



church 2016 edition

the

year-end

giving

guide

How to design
and implement an
excellent year-end
giving project



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Introduction

As the high temperatures begin to fade into back-to-school routines, changing leaves, and football games, you may be feeling like you can take a breath after summer. The truth is, we're moving closer to the end of the year. Retail stores are already gearing up for Christmas, and now is the perfect time to plan your end-of-year giving project.

For many church leaders, this time of the year can be filled with anxiety. Time to make budget is running out. The year-end excitement is replaced with last-minute angst.

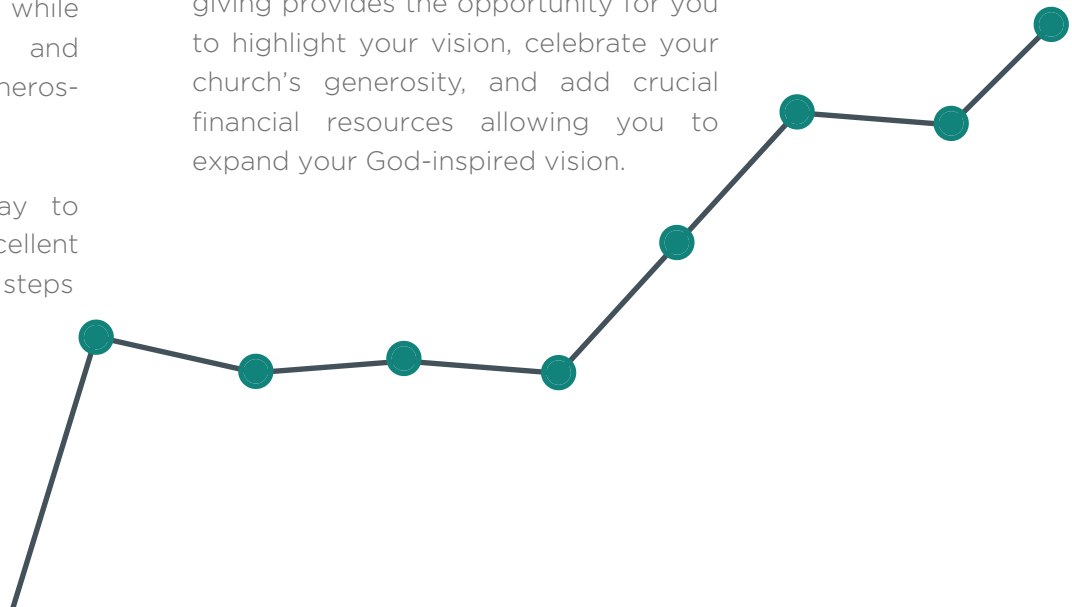
It doesn't have to be that way.

What if there was a way to engage and excite your congregation, while accelerating your giving and improving your church's overall generosity culture?

This guide serves as a pathway to **design** and **implement** an excellent year-end giving project. The steps

included on the pages that follow will help you move into the year-end giving season with confidence and effectively expand your church's culture of generosity.

Year-end giving is an important part of an overall stewardship strategy. Taking advantage of this natural on-ramp to giving provides the opportunity for you to highlight your vision, celebrate your church's generosity, and add crucial financial resources allowing you to expand your God-inspired vision.



Too often, church leaders assume their congregation will automatically consider the church as an option for year-end tax-planning gifts. This assumption is valid only if the church consistently executes an effective year-end giving strategy.



Assumptions and Opportunities

1

Givers will assume the church has no financial need if there is no clear and intentional communication regarding a special year-end giving opportunity. However, if you communicate appropriately and unapologetically, the church then becomes a viable year-end giving option in the mind of the donor.

2

A special year-end project provides a unique opportunity in the life of the church to highlight the value of generosity. If a year-end project is employed on a consistent annual basis, the church's donor base will begin to reserve a much larger percentage of their year-end giving for the church.

3

For many people, a significant amount of income is tied to year-end bonuses and profit sharing due to today's economy. People often treat giving from this additional income as free agent giving. In other words, they see this as opportunity to give to an organization or cause outside of their normal giving patterns. Providing the opportunity for special year-end giving gives you the chance to both teach about giving and to direct resources to the church's mission.

Motivation

Why would we do this?

The most immediate benefit of a year-end giving project is, of course, increased giving. We can all celebrate this result, but planning this initiative with care and executing with excellence will add far greater value.

Why should this project be a high priority?

It prompts spiritual growth

The intersection of faith and finances creates the opportunity for more individual spiritual growth than any other option. As a person's finances finds alignment with his or her faith, huge leaps of spiritual growth take place.

It normalizes the giving conversation

Most churches are very reluctant to talk about money. By avoiding this conversation, churches are actually ensuring a negative outcome when it comes to generosity, and limiting the natural opportunity for spiritual growth. When church leaders allow people to separate, in their minds, faith and finances, they effectively dismiss matters of finance from their spiritual lives. Silence is simply a bad option.

It provides an opportunity to talk about mission and vision

Givers in your church constantly look at the church and wonder where and how they fit in. An annual vision weekend or generosity series rarely creates any long-term traction in the lives of your donor base. Donors want to play a part in the larger story. It is critical that you take every possible opportunity to discuss, in a meaningful way, the church's mission and vision and the role finances play in supporting the ongoing ministry of the church.

Why is a plan for year-end giving so important?

