

The Fully Funded Summer

Ideas and Plans to Fully Fund Your Summer Missions and Ministries

By

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Beat the Summer Slump!

The following is a real example of a letter that a church sent me at the start of the summer in an attempt to motivate me to give. They wrote the following...

Dear Members,

As we come to the end of our successful Capital Campaign, we now ask you to turn your attention to the Operating Fund. With the summer months bringing vacations and other Sunday activities, we, the members of the Finance Committee, want to remind you that our monthly expenses continue for things like lighting, air conditioning, maintenance of grounds and buildings, personnel costs, missions outreach, etc. This is typically the time that giving slows down and doesn't rebound until October causing a cash flow crunch which makes it difficult for the church to meet its monthly obligations.

If you are current on your Operating Fund giving, we appreciate your faithfulness. If you are behind on your giving, we ask that you try to bring this current. And, if you are able, please consider paying ahead on your pledge or paying your pledge in full now to ease the money crunch.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the members of the Finance Committee below to get more information. Thank you in advance for your consideration and commitment to **Name of church withheld**.

Wow! Talk about non-motivating! Would you give to this church? Does helping them pay for the air-conditioning cause you to want to dig dipper into your pocket and give more money to them? The second I read this letter I knew I had a keeper. I kept this letter to show to others so that you won't make the mistake they did! It would not surprise you to know that the above church did NOT meet their budget needs at the end of the year. Letters like this were one reason why.

They didn't ask me to but I re-wrote the letter and sent them my sample. Here is what I wrote...

Dear Friend of Community Church, **I made that name up I still want to protect the church above!**

Can you believe that school is almost out and the summer is about upon us? It truly does seem that time flies especially when you are busy. We have certainly been busy here at Community Church. What an exciting year we have already had thus far. The excitement and fun are about to ramp up with the approach of summer. While summer might be a slow time for some churches we crank it up here. Consider...

- Our VBS is set to be our best ever and starts the last week of June.
- Our Student Ministry team will be heading to camp in July. Last year we saw many conversions to Christ and we are believing God for a greater harvest at this year's camp.
- Our Mission teams will be literally around the globe in Africa and South America.
- We are also going to be holding a special mission VBS for inner city children of our town.
- All our regular weekly activities will be running as well.

So, you can see things are starting to get a little crazy here. All of what we do is possible as a result of the faithful gifts of our members. Without you none of the above would happen.

This summer we are holding a special giving campaign called, The Summer of Love. We are asking you to help us show the love of Christ with your gift. Giving to this special campaign will not only help us stay current on our regular operating expenses but it will also help pay for all our missions ventures listed above. Each of us can show our love with a gift this summer that will enable us to show our city, state, nation and the world that we love them and want them to know personally the love of Christ.

Included in this letter are three envelopes, one for each month of the summer. Use each one to mail in your special offering of help. So when you are at the lake or on vacation you can be assured that your gift will fuel ministry back home.

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

Your pastor,

Do you see the difference in the appeal? One sounds desperate the other focuses upon the positive upcoming missions and ministry initiatives. Studies show that people give to that which they believe matters and will make an impact. While I want comfortable surroundings asking me to give to keep the air-conditioning on will not ultimately motivate me to give more. Changing lives for the Kingdom will.

Giving to the church as percent of income decreased from 3.11% in 1968 to barely above 2.0 % currently an over 20% decline in the proportion of income donated to the church. I believe that one reason why is we simply don't have good stewardship plans in place to meet this challenge. This book is an attempt to help you fully fund your summer.

Summer is one of the most challenging times for churches to meet their giving requirements. I have worked in the stewardship ministry for over sixteen years and have analyzed hundreds of churches giving patterns. EVEN in growing churches with healthy stewardship giving summer is always the most challenging time to meet the budget. The irony is that summer is also one of the busiest in terms of missions and ministry endeavors. If ever there is a time that you desperately need to make budget it is during the summer!

This book is designed to help you fully fund your summer in a way that avoids guilt or coercion which never work anyway. I am going to give you a positive plan that if you follow it you will see giving increase this summer over past summers. Your missions and ministries are too important not to be fully funded.

My goal with this book is not only to provide you with information about how to build a plan but to actually help you get that plan started for your church. At the end of each section is an Action Plan listing out steps to take to fully fund your summer. Also the Appendix includes tons of samples. So, let's get started!

Building the Base for A Successful Summer Giving Campaign

Have a Plan and Work Your Plan

I wrote a book entitled, “The Top Ten Stewardship Mistakes Churches Make.” One of the chapters was on the lack of planning. My contention is that the vast majority of churches have no stewardship plan in place. What results is a sort of knee jerk reaction to stewardship. The results are that many churches struggle to make budget. Then when someone or something has to be blamed for this decline we look for scapegoats. With the stresses of our economy the easy scapegoat has been to blame the recession.

While the economy has certainly placed additional challenges upon the typical church, studies show that recessions have had little to do with the gradual decline in giving since 1968! So, in looking who to blame it might be time to look inward. If you have no plan for stewardship then I submit that the blame for any decline or challenges in giving you have be laid to rest at that gate.

Why is it that we have evangelism plans, discipleship plans, growth plans and mission plans and we don’t think about a plan to fund the other plans? Whatever the reason, the failure of good stewardship planning has caused many churches to miss fulfilling the other plans. We always say that the failure to plan is in reality planning to fail. Of the clients that we work with that are seeing the best success, everyone has a plan of action with regards to stewardship and they work their plan. Remember the old saying, “If you aim at nothing you will hit nothing?” In countless churches across America this is exactly what is happening. Don’t blame your decline in giving on the economy if you have failed to implement a plan of action. If you really want to increase your giving then now is the time to get a plan and start working your plan.

The number one way in which churches fail to plan is last minute actions. I get phone calls almost weekly from desperate church leaders wanting me to help them with their giving. Since my mother taught me to be nice I avoid saying, “Why have you waited so late!” Instead, let me say it here, “Why are you waiting for a crisis in giving to start thinking about stewardship?”

Good stewardship results require advance planning! Let me give you an example. I have an e-book about annual giving campaigns called, “The Maximized Annual Campaign.” There are still many churches that utilize annual campaigns. I do think they can be effective. Most annual campaigns fail due to lack of planning. The majority of annual campaigns are held in the fall. Guess when most church leaders start thinking about their annual campaign, fall!

My book on annual campaigns gives the church a road map to success IF they start planning in the summer at the latest! So I want churches to have access to the book so that potential clients can utilize in the summer to get ready for their fall campaigns.

What are your plans for a summer giving strategy? For the client churches that I am tasked to help increase their giving we are already discussing plans for summer giving. My goal is for their plans to be finalized by mid-April so that they can begin enacting them in May. We know that summer is always a challenging time for giving, so get ahead of that by planning in advance!

Do you have a plan and are you working your plan?

If It Is Not Owned By Someone It Doesn't Get Done

It is not enough to decide you need a plan or even to work up a plan. I have worked up plans for churches that looked good and would have worked. The problem is that often, after the initial presentation, the plan sits on a shelf along with all the other conference books of great ideas that we have forgotten about. Simply having a plan is not enough; you have to work your plan.

For any task to get done someone must own it. If it isn't owned by someone it will get left undone. I don't care whatever discipline or job you talk about it is always true. Owning something means you accept responsibility for it. Owning something means that if it is your task then you are the one responsible. When no one takes responsibility then it is left to chance whether or not something happens.

One of the major reasons so many churches are struggling in the area of stewardship is that no one really owns the process. There might have been a time when that was not important. However, we are seeing the percentage of gifts to churches decline each decade and if someone does not own correcting that slide in your church you too will feel the loss of dollars. Losing dollars means you lose ministry opportunity. All this could be avoided if someone simply owned the process. Yet too many churches are leaving their fate up to chance simply because no one owns stewardship.

Who owns stewardship at your church? I have been shocked and dismayed at how many churches when I press them have to admit that no one owns stewardship. It is a back burner issue. How often do you talk about a stewardship plan in staff meetings? While you moan about the lack of funding, are you doing anything at all to correct that? Do you have a plan to address stewardship in your church? If you have a plan, does someone own making sure it gets accomplished? Have you simply given this to a committee that might or might not see it to completion? Do you even think about stewardship?

My question for you today is who owns your stewardship plan? If the answer is not apparent you could already be heading for trouble. If you thought, plan? You are in trouble! Here is a thought,

get a plan and then find someone to own it. Really own it. Not just a line on a job description to which no one pays attention. Find a person that will champion your stewardship by owning it. Do this and you will buck the trend many are experiencing in seeing their donations decline. Don't sit back and let the economy smack you around. Take action. Own it before it owns you!

Action Plan – Following each section I will give you an action plan and a suggested timeline. This book is not meant simply to read but to serve as a foundation for acting upon what you read. By following the principles above you can fully fund your summer IF you ACT! So, let's get started...

- Earlier in this chapter I asked, “Do you have a plan and are you working your plan?” How did you answer that question? My suggestion is...
- If you serve in a church with other staff gives them a copy of this book and ask them to read through it. Then meet and discuss what ideas you received from the book. Spend time at each staff meeting for the next few weeks discussing a plan to fully fund your summer.
- Good planning starts with good evaluation. Look back over the last few summers at your church. What were the most challenging weeks in terms of making budget? What were the strongest? Are their patterns to the giving that you can detect? Design your summer giving plan in a way to meet those challenges.
- I wrote above that someone must own a plan for it to work. Who at your church will own your summer giving plan?
- Make a goal to have a written plan of action in place by May first!

What Motivates People To Give?

Before we start planning to fully fund your summer giving it is important that you realize what motivates people to give. Studies have shown that there are three primary drivers of why people give. They are:

- 1. Belief in an institutions vision.**
- 2. High regard for staff leadership.**
- 3. Fiscal responsibility of the institution.**

Violate any of these three principles and it doesn't matter how good your summer campaign program is, you are doomed to failure. For your work on the summer campaign there might not be anything at present you can do to increase confidence in points two and three. However you can and should build your summer campaign around a vision that will unite all segments of your church.

The Power of Vision

When it comes to giving everything rises and falls on vision. It is the number one reason why people give to any ministry or church. Show me your vision and I can tell you whether or not you will be successful in raising funds. Too often when giving is down we want to blame the economy or other issues when the truth is our vision is not motivating people to give. When you have a powerful vision you can be assured that strong giving will follow.

Bill Hybels correctly nailed it a few years back when he said, "Vision leaks!" He meant that people tended to forget the vision that was cast just months ago. In the day to day struggle of life other issues would crowd out that vision statement and they would often be clueless as to what their church was about.

As a pastor once a year I would preach a sermon about the vision God had given me for my church. I typically did that the first Sunday of January. I called it my state of the church message. I would lay out what was ahead for us in the next year casting a vision that I thought was compelling and most of all God sent. I would wonder in May why the church did not understand what we were to be about. My vision casting sermon had probable leaked out the second they got to the cafeteria for Sunday dinner.

Vision casting cannot be one Sunday a year or even the Sunday of launching a campaign or stewardship initiative. Since vision leaks we must repeatedly remind our members where we believe God has us going and how they can get on board. As a pastor once told me, "You have to tell a church member seven times, seven different ways, before he or she gets it." The "it" in this case is the vision that is the driver for why I stay at church as more than just another warm body in a seat. Vision as we have stated when it comes to stewardship is the main driver of why

people give. Vision is what keeps me giving even when the economy is down. So, if your vision pot is leaking you can be assured that the offering plate will have holes in it as well. You cannot motivate your members to pledge to the summer budget if they are not inspired by your vision.

Never will vision be more important than in stressful economic times. Several years ago I coined this truth:

Good Vision Trumps Bad Economy!

When I was younger we played the card game of Spades. I was never particularly good at Spades which might be why I no longer play. I never seemed to get the hang of it in terms of strategy or just the sheer luck of the draw of a winning hand. One thing I do remember vividly about Spades is that you always wanted to have spades in your hand. You could be playing the ace of hearts and think you were going to win the hand and someone else could throw in the deuce of spades and beat you. Playing a spade was a trump card that beat all other cards in play. In stewardship vision is the trump card that affects your ability to raise funds.

Developing your Vision

There are scores of books on vision and how to develop one. In fact it has been one of the most written about and talked about subjects in Christian leadership circles for the last decade. You probably have been to those conferences and have those books on your shelf. You like me probable formed a team to study and craft a vision statement. In my opinion we have made vision development overly complicated. Most vision statements that I see are either trying to be too cute or too broad to ever be effective. If we were honest most people in our pews don't know truly what our vision is nor do they really care. I think this is again due to the fact that we have made it overly complicated.

Please understand that I am not trying to minimize the importance of vision. It is crucial. I just think that we have made it too difficult and have muddied the waters not only for ourselves but the people we lead. I think finding your vision is much simpler than we have made it.

What is in your heart?

Two Old Testament figures come to mind of how to establish a vision. First David is a prime example of someone that was driven by a vision that in turned drove Israel to accomplish more than they ever dreamed of. While his son Solomon is known for building the temple it really was David's dream and vision that began the process. As we know God would not let him build it since he was a man of war. However listen to what he tells the leaders of Israel in I Chronicles 28:2, "King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. *I had it in my heart to build* a house as a place of rest for the ark..." He then laid out his dream and vision. In chapter 29 he leads the people to give willingly to fund the new temple. The offering that was given in chapter 29 was a result of a vision David had in his heart and communicated in chapter 28.

