



Complete Guide to

**YEAR-END**

**Giving**



**SOLUTION GUIDE**

The ministry ideas, how to's, tips, and advice you need to create a compelling giving campaign.

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# The Giving Season

The sights and sounds of the holiday season strike a familiar chord that's echoed throughout the ages. It's a universal language full of cherished traditions and sacred beliefs that fill our hearts with gratitude and benevolence.

The giving season is a time to be thankful for God's ultimate provision in our lives and to pour out an abundance of blessings on those less fortunate. It's an opportunity for the church to be the hands and feet of Christ inside and outside the walls of the church.

## Generous giving doesn't grow on trees.

It takes time to nurture and cultivate generosity. **For most people, generous giving stems from a personal, life-changing experience with the church.** Once that happens, people are more eager to invest in the work of the ministry.

This holiday season, tap into the passion of your people. Increase engagement and personal involvement. Capture the heart, and you'll transform the soul into missional thinking, fruitful living, and generous giving.



# Year-End Holiday Fundraising Campaign

'Tis the season to be giving. The holidays are one of the most strategic times of the year in the life of the church. Statistics show that **1/3 of all annual giving occurs in December.**

Increasing donations doesn't happen overnight or just because everyone is in a warm, fuzzy giving mood. Churches must develop a comprehensive strategy that uses the right mix of online tools and communication channels to reach their audiences and maximize ministry results.

**30% of nonprofits raise  
25-50% of their annual funds  
from year-end giving.**

The busiest fundraising season of the year offers unlimited opportunities to increase the ministry potential of the church. Giving trends like these create a unique opportunity for challenging and inspiring believers to go above and beyond their normal giving levels.

For that reason, over 50% of nonprofits start planning a year-end appeal well before the end of the year. The question is are you ready?

Launch a multi-channel year-end holiday fundraising campaign that will make a profound impact on people's lives. Actively promote the campaign to increase donor awareness, retention, and support. Here are several tactics that will jumpstart your campaign and deliver blockbuster results.

# The Big Picture

Cast a vision. Plan a year-end holiday fundraising campaign that underlines the brand and core values of the church. Create a theme with sincere messaging that will capture the hearts and imagination of your congregation. Make it relevant and practical so people will stick with you despite everything else that's competing for their attention during the holiday season.

## Strategy

Set a launch date with a campaign theme and clear objectives that are measurable and quantifiable. Match the idea and approach with the message and audience to optimize ministry results. Communicate what sets the church apart and makes it unique. Give people reasons to support the campaign with illustrative descriptions and benefits.

## Message

Weave compelling issues and heartwarming stories together into a cohesive narrative arc that builds and sustains the campaign theme. Utilize sermon messages and Bible study materials to validate and reinforce the message of the campaign.

## Audience

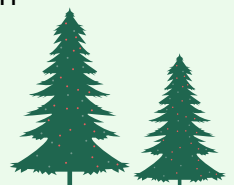
Target beneficiaries and put them front and center in the campaign. Know WHO you're talking to and HOW you want to communicate with them. Customize the message and delivery method to reach your #1 giving demographic.

## Communication Channels

Spread the campaign message through different platforms and communication channels that resonate with your congregation. Match the audience with the delivery method that will deepen engagement with supporters and motivate them to invest in the life and operations of the church.

## Gatekeepers

Peer-to-peer (P2P) fundraising is the backbone of a year-end fundraising campaign. Select influencers who know the pulse of the church so they can reinforce the narrative arc of the campaign. Recruit high profile individuals associated with the ministry who will add substance and credibility to the campaign.



# Website

The vast digital bubble surrounding us creates a dynamic online environment for connecting and unifying the modern-day church. The website plays a pivotal role in promoting your holiday fundraising campaign and triggering a direct response. Introduce supporters to your campaign quickly and efficiently. Pull visitors and supporters into a compelling story that shares the importance of taking action during the holiday season.

## **The home page is a key marketing asset.**

Spotlight your year-end giving efforts with a bold call to action (CTA) that guides people to your campaign page or microsite. Grab people's attention with eye-popping images, strong brand messaging, and clear actionable steps. Here are several tips for capturing donors and keeping them in the giving moment.

### Content

- Integrate personal stories into the campaign.
- Create a photo gallery or a place to add videos.
- Add a Twitter widget for all hashtag mentions.
- Post relevant messages for your blog.

