

Acknowledging Generosity: Innovative Approaches to Donor Recognition



VANCO



Churches, donors and saying thank you

Giving thanks is integral to the culture of churches across denominations. In addition to being thankful for the blessings God provides, churches can be grateful for the donors who generously give to support the programs and ministries that serve their congregation and community.

Below you'll find helpful resources to understand the reasons thanking donors is so important, how to thank those who give and ways you can express appreciation for those high-volume donors who support your church at an elevated level.



The importance of thanking your givers

Donors want to know how their gift is being used and that their contributions to your church are appreciated.

Our latest study on churchgoer giving showed that churches face an increasingly competitive environment for donation dollars as donors prefer cause-based giving at a rising rate. When a donor chooses to contribute to your church over other possible recipients, thanking them reaffirms their decision to support your programs and ministries.

Don't assume that donors know you received and appreciate their contribution, and don't rely solely on a general thank you in your church bulletin or an announcement from the pulpit. A personal message makes a lasting impact on a donor and forges a lasting connection with your church and its ministries.

Data from our giving study, *The Definitive Guide to Churchgoer Giving*, and from Giving USA shows that donations to religion as a percentage of all charitable giving have dropped from 58 percent to 27.



As churches face this challenge, here are seven key guidelines to follow as you thank givers for their support.

1. Be grateful – Remember that the purpose is to thank donors, not ask them for more money.
2. Be genuine – Be heartfelt and personal, but not cheesy.
3. Be specific – Address donors directly and use language that will resonate with them.
4. Be personal – Include elements that are specific to your church's congregation.
5. Remind donors of how their generosity directly benefits the church – Highlight the specific impact their gift has on your church.
6. Write in your church's voice – Even if you start with a template, update it with the language and tone of voice that your congregation is used to hearing from you.
7. Keep it short – Write succinctly and to the point so reading the note doesn't feel like a chore.

Best ways to thank your givers

There's more to thanking givers than sending them a thank-you note. A quick note expressing gratitude for a gift is good, but leveling up your thank-you efforts by hosting events shows donors a deeper level of appreciation and helps spark future generosity.

Consider hosting events specifically designed to thank donors. Not only do these events help donors feel valued, but they're a chance to better connect these key supporters to the ministries they support in a way a written note simply can't.

Put a personal touch on your thank-you with a lunch, dinner or other special event for those who generously give to your church.

Here are a few good event ideas to thank your church's donors:

- Personalized 'Thank you' notes
- Annual donor appreciation events
- Call-a-thons
- Create an 'Impact report'
- Host donor workshops or webinars
- Recognition walls, commemorative bricks or plaques

How should you thank your high-volume givers?

Every gift to your church is valuable, but for those who go above and beyond with high-volume giving, it's important to make the extra effort to recognize their generosity.

Those who give large gifts help your church not only live out its mission, but go further in making a positive impact on those in need. Building strong relationships with these high-volume donors hinges on spending time with them, sharing stories of the great work being done through their gifts and hearing their input on the programs they support. For example, you could share that you

were able to accommodate 23 percent more church campers by providing additional transportation, lodging, canteen funds and food - and share the specific feedback you received from individual attendees.

Focus on connecting with high-volume donors on a regular basis and don't simply expect their next major gift at a certain time of the year.

Here are a few ideas for how you can connect with these donors and build stronger connections:

- Vision-casting sessions
- Meet for coffee to help build relationships and provide project updates
- Make them a part of the strategy setting for projects
- Share stories and data that show the impact their support makes

Thank-you note templates to help you get started

Finding the right words for a thank you message isn't always easy. That's why we've taken our 25-plus years serving thousands of churches across denominations and used that experience to craft helpful thank you note templates to assist you in expressing appreciation for your donors.

Click on the links below to find a wide range of templates you can build on and personalize to meet your church's needs.

Example Thank You Templates:

- [General Thank-You Messages](#)
- [End of Year Thank-You Message](#)
- [Special Collection Thank-You Message](#)
- [Receipt for Tax Purposes Thank-You Message](#)
- [Church Volunteer Thank-You Message](#)
- [Church Workers Thank-You Message](#)
- [Church Leaders Thank-You Message](#)
- [Memorial Gift Thank-You Message](#)
- [Family and Friends Within a Group Donation Thank-You Message](#)
- [Individual Donor Thank-You Message](#)
- [Close Church Member Thank-You Message](#)
- [Friend of the Deceased Not Known to the Church Thank-You Message](#)
- [Thank-You Message With a Request for Feedback](#)
- [Church Event Attendance Thank-You Message](#)
- [Personal Thank-You Template for Pastors](#)
- [Church Event Invitation and Thank-You Template](#)

#1 Sample: Thank-You Message Example



Dear **[name of church]** family,

On behalf of the entire congregation, I would like to sincerely thank you for your time, effort and monetary donations this year. We are so lucky to have your support.

This past year, our total fundraising efforts amounted to **[sum]**. This is something we can all be proud of. Through your donations, we can continue to fund **[church program]**, and accomplish **[goal]**. We are extremely grateful for any and all donations received this year.

[Something specific about how their generosity will directly benefit the church]. If you have any questions regarding how your gifts are being used, please feel free to contact **[name]** through **[contact information]**. We look forward to a great year to come. Our sincerest gratitude once again for your generous contributions.