Nehemiah is another example of someone that God placed a burden in his heart. In chapter one after he hears of the disgrace of the broken walls of Jerusalem he, “mourned and fasted and prayed before God.” In chapter two he is given permission and aide from the King to rebuild the walls. He begins by inspecting the walls. Nehemiah 2:12 says, “I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God *had put in my heart to do* for Jerusalem.” What was in his heart ultimately led to the walls being rebuilt in fifty two days!

What is in your heart? What do you get excited about when you dream about the future of your church or ministry? What keeps you up at night? Those are the things that are the basis for your vision. Start there. Show people what is in your heart not some catchy phrase or acrostic. People respond to vision. Money follows vision!

The Three C’s of Vision

While I am not a huge fan of catchy vision statements I do readily admit that how you communicate your vision is crucial. Down through the years I have counseled on what I call the three C’s of vision. Evaluate your vision on the basis of these three C’s.

Make it Clear

Above all else do your members clearly understand what it is you are attempting to do? Many years ago I happened to be working in a church in the town that my brother lived in. The president of the huge national insurance firm that he worked at happened to be a member of the church where I was working with. My brother one day told the president that his little brother was helping the church the president attended. The president remarked, “Yes I know they are raising funds but I am not sure what it is all about.” When my brother told me that my heart sank as the pastor was counting on the president of this firm to be a substantial donor like he had been at the local state university in town. However this man could not even tell my brother what his church was doing. The vision was not clear. Is your vision clear? Can your members easily tell their work associates, neighbors and friends what you are doing and why? When visions are not clear people will not donate even in the best of economic times.

Keep it Concise

Donors have basically two questions, does this make sense and can you pull it off? Answer those questions and you will get their dollars. Remember the old KISS acrostic? It stands for Keep It Simple Somehow. KISS is good advice for communicating your vision.

Several years ago I worked with a church in the Northwest that had just finished working up their vision statement. On the telephone one day the pastor told me he would fax it to me. When it finally finished coming through my fax machine it was twenty five pages long! I laughed when I saw that every point and sub-point was alliterated. I was not surprised that we had difficulty raising funds around this vision as the people never could quite grasp what it was

about. Your people ought to be able in one to two sentences tell what it is you are about and how you propose to do it. Remember Keep It Simple Somehow!

Cast it Compellingly

The most important thing of all is to make your vision matter in the hearts of your members. You have to realize that they have multiple opportunities of where to spend their money including other ministries that are after their charitable gift. A compelling vision that motivates the heart will even in the worst of economic times cause dollars to come to your ministry. Show your donors how their gift will make a difference and they will rise up to support it financially. Fail to communicate your vision in a compelling and passionate way and you will struggle through this economically challenging time.

Make the Summer Campaign About Vision Not Meeting Your Budget

The number one reason most summer campaigns do not maximize their potential is because the emphasis is not about vision but about making budget. Few of your members are motivated by hitting some arbitrary number. If you truly want to be successful build the summer campaign message around a vision that will inspire. Focus on what the funds you are asking to be given will be used for. People want to know that their gift will make a difference for the Kingdom. Your main task is to effectively communicate the vision of what your church will attempt to accomplish next year.

A Working Assignment: Write Out a Vision Case Statement for Your Summer Campaign

Following the above principles write out three to five major points of why your summer campaign is so important for your church. What major initiatives you are launching this summer that the summer campaign will help fund? What is the major focus of your church for the upcoming summer?

What are the positive things your church has accomplished that they will continue working on this next year? These questions can begin your thinking about a vision case statement. The vision case statement becomes your talking points to rally the support of the congregation. Tell members why they should commit to the campaign not simply that they must. Give them a compelling reason to give that is greater than simply helping you make budget this year. What does the budget accomplish apart from paying the preacher and the light bill? The more compelling you make your vision case statement the more impactful it will be.

Naming the Summer Giving Campaign – You will want to choose a name for the upcoming stewardship campaign. Using your vision case statement as a starting point for your theme will give you a good start on the kind of name you want to attach to the campaign. The name should be simple, concise and yet appealing. Don't try to be too cute or catchy. However you do want the title to be memorable and impactful.

Action Plan: Vision Cast Your Summer Giving Plan – Remember people give to vision. Make your summer giving plan about reaching people not reaching the budget and your chances of fully funding your summer will be much greater. The following steps should be taken immediately...

- **Vision Case Statement** - Write a one page vision case statement for why your members should give to the summer giving plan. This should include listing missions and ministry endeavors. If infrastructural needs must be listed, i.e. utility bills, set them in a way that communicates how they support missions and ministry.
- **Create a Theme for your summer campaign** – This summer I am using the theme, “The Summer of Light.” I am basing that upon, John 8:12 where Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.” I wanted to have a theme that reflected hope amidst the darkness of the days we live in. You can use my theme or develop your own. Remember the theme should encompass what you are attempting to raise funds for. Make the theme creative and memorable.
- **Wrap the message and communication of the summer giving plan around your vision case statement and theme.** The vision case statement and theme become your talking points for the entire summer. So, craft both well!
- **See Appendix A for a sample of how to craft your summers vision statement.**

Setting the Stage for Success – Leaders Lead the Way!

Our plan addresses the two groups that exist at your church, Leaders and the Core of the congregation. Leaders are comprised of staff, ministry leaders, elders and deacons, small group leaders or Sunday School teachers as well as those that lead by their monetary gifts. This group typically in any church represents roughly 20% of the congregation. These leaders give the vast majority of what is given, in some cases as much as 90% of the total gifts.

Any plan that does not take them in to account will fail. In “Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don’t Give Away More Money,” the authors found that Five percent of Protestants give 56 percent of all that is given. This group at your church will be pivotal to the success of raising additional dollars. We believe that leaders lead the way and the congregation follows.

The Core of the congregation that represents 80% to 90% of the makeup of any church typically gives only 10% to 20% of the gifts. This is typically a spiritual maturity issue but also is an economic issue as well. Our experience is that you have to teach this group how to be a fully functioning disciple while at the same time equipping them to be responsible stewards of that which God has given them.

Our plan will follow the model of leaders first and the core of the congregation second. It is our experience that this will equate towards immediate stewardship enhancement. We believe that you should never announce anything from the platform to the church that you have not first communicated to your leadership. By using this approach when you do announce the start of the summer campaign you will have already informed your leaders and enlisted their support. They thus can become your eyes and ears to the rest of the congregation impacting all those in their sphere of influence.

The success of a meeting hinges on the meetings before the meetings! I learned as a pastor that if I wanted something to pass through my leaders I needed first to get the key influencers on board. So I would begin planting the ideas I wanted to initiate in the hearts and minds of key leaders before the various committee meetings. In time I learned that this same process was important for the whole congregation. People need time to get their hands, hearts and minds around something. Too often we in the church surprise our leaders and the congregation with our ideas and then wonder why no one gets on board.

One of the biggest mistakes of the summer campaign is not setting the stage for success ahead of time! Whether it is laziness or lack of understanding little to no thought goes into most summer campaigns. The results are then mixed at best. You should never announce from the pulpit the summer campaign and then that day ask people to give to it. Giving at the level you want them to give takes time. Our process takes time to evolve but it will help you maximize the results. It could just help you make that budget you have your eyes upon.

The following pages outline the key elements of bringing leaders together before you launch your summer campaign. We call it a Leadership Summit.

Leadership Summit

Affirm the Faithful and Rally Leadership - Since we believe that everything rises and falls with leadership we believe it is important to rally the leaders at your church. We typically do this at a Leadership Summit meeting.

The following outlines the elements of this meeting...

Premise: The success or failure of any endeavor can be traced back to leaders responding with whole hearted support from beginning to end. The Leadership Summit is a key element in the success of any giving campaign.

Goal: The goal of the Leadership Summit is to build ownership of all that God is doing at your church. We want to give leaders an update on what has happened and is happening with regards to the future. We want to create buy-in to the vision and extend a challenge for them to actively support that vision. The leadership must be informed, supportive and passionately talking about the vision. In essence we want to see the transfer of the vision from the pastor's heart into their heart causing them to be vision carriers!

Plan: First, we would encourage a list of all current leaders at your church be pulled together. This would include staff, elders or board members, ministry leaders, any small group leaders and others that serve in a position of influence. We would also encourage you to include those that are your financial leaders as well. The entire final list typically will comprise about twenty to twenty five per cent of your regular attendance.

You will then want to set a date and time that will be conducive to a good percentage of attendance by those on the list. You will need to determine what type of event you think would work best. Some churches have had this as a food event while others have opted for a much less involved event that was simply a meeting in the worship center. There is no one way that is better than any other. You will simply need to decide which format and time you think is best for your church. However, if it involves something more than a simple meeting then you will need to put someone in charge of those details.

All those on the invitation list should receive a letter or invitation to the Leadership Launch at least two to three weeks ahead of the date. Maximizing attendance is helped by telephoning all those invited a few days before hand to remind them of this important

meeting. Typically this can be done by the secretarial staff or a volunteer recruited for this task.

Time Frame: This event needs to be held at least two to three weeks prior to the kickoff of your summer campaign. Ideally we will want to have this event sometime in early May but certainly before school is out.

Format: The following format is merely a suggestion of the key elements of the Leadership Summit. Churches need to tailor the suggestions to fit their particular style. Many churches incorporate a time of praise and worship to start the Summit. Whatever you decide to do the entire time of the Summit should be right at one hour and no more than one and a half hours. A typical format will include the following:

Ministry Update – The focus here should be upon all that God has done in the last year. You should spend time thanking them for their support both from a volunteer standpoint and also financially. Deal with any things that you feel are potential land mines for the future. The focus however should be positive helping them see the faithfulness of God in the past thus leading to trust for the future.

Our advice is to celebrate the “wins” of your ministry in the last year. Everyone loves to be on the winning side. Show the success of what your church has done. In doing so you are communicating in a positive way that giving to your church is a worthwhile use of your member’s hard earned dollars.

Budget Update - The focus during this segment is to give them a glimpse of what the future could look like if we are obedient to what we feel the Lord is calling us to. You should outline all the various steps that you are being led to pursue in the order you feel is best.

Summer Giving Campaign – You want to announce the upcoming stewardship campaign to these leaders.

The campaign must always begin with the discussion of ministry, yet ministries need funds. The question in the mind of any donor is, are we being fiscally responsible? Donors commit to what they see as an urgent need not an extravagance. Some things are obvious to everyone, paying the bills, paying salaries, etc. Other things might not be so obvious to all but are still important.

Your plan must stand the test of questions. Remember, there is a difference from asking a question for information and questioning for the sake of being disruptive. Donors want to know is the campaign goals realistic? Your goal is to make sure the giving campaign is in line with your ministry and that it can be accomplished. If your budget goal and thus the goal of the campaign is unrealistic donors will not be as excited to support it. Additionally it will make it harder for them to defend it to those in their sphere of influence.

Donors want to know if they commit the dollars to this campaign can you pull it off. Do you have a plan to accomplish this or are you simply a dreamer? In other words how are we going to get this all done? The difference between leaders and dreamers is that leaders have a plan and act upon their plan!

What you want to do is to show that you have carefully thought out the process of what it will take to pull meeting your budget goals successfully. You are launching a campaign that we feel could generate funds to meet and exceed your current budget needs. The campaign will be launched in a few weeks but you wanted to give them as leaders an insider's view of what was about to happen. At the end of this campaign you will continue to stress giving and will seek to enhance your stewardship base.

Vision Link – It is very important that we help them see that this campaign is not just about paying bills and salaries. We are looking to:

Link the campaign to the Mission
Link the leaders to the Vision and then ultimately,
Link the congregation to the Journey

Cast a compelling vision. Remember, it is a compelling vision that people give sacrificially to. **Your aim with leaders, as it will be with the entire congregation, is to personalize giving this summer by putting a picture on giving. Show them what giving to the budget accomplishes and they will be more apt to give.**

Commitment – To conclude you want to call your leaders to commit to A. Be informed; B. Be supportive and C. to be in prayer D. give! Ask them to become with you owners of the vision the Lord has given your church. Communicate to them that over the next few days you will make yourself available to them to answer any questions that they might have.

Gift of Appreciation – You might want to consider a thank you gift to those that have been so faithful in their gift to the church. Some memento of appreciation would add a nice touch to the meeting. Randy Alcorn's "The Treasury Principle" is a good example of a gift book that could be given not only to current giving leaders but to all who sign up to give as a result of the summer campaign.

Follow Up – Immediately following the Leadership Summit you should mail letters to all those on the invitation list. The letter will summarize what was shared at the Leadership Summit.

Action Plan – Your leaders give as much as 70% to 80% of all your dollars. Effectively communicating with them and motivating them is key to fully funding your summer. Do the following...

- List who you consider leaders at your church. An example would be Board members, deacons, small group leaders, ministry leaders AND giving leaders.
- Determine the best time and place to hold a Leadership Summit.

- Send out a letter of invitation to those on your list at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- Work through the agenda of what you want to share at the Leadership Summit.
- Make sure all support materials are in place well ahead of time.