### Home Page

- Create a banner with an image, graphics, and text showing the name of the campaign and CTA.
- Display links to campaign pages or blog posts that feature campaign content.

### Campaign Page

- State the campaign theme, goals, and objectives.
- Feature campaign content, CTA, and relevant resources.
- Display colorful, easy-to-find donation buttons and links.
- Encourage recurring gifts so donors can automatically give each month.
- Create a “Why Donate” page that supports the premise of the campaign.

Create a compelling narrative with personal stories that walks people through the problem, proposes a solution, and challenges supporters to make a difference. Appeal to the heart, show where the money goes, and offer plenty of incentives that will motivate good stewardship and benevolent giving.





# *Direct-Response Email Campaign*

Relationships are the building blocks for creating a vibrant, healthy church. Studies show that the more you interact and engage with supporters, the more you can count on them to treat their finances with an open palm.

Email is the #1 channel for driving online donations. A direct-response email campaign offers a cost-effective way to promote a year-end holiday fundraiser. Create a donor-centric message that will connect you with people and convert fence-sitters into generous givers.

## **Make progress by going backward.**

November and December are the most popular months for year-end requests. Start with the end date of your holiday fundraising campaign and work backward to nail down the content and frequency of your email solicitation efforts. Launch a 6-week campaign that starts mid-November and ends on December 31. Send out one email each week to keep the campaign top-of-mind and drive readers to the website or other mediums to take action.



## **December 29, Week 6**

Nearly 15% of ALL donations happen in the last 3 days of the year. Count down the remaining days to create a sense of urgency. Send a last-minute reminder (e.g. “A few days left to make a tax-deductible gift!”) to stir people’s hearts.

## **December 22, Week 5**

Urge donors to cross the finish line and reach the goal (e.g. “Less than 2 weeks remaining to lock in your year-end donation!”).

## **December 15, Week 4**

Revisit and reinforce the vision and key stories of the campaign to motivate a direct response.

## **December 8, Week 3**

Update supporters on campaign progress. Offer incentives to energize giving. Promote eCard options as holiday gifts (e.g. “Make a gift in the name of a friend or family member and send an eCard for Christmas.”).

## **December 1, Week 2**

Tell the story of how the fundraising campaign will impact real people inside and outside your church.

## **November 24, Week 1**

Cast a vision for next year, introduce a year-end holiday fundraising campaign, and share stories across all platforms and communication channels.

Energize supporters and reach new donors with a powerful, online fundraising experience. Share your message with creative stories and a clear CTA that will trigger a direct response and maximize ministry results.



# eGiving

Churches face an uphill battle when it comes to inspiring generosity in the pews. Statistics show that when attendance drops, engagement decreases and giving declines. So how do you keep people connected and engaged during a busy and hectic holiday season?

## Giving with a mobile device is the new offering plate.

Your church needs an online giving solution that is convenient and easy to use, accessible anytime, anywhere, 24/7. This will give your church the ability to offer all the resources your people need to stay connected to your campaign.

**BONUS:** You can make a public call to give by having whoever is willing to pull out their phones and make a commitment right in church.

Make sure your solution allows users to set up a recurring giving plan and make pledges in addition to one-time gifts. This will help giving stay strong well into the new year.





# Social Media

Social media is the fastest-growing, easiest-to-use, and most cost-effective online tool to promote your year-end holiday fundraising campaign. Create strong brand awareness and stimulate active user engagement with your social media community.

Organize a social media presence across multiple channels. Match the content to the appropriate platform. Make sure members and visitors know where to find you so they can interact and engage with you in multiple ways during the campaign. Feature a donation link on Facebook, Twitter, and other relevant social media channels to maximize campaign results.

## Holiday Hashtag

Create a holiday campaign hashtag to pull and monitor messages that mention your holiday fundraising campaign. Stay current with conversations, promptly respond to questions or comments, and thank supporters by liking, favoriting, or retweeting their messages.

## Profile & Cover Photos

Update your cover and background photos to reflect your branded holiday fundraising campaign. Increase campaign awareness and motivate casual profile visitors to learn more about your ministry initiative. Post links back to your campaign page or microsite.