[CLICK HERE FOR ANSWER](#)

If your church is like most, 50% or more of your regular members and attenders give nothing or close to nothing.

Holiday giving is a great opportunity for a person to give for the first time


If your church is attracting new people, presenting this year-end project in a compelling and creative way will encourage their giving sooner rather than later. If your church is like most, 50% or more of your regular members and attenders give nothing or close to nothing. An exciting and well-presented year-end initiative can help change that. A person must give a first gift in order to become a regular investor in the ministry of your church.

It gives leadership practice talking about the church's mission and finances

This type of project is a catalyst for an easy-to-understand conversation about the value and impact of generosity. It is a very natural on-ramp to giving and provides a great opportunity for your church's members and attenders to invest in the mission and vision of the church. Year-end projects can serve as the perfect laboratory, giving you and your leadership a very safe and low-risk platform to communicate mission and vision and to challenge people to get involved.



The Process



1 Deciding to tackle the project & setting it as a high priority

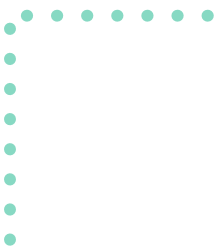

2 Clearly defining the project

3 Establishing the project goal

4 Creating the team to implement the effort

5 Framing the message with clarity

6 Creating the necessary communication tools





The Process

Continued

7 Creating multiple on-ramps to give

8 Telling the story

9 Preparing to receive the gifts

10 Saying thank you

11 Celebrating spiritual development



**Deciding to Tackle the
Project & Setting It as a
High Priority**



DECIDING TO TACKLE THE PROJECT AND SETTING IT AS A HIGH PRIORITY

Givers have certain universal expectations. They expect to be listened to, treated with respect, and never taken for granted.

You will be asking people to give financially.

This is not something they are naturally inclined to do. You want to ensure you honor your givers and potential givers. A well-planned and executed year-end project does that. If a project is poorly planned or communicated, ineffectively executed, or focused more on the church than the giver, you will do damage to your generosity culture instead of helping it grow. Remember, the goal here is forward momentum, not steps in reverse.

Plan on a minimum of 30 days for planning and preparation prior to any public communication to the congregation regarding the project. Finally, you should never move forward with a year-end project unless you are determined to complete the project with excellence.

In order to ensure the project is a high priority for your church, you must answer the following questions:

- Will this project help us make progress in accomplishing our mission?
- Will this project enhance our generosity culture?
- Does our church leadership fully endorse the project and plan?
- Can we promote and execute this project with excellence?
- What is our budget to create and tell the project story?

Clearly Defining the Project

You must be able to clearly and effectively articulate your project's focus. Your project may include multiple elements, but it should never have more than three unique applications of giving. For example:

1 Investment in a local ministry work

2 Investment in a global mission work

3 Investment in the reduction of the church's current debt

The amounts will not, in most cases, be equal, but givers are not as concerned about the percentages as they are the scope, the impact, and the mission critical nature of the project elements.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

Human touch projects are well received during the Christmas season. A project like this is consistent with the teaching of Christ and the compassion associated with the holiday season. Consider a partnership with a local food bank, hospice care facility, or another trusted local ministry.

Missions giving both local and global, is another good option. The project however, must be specific in nature. If it becomes too broad, it loses the critical element of human touch. Donors must be able to visualize the project and see themselves as a part of the story. Examples include special support of a missionary with close connections to the church or a construction project such as a school, water-well, or medical mission station.

A special project targeting church facilities

such as renovating the Student Ministry area. Is there an important project that was deleted from the annual budget? An initiative like this can provide the opportunity to fund that need.

Debt retirement

although not as glamorous as some of the other options, is often a tremendous felt need. Debt retirement, for the church, should be viewed as increasing ministry funds by decreasing debt.

Planning and development for the church's next construction phase

can be an attractive option. The soft costs – related to professional fees for planning and other preliminary work – can often be larger than what the general budget will allow. Do you need to work with an architect or a design-build firm to prepare a master plan? A year-end project provides a great opportunity to fund such a need. Givers are eager to see leadership exercise due diligence and fiscal responsibility in their planning and they will recognize the wisdom and value of this advance preparation.

A combination of the above options

can be appealing, especially if a person/couple has different giving preferences. One spouse might be most inspired by a project with a significant human touch element while the other may lean more into a facility project of some kind. You must limit the project elements however. More than three elements will begin to dilute your donor's passion. Finally, tell the church how the money will be used (i.e., 70% to the local food bank, and 30% to the camp in India).

Note

With interest rates fluctuating, you may want to consider if debt retirement is the best option. If you are currently servicing debt at a favorable interest rate and foresee a possible need to borrow again in the coming months, debt retirement might not make sense. Why pay off low interest loans only to soon after pay additional fees to borrow money at higher interest rates? Also, it is important to check with your lender to ensure there are no negative consequences related to the early retirement or reduction of your church's debt.



ESTABLISHING THE PROJECT GOAL

It is appropriate to have a specific goal for your project. It is better, however, to avoid projects requiring an unreasonable level of financial investment in order to be successful. Establishing a goal and coming up short is counter-productive.

Your goal should be:

Reasonable

Engaging the heart of the giver is far more important than achieving an unrealistic goal.

Achievable

You want to put your church in a position to celebrate the reaching of your project goal.