Putting the Plan Into Action

Go Digital or Get Left Behind

I remember the first cell phone I ever saw. It was about as big as a loaf of bread! I was so envious of my pastor friend who had the ability to be in instant contact with his church. Though each call cost an arm and a leg he could still be accessible even when he was traveling. I wanted one! I thought I needed one and I just had to have one. The problem was getting the Finance Committee of my church to see this not as a toy but as a necessary means of communication. Ultimately we purchased a mobile phone and did use it.

Americans more and more are turning away from using cash and checkbooks and going entirely digital in their commerce. Does it then not make sense that the Church should respond by allowing people to give the way they do commerce? Yet most churches in America still utilize only one tool for collecting money, the offering plate. We treat the offering plate like Scriptures demanded that we use only that means to collect the offering. In fact passing the offering plate was not widely used by American churches until the late 19th century.

Why should you consider having a digital platform upon which people can give to your church? Consider...

- 2/3 of Americans have a smartphone.
- 73% of smartphone users use their mobile browser to shop.
- Online shopping last Black Friday surpassed brick and mortar sales for the first time!
- 24% of online purchases were made on a mobile device.

Clearly the times have changed and so must the church. If your church is to stay current with the way in which people use money it must have a digital platform! When it comes to a digital platform the following are what I believe are your MUSTS to provide the kind of digital platform upon which to build giving.

Set up online giving to help you increase giving this summer! One of my clients read one of my early posts about the need to set up online giving and specifically recurring giving. This church has an annual operating budget of \$250K. Every summer was a challenge to meet the budget needs. He told me, “We would have some Monday mornings where the offering count was only in the hundreds of dollars instead of thousands of dollars. We would have to determine

what bills to pay and what to put off hoping for a better Sunday coming up.” Then they enacted online giving and in the month of May they ran a push encouraging members to sign up for automatic withdrawals (ACH). Now 50% of the churches giving comes in through online giving. The pastor commented to me, “Online giving has taken the panic out of Monday morning for us!”

I had another client that was one of the top 100 churches in terms of attendance in America. They wanted to have a summer giving campaign that was different from all the others they had run. The year before their online giving was only around \$350K of their nearly \$15 million dollar budget. In May we ran a push to encourage online giving. That year online giving rose to over \$1 million dollars! They eclipsed their summer giving goals in part because of online giving.

You need online giving. Online giving set up through your website is the base you build your digital giving upon. Sadly one survey revealed that only 14% of U.S. churches offered online giving. When Americans now set up most of their billing online why would your church NOT have online giving as an option?

I have a company designed to help churches effectively set up online giving called **Charis Giving Solutions**. You can find out more about it here <http://charisgivingsolutions.com/>

Make sure your online presence is set up for mobile devices. The statistics above tells us why we need to have our websites be mobile friendly. More and more people are using their smartphones to locate and find things, even churches. If your website is hard to read on a smartphone or tablet you run the risk of losing guests AND you make it harder for people to give to your church digitally. Again **Charis Giving Solutions** can help set up your website to be mobile friendly.

Have an App so smartphone users can easily access your church information AND easily give to your church. Apps are spreading like wild fire. When every major company from McDonalds to the local ice cream store down the road from you has an App why would your church not?

Finally, I believe every church should have a giving kiosk set up somewhere in the church allowing people to give on site. If I forgot to write the tithe check can I still tithe if I am at your

church? Americans are used to using machines to make financial transactions. They will use a giving portal at your church if you have one set up.

Once again, **Charis Giving Solutions** can help you with this. It is much easier than you think and will not cost as much as you think it would.

Some day in the not too distant future we will look back and remember the days of checks. While we might think that day is far in the future ask yourself this question, how many checks a month do you write? My guess is that most of the checks you write are to your church IF it does not have digital giving. The times have changed and the Church must change to meet the demands of our society. We need to go digital or get left behind!

How to Use Your Digital Platform to Increase Participation for your Summer Campaign

IF you have all that I mentioned above you can and should use these platforms to build out a strategy to increase participation and pledges for your summer campaign. One of our goals at The Charis Group is to make giving easy and fun. By fun we mean meaningful. Show your members what giving accomplishes and they will give more. Also, we believe that the easier you make it for people to give the more they will give. America is online so your giving should be also.

Here are a few ideas to help you in this process...

- Build a separate link off of your website where people that people can access to find out more information about the vision of the summer campaign AND can actually give. We at Charis Giving Solutions can help you set this up.
- Digitize all communications so that they can be used with email and Social Media. This is not difficult at all to do. All letters can and should be adjusted for email usage. One key to remember is that emails need to be shorter in length than regular letters.
- Use your existing Social Media sites to focus in on the summer campaign. You want to always make the link between what you are doing at your church and giving. For instance consider this Tweet, “Our church each year reaches hundreds of kids in our community through VBS. Your gifts make that happen. Consider a pledge today!” You can also set up through Twitter pasting in your web address and it will be shortened thus saving your character space. That is important for Twitter as you only have 140 characters per tweet.
- Use Facebook to show pictures of missions and ministry in action and put a tag line under them saying, “Your faithful gifts allow this to happen.”
- Build out an email strategy towards informing members of the summer campaign and encouraging their support. ALWAYS embed a link directly to the summer campaign page of your website.
- Set up a QR code to be put into all bulletins the weeks of the summer campaign that members can use their smartphone with to access the summer campaign webpage and thus make their commitment.
- Use your App to allow members to make their pledge on their smartphones. Again, if you don’t have an App contact us at Charis Giving Solutions to find out how to set one up.

All of the above take advance planning! Make sure you have these systems in place months before the launch of your summer giving campaign!

Use Facebook to Increase Giving

Facebook is all the buzz right now. More than a billion people worldwide are on Facebook. In fact if you considered Facebook users a nation they would be one of the largest in the world! Many of those billion plus people are members of your church. Out of the current 1.86 billion users worldwide 214 million are from the U.S. Do you connect with your followers via Facebook? If not you could be missing one of the best ways to tell your churches story and connect with your members.

Why should your church use Facebook? The numbers above should be reason enough. Also we have to realize that Facebook is THE social media tool of the majority of people in America. It is the electronic version of the water cooler or the neighborhood porch. It is where America gathers to talk about family, fun and whatever is on their mind. It has become America's scrapbook. Facebook gives you a window into the lives of millions of people. Facebook is how we catch up with old friends, keep relatives updated on the kids and grandkids and how we journal the story of our lives. Why would your church NOT have a Facebook page?

Apart from the above reasons churches should love Facebook as it is free and easy to use! Facebook is perhaps the world's cheapest marketing platform in the history of the world. Your church can spread the news of what you are doing to your members. Having a Facebook page allows them to connect to all the ministries of your church.

How to Raise More Money Using Facebook

One of the best ways to motivate people to give is to show them what dollars given to your church accomplish. I always advise our clients to tell their story. A good vision trumps a poor economy all the time. Show people what your ministries are accomplishing and they will give and continue to give. Here are some practical ideas for you to consider...

- First get a Facebook page for your church and begin posting continual updates and pictures. There is nothing worse than an out of date web page or Facebook page. Use the tool and it will bring results.
- Consider a page for each major ministry of your church. For instance you might have one for your Children's Ministry, one for Student Ministry and one for Senior Adults. Yes, Senior Adults are one of the fastest growing segments of Facebook. My 88 year old mom spends more time on Facebook than I do!

- Regularly mention your Facebook page in all your other links and announcements. You have to drive traffic to your page.
- Make sure someone on every church event is taking pictures. Nothing tells your story like pictures of your members involved in ministry. This alone will keep members coming back to the page.
- Use Facebook to announce upcoming ministry and mission events. You might show pictures of the same event from last year.
- Every time you have a major event post news of the event and pictures for people to see.
- Allow your people to contribute to the pages and thus open up an interactive communications avenue for everyone in your church.
- Frequently make statements like, “Without the faithful donations of members like you, mission events like this would never happen. Thank you for your gifts!”
- Have a link on your Facebook page back to your giving portal so that people touched by your story and pictures can give to support that work.

The bottom line is to tell your story and link ministry to giving. The more money we raise the more ministry we can do. Facebook is a tool with unlimited potential to get your message out. By connecting with your members to what you are doing and showing them how their gifts matter you will set the stage to have your appeals for money be more readily accepted. So, what are you waiting for, get a Facebook account set up now!

See the appendix for samples of how churches have used Facebook to boost summer giving.

Use Twitter to Tell Your Story

If you don't know what Twitter is you might be showing your age. Or you might not be paying attention to what is happening around you. Twitter made the news last year as protesters in Egypt and other countries used it to get the message out about their positions. So you should have by now heard about it.

Twitter, founded six years ago, is one of the most popular instant messaging platforms that allows a user to post messages of only 140 characters. Those messages are called Tweets. Twitter has become so popular that many feel it will eclipse e-mail as the primary form of online communication. While I am yet to get on that band wagon I do believe in Twitter and use it extensively.

I once knew a pastor who remarked that Twitter was the most narcissistic thing he had ever seen. That pastor has long since given up that view and now tweets regularly. In fact at a recent conference he held at his church he continually fired out tweets of key points the speakers were saying. I know because I was following his tweets.

If you are not on Twitter you need to be. If you are not using Twitter to help increase giving at your church you are missing one of the easiest and cheapest ways to communicate with your members. Let me give you a few reasons why you should be on Twitter.

First, it's where many of your people are getting information. Consider the following...

- Twitter reached 500k users 1 year and a half after launching
- Twitter reached 1 billion tweets shortly after 3 years.
- Today Twitter easily has more than 67 million Tweeter users in the U.S.
- Twitter recently eclipsed 313 million monthly active users by the end of 2016.

Second, it is free to sign up and easy to use. It is so easy even a caveman could do it! I know that is someone else's ad but it is true. The only challenge is that you have to limit your message to only 140 characters.

OK, so that is why you should use it but how would you use it to increase giving? Twitter allows you a platform to tell your story. One of the best ways to motivate people to give is to show them how their gift makes an impact. Consider this tweet...

This coming wk 100's of kids will attend VBS here and have their lives changed forever. Your gift helps make that happen! Thanks 4 giving!

That is exactly 140 characters. Spaces count so you have to be creative. Notice, wk for week, 100's for hundreds, 4 for for. Or here is another one ...

Snow made it hard for many to attend. Did you know you can give online? To do that go to www.yourgivingportal.gothere

Obviously it will not look exactly like that. In fact Twitter will shorten the web link allowing you to still type in enough of your message AND use the link to direct people to where you want them to go. You could use Twitter to drive people to your sign up pages for events but also to your online giving portals.

You can also get free programs that post Tweets even while you are asleep. I use a tool called Buffer to post my tweets throughout the day. It is free and you can find it here <http://bufferapp.com/>

There are other tools like it and having them simplifies things and allows you to be more effective in your tweets. For instance the minute I finished writing this post I set up through my Buffer account tweets announcing this post. I was thus able to do other things while Buffer did the work for me.

With Twitter about the only thing you are limited by is your imagination and well saying it in only 140 characters. As I think about it if you are a preacher you might need to enlist someone else to do this as most of us cannot say hello in 140 characters!

I would use Twitter for all kinds of communications at my church. While it will not hit all your members it will hit enough to be worth the time and effort. Don't bombard your Twitter followers with too many messages. Also, while I recommend using Twitter to increase giving to your church I would also advise to use those messages wisely and in a timely manner.

We have so many platforms upon which to tell our story of the amazing things in ministry your church is doing. People give money to ministries that are making a difference. Tell your story on Twitter and see if it does not help increase your offerings!

By the way, please follow me on Twitter. I am @StewardshipMan

Action Plan – Is your church set up for digital giving? If not it is way past time to implement the technology of our century. Your digital plan should include...

- Review your online presence with the look of an outsider. Does your churches online presence enhance or hinder your ability to connect digitally with your community? Take steps to get your church into the 21st century!
- Let's start with your website. Is it up to date? Are you using it as a communications tool for members? What improvements need to be made to enhance your web pages presence?
- If you don't have online giving set up start the process TODAY to get your church set up.
- Make sure your website is mobile friendly. If you don't know log on to your site with your smartphone or tablet. If it does not appear right on that device then you need to get it set up for mobile connections.
- If you don't already consider having an App built for your church.
- Do you have an email data base of your members? If not create information sheets asking for members email addresses and pass them out next Sunday.
- Make sure you have a Facebook page set up and active. Facebook is the front porch of America and a free creative way to tell your story. Make sure all members know about your page AND invite them to participate by posting pictures related to missions and ministries of the church.
- Set up a Twitter account for the church and begin advertising it to the entire church.
- Sign up for a service like Buffer that will allow you to schedule Tweets that focus upon the missions and ministry of your church. Then start tweeting!

Snail Mail Works! How to Use Direct Effectively

Remember the old saying, "If it ain't broke don't fix it?" In our rush to embrace new technologies I sometimes want to remind people of this saying. Too often when it comes to raising funds outside of the traditional platform appeal most churches fail all together. A few try the mail but not that many. Now with the rise of Social Media it seems that more and more people are moving away from the tried and true strategy of direct mail. Don't make the mistake of thinking direct mail cannot work for you.

Admit it. When you go to your mailbox and it's empty you are disappointed. Of course we can always console ourselves by the fact that at least there are no bills in the mail. Yet we all love to get mail. We just want that mail to be personal not junk. When the mailbox is empty there is a feeling somehow of disappointment.

