your special offering to be trumpeted across all your platforms.
- Set up through your online giving pull-down menu a line that designates the special offering you will hold. This allows you to track your results better.
- Monday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, send out a letter to all your giving and ministry leaders. See the sample letter later in this playbook. Also, consider inserting a postage-paid self-addressed envelope with every direct USPS appeal you send. See the sample at the end of this playbook. One goal for any and every appeal is to make it easy for people to give.
- Sunday, August 21st two weeks before the special offering, for a Labor Day appeal, announce the special offering from the platform of the church right before the time of offering. See the sample provided later in this playbook.
- Monday, August 22nd, two weeks out for a Labor Day appeal, use social media accounts to highlight the special offering. Show donors what giving to your special offering will accomplish. I recommend at least one to two posts a day. **Make sure each post contains a link to give online. For help contact <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>**
- Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, send out a snail mail appeal about the special offering. See the sample at the end of this playbook. Remember to include a self-addressed postage-paid envelope.
- Thursday afternoon, September 1st, send an email blast for a Labor Day appeal with an embedded link to your giving page asking people to give right then! See the sample.
- Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, send a text appeal asking for a gift.
- Monday morning, September 5<sup>th</sup>, send out one final email blast encouraging participation in the special offering. See the sample that follows.
- Write notes and emails thanking those that gave with a special focus on first-time givers on Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, announce from the platform the results of the special offering focusing on what the offering will allow you to accomplish for missions and ministry n the weeks to follow.
- Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, across all platforms, celebrate the results of the special offering for the next few days. Provide a link to your giving portal so that people can still give.

## **Basic Steps for Effective Appeals**

**COVID19 showed us how our offering must be a 24/7.** To be effective, your offering plate must never be closed. An effective come-from-behind giving strategy must include direct appeals, snail-mail, and 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 that I would focus on using the USPS for any appeal in this day of online giving. Why would I do this? Easy, **Snail mail still works!** Think about it, how many appeals do you get in the US mail? There is a reason non-profits still send out snail mail; they work.

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

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

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

- Captivating Subject line! If they don't open it, they can't read your message.
- Short and to the point! Again, most 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 Monday, August 15th**

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

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

**I'm Fired Up because we went back on offense in 2022, and your generosity helped make that happen.** On behalf of countless lives changed, let me say thank you!

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

- List an outreach ministry your church supported,
- Give a report of summer camps, VBS, etc.
- List any other victories accomplished because of members' generosity.

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

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

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

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

**I wanted to alert you to a special offering we will hold in the next few weeks culminating on Labor Day, September 4<sup>th</sup>.** We are challenging our entire church family to give a gift over and above their regular giving for a special offering we are calling "**Take the Challenge.**"

"**Take the Challenge**" has a two-fold goal with this offering. **First**, we have a goal of making up one week's lost offering. Achieving this will better position us for our fall ministries. Our giving goal is to receive an additional \$10,000 dollars (Insert your giving goal) above our normal offering. Your generosity will help us achieve that goal. The secondary goal is to motivate others to join generous people like you.

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

Blessings,

Pastor Mark

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

## Email Samples

### First Email Blast – Send Monday, August 29th

#### Subject line: I'm Fired Up about the season! Are you?

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

We are days away from the start of our fall season here at YOUR CHURCH, and I am fired up about our special offering “Take the Challenge!” Why? Because I believe we are back on the offense, taking this city for Jesus! I’m calling on every YOUR CHURCH member to get Take the Challenge with me.

What is there to get fired up about? Consider this...

- Our Student Ministry is kicking off, and we expect record numbers!
- We have set Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, to be fully open!

Now more than ever, we must meet the challenges of our present-day to continue to share hope with our city. Therefore, I am challenging our entire church family to give to our special "Take the Challenge" Labor Day offering push!

The "Fired Up" goal is to assure funding for all our missions and ministry that starts this fall. We want to raise what would essentially be an extra week's offering, \$10,000! (INSERT YOUR GOAL) I am asking you to pray about giving over and above your normal offering for this special Labor Day push. Give now at <http://ourchurch.org/give>

**I am taking the challenge and giving an extra offering! Will you?**

Your Pastor,

Dr. Pastor

**PS. We make giving easy through our online giving platform <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

**The second email blast is to be sent out Thursday, September 1st.**

**Subject line: We're Getting Take the Challenge!**

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

**Just thinking of our exciting fall lineup of missions and ministry opportunities gets me excited about our "Take the Challenge!" offering.** By God's grace and the amazing generosity of our members, we are more active than ever in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. This fall, we will,

- List events, ministry, and mission opportunities.
- List events, ministry, and mission opportunities.
- List events, ministry, and mission opportunities.