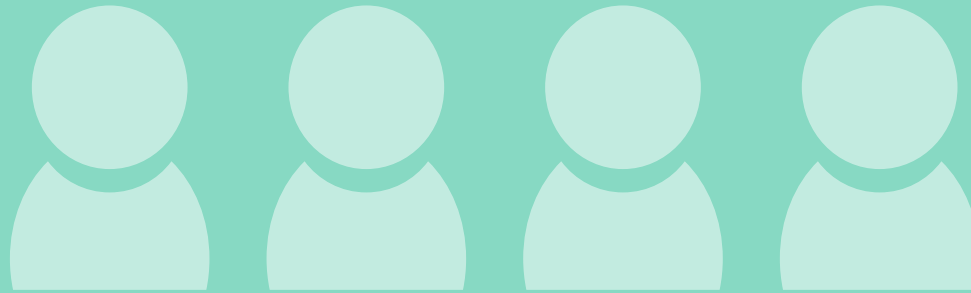
Incremental

For example, you might say, “We will drill one freshwater well for every \$5,000 we invest.” Given this example, whether you drill one well at \$5,000 or five wells at \$25,000, you can celebrate a win.

Also keep in mind, it should be a very rare occasion when a church plans a year-end project that would exceed 10% of their annual, general operating revenue.

Note

A year-end project can often be seen as competition with everyday giving. This should not be the case. If framed correctly, the project should increase everyday giving. A project of this kind creates an excellent on-ramp for first-time givers. A first-time gift can lead to a second gift, which can lead to ongoing and sustained giving. A project like this also helps your people understand the relationship between their generosity and the accomplishment of life-changing ministry.



CREATING THE TEAM TO IMPLEMENT THE EFFORT

You will need a committed and capable team to successfully plan and execute this project. In regard to the team, there are four key positions to fill:

The Project Director

This person will serve as the project quarter-back. He or she should have a passion for the project and the authority to ensure project success.

The Project Champion

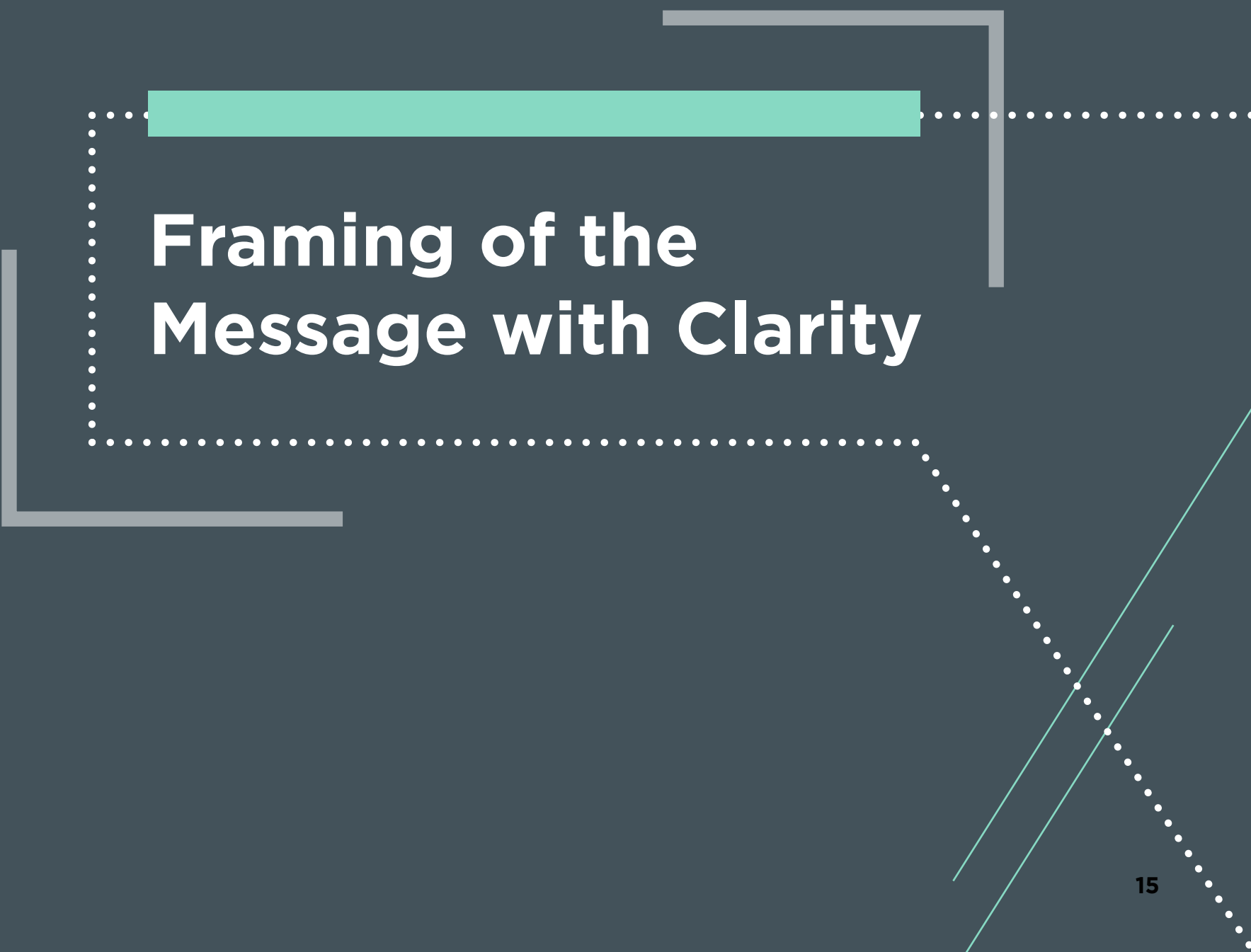
This is usually the Senior Pastor. This person is responsible for telling the story and framing the project in light of the church's larger mission.