It seems to me that we forget about our own emotions about snail mail when it comes time to discuss the impact of e-marketing and social media. Snail mail is so un-hip and so yesterday. The assumption has been that no one who is serious about reaching people does so using snail mail. The blog world is filled with post after post telling us to abandon the old ways and get into the 21st century. Most of what I read in terms of fundraising is about the use of social media. Hardly ever does anyone talk about good old fashioned U.S. Postal delivered mail. When they do it's dismissive.

Well, don't look now but the mail is not dead! The Wall Street Journal carried an article entitled, "Firms Hold Fast to Snail Mail Marketing." The upshot of the article is that firms are finding that abandoning their traditional snail mail campaigns actually cost them money rather than saved them money. That turns on its head one of the major arguments for abandoning snail mail, that it costs too much compared to electronic delivery. The article quoted several business leaders who had left their traditional mailings only to find that their customers missed them and that in the end it cost them revenue rather than saved them money. They went back to what worked for them, snail mail.¹

Snail Mail Works For Charities

How many letters did you get this week from some charitable cause asking for your support? Charities might not be Calvinistic and believe in the doctrine of the Security of the Believer ala, once saved always saved. They do believe in the security of the database. Once they have your name and address you will eternally get mail from them! Why is it that so many charities use the U.S. Postal system to make appeals? It works! If it did not work then you and I would not be getting all that mail in our boxes.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy wrote an article on a study by Edge Research of how charities must adapt their strategies to reach various age groups. While the major focus of the article was on reaching younger donors through means other than direct mail, something that I will discuss in the next chapter, it nonetheless found that direct mail still has great value.

Consider this startling statistic, "The study found that direct mail remains the dominant way through which older people give, with seventy-seven percent of donors born in 1945 or before

saying they had given through the mail in the last two years.” The study further found a breakdown of, “Forty-three percent of people in their 30’s and 40’s and twenty-six percent of those in their 20’s said they had given through the mail in the past two years.²” While younger people do indeed use a variety of sources to give across the board, snail mail was still found to be impactful.

If It Works For Non-Profits It Will Work For Your Church

Many years ago I was introduced to the need to use direct mail as a means to raise funds for my church. The IRS mandates that churches send out giving statements. As we moved to meet this requirement I always included a letter of thanks from me for their gift. The letter also included an envelope that had a postage paid stamp that we only paid postage on if they mailed it back in. I was amazed at how many envelopes with checks came back our way. I gladly paid the few pennies of postage to get the checks. I learned that direct mail worked.

It might be that should Jesus tarry and this book be read twenty-five years from now this chapter will seem antiquated. Perhaps direct mail will disappear even faster than that. However, for the next few years it remains a viable option for churches to raise funds outside of Sunday morning. The key is in knowing how to use this tool effectively.

How to Effectively Use Direct Mail

What was especially enlightening about the Wall Street Journal article was for snail mail to be really and truly effective it had to be personalized. The article stated, "Many entrepreneurs find that the boiler-plate methods of the past - such as purchasing mailing lists and sending fliers or coupons to a mass audience - often aren't cost effective. Instead, business owners are creating personalized mailings, which may include special offers or other valuable information, and sending them to a handpicked list of current and prospective customers.³"

In essence two strategies are working here. Segmenting their lists for effectiveness and personalizing the message for maximum impact. The article states, "The idea is to send something that's more appealing than "junk" mail and potentially more noticeable than an email message.⁴"

So how does this apply to churches and to stewardship? Beyond not abandoning using the mail to raise funds here are some key points to ponder.

Segmentation. Don't treat all your donors the same! Nearly every church I know falls prey to this syndrome. I am not talking about showing favoritism by giving one group special treatment over another group. I am suggesting that if you treat everyone the same you are making a mistake.

We attended the church where we are now members for over two years before we joined. I marveled at how often we would get letters appealing for our commitment to the budget that was a form letter addressed to everyone. I was not a member but I did contribute to the church. It would have been a much more effective letter if it was addressed to my particular segment.

To be truly effective you need to understand what segments exist in your church. I talked about this in a previous chapter. Segmenting your congregation is no different than a choir director segmenting the bass members from the altos. He or she does that to maximize the choir's musical impact. To maximize your communication and your giving potential you should do the same. While it might create more work for you, segmenting your mailings could increase the amount of money you receive.

Personalization. The WSJ article I mentioned above began with the story of an executive who, in the past, had sent out a hand signed letter to hundreds of customers. By personalizing the letter the impact was maximized. Think about the mail you get, snail mail or email. Are not the ones that get your attention those that are personally addressed? If you respond favorably to personalized mail do you not think your donors might respond the same way?

Personalization is more than simply hand signing your name to letters. There are a host of personal things that can be done. Invest in making sure that letters sent out are personalized. When a piece of mail is addressed, "Dear Mark," it gets my attention rather than "Dear Sir." When you personally call me I listen. When it's an automated voice I hang up. I once hung up on Sarah Palin. Ok, it was a recording but you get my drift. Think of ways to make your appeals, snail mail and electronic, personal and you will see a greater return.

Diversification. If you put all your eggs in one basket don't be surprised when that basket gets turned over. More and more I am seeing the "experts" come around to say that we do not need to totally dismiss old ways. The articles I quote in this chapter are prime examples. What churches need is a strategy that is diversified in order to be effective. In these days when donations are more challenging to receive you will have to work harder for those dollars. You have to be willing to try new things, change old things, adapt and diversify. In short, you need a stewardship plan of action.

The WSJ article spent the last few paragraphs talking about how businesses are trying to figure out how to integrate Web marketing with direct mail. It quoted Professor Eric Anderson as saying, "The introduction of new media has forced business owners to go back and revisit the whole playbook on what's the best way to communicate with customers."⁵ The point here is that there cannot be a one size fits all mentality. In our rush to embrace the new electronic world we had better not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Marketing or, in this case, appeals to give should never be one as opposed to another but a both/and approach.

So hopefully by reading this chapter you are now convinced that part of your stewardship plan must entail good old fashioned snail mail. It is not enough to know that you need to use this approach; you need to know how to use it. You can often do more harm in sending out a bad letter than not sending one out at all.

As I was writing this chapter, my wife came in with an appeal letter from a local hospital asking for a donation. Amazingly it contained a key misspelled word. It talked about three enclosed cards when none were enclosed. In short, the only impact it made on us was to use as an example of how not to send out an appeal letter. The next chapter on "How to Write a Direct Mail Letter" will hopefully keep you from the same kind of mistakes.

¹ Teri Evans, “Firms Hold Fast to Snail Mail Marketing,” Wall Street Journal 12 January 2010.

² Caroline Preston, “Charities Must Adapt Appeals to Reach Young Donors, Poll Finds,” The Chronicle of Philanthropy 25 March 2010.

³ “Firms Hold Fast to Snail Mail Marketing”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

How to Write a Direct Mail Letter

My wife and I have given in the past to a Tulsa, Oklahoma ministry called the John 3:16 Mission. They feed and house the homeless and poor in our home town of Tulsa. In May of 2009 we received in the mail an envelope with the words on the outside that read, "Summer of Yes! 2009 Please Respond by June 30!" Inside was a letter of appeal and three commitment slips for each month of the summer and three envelopes each with the month printed on them. My guess is that John 3:16 raised the money they needed that year to carry out their summer programs.

It was a well written letter by a Christian charity that obviously has a lot of experience writing appealing letters. In fact, they might have paid someone brilliant to write it for them. While your budget might not give you that luxury you nonetheless can learn how and when to send a direct mail letter. The following points are why I think this appeal was successful and how you too can implement successful direct mail writing.

The appeal letter was one page front and back and gets straight to the point. Appeal letters should never be long. One page is better even than one page front and back, but at least this one was one page. This letter was personally addressed and told us exactly why they were writing to us - summers are a time of donation drop-off. They then listed out what they will do and how many they will feed this summer. My only criticism is that they put those points on the back of the letter. I would state my need on the front. In fact, I always like to start the letter by telling what God has allowed the ministry to accomplish. People not only give to where there is need but to where ministry has happened. Hearing about past success gives me confidence that my gift will provide future success. On the whole, the John 3:16 letter was effective and my guess is that it did result in contributions.

Printed commitment forms making it easy to choose what gift we can make. For June, July and August they have forms already made out that we can use. They have made making those payments easy as you can either include a check or have your credit card charged. The key here is that they have made it easy for us. In our world of convenience you have to make it as attractive and easy for your donors as possible.

Three envelopes were included, one for each month, further making the process easier. All I have to do is put a stamp on them and my return address. The three envelopes each have the month printed on the outside so there is no way even I can mess it up! My position is that every letter you write to your donors should have an envelope in it. I think it is even advisable to have a postage paid permit printed upon them so that it is even easier for your donors to respond. Putting envelopes in the mailing says you expect to get something back.

So, what was the result of this mailing upon the Brooks household? We sent in \$100 a month. While that might not seem like a lot, you need to understand that typically we give around Thanksgiving and Christmas. This appeal has generated from us an additional \$300 that they would not normally have gotten. How many other \$100 monthly gifts did they get on top of ours?

Appeal Letter Outline

The above sample worked well for John 3:16. The same basic approach should be utilized for every mailing you attempt. I am a big proponent of one page letters. As such here is my outline for an effective appeal letter.

Opening Paragraphs – Start out by being positive. Tell stories of how your church is making an impact. List specific examples or personalized stories. Sometimes I use bullet points to highlight specific victories. End the paragraph with a sentence like, “All of this is possible because of donors like you. Thank you for helping us make a difference in our region.”

Middle Paragraphs – State the need. Don’t sound desperate but do list what you want and why. Make clear what you are asking for and what you will do with donations that come in. The best appeal letters have what I call a driver to them. You need to communicate an impactful reason for the donation. The John 3:16 example I gave here was compelling. A poor appeal would have said, “Summer is a tough time on our budget and we are behind please help us catch up.”

Closing Paragraphs – Sum it all up. State when you want the gifts to come in. Finish up by thanking them for their past support and their prayerful consideration of this request.

Inserts – As I stated earlier every letter you send out should contain an envelope. Your goal is to make it as easy for them to respond as possible. While we will talk about online giving in the next chapter, I would also include your online giving address so that those who choose to give that way can.

Remember the Three C’s of Vision

One key thing to remember is that money is raised based by a vision that motivates and inspires people. We teach our clients that their vision must be clear, concise and most of all compelling. The better you write a letter with these three principles in mind the more impactful the response will be.

That is it. It is not hard to write. Put some thought into the letters you write. For heaven’s sake have someone check the spelling and grammar. Using these simple directions can make your appeal letters much more effective.

Action Plans – Direct mail will be one of the crucial pieces leading to a fully funded summer of giving. Here are some steps to take now...

- Consider having special envelopes designed highlighting the summer giving campaign. You will need those printed and available no later than the last of May.
- Schedule out when all letters will be sent out. See our sample calendar in the Appendix.
- Write each letter at least two weeks prior to when they need to be mailed.

Use the Pulpit to Increase Your Giving

The best way to raise funds at your church is by utilizing the power of the pulpit! For those that have done away with the pulpit let me rephrase that. The best way to raise funds at your church is by utilizing the power of the platform! Yet few churches use this free and easy tool. From the platforms and pulpits of American there is a virtual silence on stewardship. Could that be one reason why giving as a percentage of income has fallen from 3.11% in 1968 to around 2.3% now?

Every church has at least two opportunities every week of the summer from their platform in which to increase their giving with the sermon and the offering. To raise funds you need to...

Preach on it! The sad reality is that many pastors miss this opportunity as they fail to preach on giving or stewardship. One study showed that only 32% had heard a sermon in the last year on stewardship. At more and more churches there is less and less preaching on stewardship. One of the best studies on the power of preaching and giving comes from the classic George Barna book, **“How to Increase Giving in Your Church.”** He found that churches in which pastors preach...

- Single messages about giving raise more money than do churches in which no stewardship takes place.
- Two or more nonconsecutive messages do not have any advantage over churches that only preach on stewardship once a year.
- Two or more consecutive messages about stewardship raise more money than do those churches that only hear one message a year.
- Churches in which pastors preach two or more consecutive messages about stewardship matters raise significantly more money than churches that hear two or more nonconsecutive stewardship messages.
- A series on giving is nearly two and a half times more likely to experience an increase in giving than preachers who only talk about stewardship once a year or on two nonconsecutive times in a year.
-

If you want to increase giving in your church plan now to add a stewardship series into your preaching schedule. You might just make budget this year if you do.

Pass the plate! With the rise of the Contemporary Church movement many churches stopped passing the plate in an attempt to try and attract unbelievers. Ironically many of the largest and fastest growing churches in America do pass a weekly offering plate. If you are not passing the plate you are missing the opportunity to fully fund missions and ministry at your church. Yet the offering is one of the most boring moments of our time of worship. Most churches never even give any thought or planning to the offering time. It has become an afterthought. I believe we need to rethink our approach to taking up the collection.

Start this week thinking about how you can use your pulpit or platform to enhance giving at your church. There are many ways to educate and inspire your members and attendees to give. The two best will always be the offering and the power of the spoken Word. Are you using those tools effectively?