**To do this, we have challenged our entire church family to respond by faith to our special offering called "Take the Challenge."** We are challenging everyone to give an extra offering between now and Labor Day. **Give now at <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

**You're "Take the Challenge" gift will help us run our ministries throughout the fall.** We have a church-wide goal of raising at least an extra week's offering! With your help, we can do this! **Please consider an over and above gift now at <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

**I took my own challenge and gave an extra offering because I want to see lives continue to be impacted! Join me in giving 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>**

**The third email blast is to be sent out Monday, September 5th**

**Subject line: Are You Fired Up to Take the Challenge?**

Dear ,

The "Take the Challenge" offering is paving the way for CHURCH NAME to meet the challenge of providing hope to our city. Have you given yet? **Take the challenge NOW at <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

This fall, we are gearing up to provide hope and healing to our challenged society. Your generosity will allow that to happen! We have challenged our entire church family to give an extra offering to help fulfill our mission. Your "Take the Challenge" gift now will help us accomplish this! **GIVE NOW at <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

I took the challenge and gave an extra offering! I'm encouraging you to celebrate Labor Day with a ministry-expanding gift that will help us meet the challenges of funding our missions and ministries this fall. Together all our gifts *will* make a difference!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

**PS. Giving is easy when you use our online giving platform at <http://ourchurch.org/give>.  
Thanks for your generosity!**

**Fourth email blast to be sent out Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>** – While this email is meant to be a thank you note it also provides one last opportunity for people to give. Thank you, notes pave the way for the next gift!

**Subject line: You made a difference!**

Dear,

**Thank you for participating in our special "Take the Challenge" Labor Day offering!**  
Your gifts, combined with the other generous gifts of the CHURCH NAME family, are making a difference!

**Your generosity has helped ensure we can continue forward with our fall schedule.** We are focused on reaching our city for Jesus, and every gift given helps us accomplish this!

**We will announce the total given on the weekend of September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.**

Thanks again for your gift!

Your Pastor

**Did you know you can set your giving up to be automatic? Find out how easy it is by going to our online giving page at <http://ourchurch.org/give>**

## **Offering Talks**

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

**August 21st**

### **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.**”<sup>1</sup>. Woody Allen must have been prophesying about 2020!

This has been a challenging year for all of us. I won’t sugar coat it, 2020 has been a challenge for us here at CHURCH NAME. Yet we have chosen to see the challenges of 2020 not as poison but as an opportunity to further the Gospel. Consider this:

- Our doors might have been physically closed, but we found ways to stay open.
- 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!**

**Today I am announcing a special offering we will hold in the next few weeks culminating on Labor Day September 4<sup>th</sup>.** We are challenging our entire church family to give a gift over and above their regular giving for a special offering we are calling, “**Take the Challenge.**”

“**Take the Challenge,**” has a goal of making up one week’s lost offering. Achieving this will better position us for our fall ministries. Our giving goal is to receive an additional \$10,000 dollars above our normal offering. Your generosity will help us achieve that goal.

You will be hearing more about this in the weeks to come. Will you join me in taking the challenge by giving an extra offering for our “**Take the Challenge,**” 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 is offering a thirsty world living water. He said, “**Everyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst.**” Let’s “**Take the Challenge,**” so we can continue to offer living water to our thirsty world!

1. Taken from [www.azqoutes.com](http://www.azqoutes.com)

**August 28<sup>th</sup>**

## **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 "**Take the Challenge.**" We are challenging our entire church family to help us raise an additional week of giving to fund all our missions and ministry this fall. This special offering runs through Labor Day. We have a goal of raising an additional **\$10,000!**

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 all the way back into 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. Obviously, that did not go well. Do 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 did a search on the phrase, here is a line of explanation that said, "**A double-dog-dare is a challenge of epic proportions.**"<sup>1</sup>

2022 for all of us, has been a challenge of epic proportions. Our "**Take the Challenge**" special offering is a challenge of epic proportions. Your extra gift will enable us to continue all our missions and ministries through the fall. We are making a difference, and your generosity is spurring that on!

**We are seeing lives changed for eternity, and that is the ultimate challenge of epic proportions!** This morning may each of us "**Take the Challenge**" of epic proportions!

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

**September 4<sup>th</sup>**

### **Take the Challenge**

How many of you realized that tomorrow is Labor Day? Labor Day typically closes out the summer holidays for us. How many of you get the day off? Now how many of you know what the meaning of Labor Day is? Something about labor, right? As with many of our holidays, the meaning is being lost in our rush to enjoy a day off. So here is a brief history lesson for you.

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

So, a big shout out to all our laborers! I want to give out a special shout-out to our YOUR CHURCH NAME, laborers, and our volunteers! Without your labor of love, serving in all our various ministries, we could never achieve what we do. Every time you give here, you help support their work. So, thank you for your generosity.

Tomorrow also culminates our special offering called “**Take the Challenge.**” We have been challenging everyone to give an extra amount or gift these last few weeks culminating on Labor Day. Our goal has been to receive an amount equal to what one week’s offering typically would be. For us, that is \$10,000. We’ve already seen scores of you give, and we are close to that goal! Thanks for your generosity.