The Communication Director

This person will lead the team charged with developing the overall communication strategy as well as creating the copy, the printed materials, and the videos related to the project.

The Internal Operations Director

This person is in charge of logistics, ensuring the necessary systems are in place and keeping the project on-track and running smoothly.



Framing of the Message with Clarity

When developing the message, it is important to ask, “Why should this project matter to the giver?” For most church leaders, the needs of the church are obvious. Therefore, they assume givers are aware of those needs and are eager to give to the church. This assumption however, is not accurate.

People may give based on loyalty, but when they do, it will generally be in smaller amounts. People give significantly when there is a strong emotional connection between their values (what is important to them) and the perceived impact of their giving (am I making a difference). There are two essential elements to a clear year-end project message.

Project Title

The project title, or theme, creates the overall tone.

Charity Water (www.charitywater.org) uses very compelling project titles to engage the hearts of their donors. Titles like Water Changes Everything or Your Next Birthday Can Change the World will effectively align the heart of the donor with the project.

What makes a great title (or theme)?

- It calls a person to action
- It uses as few words as possible
- It can easily be accompanied by a tagline
- It connects both the financial and the spiritual aspects of the project
- It ties to the history and culture of the church

Communication Handles

Having decided on your project title, or theme, it is helpful to provide communication handles for your donors. Handles are words or phrases that help clearly convey the project’s elements and impact.

To illustrate the use of communication handles, let’s look at a sample project and develop the appropriate communication handles.

Note

Consider trying to obtain a URL for your theme. While not essential, it can prove quite valuable should the project become an annual event.



Our sample project has three elements:

1. Investment in a local ministry work
2. Investment in a global missions effort
3. Investment in the reduction of the church's debt

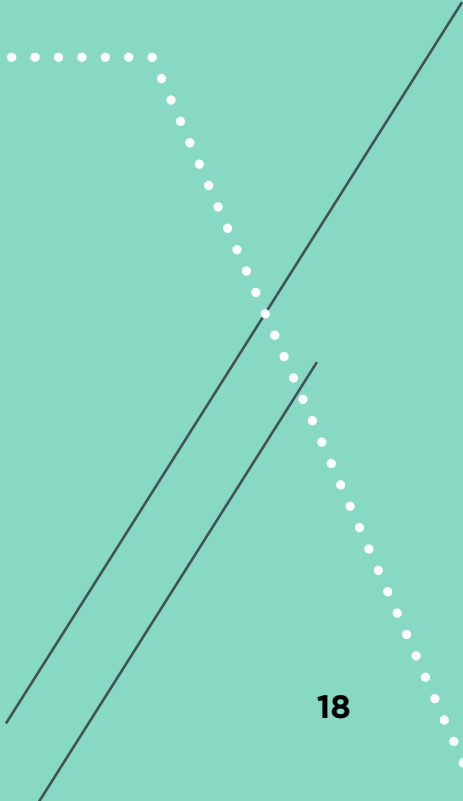

We can more clearly define the elements by providing helpful connection points, or handles.

In the case of our sample project, the theme is Radical. Our handles could be:

- Radical generosity for our neighbors (local ministry)
- Radical generosity for our world (global missions)
- Radical generosity for life change (debt reduction allows the church to invest more into life-changing ministry)



Creating the Necessary Communication Tools



A traditional approach to a project of this kind would call for a very high-quality, multi-page brochure clearly explaining the need. While getting this information on paper is important, we want to ensure we fully engage the heart of the donor as we tell the story of our project and its purpose. In order to accomplish this, you will want to use a number of communication media. When it comes to introducing the project to your church, it is much more beneficial to have several incremental communication steps as opposed to one major announcement. In today's church culture, fewer people are in church on consecutive weekends. By focusing all of your communication efforts on a single weekend, you will miss the opportunity to connect with a significant number of people. By expanding the focus, you will connect with a much larger percentage of your potential donors.

A well-executed year-end project will include the following communication tools:

A basic print piece

This can be an oversized postcard, a trifold brochure, or something more unique and creative. It should, however, be a piece the person can keep as a reminder. Consider something they can put on their refrigerator, keep in their Bible, save on their desk, or put in their to-be-done folder.

An engaging video

In today's culture, video is quickly becoming our primary communication medium. One or two short videos (no longer than two minutes) can pay huge dividends. If your project has multiple elements, you should create a video for each of the parts. You don't have to spend thousands of dollars on the videos, but they should be well done and tell a compelling story.

A response mechanism

For those who prefer to give by check, an envelope with the project name and various response lines is essential. An envelope is preferred over a card. A card assumes the donor will give in person while in church, but an envelope provides the option to mail the check should the giver choose to do so. You should make the envelope as giver-friendly as possible. Consider making the envelope a Business Reply Envelope. While the use of a BRE will add some additional costs, one or two gifts will easily cover the extra expense. There is value in making the process as easy as possible for the giver.