This summer think about how you set up the offering. Set it up strategically to raise more funds. Look in the sample section for four samples in the Sample section at the end of this book.

Action Plan- Few church leaders ever give any thought to planning how from the platform they can enhance stewardship. Be different make the following plans...

- Think about how sermons during the summer can be used to enhance giving. Even though the series might be on something other than giving think about ways to insert comments about the importance of giving.
- Plan out every offering moment with an elevator pitch. See the Appendix for samples.

A Sample Summer Giving Plan – The Summer of Light

The following section is designed to actually show you what a summer giving plan would look like. It is called The Summer of Light. Our goal is to communicate that in the midst of a world of uncertainty and darkness there is light. Jesus is THE light of the world. We want to lift Him up high so that His light will shine and bring others into the light. Thus our theme and message trumpets that truth. This year I am building the message around the theme, “The Summer of Light”

As you look over the calendar you will note that on almost every Sunday something has some mention about the summer giving campaign. We recommend use of not only the Internet and direct mail but also the platform to communicate the message of light and to encourage faithful giving. We also utilized lay testimonies of members telling their own stories of God’s faithfulness when they gave. Each message is to be positive, uplifting and yet challenge the church to give in support to the missions and ministry of the church that was providing hope to their community.

Stewardship Plan Calendar The Summer of Light 2017 Calendar

May

- Early May** **Leadership Summit** – A gathering of all leaders, both ministry leaders and giving leaders. Give an update on the status of ministry, thank them for their support, announce any new initiatives for coming summer and focus on long term summer initiatives, stress importance of summer campaign and ask their support for giving during the summer.
- 5/7** **Bulletin insert encouraging Automatic Withdrawal** – Insert into your bulletin a signup sheet for setting up automatic withdrawal. **See sample in Appendix**
- 5/14** **Tithing Testimony** – Enlist laypeople to give a one to two minute testimony of their experience in tithing.
- 5/15** **Direct Mail and Email blast about summer giving campaign commitment**

June

6/1 **1st Direct Mail and email letter** – First Summer Giving campaign reminder letter with commitment card and envelope goes out to every person that made a commitment to give. Another letter goes out to those that did not make a commitment encouraging them to support Summer Giving campaign.

6/4 **Bulletin insert** – Focus on another missions or ministry initiative

6/18 **Tithing Testimony**

July **Theme –Committing to the Harvest**

7/3 **2nd Direct Mail and email blast** – Reminder letter goes out with envelope to every person who made a commitment to the campaign.

7/10 **Second quarter giving statements mailed**

7/16 **Bulletin insert**

7/23 **Tithing Testimony**

August

8/1 **3rd Direct Mail and email blast** – Final letter goes out with envelope to all those that made a commitment to the campaign.

8/13 **Tithing Testimony and promotion of fall session of Financial Peace**

8/20 **Bulletin Insert encouraging strong close out on Summer Giving Campaign**

September

9/3 **Final Fruit offering for Summer Giving Campaign**

9/4 **Send out thank you letters to all who gave to The Summer of Light**

Appendix – Samples

Appendix A: Samples Letters for The Summer of Light

May 15th letter setting up giving campaign

Dear Community Church,

At Community Church our focus is, LIST YOUR VISION STATEMENT. We are committed to bringing light into the darkness of our world. This year we have seen over **XX people baptized.** Every one of them has a story. Here is one story.

Insert a story of one person who was baptized. This should contain three to four sentences!

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” **We bring light to people like (Name of person) as each one of you through your prayers, service and giving play a part in the story of the XX we have seen come to Christ.** So, thank you for doing your part to help us reach that one person. We have seen great things but there is more to do. **There is still more light that needs to shine!**

Will you help us share the light of Jesus? As we approach the start of summer we encourage you to remain faithful in your giving so that we can continue to share the light of God. Frankly summer is a challenging time for us to make budget as many are away on vacations and our attendance is lower. Yet at the same time our needs to fund our missions and ministry endeavors increase! So, we need your help!

This summer we are launching a summer giving campaign called, **The Summer of Light.** We are asking everyone in our Community Church family to stay strong in their giving so that we can share the light of Christ to our world. We are asking you to be on beacon in our **Summer of Light.**

Every dollar helps us better fulfill our mission. Let’s make sure Community Church is fully funded this summer. **Will you share your light with others through your generous giving?**

Community Church Family, thank you for all you do in service and financial support. Let’s give generously so that we can share the light of Christ to our town, region, state, nation and the world!

I am committed to doing my part to shine the light. Are you?

Bro. Mark

P.S. We have included an envelope to make your giving easy. Simply include your gift and mail it back or drop it in the offering the next time you worship with us.

P.S.S. Don’t forget you can simply and securely give your tithes and offerings through Community Church’s website <http://communitychurch.org>

Email version of the same initial letter

Dear _____,

At Community Church our focus is, LIST YOUR VISION STATEMENT. We are called to shine our light within us, the Light of Christ, to pierce the darkness around us!

We shine the light of Christ through your prayers, service and giving that helps play a part in the story of the XX we have seen come to Christ. So, thank you for doing your part to help us reach that one person. We have seen great things but there is more to do. There is still more light to share!

Our summer giving campaign is called, **The Summer of Light**. We are asking everyone in our Community Church family to stay strong in their giving so that we can share the light of Jesus to our community. We are calling upon you to help us share the light! Give here to help us reach share the light, <http://communitychurch.org/give>

One of the best ways to do this is by setting up your giving automatically! Sign up for recurring giving at <http://ourchurch.org/give>

Community Church Family, thank you for all you do in service and financial support. Let's give generously so that we can share the light of Christ to our town, region, state, nation and the world!

I am committed to doing my part to shine the light. Are you?

Bro. Mark

P.S. Don't forget you can simply and securely give your tithes and offerings through Community Church's website <http://communitychurch.org>

2nd Direct Mail Sample Letter

Dear Community Church Family,

Happy Fourth of July! The Fourth of July has come to mean a lot of things to we Americans. It means baseball, hotdogs and Chevrolet to some. To others it is a day off to lay around the pool or beach. The Fourth is a time for us to relax and spend time with our families, to eat and to watch parades and fireworks. Sometimes we forget the real meaning of the holiday, to celebrate the fact that our Founding Father's risked their lives so that we can be free.

Down through the years there have been many countless sacrifices to maintain our freedom. 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's our nation grants us. We are free in Christ. Our **The Summer of Light** giving campaign has been all about sharing the hope we have in Christ since we are free. To date we have kept pace with our missions and ministry needs. I am writing you again to encourage your continued support of this crucial endeavor.

We are half way through summer with still many more exciting things to accomplish so we must not stop now. Please prayerfully consider continuing to give to **The Summer of Light** Every gift goes to continue our work of sharing hope not only to our community but literally around the world. Our desire is to see many more experience the hope we have as a result of being free in Christ. Thanks for your consideration and faithfulness in giving. Your gifts are making a difference.

Your pastor,

Bro.

PS. Remember you can give online by going to our website at www.OurCommunityChurch.com

Second Quarter Sample Letter – Since you must send out a quarterly letter and the second quarter ends in July here is a sample letter for your consideration.

Dear Community Church Donor,

In sports the half time is when teams rest up, reflect on what worked in the first half and what didn't, and prepare to close out the game successfully. We have reached the half-way point in our yearly giving here at Community Church. As a result of you and many others faithful giving we have stayed in the game! While we read of many churches struggling we have, by your faithful giving and the grace of God, manage to not only survive but to thrive! We have accomplished much in the first half of the year. However there is still much more to be done.

Enclosed you will find your quarterly giving statement for the first two quarters of the year. I asked our financial team to allow me to insert a personal word to every donor. I wanted to say a simple thank you for your faithfulness in giving. I know you have multiple opportunities to give to other ministries and causes. The fact that you have given here is greatly appreciated.

As we move into the second half of the year we still have many ministry opportunities ahead of us. We are in the midst of our summer giving campaign, **The Summer of Light** We have been blessed to see great things happen for the Lord and are looking forward to a great fall. We are already ramping up for an exciting new year. All of this is made possible through gifts like yours. Your faithful support now will help us continue our full ministry focus.

Each of us loves to be a part of a winning team. Here at Community Church our “game” is not that of earthly matters. We are in an eternal match against the forces of evil. We will prevail. The victory is ours through Jesus! Yet we dare not slack off at any point and lose the advantage that is ours. By staying faithful in our gifts we can assure that our second half will be just as impactful as our first. I know I can count on you as you have shown yourself faithful in the past. Together we will win the victory for Jesus!

Thank you once again for allowing me the honor of being your pastor and thank you for supporting this church through your gifts.

Your pastor,

Bro. Mark

PS. Always remember you can set your giving up to be automatic by going to <http://communitychurch.org/give>

3rd Direct Mail letter

Dear Friend of Community Church,

Millions are flocking to see the movie LIST A CURRENT MOVIE! Have you seen it? Hollywood capitalizes on our desire for great stories and every summer they release block buster movies. Those movies are usually based upon some fictional story that has little to no meaningful message. I want to tell you a story that is real. It is the story of how light came to one person named, John Smith.

Most of you don't know the name John Smith. John lives in our city and through friends who invited him to our church he realized he needed Christ as his personal Savior. Not long ago he made that commitment which changed his life forever. I was honored to baptize John along with others. Each of these people like John Smith has a story to tell and now thanks to Christ their story will have a happy ending!

While you may not realize it you are a part of John Smith's story and the other people we baptized recently. Your faithfulness in supporting the ministries and missions of Community Church allows us to reach the John Smiths of the world. John Smith is only one story of many that are happening not just in our town but literally around the world.

Baptizing people is always exciting but it is just the tip of the iceberg of all that we are doing this summer. We saw XX of our students accept Christ at Summer Camp. Hundreds of children have been impacted through our VBS. We have sent out mission groups literally around the globe all to, **put your Vision statement here!** Together we at Community Church are making a difference. **We are committed to shining the light of Jesus into the darkness of our world!**

As hard as it might be to believe we are almost through summer. We have seen already many great victories but there is still work this summer left to do. Like a football team at halftime holding a lead we dare not coast in the second half. Community Church never has coasted and I am trusting we will press to the finish in our campaign **The Summer of Light**

Summer is always a difficult time for the average church in America to make ends meet. However Our Church is far from the average church and through your generosity we are on pace to hit our financial goals. **Remember from Memorial Day to Labor Day, our weekly ministry budget need is \$X,XXX.** While we are on pace I want to encourage you to continue your faithful giving so that we can continue with our ministry and mission goals.

How many other stories like John Smith's will we be able to celebrate by summer's end? Hundreds and thousands of stories of changed lives for eternity will be told. Thank you for your generosity that helps make this happen. We can finish the summer strong if you will support **The Summer of Light** to help us shine our lights brightly!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

PS. Don't forget that you can set up your giving online so that if you are gone your gift is present. To sign up go to <http://ourchurch.org/give>

Thank you letter after summer giving campaign is completed

Dear Community Church Family,

The Apostle Paul opens his letter to the church at Philippi by saying, **“I thank my God every time I remember you.”** I know how Paul felt as every time I think of our Community Church family I thank God for you and that God allows me the privilege to be your pastor.

This past summer was another reminder of how blessed I am to serve the Lord here. Gifts to our **The Summer of Light** campaign allowed us to collect over \$XXX,XXX to fund our summer missions and ministries! Praise the Lord and thank you Community Church family. When other churches are being forced to scale back due to declining offerings we are poised to continue our work for the Lord. None of this would be possible without the favor and blessings of God and the faithfulness of our Community Church family.

I wanted to write and thank you for your sacrificial giving. While numbers like \$XXX,XXX are exciting what is even more exciting is the continued ministry that it allows us to accomplish. Every gift given to Community Church is wisely and prudently used to extend the Kingdom. The greater **list your city** area and beyond is blessed by your faithful gifts.

Let me end by quoting the rest of Paul’s opening thanksgiving and prayer to the Philippians, “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”

May this prayer of Paul be true for our church as it was for the church at Philippi. I look forward to seeing you this Sunday with Bible ready and hearts receptive to hear what God wants to say to us.

Committed to shining the light of Jesus,

Bro. Mark

PS. Don’t forget you can give online at <http://communitychurch.org/give>

Appendix B:

Crafting Your Vision for the “Ask”

Worksheet

Purpose: To document the vision for (insert defining vision statement) and make a compelling case for giving to your church in the next few weeks.

Principles / Benefits: Guidance for developing the case for giving to your church.

1. Effectively communicates leadership’s vision for the church.
2. Reflects the church’s mission.
3. Identifies genuine needs and offers practical steps for meeting those needs.
4. Ensures that everyone in your church’s family receives consistent messages about the church’s vision and priorities.
5. Presents a positive image of the church.
6. Builds on the church’s potential.
7. Demonstrates how sacrificial gifts will unleash the church’s potential and turn vision into reality.
8. Provides a clear link between the church’s mission, its vision, and support opportunities.

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

1. Who we are
2. What has been accomplished
3. Our Purpose
4. Specifics of our vision for the future – how these decisions were made
5. Why are these needs crucial to your ministry?
6. Cost of realizing this vision (if known – anticipated cost and fundraising goals could appear in subsequent program publications.)
7. Why now (demonstrate the sense of urgency)
8. What will it take
9. A call to complete and sacrificial participation
10. You can make a difference!