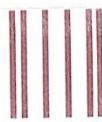
Your “**Take the Challenge,**” gift along with your regular giving today, helps us accomplish all the life-changing work we do here. Your gift will enable us to move into our fall season fully funded. This morning we want to challenge you to “**Take the Challenge,**” so we can meet the challenge of **INSERT MISSION STATEMENT OR SAY, reaching our city for Christ!**

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

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

## Sample Envelope

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NECESSARY  
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FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 78004 WINTER HAVEN, FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

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205 FARNOL STREET SW  
WINTER HAVEN, FL 33880





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

**The Stewardship Coach Print Platform** – Access to The Stewardship Coach newsletter and all my seasonal playbooks for building out your stewardship platform. <https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/silver/>

**The Stewardship Coach Digital Platform** – Access to all print materials, plus a seat at my weekly group teaching time called Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach. These members also have email access to me.  
<https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/gold/>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**If you are interested in raising over and above money, email me at [mark@acts17generosity.com](mailto:mark@acts17generosity.com)**

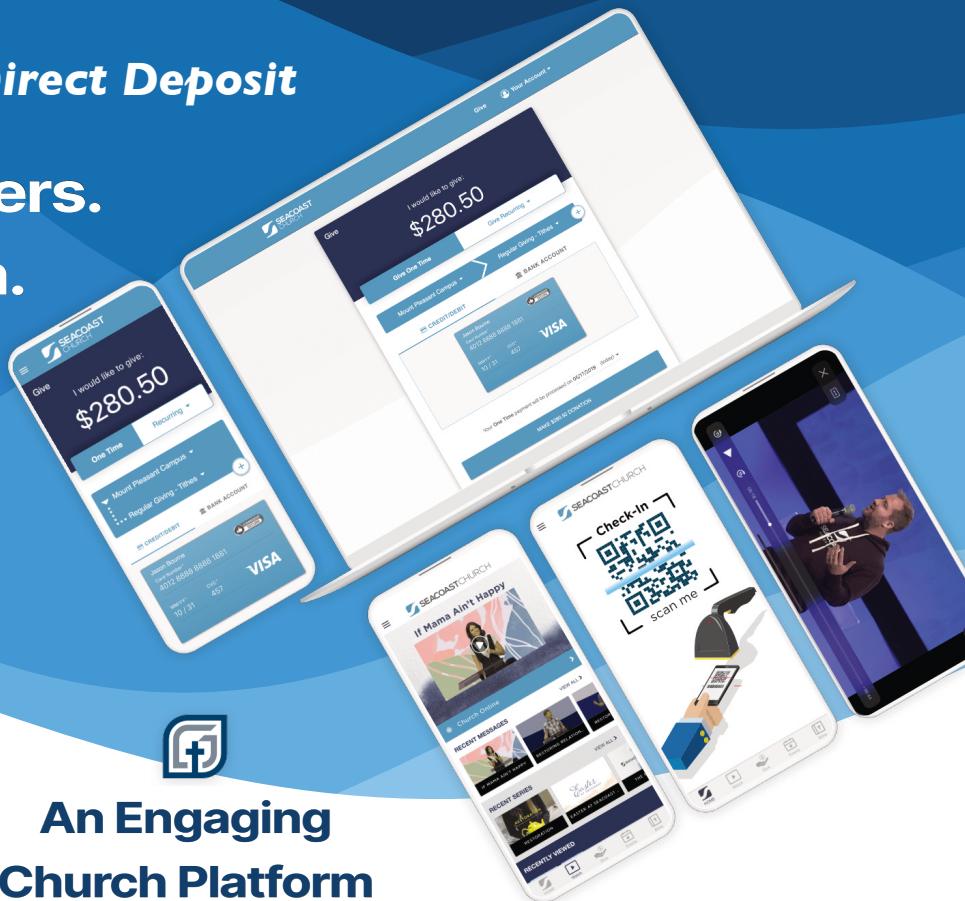
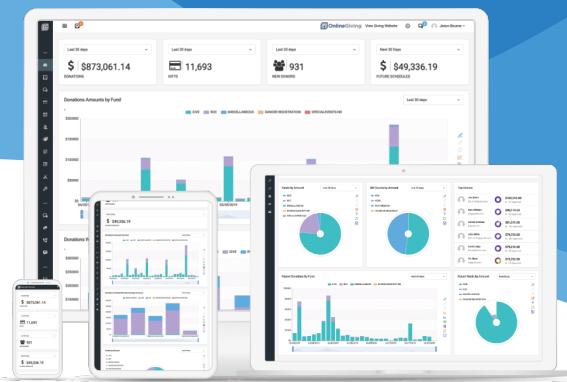
**Want to White Paper The Coach?** I have now begun to provide both the print and digital platforms to various groups who then, in turn, provide it for free to their clients. If you would like to know more about that, go to:  
<https://acts17generosity.com/partnerships/>


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## 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.

- ✓ 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.