A separate webpage on your church's website

For your year-end project, you should create a separate page highlighting the project. The page should include information about the plan, photos, and a "Give Now" link. It's important the process for giving to the project be as simple as possible.

The background is a dark grey-blue color. It features several abstract geometric elements: a series of grey lines at the top left forming a stepped, architectural-like structure; a solid teal horizontal bar positioned above the title; a dotted white line that forms a rectangular frame around the title and extends horizontally across the top; and a large, stylized grey arrow pointing right, located below the title. In the bottom right corner, there are two parallel teal lines and a dotted white line extending diagonally.

Creating Multiple On-ramps to Give

Donors will often give to your church in a manner consistent with how they normally handle their financial obligations. For example, someone who pays the majority of their bills online is more likely to give electronically. Because people choose to give in different ways, it is important to employ multiple on-ramps for giving.

Too often we assume people will give almost exclusively during the weekend worship service. It's important to remember that very few people carry any significant amount of cash today, and even fewer have their checkbooks with them at any given time. When we limit our thinking, regarding giving opportunities, to the weekend service, we unintentionally restrict giving.

In order to make it as easy as possible for your people to give, you should create multiple on-ramps for giving.

Here are some ways to accomplish this.

- A project giving-envelope in the weekend service.
- A project giving-envelope by mail.
- Links to give electronically to your project on your website.
- Links to give electronically to your project made available via email.
- Remind people to use their bank's online bill pay feature.
- An iPad, or other card reader, in your church's lobby for pre- and post-service giving.
- Social media. If your church currently makes effective use of various social media channels, you can use these outlets to share information about the project and to make available your electronic giving links.
- A project microsite. While rare, some churches create a special website devoted solely to the project. This site would promote the project, share project information, tell stories, and provide another way for donors to participate financially.
- Encourage people to drop off their gifts at the church office.

Mobile giving tools. While this is one of the newer methods of giving to the church world, for many it is quickly becoming the preferred way to give. If your church has not yet incorporated mobile (or text) giving into your donor strategy, there are fun and creative ways to introduce it to your church (see the next page).

Consider promoting a “Mobile Giving Week-end.” For instance, sometime in early to mid-December, ask people to bring their smartphones to church (okay, so they do that anyway). Then, sometime during the service, ask them to take out their phones and walk them through the process of mobile giving (downloading the app and making a donation). Mobile giving is an excellent way to engage first time givers.

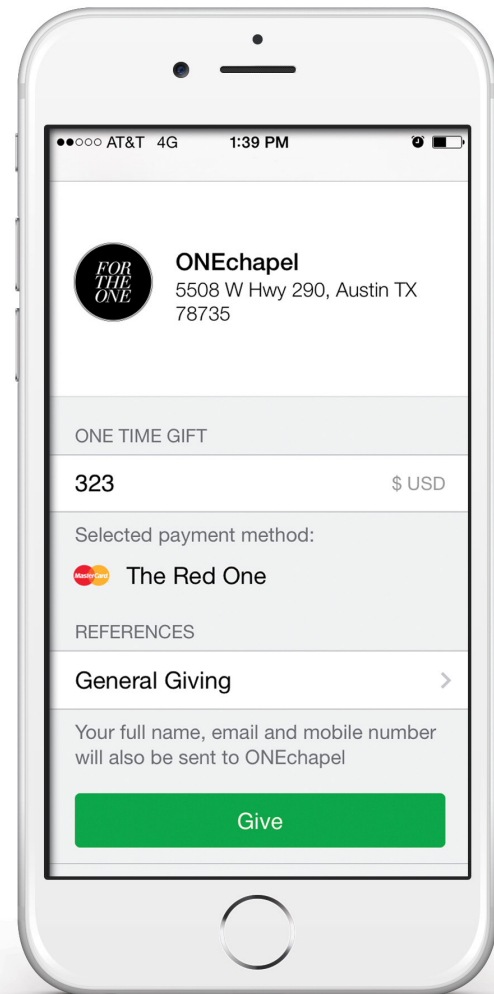
TARGET DATE TO INTRODUCE MOBILE GIVING TOOLS TO CHURCH:

Second Sunday in December

TARGET DATE TO RECEIVE ALL GIFTS:

No later than December 31st.

For those who wait until the last minute, consider having a small team at the church on December 31st to accept gifts. Make it fun. Have the team stationed out front, giving away coffee and doughnuts. Provide dog treats for those who stop by with their pets. Be creative.





Telling the Story

Laying the groundwork

It is important to tell your church's story as often as possible. Taking a few minutes, during each weekend service, to share a story of ministry impact reminds people their generosity is important and they are making a difference in the lives of others. The best time to do this is in the 60-seconds prior to your church's offering.

Your impact report

A key element of your church's generosity culture is your annual Impact Report. While the Impact Report is similar to an Annual Report, the most significant difference is the fact that an Annual Report is static; in other words, there is no call to action. Using the Impact Report, we want to (a) show people how their current generosity is making a difference and (b) call them to even greater levels of generosity.