## Profile Page

Pin a tweet or Facebook post to the top of your profile page so it's the first message visitors see when they hit your Twitter account or Facebook page. Focus the message on your holiday fundraising campaign, display an image, and post a link back to your website that will increase brand awareness and heighten visibility.

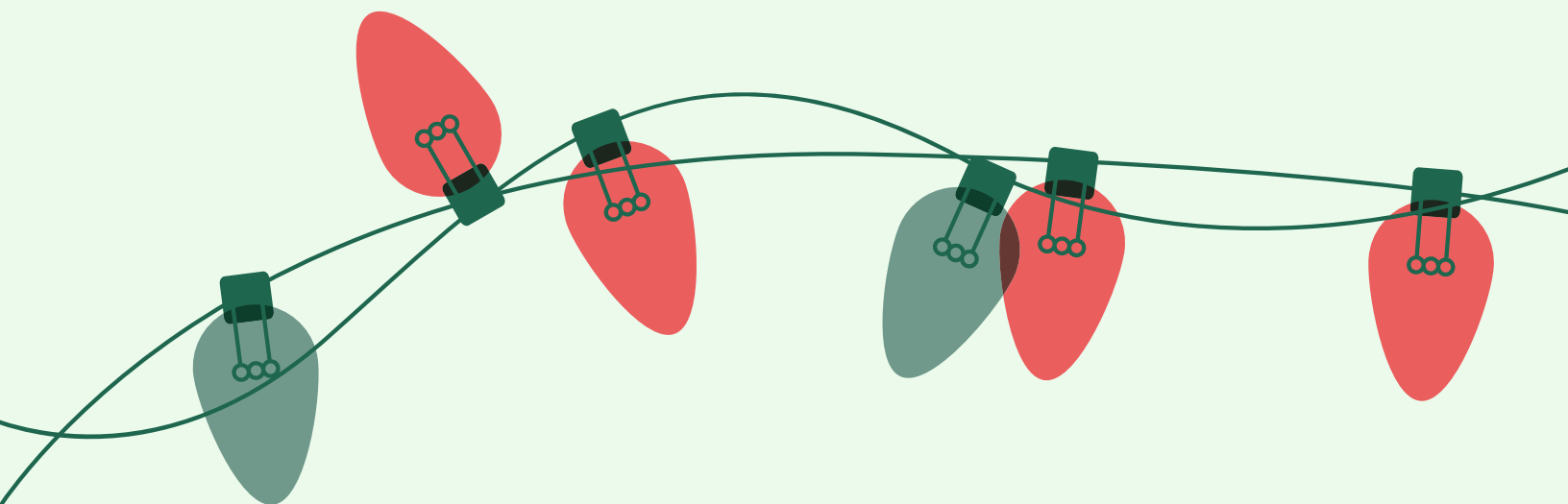
# Blogs

Statistics and data convey vital information, but the numbers don't tell the whole story. People give with their hearts, not their heads. Communicate a powerful narrative about how the church is changing people's lives through the generosity of others.

## Stories personalize the numbers and put a face on a cause.

Use a tool that's already in-house. Leverage your blog to tell heartwarming stories that will elicit a direct response. Update your blog regularly. Utilize it as a storytelling medium to touch people's hearts with the theme and message of your campaign.

Increase interaction with supporters and share the tangible benefits of contributing to the work of the ministry. Refresh your blog throughout the campaign with compelling content that will deepen donor engagement and draw visitors back to your website.



# Cross-Promotion

Create uniformity across all your platforms and communication channels. Consistent branding and messaging will reassure donors about the importance of your cause and increase the likelihood that they will follow through with a contribution.

## Integrate - don't isolate - the campaign message.

Multi-channel communication is essential to increasing the strength and reach of your message. Multiple touchpoints will cultivate trust, build confidence, and increase engagement that will galvanize your donor base and stir a strong CTA.

Here are a few tips for cross-promoting your year-end holiday fundraising campaign.

- Use the church newsletter or bulletin to tease the campaign and point to other communication channels and platforms.
- Shape the content of your email correspondence, website solicitations, and social media content with similar language and action points.
- Reiterate fundraiser information and announcements across print, web, email, and social media platforms.
- Implement the same images and talking points for email appeals and donation forms.
- Post links that will integrate web, email, and social media platforms.

A multi-dimensional fundraising platform plays a pivotal role in the success of your year-end holiday fundraising campaign.