Reasons to give: Think through the following needs your church has in the coming weeks. Use the list on the next page as a beginning working document to help clarify the “ask.”

Mission Initiatives – List any specific mission your church supports that would receive dollars to help meet their needs. An example might be:

- 10% of all gifts will go towards support of international missionaries.
- Our Mission teams will be literally around the globe in Africa and South America.

Why is it important to give to this now?

Ministry Initiatives – List any specific ministry of your church that would receive dollars to help meet their needs. An example might be:

- Our student ministry spring break retreat is weeks away and we want to impact as many students as possible, your gift can make this happen!
- Our VBS is set to be our best ever and starts the last week of June. Planning and work are starting now and we need to fully fund this!

Why is it important to give to this now?

Appendix C:

Sample Offering Talks for Your Summer Offerings

May 28th Honoring Those Who Gave the Ultimate

Memorial Day was designed as a day to remember those who gave their lives defending our freedoms. Too often we have forgotten the purpose of this day. We focus more on the start of summer activities than we do honoring those that gave the ultimate sacrifice. At some point this weekend I challenge you to stop and say a word of thanks to those that gave that kind of sacrifice.

During WWII families that had members serving put a blue star in their windows. It let everyone know that a father, son or even daughter was serving their country. When a loved one died in that service they put up a gold star.

You may have seen blue stars in car windows or on lapel pins recently as that practice has come back into vogue with our current conflict. You may have even seen gold stars. Every time you do we need to say a prayer for those families and thank them if we can for paying the ultimate sacrifice. Monday, Memorial Day is their day. Let's pause at some point and remember those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We have benefited from the sacrifice of others. Not simply our freedoms we enjoy here in America paid for by the spilt blood of our troops. We benefit from sacrificial giving in countless ways in this country from schools, to hospitals to museums and more. The generosity of Americans is enjoyed by each successive generation.

Here at **Your Church** we have benefited from the generosity of past generations. We worship today in this facility due to the sacrificial giving of others before us. Without their sacrifices we would not have what we have or be able to do what we do.

This Memorial Day weekend as we honor those that gave the ultimate sacrifice let's do our part for the next generation by giving to this offering. Others gave so that we can worship here. Will you give so that future generations can continue to worship here?

June 4th Taking a Vacation?

How many of you are planning a vacation this summer? Anyone heading overseas? How many of you are heading to the beach? What about the lake? Anyone going to the mountains? How many of you are simply staying at home hoping to do nothing? That might be the wisest course of action. Someone has said that often our vacations are so tiring that we need a vacation from our vacation! Staying at home and resting might be just the thing for you AND think of all the money you will save!

Speaking of which, according to American Express the average vacation expense per person in the United States is \$1,145, or \$4,580 for a family of four. I suppose that depends on where you are going. The price of everything is going up including vacations!

At OUR CHURCH we believe in the importance of taking a vacation. Whether you are simply staying at home or going somewhere exotic our pray for you is that it will be a relaxing, refreshing time and one that bonds you with your spouse and family.

If you are going to be gone this summer please remember that you can give ahead of time or even at the beach! Our online giving is set up to make giving easy for you. One of the best ways is by setting up recurring giving. That way you never need to remember to send a check in or bring the checkbook with you to church. If you forget and are on the road simply go to our website and click the give button.

This summer we have an amazing line up of missions and ministry initiatives. We will be changing lives for eternity and your faithfulness in giving, even when on vacation, helps us do all we have planned. So, this summer take a break and get some rest. Yet don't forget to give!

June 11th Mine!

One of the first words other than mama and dada that a child learns is, “Mine!” If you doubt me just go down to our nursery area and try to take a toy away from a two year old. In all probability the word you will hear is, “Mine,” followed by tears. Where do they learn that? We certainly don’t teach that. We could have a long theological talk about the sin nature of man and all that but I think all of us would agree that sadly we are born with a selfish tendency.

How can a cute little toddler be selfish? Yet they are. We don’t worry about it much because we know with proper training and maturity they will grow up. Yet does that attitude of, this is mine, ever leave us? When you believe that something is yours or that you have earned something it is harder to give it away. When something is simply loaned to you then it is easier to give back.

Did you know that what you think you own you don’t really own? We know that is true for the car and house we have financed through the bank. In actuality everything we think we own is simply on loan to us. You doubt me? Consider Psalms 24:1 that says, “The earth is the Lord’s and **everything** in it.” This passage and others teaches us that God owns it all. What we have He has entrusted to us. Consider it a loan.

Here is another passage to consider, “*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust (literally, stewards) must prove faithful*” ([1 Corinthians 4:2](#)). The Greek term “steward” here includes a form of the word, *house*. It describes a household manager in the ancient Greek world who handled the finances for the owner. Managers are accountable to owners for how they use their finances or material possessions.

Every time we take up an offering here it is our opportunity to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Our gifts fuel the mission and ministry that we do here. Yet when we give we grow in maturity. We cease being a toddler saying, mine, to becoming a fully devoted follower of Christ saying, yours! Today as we take up this offering let’s be good stewards of that which God has entrusted to us.

June 18th The Best Gift for Your Father

How many of you use Google to find stuff out? What did we do before Google? You can find out anything on the Internet. Thank you Al Gore! Some of you got that. It is true that you can find a boat load of information. So, in case you missed it today is Father's Day. Let's give all our fathers a hand!

So what does Google have to do with Father's Day? I wanted to know what dads really wanted for Father's Day so I Googled it. Boy is there a lot of lists on what to get dear old dad! In fact it is sort of confusing. The lists run the gamut. So what my researched showed was there was not one specific gift that will say best how much you appreciate dear old dad.

So today I can't help you discover what the best gift for your father is. Frankly at this point it is probably too late. At least you can call your dad today and hopefully he is in the 50% that considers a phone call as an appropriate Father's Day gift.

What is the best gift to give your heavenly Father? As we come to the offering time that is what I want all of us to think about. What gift will please our Father in heaven? Is it a percentage? Is it a specific dollar amount? What gift can we give to honor our spiritual Father?

The Apostle Paul shed light on this in his letter to the Corinthian church encouraging them to give. Listen to what he said about giving, "Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Today we honor our fathers. Whether we give them a tie, a card or just a phone call the value of the gift comes from the love that gift expresses not what it is. Today as we take up the offering what God truly is looking for is a gift given from love. When we give out of love it's easier to give and we give cheerfully! That is the best kind of gift!

June 25th We Want to Say Thank You

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

Summer is a busy time for us here at OUR CHURCH. We have tons going on. In fact 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 are about helping connect people to a life changing experience with Christ. We could not do any of this without you! Literally, 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!

Not only are we dependent upon volunteers giving of their time but all 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 simply want to say, 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 not only here in our town but around the world. Thank you! Thank you! **Your generosity is changing lives forever!**

July 2nd Until Everyone is Free

Tuesday we celebrate the birth of our nation and the freedom that so many have paid the ultimate price protecting for us. We are free to worship today because so many have served to keep us free. Would all of you who have served in the military please stand? Let's give them a round of applause! Thank you for your service.

If you have served or are a family member of one who served you have probably heard of the USO. **The USO has provided support for soldiers and their families for over 75 years.** They provide entertainment to our troops and support to their families. Their slogan is, **“Until Every One Comes Home.”** I love that slogan and pray that one day it will be true.

As we celebrate the freedom of our nation we know that millions of people are still enslaved. White, black, Asian, Indian, all races everywhere are born into sin. That sin sows seeds that grow into chains of spiritual slavery. Those chains of sin lead humanity into all kinds of harm and woe. True freedom does not come from releasing physical chains but from releasing spiritual chains. At YOUR CHURCH this is our focus. This is what drives us each and every day, to sow the seeds of spiritual freedom.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians this, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” **Like the USO slogan our slogan could be stated, “Until Every One is Free.”**

You are a big part of helping us achieve this dream of ultimate freedom. Every time you attend, serve, invite, pray and give you sow a seed that makes it possible for others to experience the true freedom that comes only in Jesus Christ!

So this morning as we take up this offering let's give so that we can continue our positive message of life change, **“Until Every One is Free.”**

July 9th How to Be Blessed

Wouldn't you love to have God's blessing? Every week we take up an offering and we talk about how your gift helps us do all that we do here. We do countless things that help improve the lives of people and it is all because you give. Yet what we often forget to focus upon is that giving gives us God's blessing!

Talking about giving bringing blessings is seldom communicated due to the excesses of a few churches and pastors. Some have promised that if you give to their ministry or church God will double, triple or greatly increase the amount you have given. That is not the point of our giving. We don't give in order to get more for ourselves. We give because God has asked us to give. Yet repeatedly God promises those that give His blessing. This blessing might be financial but it might also be a simple joy of knowing that you and your gift matter for Kingdom work.

Psalms 37 is a Psalm that talks about how God blesses the righteous and generous. Verse 25 and 26 says, "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed."

This is just one passage among many that point out a couple of truths. First, that those who are righteous, those who have put their faith in Christ, are generous. Think about that for a moment. The second truth is that God blesses those that are generous. It even says their children will be blessed! Again it does not mean you will get a boat load of money in return. However, you will be blessed. Think about that. The God of the universe who created everything is on your side. He WILL bless you. I don't know about you but that brings me comfort. So as we pause to take up this offering let us never forget that a part of what we get when we give is God's blessing!

July 16th How Much Does School Cost?

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? 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 down time. 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 own 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 all that we do including keeping the building cool! As you might imagine during the summer months our giving is greatly challenged with many people gone. If you missed an offering this summer would you consider making that up this morning? Your gift today will help us reach more people with the Good News!

Your gifts are important because we are not done yet sharing the Light of Jesus!

July 23rd Sick and Tired

Is anyone here sick and tired of politics? Most Americans would say yes to that question. Politics is divisive. While we believe that Christians should vote we also believe it is not our place to tell you how to vote. Our country is divided into various factions, parties, segments and groups. We have enough that divides us so at **YOUR CHURCH NAME** our focus is to be united around one thing, our vision.

State your vision or mission statement. (If you don't have a vision statement read Matthew 28:18-20.) You know what? You can be a Democrat a Republican, an Independent or nothing at all and be on board with our vision statement. It is why we exist. It is our focus, the lens by which everything here is evaluated. It is our rallying cry our reason for existing.

While we have political opinions our main focus is upon being the kind of church God has called us to be. We recognize the importance of Christians being in the political arena to bring salt and light to that process. Yet we also recognize that no government can do what God has called the Church to do. If our hope is in Washington or even our favorite candidate we are in trouble! The hope of the world does not lie in a political process, party or person but in Jesus Christ. Locally, here in, **Your City**, God has placed us to be His hands and feet. All that we do is to accomplish this.

This is why every week we take up an offering. We never apologize when we pass the plate. We don't tell guest they don't have to give. We try to show you how giving here helps share the love of Christ, locally and around the world.

It is estimated that spending on the last political campaign by all persons and parties was \$6.8 billion dollars! Much of that was spent on television ads that most of us will quickly change the channel on. All that money might get a candidate elected but it will not impact the soul of one person like your gift today will. We don't have Super Pacs here. We don't have high rollers or Wall Street money. We just have people like you who are sick and tired of the impact of sin and desire to see real life change!

July 30th No More Offerings!

Did you know that there was once a time in the Bible where God's people were told to stop giving? It's true. In the book of Exodus the story is told of the building of the tabernacle. If you remember the tabernacle was built while the children of Israel were in the desert. I am not sure if you know this or not but there are not any Lowe's or Home Depot in deserts. So how in the world were they going to build a tabernacle?

The answer came from Moses who said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring the Lord an offering..." Where were they to get all this stuff? They had it with them. For if you will remember on the night they left Egypt the Egyptian people gave the Israelites anything they asked for just to get them out of the country. The Bible says the Israelites asked for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. Exodus 12:36 says, "The Lord had made the Egyptians favorable disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians. You see God knew there was an offering coming and He prepared His people ahead of time so they could give.

So when it came time to build the tabernacle and take up an offering to supply what was needed Moses asked the people to give. In Exodus 35:21 it says, "and everyone whose heart was willing and whose heart moved him to come and brought an offering to the Lord." They kept on coming and giving until in Exodus 36:6,7 this is recorded, "Moses sent out orders through the camp: "Men! Women! No more offerings for the building of the Sanctuary!" The people were ordered to stop bringing offerings! There was plenty of material for all the work to be done. Enough and more than enough."

There are several take aways from this story. One is that when God wants to do something He gives us a chance to be involved in that. Another is that before He asks us to do something, like give an offering, He has already provided a means by which we can give. The final is that when we have hearts that are willing and moved we give in abundance. The people of Israel knew the work of the Lord was important and they willingly gave to support it.

Every week here we take up an offering and before we do so we try to help you see what your generous gifts do. We do that to help you too give from a willing heart. In the New Testament we are told that God loves a cheerful giver. When our hearts are willing our offering will be cheerful! So, let's give today with willing hearts!

August 7th How God's Work Gets Done

You might have heard the saying that there is no I in the word team. We are now turning our attention towards football. The successful teams always work together. Thus the saying there is no I in the word team. You can't be focused upon yourself you have to be focused on doing your part for the team.