A second notable difference between an Annual Report and an Impact Report is when the report is presented to the church. Traditionally, an Annual Report is distributed early in the calendar year and reports on ministry activity for the most recently completed year. However, this is not the best time to deliver your Impact Report. Mid-November is a better time to make this report available to your church. There are a couple of reasons for this:

1

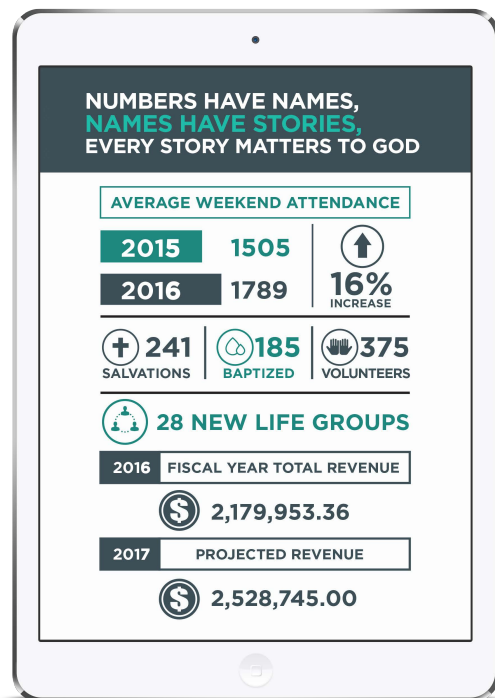
The end of the year is the most robust giving time of the year. This is the best, and most logical, time to tell the story of the impact of your church's generosity.

2

By distributing this information in mid-fall, you have the opportunity to celebrate all God has done through your church in a year by the end of December.

We recommend you distribute your Impact Report electronically. Some people, however, will not have access to electronic options, so it is a good idea to print a small quantity of the reports and have them available in the church office and at the church's Welcome Center.

An electronic version of the report can easily be distributed, as a PDF document, via email. You can also showcase the report on your church's website well into the next year. This is a great way for guests to explore and learn more about your church. The Impact Report provides another great opportunity to use video. Some churches include a compilation video of the year's ministry highlights. A video of this kind rekindles memories of life-changing ministry and creates healthy emotion, stirring the heart of the giver.



FREE sample Impact Report

Announcing the Project

How is the year-end project introduced? There are three key points of introduction.

Electronically

Rather than introducing the project in the weekend worship service, consider first making the announcement electronically. Create a short video (less than 2-minutes in length) of the pastor telling the story of the project. The video should accomplish the following:

- Create excitement around the church's mission
- Provide information about how this project will accelerate the church's mission
- Provide an overview of the project and its various elements
- Prepare the people to learn more about the project at the next weekend service
- Remind people that, as a church, you do not *have* to do this; rather, you *get* to do this
- Let the people know what an honor it is to be their pastor

TARGET DATE FOR ANNOUNCING THE PROJECT ELECTRONICALLY:

The week before or the week after Thanksgiving. This will largely depend on your church's attendance pattern.

From the platform

During the weekend after the video email, the church leadership should highlight the project in the weekend service(s).

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO

This is where you'll want to use the video elements. The video(s) should tell the story and assist you in framing the project. You should post the video to the church website the next day. You should also send a special church-wide email containing a link to the video. Here's a sample email:

Wow! What an amazing day of worship yesterday. I've heard from many of you, how much you enjoyed the video explaining the Radical Project. I wanted to let you know how you could see the video again and how you could help someone who missed it to see it for the first time.

Here is the link to the video [include video link].

Can you believe we, as a church, get to do this? We are really making an impact in Cleveland, in the nation, and around the world. Thanks for helping make it all possible!

Be sure to make the email as easy to forward as possible. You want the video to be seen by as many people as possible.

TARGET DATE FOR ANNOUNCING THE PROJECT FROM THE PLATFORM:

The first weekend after the electronic announcement goes to the church.

Print

Include the giving envelope and your basic print piece in the bulletin on the weekend of the platform announcement. The print pieces should not go in the bulletin before Thanksgiving. Early December is preferable. Most gifts will be received later in December, so there is rarely a need to introduce these giving elements earlier than Thanksgiving.

- You should include the same pieces in the bulletin every week through the end of December.
- The project should not require heavy emphasis every weekend. Simply including the print pieces in the bulletin each week will serve as a reminder.

TARGET DATE FOR SENIOR PASTOR TO SHARE:

The first weekend in December

1

The Senior Pastor gives a 2-minute summary of why he/she is personally investing in this project. Why does the project matter to him/her? What about this project moves his/her heart? What sacrifice is he/she making in order to invest in this project?

2

Later, another church leader (other than the Senior Pastor) should tell his or her story of why he/she is investing in the project.

TARGET DATE FOR ANOTHER CHURCH LEADER TO SHARE:

The second weekend in December

It is important that 100% of leadership participate financially in this project. You need to be able to announce that 100% of the church's leadership has invested in this year-end initiative. The total dollar amount is not critical here. What is essential is the complete and total buy-in of the leadership team.

Note

If you plan to announce the 100% participation of leadership, you should communicate this expectation when seeking initial leadership approval for the project.



Preparing to Receive the Gifts

It is important that your financial team be prepared to receive the gifts in a well-organized manner.

Legal boundaries of receiving gifts

If you do not currently have a policy in regard to the receipt of gifts, you can use this template as a starting point. These recommendations will assist your church in the development of a set of acceptance and disposition guidelines to be used for all donated gifts. These policies are especially important in the case of non-cash giving.