Incorporate compelling stories and persuasive appeals across all communication channels that will inspire the community, activate supporters, reach new donors, and raise more funds.





# Giving Levels

People open up their wallets more often and in multiple ways during the holiday season. It's a golden opportunity for believers to be the hands and feet of Christ to a lost and hurting world.

Luke 12:48 says, *"To whom much is given, much will be required."*

God, the giver of all good things (James 1:17), gives us everything we need to fulfill His will. *"Freely you have received, freely give."* (Matthew 10:8).

Tap into the generous hearts of your congregation. Launch a branded donation form to increase gift conversion. Create customized checkout pages for donors with different giving capacities.

## Branded donation forms raise 7 times MORE funds.

Segment donors by past average gift amounts (e.g. lower-tier, middle-tier, higher-tier). Guide each donor group to different donation forms with appropriate default gift ranges during the campaign.

Increase new donor acquisition rates and elevate the average gift per donor with a clear CTA. Challenge different donor groups to increase their normal giving levels without downgrading larger donors.

- Target non-donors with a low-dollar ask or special acquisition.
- Reach out to low-dollar donors with a mid-range ask.
- Approach mid-dollar donors with a high-dollar request.
- Solicit monthly givers with a one-time high-dollar appeal.

### **Turn loyal donors into champions of your cause.**

People donate to organizations they're familiar with or contribute funds based upon the referrals of friends and family. Even in our vast digital world, word of mouth is still one of the most effective ways to promote your campaign and ministry.

The end of the year is the most critical fundraising window for the church. Make the most of your year-end appeal. Implement intuitive data, segment diverse audiences, and execute targeted follow-up that will increase donor loyalty and optimize ministry results.

# Capture Hearts & Year-End Donations

The sights and sounds of the giving season capture our hearts and inspire us to be the hands and feet of Christ to those less fortunate. The time-honored traditions of the church and our personal, sacred beliefs stir us to give sacrificially and out of surplus so we can be salt and light in a world that desperately needs Christ.

Make no mistake about it. A holiday fundraising campaign is one of the most important initiatives of the year for the church. It galvanizes and fortifies the ministry so it can carry out its cultural mandate and fulfill its biblical calling. That's why a year-end holiday fundraising campaign must be front and center from start to finish.

Formulate a comprehensive plan with strategic goals, razor-sharp tactics, and a compelling narrative arc that will pull the campaign together. Roll out a campaign calendar populated with out-of-the-box ideas and strong action points to monitor progress and measure success.

## Create a campaign timeline that makes sense for your ministry and donors.

Appeal to supporters early in the process so they can plan ahead and contribute in a timely manner. Cross-promote the campaign with the right mix of platforms and communication channels. Structure your website, organize your social media networks, and leverage your blog to elicit a direct response.



Matthew 25:23 puts it this way:

**“Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your Master.”**

This Scripture rings true for every believer. Challenge and inspire your flock to be good stewards and generous givers so the church can be a relevant voice and redemptive influence in the community.

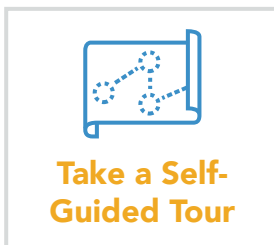
Stay top-of-mind and instill a heart of generosity that'll pay big dividends this holiday season. Show people what you're doing and where they're going that will put the church on a path towards financial growth and freedom. Create a fundraising campaign that captures hearts and year-end donations. Make a profound impact in people's lives and ring in the New Year on a high note.



Throughout this guide, you have seen several ways that Realm helps churches reach new people and manage the life and operations of a church. We're excited to share more about our revolutionary ministry tool, Realm.

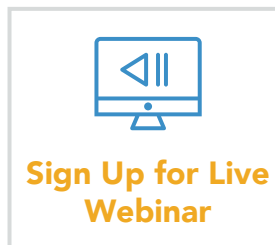
Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life way easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.

We'd encourage you to explore all that Realm makes possible by taking a demo, walking through a self-guided tour, or speaking with an associate today!



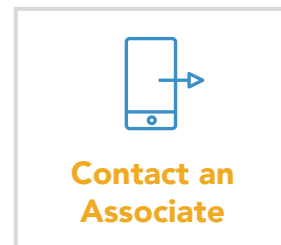
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