Did you know that is how God's work gets accomplished? Consider the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. This book contains the story of Nehemiah rallying the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and gates. They did this in a miraculous time of 52 days! Most people only read the first chapter of Nehemiah as it tells how God moved his heart and the heart of the king to help rebuild the walls. Yet in chapter three amidst a bunch of Hebrew names none of us can pronounce there is an amazing story.

Chapter three of Nehemiah lists all the families, priests and other who worked section by section to rebuild the walls and the gates. Tucked into this chapter is one amazing phrase that illustrates the team concept of work. It is the phrase, next to him or sometimes, next to them. Those two phrases are found seventeen times in the chapter. That is the key to how the wall was erected in 52 days.

That phrase reminds me of the New Testament phrase that Paul used when talking about the work of the body of Christ. He talked about, "each part doing its work." So the Church when we work side by side, each doing its part can accomplish incredible things.

As we take up the offering this morning I want you to realize that all our gifts matter. What all of us give together is greater than what a few can give. Small and large gifts when given in obedience to God matter. Your gift and the gift next to you and the one next to them together helps us build and maintain the wall God has called for us.

So, let's each do our part for the work of God. That is how God's work gets done!

August 13th Fantasy Football Mania

How many of you participate in fantasy football? You guys have your teams set yet? How many of you are in more than one league? How many of you are in two leagues? Three? Four? Anyone in more than that?

Some of you are probably asking yourself what is fantasy football? Fantasy football is a competition in which participants select imaginary teams from among the players in a league and score points according to the actual performance of their players. So, you could have the quarterback of the Cowboys and a running back from the Cardinals on your team. Your score is determined by how they do week by week. You participate in a league against other players teams.

While that might be new to some here it is exploding around the country. You could call it a Fantasy Football Mania! Consider these facts...

- Participation since 2003 has grown by over 270% so that nearly 60 million people participate today!
- Americans spend on average 9 hours a week on fantasy sports.
- Fantasy football is a \$19 billion dollar industry.
- The average participant spends \$465 dollars a year on fantasy sports.

Compare that amount to what one study found was the medium gift to a church yearly in America, \$200! Let that sink in.

Let me be clear, I am not against playing fantasy football or spending money on other leisurely pursuits as long as they don't rule your life. Yet what does it say when we spend so much time and money on something as fleeting as fantasy sports? What we spend our time and money on shows what we value.

Here at YOUR CHURCH NAME we are focused not on fantasy but eternity. We value people. Our goal is to move people into a loving relationship with our loving heavenly Father. That is our mania. And every week we pass an offering plate asking people to give to support our life changing work. Our work is not fantasy but fact. We are making a difference and we ask you to generously give this morning to help us impact our town for eternity!

August 20th When Small Gifts Are Huge

Huge is a word that is being used a lot by a certain politician these days. So this morning I want to talk to you before our offering about how your gift can be huge. Now before you worry that I want all of your 401K I want to tell you a story from the Bible that illustrates how sometimes the smallest gifts are the largest.

We all remember the story of the widow's mite. The Gospel of Mark records that story of Jesus and his disciples sitting where people put in their offerings. The passage says, "Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on." **Her small gift became huge!**

Then a few pages over in the Gospel of Mark a story is recorded of a woman came with an expensive jar of perfume that she poured out on Jesus feet. Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. **She did what she could.** She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." **Her small gift became huge!**

II Corinthians 8 contains a challenge from the Apostle Paul for the Corinthians to finish on a promised offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem. In verse eleven it says, "Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, **according to your means.**"

This morning as we take up the offering what makes your gift huge is what that gift says about your heart. The two small gifts in the Bible are remembered more than any other gift. They gave according to their means but their heart behind the gift is what made their gifts huge! Let's all give that way this morning!

August 27th How You Can Help Many People

Have you ever thought about what your tombstone might say? I know for most of us that is the last thing we want to think about. I am not saying your end is near but think about it. What will be said of you after you are gone? How will you be remembered?

With that in mind let me share with you a rather obscure verse about a woman in the New Testament named Phoebe. It comes from Romans 16:1-2 and it says, “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, **for she has been a great help to many people, including me**”

Now there is a great epitaph! For the rest of eternity that woman will be remembered as one who was a great help to many people. We don't know what that means. Did she give money, provide lodging or food or all of that? Whatever she did the Apostle Paul said she had helped many people, including him! Her serving character brought her to the attention of Paul and through the book of Romans to you and I. That is how she is forever remembered.

Through simple acts of kindness you and I can be remembered. As we take up the offering I want you to know that your gifts are a help to many people. A portion of what you give goes to...

- Name a mission or missionary that your church or denomination supports.
- List various ministries your church does for the community,
- Share about how you impact children and students through their giving.

I could go on and on. So, you might not think your life counts but it does. You might not think your gift is any big deal but it is. All our gifts combined accomplish much. When you give you are being a great help to many. As Christians shouldn't that be one of our goals in life?

Phoebe wasn't remembered for what job she held. She wasn't remembered for her wealth, her home, her wardrobe or any earthly thing. She was remembered for being a great help to many. Let's imitate that in our lives starting with today's offering.

September 3rd 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 the strength, prosperity and well-being of our country. It is our nation's way of saying, "Thank you for your hard work!"

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 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 guest who just want to know where to park and where to go. All our workers laboring for the Lord matter!

Paul entreated 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 gifts combined together, large and small, help fuel the work we do here.

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

Appendix D:

Samples of John 3:16's Summer of Hope Campaign

I mentioned earlier in my work how we gave to John 3:16 a mission in Tulsa as a result of their appeal letter sent out to us. The following are scanned copies of their 2012 endeavor.

John 3:16 Mission
P.O. Box 1477
Tulsa, OK 74101-1477



Your Summer of Hope Commitment forms are enclosed! When you return them with your summer gifts, please be sure to sign the Mealtime Blessings. Along with nutritious meals, you'll help provide life-transforming hope—all summer long.

G020



May 22, 2012

Dear Mark & Valerie,

When Jesus was a guest for dinner, He spoke, saying, "...when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed..." (Luke 14:13-14)

As we prepare to serve the hurting men, women and children who will come to us this summer from the streets of downtown Tulsa, times continue to be tough. Recent reports indicate increasingly large numbers of people in our area are living below the poverty line. In this challenging economy, your support means so much to us and to the Tulsans who are coming to us with heartbreaking needs.

With the faithful support of friends like you, we'll receive many gifts later this year to help us care for the people who come to the Mission during the fall. **But the fact we face every summer is that donations drop off just about now. June, July and August can be a barren time here at John 3:16 Mission.**

We're preparing as best we can for these lower-income months—but we need your help, because men, women and children seeking food, shelter and other vital care can't wait. They need help all summer long! And with the ongoing economic instability, more are trudging up Denver Avenue on their way to our Mission for help every day.

They need nutritious meals. A place to sleep. They need education, work training, rehabilitation and Christian counseling to help get their lives back on track.

As a John 3:16 Mission supporter, we know you understand how important all these services are to our work here in the Tulsa area. **That's why we're asking you to make a special three-month commitment, so this can be a Summer of Hope for our homeless and neediest neighbors.**

We appreciate your generous Tulsa spirit and would like you to consider making a generous gift today, one more just like it in July, and another in August.

Or simply make one large gift for the entire summer, and send it today. This will save

(over, please)



Location: 506 N. Cheyenne Avenue

IT'S EASY! Give online at john316mission.org

20422

180

you time, and will help us greatly in facing this summer's unique challenges.

Either way, your help will truly be a blessing to this ministry and will be put to work immediately to provide these vital services during June, July and August:

Over 58,000 nutritious meals. Because much of our food is donated, your gift also provides the labor, utilities, equipment and facilities to prepare and serve meals for just \$1.92 each.

More than 6,500 nights of safe shelter. It's not safe to sleep on the street or even in abandoned buildings at night especially when the Oklahoma sun is sizzling. At the Mission, people get a cool, clean, safe place to rest.

24,500 articles of clean clothing. For many of those we help, the clothes they wear and the few things they carry with them are all their own. They get dirty quickly, especially during the summer.

2,800 hours of prayer and Christian counseling. Especially now, those who come to the Mission need food for their souls as well as their bodies. We offer encouragement through Bible study and worship, and pray that our ministry will help provide healing and transformation.

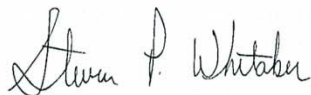
16,800 hours of recovery, education and work training. These programs are the heart of our Mission's plan to help those who truly want to rebuild their lives. Often this desire to change starts with a simple meal or a night's shelter.

As the tough economy persists, what a difference your Summer of Hope Gift Commitment will make in the lives of our neediest Tulsa neighbors.

Whether you can send one larger gift today or a special gift each month, be assured that your donation will be put to work as soon as it arrives!

Please help us continue to reclaim lives and restore hope during the next three months by making your Summer of Hope Gift Commitment to help hungry, homeless and hurting Tulsans today.

May God bless you for caring,



Rev. Steven P. Whitaker
President & Sr. Pastor

P.S. To save time and help make this a Summer of Hope for our needy Tulsa neighbors, send one generous gift today. Or use the three enclosed commitment forms and matching envelopes to send monthly donations. (Be sure to sign the Mealtime Blessings to encourage someone in our program!)

Thank you for your compassion!
-S.W.

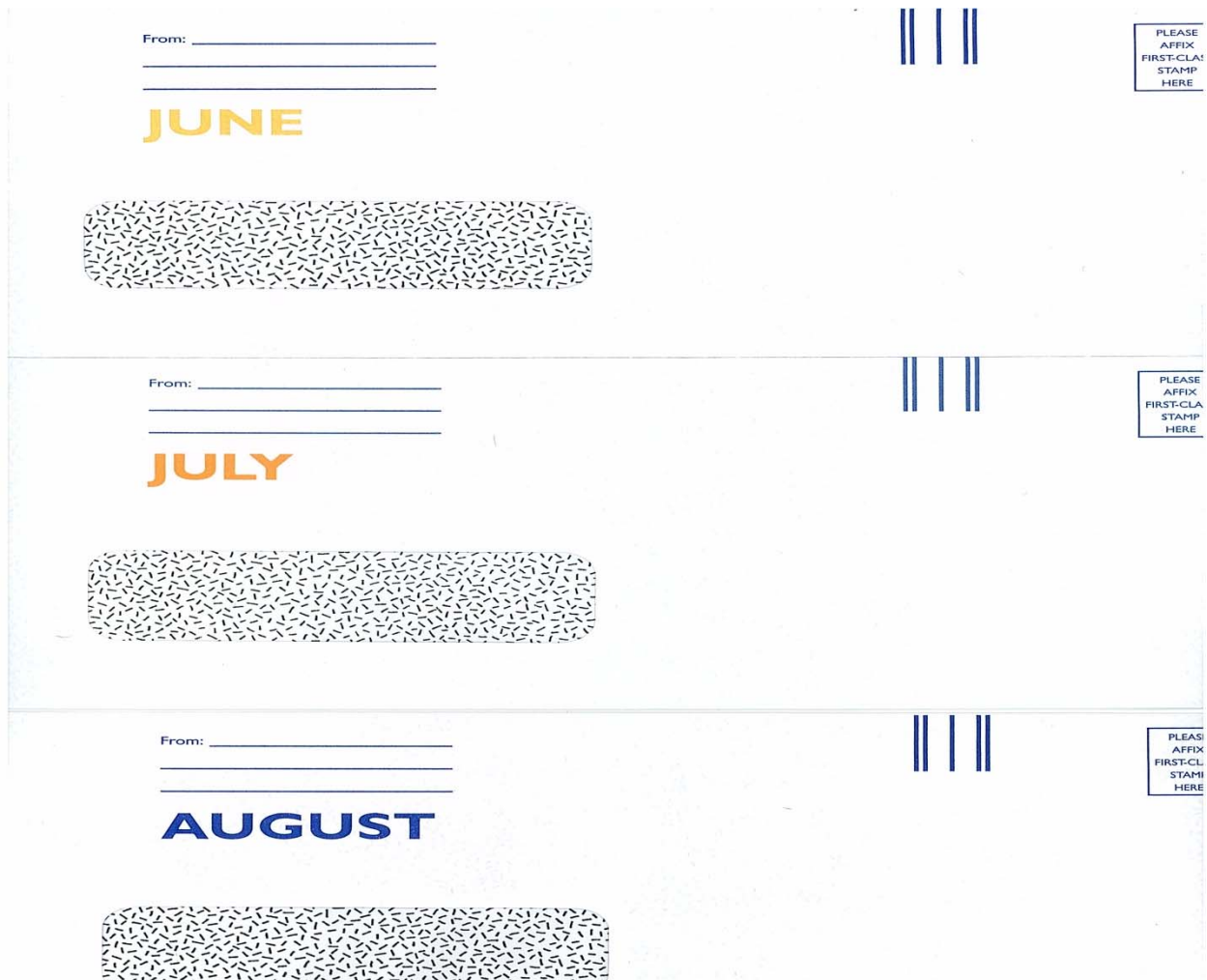
John 3:16 Mission
P.O. Box 1477
Tulsa, OK 74101-1477



**SUMMER OF
HOPE
2012**
PLEASE REPLY BY JUNE 30!

This was the envelope that it was mailed in. Notice the appeal to reply by June 30th!

Inside were envelopes for each month...