There is no need to publish these policies. The need to implement such policies is rare, but you should have them on record. You always want to be well prepared to receive all gifts for this, and any other, giving opportunity.

These guidelines are simply a tool to be used to begin dialogue with your church leadership. The information listed here is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible policies.

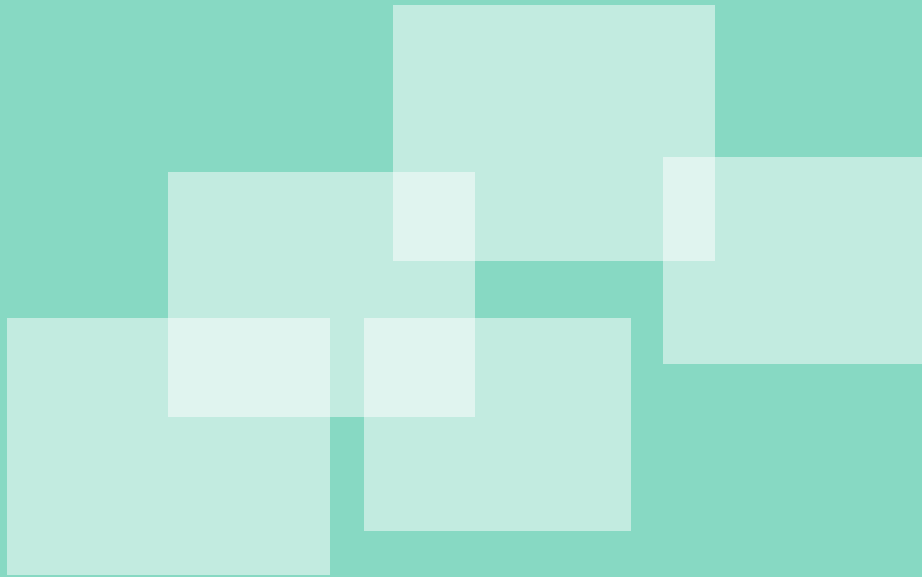
- Cash gifts will be accepted and receipted according to the normal financial and accounting procedures of the church.
- Receipt of non-cash gifts will be the responsibility of the Business Office. The church reserves the right to decline and return to the donor any gift determined to be unacceptable due to value, marketability, or other reason deemed inappropriate to the church.
- All non-cash gifts (except real estate) will be immediately liquidated by the church.
- Gifts of stock, various kinds of securities, insurance products, automobiles, livestock (or other animals), jewelry, and other items of value must be unencumbered and given outright to the church.
- If a gift is determined to be acceptable to the church, the gift will be immediately sold in a manner deemed most appropriate by the church.
- Gifts of real estate must be given with an appropriate title search, environmental evaluation, survey, and appraisal. Any and all cost of transfer will be the responsibility of the donor. Gifts of real estate must also be unencumbered in regard to liens, litigation, or any other potential liability to the church.
- The church reserves the right to decline any gift prior to accepting title of said gift.
- All non-cash gifts will be acknowledged in a dated letter from the church business office (or other appropriate person), which will include a description of the gift and copies of the appropriate IRS reporting forms.
- Questions regarding any policies contained herein, should be referred to _____.

Stocks and other assets

Be prepared to provide guidelines to givers regarding how to transfer gifts of stock and other assets. While not common for gifts of this kind to be given for a year-end project, you should have a pre-determined process to handle this, as well as general year-end giving.

To assist the donor, you may want to include a sentence, similar to the sample sentence below, on your giving card and envelope:

If you wish to give stock or appreciated assets, please contact Gordon at the church office, 404.555.2121.



Saying Thank You

A white dotted line that starts horizontally to the left of the title, extends to the right, then turns 90 degrees down and continues diagonally towards the bottom right corner of the slide.

G

iving is the result of a relationship between the church, the church's mission, and the donor. In today's world of rapid-fire electronic communication, the need to express gratitude is often ignored. However, saying thank you is a simple courtesy you cannot afford to overlook.

We recommend a thank you letter or note be sent to everyone who gives. This accomplishes three things.

- 1 It acknowledges the donor's investment.
- 2 It validates the importance of the relationship between the church and the giver.
- 3 It provides a level of closure to this specific engagement.

TARGET DATE FOR THANK YOU NOTES TO THOSE WHO GAVE TO THE PROJECT

First week or second week of January

Showing gratitude to first-time givers

Thanking first-time givers is a practice that applies to your everyday giving as well as special project giving. When someone gives to your church for the first time, this is a big deal. They have made the decision to invest a portion of their treasure into the mission of the church. When thanking the first-time giver, here are a few things to remember:

- Send a handwritten note to all first-time givers. A note of this kind provides a very important human touch and it connects the worlds of faith and finance.
- While the first-time givers donation will be recorded and included in the annual giving statements, this is a report of transaction. What you want is transformation. Our goal is to begin to grow and transform the giver's relationship with the church. A handwritten note is a key pastoral event that can impact this relationship for years to come.
- One of the objectives of the year-end project is to create on-ramps for first-time givers. Expressing your gratitude in a meaningful way will dramatically increase the likelihood of a second gift.

The process for first-time giver notes

- Have the church's accounting or finance team provide you with a list of first-time givers within 48 hours of the gift.
- The notes should be mailed, to the donor, no more than 72 hours after the gift is received.
- The notes should be handwritten. This increases the relational and pastoral connection.
- Always use first names in the salutation.
- The notes should only be a few sentences.
- The pastor should always sign the notes.
- The address on the envelopes should also be handwritten.
- Use a stamp. Stamped envelopes, as opposed to those that are metered, are read more often. This also adds another level of personal touch.

Dear Joe and Julie,

Thank you for being a part of Valley Church.

The staff let me know about your financial investment in the Radical Project. Your gift is very generous and will make a difference in the lives of many. The role you play in our church truly matters. I'm glad you are a part of the Valley Church family and I'm honored to be your pastor.

Pastor Tom

Using video to say thank you

You may also consider the use of video when saying thank you. This is a quick and easy way to express your appreciation with that added personal touch. Here is a sample Thank You video.

SAMPLE THANK YOU VIDEO



Celebrating Spiritual Development



Celebrating the outcome of the project – by focusing on what God has done through this effort – is just as important as receiving the gifts. Many churches simply move on to the next sermon series after the holidays and the project quietly becomes a distant memory. Instead, set aside time to celebrate what God has done and how your church has grown spiritually as a result.

A good time for your celebration is mid to late spring (April or May).

- Target a weekend to publically announce the project's financial results.
- Announce the total amount received to-date.
- Illustrate the results and impact of the giving. Tell stories that align the hearts of the givers with the results of their generosity.
- Consider the creation of a celebration video. Include images from the project, as well as stories from some who invested in the effort.

TARGET DATE FOR ANNOUNCING THE PROJECT'S FINANCIAL RESULTS:

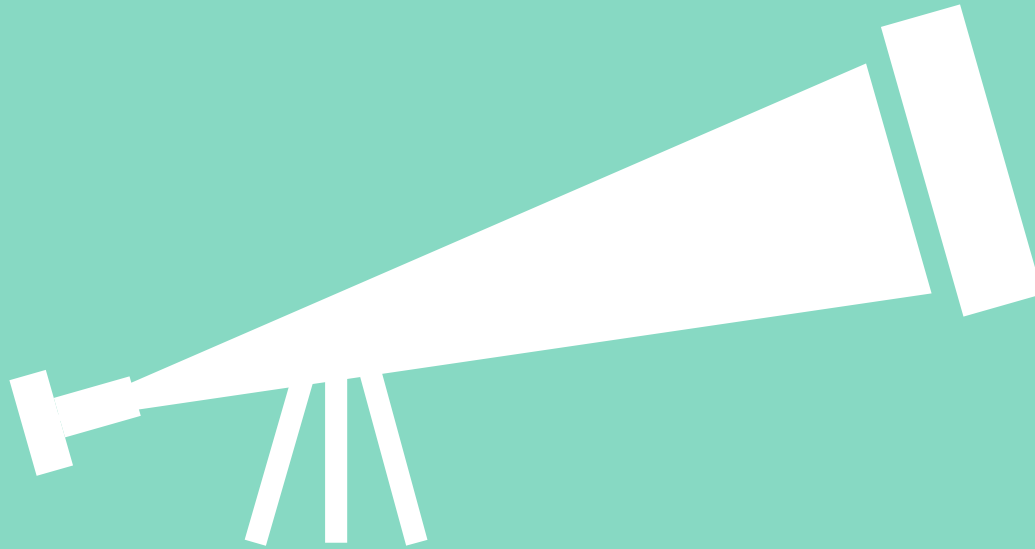
First or second weekend in January.

Celebrating the project's outcome

In addition to sharing the amount invested in the project, you want to share the impact the project generated. Consider the production of a video highlighting some of the project's results. One church, for example, created a video showing the first streams of water being pumped from a well in a region that had previously been without water. Images like that connect a person's faith and finance forever.

TARGET DATE FOR CELEBRATING THE PROJECT'S OUTCOME:

Between the first weekend of April and the second weekend in May. The right date for your church is dependent on the scope of the project.



Monitoring Your Generosity Culture Into the Future



Note

A powerful tool to monitor your key generosity indicators is Mortar-Stone. Check it out at mortartstone.com

Once you begin the journey of accelerating your church's generosity culture, it requires ongoing care and maintenance. Like all other areas of spiritual transformation, generosity requires more than occasional attention.

Most churches don't monitor generosity signals on an ongoing basis simply because, in addition to the already over-taxed schedules of their staff, it's a lot of work, and they don't have a good system that allows them to receive current information regarding certain key indicators.

Keeping an eye on key generosity indicators is crucial. The numbers church leaders look at must go much deeper than weekly and per-capita giving. Generosity metrics such as first-time/front-door givers, back-door givers, retention rate, giving vs. median income, and others not only provide insight into your ability to fund your vision, they also serve as early warning signs for spiritual issues or challenges with vision.

Closing

Remember, the primary goal of your year-end project is to accelerate your church's generosity, allowing you to more fully fund your ever-expanding, God-inspired vision. It is always important to connect a person's giving to the church's mission and ministry impact.

We pray this guide will serve as a pathway to create, plan, and execute an excellent year-end project at your church. Beyond the project, we pray you and your church will experience so much more.

Our hope is that this guide will help you elevate and accelerate your church's generosity culture, the vision and outreach of the church, and ultimately the spiritual development of everyone involved.



Generis

generis.com