SUMMER GIFT COMMITMENT

By signing this form, I commit to helping hungry, homeless and hurting Tulsans this summer.

Signature _____

I've signed the attached Mealtime Blessing and enclosed it with my gift of:

\$ _____

JUNE

- To save time and help the Mission be prepared, I'm enclosing my entire summer gift.
- Please charge my credit card. (See back of form.)

- I'm sending my June gift today, and will match it in July and August.

Please send me periodic email updates. Here is my address:

(please print)

Please return this form with your check made payable to John 3:16 Mission

To give a gift online, go to john316mission.org

6/12
REV STEVEN P WHITAKER PRESIDENT & SR. PASTOR
JOHN 3:16 MISSION INC
PO BOX 1420
JENKS OK 74037-1420



REJOICE

"...you will fill me with joy in your presence..."

~PSALM 16:11

00903521 00M6B324 7

SUMMER GIFT COMMITMENT

YES, Steve, I'll make sure that food, shelter and other vital services are available at John 3:16 Mission.

I've signed the attached Mealtime Blessing and enclosed it with my second gift of:

\$ _____

JULY

- Please charge my credit card. (See back of form.)

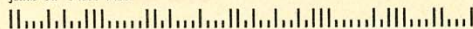
Please send me periodic email updates. Here is my address:

(please print)

Please return this form with your check made payable to John 3:16 Mission

To give a gift online, go to john316mission.org

6/12
REV STEVEN P WHITAKER PRESIDENT & SR. PASTOR
JOHN 3:16 MISSION INC
PO BOX 1420
JENKS OK 74037-1420



GIVE THANKS

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory..."

~1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

00903521 00M6B324 7

SUMMER GIFT COMMITMENT

YES, Steve, I'll make sure that food, shelter and other vital services are available at John 3:16 Mission.

I've signed the attached Mealtime Blessing and enclosed it with my third gift of:

\$ _____

AUGUST

- Please charge my credit card. (See back of form.)

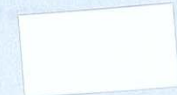
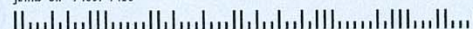
Please send me periodic email updates. Here is my address:

(please print)

Please return this form with your check made payable to John 3:16 Mission

To give a gift online, go to john316mission.org

6/12
REV STEVEN P WHITAKER PRESIDENT & SR. PASTOR
JOHN 3:16 MISSION INC
PO BOX 1420
JENKS OK 74037-1420



TRUST

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him..."

~ROMANS 15:13

00903521 00M6B324 7

May God bless you
today and every day.
From a caring
friend named

(SIGNATURE—FIRST NAME)

Please charge my gift on my credit card: VISA MC AMEX DISC

Card Number _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____ Expiration Date _____
To charge by phone, call (918) 587-1186.

More great ways to help:

Have you included the Mission in your will? Yes No
Would you like information on this and other planned giving opportunities? Yes
If you would like to donate food, equipment, or household goods and furniture,
or volunteer your time, please call the Mission at (918) 587-1186.

MATCHING GIFT

Ask your employer if a corporate
giving program will match your gift.
For more information please call
(918) 587-1186.

No person is denied services based on
race, creed, sex, disability or national origin.

If gifts exceed expenses, extra funds will
be used to care for hungry, homeless and
hurting people throughout the year.

We never sell or rent our supporters' names.

Thank you! Your gift is tax deductible to the
full extent of the law. We will send a receipt
for your records.



180

May God bless you
today and every day.
From a caring
friend named

(SIGNATURE—FIRST NAME)

Please charge my gift on my credit card: VISA MC AMEX DISC

Card Number _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____ Expiration Date _____
To charge by phone, call (918) 587-1186.

More great ways to help:

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Signature _____ Expiration Date _____
To charge by phone, call (918) 587-1186.

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Have you included the Mission in your will? Yes No
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for your records.



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Appendix E: Automatic Withdrawal Samples

Bulletin Insert or paragraph for newsletter

How many checks a month do you write? In all probability if you are like most Americans you are writing fewer checks now than just a few years ago. Did you know that our nations Federal Reserve is now processing a third of the checks they did twenty years ago? Paper check usage has declined from 61% of all payments in 2000 to just 26% in 2010. So, if you are writing fewer checks you are not alone.

To start the process simply go to **insert the web link to your churches website**. Click on the Give Button and follow the easy step by step process. Should you have any questions you can contact **Insert Name** at **insert email address and telephone number**. They will be more than happy to help you get started.

Giving online is easy, safe and secure. Your gift will quickly come to our account here at **insert the name of your church** to be used for missions and ministry. With online giving even if you are on vacation your gift still shows up. This consistency in giving will allow us to do more ministry and be more effective in our endeavors.

Sample Online Sign Up Envelope – Most online giving platforms allow you to up recurring giving on the site. However for some people this is challenging and difficult. To make it easy for people to sign up for recurring giving consider what one of my clients produced for the pockets of their chairs. Even if attendees did not utilize the envelope it is a non-threatening reminder of setting up recurring giving.



Sample Screen Shots For Social Media and Screens

Summer
—of—
2014
Sharing

Your **GPS** gets you
to your destination.



Your **tithe** gets FBC
to God's destination.



Apply sunscreen
and tithe...

You should do
both while on
vacation.

2014 Summer
of Sharing



first baptist
Rock Hill

2014 Summer
of Sharing

Tithe
from
the Beach



Did you know you can tithe from the beach? You can! Just download our church app or go to our mobile website on your smart phone. Or better yet, set up recurring giving so that you don't have to remember to tithe while this is your view.
http://bit.ly/FBC_Give

For a \$1 a day you can increase your giving 365 days of the year!

Ronnie Floyd once said, "Pastors must start thinking about giving 365 days a year not simply when they have a capital campaign." Yet who has the time to think about giving 365 days a year? Who has that kind of expertise? Even if you could find someone that experienced who can afford another staff member? So, what is a church to do? USE GIVING365!

Dr. Ronnie Floyd recommends Mark Brooks' Giving365!



"Mark Brooks has provided valuable coaching to me personally as a pastor and to my church towards helping us be fully funded. His expertise and knowledge of the trends in giving always keeps us on the cutting edge. Now you too can get the same type of help that my longtime friend Mark provides for me. I wholeheartedly recommend Mark Brooks' Giving365."

Dr. Ronnie Floyd
Senior Pastor, Cross Church, Northwest AR

Here is what you get with Giving365...

- 24/7 access to The Stewardship Coach!
- Weekly offering talks sent directly to your inbox!
- Weekly live teaching with live interaction.
- Weekly newsletter highlighting key trends and issues about giving.
- Seasonal giving campaigns for Easter, summer, end of year and more!

Pastor Brian Hughes calls Giving365 "Phenomenal!"



"Since we started following your coaching our giving can be summed up with one word: phenomenal! In fact our giving is up 30%+ this year. This has been life changing for our church as we no longer scrape around for money every week."

Pastor Brian Hughes
Powhatan Community Church Powhatan, VA

I have made my stewardship coaching...Affordable, Easy and Effective!
Any church can afford my plans and EVERY church will see an increase in giving.

Try Giving365 for \$1 for 14 days by going to:
www.giving365.com



Mark Brooks



The Stewardship Coach Volume 2 / Issue 37



“10,000 people are turning 65 every day - a demographic shift that promises surprising change for nonprofits and fundraisers.” That was a recent headline and quote from, “The Chronicle of Philanthropy” along with the picture at the left. [Have you considered what this means for your church?](#)

You are heading for a 25% or more cut in giving! Two years ago I spoke at a conference in Illinois just outside of Saint Louis. To illustrate the impact of aging Baby Boomers, the largest giving group in America, I looked up the salaries of school teachers in that county. It is amazing what you can find on Google! I found an elementary teacher had a salary of \$88,459 dollars. Illinois is one of the highest paying states for

teacher’s salaries. What is really great for teachers is Illinois’ retirement package. At 55 years of age with 30 years of teaching you can retire at 75% of your top salary!

So, let’s say this teacher is a faithful tither to your church on her \$88,459 dollar salary. That is \$8,850 your church gets annually. However she is getting tired of chasing fourth graders around and at a young 55 she wants to see Europe and travel. So, she retires. She now makes 75% of her top pay or \$66,374 a year. She still tithes 10% of her income but guess what, that tithe is now \$6,637. **You just took a 25% hit in your yearly giving!** Yet it is worse than that because I am guessing not everyone in your church nearing retirement has this kind of package.

57%! Households headed by people who are 65 or older are bringing in just 57% of what the median income of households headed by 45 to 64 year olds. So, unless your church is filled with Illinois school teachers or retired executives you could be facing a more severe cut than 25% from those approaching retirement!

Giving continues to decline in America and it will only get worse! The question for all of us is what are we going to do about it? If you are reading this you are ahead of most church leaders. You are at least plugging in to a system to help you. Being aware is the first step. Here is my advice as we move forward.

We have to focus upon the front end and back end of our donor base. The back end are those Boomers that presently are fueling most of what comes in to your plate. Do you have some type of estate plan in place? While it might not garner you dollars now it could make a difference in ten to twenty years. Less than 10% of churches in America have any estate planning in place. As a result less than 10% of bequests in America go to churches! You need to be one of those 10%.

Finally, we have to train up the next generation of donors. This will not be easy but it must be done. We have to change the conversation. We can’t preach guilt laden messages about the need to give. We must show what giving to the church accomplishes. Telling your story and linking that to giving is the best way to ensure a solid giving future.

It will not happen overnight but by starting now you can head off the decline staring you in the face. Act now!

Mark Brooks - The Stewardship Coach

Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach is back this Monday, September 14th! To register go to, <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/501334238322426035>



Elevator Pitch Your Offerings!

Every week I write an offering talk for my members called the Elevator Pitch. My goal is to make the offering exciting and impactful! Below is a recent offering talk...

Football season is upon us! This talk focuses upon the start of the NFL season and how much Americans gamble on football.

\$95 Billion

Last week the National Football League began play. So finally, instead of hearing about deflated footballs and which player was arrested for whatever, we actually got to watch our favorite teams play! Any NFL fans out there? Any of you play Fantasy Football? Americans truly have a passion for football that sometimes borders on lunacy.

This week I saw a headline that stated there will be \$95 billion dollars wagered on NFL and college football games this year! Only \$2 billion of that will be done legally in Nevada the only state to allow legal wagering on sports.

Gambling is putting up money in hopes of gaining more money back. Yet it hardly ever works. In fact you are more likely to be struck by lightning than winning the lottery. While the odds of winning this week's football pool might not be as high it is still not a sure thing. You know the saying, "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas?" Well that is especially true of gambling! How do you think they pay for all those lights? The money people lose at gambling pays for that.

Jesus gives us better odds than Vegas! He said in Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

We don't give in order to get. We give out of love for Christ and what He has done for us. We give to help others experience the grace of Jesus that we have. Yet a benefit of giving is that God promises to meet our needs.

So as we take up the offering this morning, who do you want to place your money on, your favorite team or God?





Sample Section

I write sample emails and direct appeal letters for members that increases their giving. Here is a recent example,

We are nearing the end of the third quarter of the year. Churches are required to send out giving statements for any gifts above \$250. I think it is a good practice to send out giving statements for any amount. Statements like the sample below serve as non-threatening reminders of giving. I advise sending out statements that include a letter of thanks AND an envelope for ease of use in sending back replies. Here is a sample for your consideration.

Dear (Personalize this!),

As hard as it might seem we are in the fourth and last quarter of the year! We regularly send our donors a statement of their giving. While it is simply numbers on a piece of paper to many, for us it is the lifeblood of fueling our missions and ministry here at OUR CHURCH. **Without you, and donors like you, we could not achieve the things for the Kingdom that we do. Thank you!**

Did you know that gifts to OUR CHURCH are tax deductible? While we don't give to get a tax break, none the less we are blessed in America to be able write off gifts to OUR CHURCH. It makes good sense to be good stewards and take what the government allows us. Every quarter we send you a statement like this for your records as well as one at the end of the year.

Should you have any questions about this statement you can contact our Financial Secretary, Mary Jane Smith, at 1-555-555-5555. Or you can email her at msmith@ourchurch.org. We hold all gifts in the strictest of confidence and use every gift responsibly to advance the Kingdom work God has called us to here at OUR CHURCH.

Again, thanks for your generous and faithful giving. Together all our gifts add up and they all make a difference for Christ and His Kingdom!

Your Pastor,

Bro. Mark

P.S. We have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for you to use if you are going to be away or you simply want to mail in your contribution.



Monday Mornings with Mark



As a member, you are invited to join me every Monday morning for *“Monday Mornings with Mark The Stewardship Coach!”*

During each session I teach for about fifteen to twenty minutes on a crucial issue related to stewardship tailor made for my partners. Then afterwards they can ask me anything pertaining to the topic or any other stewardship issue and I will do my best to answer questions until time runs out.

These weekly sessions allow you to receive personalized help for your ministry. This is an exclusive time for members of Giving365. Not only this but my members get to contact me personally each week with any questions or giving needs they have.

Would you like to try Giving365 for \$1?

Click the QR code below and I will let you try Giving365 for 14 days. After 14 days you will be charged \$365 for a year's worth of giving help. That is \$1 a day to help you increase your giving now!



<http://giving365.com>