Yours in Christ,
[Name]

#2 Sample: Thank-You Message Example



Dear **[donor]**,

On behalf of the entire congregation, I would like to sincerely thank you for your generous gift to **[church, or specific program if applicable]**. We are so lucky to have your support.

Through your donation, we can continue to work towards **[goal]** and secure the future of **[program]**. We are extremely grateful to receive your gift for this purpose.

[If applicable, mention something specific about how their continued generosity over the years has directly benefited the church. If they are a first-time or infrequent donor, mention how thrilled you are to have them as part of the church family.] If you have any questions regarding how your gift is being used, please feel free to contact **[name]** through **[contact information]**. Our sincerest gratitude once again for your generous contribution.

Yours in Christ,
[name]

#3 Sample: Thank-You Message Example



Dear **[Personalized Salutation]**,

The church family and I wanted to say a big thank you for your donation of time and effort in helping in our **[Church Program]** during the past month. I appreciate the care, time and energy you have given.

You have definitely raised the level, and your guidance of the team has certainly been exemplary. We are reaping the benefits from your ministering, and we could not have done it without you.

God be with you. Looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

Thank you,
[your name]

#4 Sample: Thank-You Message Example



Dear Congregation,

The church and I would like to take this time out to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you for coming together and helping at the fair. I was filled with joy at seeing you all turn out with your donations of items for the “Help build the new bell tower” fundraiser! I am glad to let you know that we managed to achieve our goal and the building of a new bell tower will go ahead! Every little bit certainly helps!

[insert picture of the newly built bell tower here]

We have managed to see the hand of God at work. I will be forever grateful for your support, kindness, and love. Indeed, you revealed the true foundation of this church is kindness and love.

May the grace of the Lord be with you all.

Thank you,
[your name]

#5 Sample: Thank-You Message Example



Dear **[Personalized Salutation]**,

On behalf of the church, I wanted to express my sincere gratitude for your donation to the Children's Christmas Fund. We are happy about your support.

Through your donation, we have been able to accomplish gift packages for all the children this year. You have truly made a difference and for this, we are extremely grateful!

Please feel free to contact me, if you have any specific questions, we would love the opportunity to thank you again!

With deepest gratitude, and warmest wishes,

Yours in Christ,
[your name]

#6 Sample: Thank-You Message - End of Year



Dear **[Church Member's Name]**,

Thank you for your support of **[Church's Name]** over the past year. Your giving has enabled our church to continue to keep the lights on and reach the community around us.

Thanks to your generosity, over the past year, we've been able to:

[things your church has accomplished in the past year]

Your support was critical in helping us to continue growing our community.

Your donations are tax deductible for income tax reasons. We've attached a summary of your giving from the past year for when you file your taxes. Keep this letter for tax purposes.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission. We look forward to heading into **[new year]** with you and continuing to share the Word of God with our community.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

#7 Sample: Thank-You Message - Special Collection



Dear **[Church Member's Name]**,

We hit our goal! Thank you for your contribution to **[project name]**.

We received your donation of \$**[amount]**; this donation helped us **[what you put the money toward]**. Because of your donation, we were able to **[statistics you have from the event, e.g., reach X number of people]**.

Your support was critical in helping us to continue growing our community.

Your donation is tax deductible for income tax reasons. Keep this letter for tax purposes.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission. We are truly blessed by your participation.

Gratefully,
[Signature]

#8 Sample: Thank You Letter to Be Used as a Receipt for Tax Purposes



You can use this brief thank you letter to confirm the amount of a donation to a church and it can be used by the donor as documentation to claim a tax deduction. Donors can qualify for a 100% tax deduction when they donate \$250 or more to a religious institution.

As stated in IRS Publication 1771, acknowledgments must be made “in writing, when the money is received, and in a fashion that will come to the donor’s attention.”

[Date]

Dear **[Donor’s Name]**,

We at **[Church’s Name]** want to give thanks for your generous donation of \$**[amount of donation]** made on **[date of donation]**.

Our church thrives because of your generosity. God bless you for your donation. You didn’t get anything in return for your donation besides religious gratification.

[Church’s Name] appreciates your generosity.

Sincerely,
[Pastor’s Name or Church Secretary’s Name]

#9 Sample: Thank You Message to Church Volunteer Template



Dear **[Volunteer's Name]**,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your service at **[Church's Name]**. I know how much time, energy and love you put into the ministry here, and it's such a blessing to know that we can count on you.

Thank you for the hours you've spent assisting our church. Thank you for being a friend to those who need it most. Most importantly, thank you for helping to make our church a vibrant, spiritual community.

I know you have a lot of other things to do — other churches, organizations or causes whose missions you support. That's why it means so much that you've chosen to spend some of your precious time here. This letter can't repay you for what you've given to our church, but I hope it will suffice as a token of my gratitude.

We are grateful for your service, and we hope that you continue to be a part of our church family. Our ministry looks forward to seeing more of your smiling face at worship services every Sunday!

Regards,
[Your Name]

#10 Sample: Thank You Message to Church Workers Template



Dear **[Worker's Name]**,

Thank you so much for your work at **[Church's Name]**! I have seen the difference that your position as **[Job Title]** has made in our community, and I wanted to take a moment to let you know that your hard work hasn't gone unnoticed.

We rely on you to help us make sure we're doing everything we can to reach out to our community with the love of God. It's because of church workers like you that we're able to spread the gospel and improve our congregation.

Your passion for serving others is an inspiration to us all. It's truly a blessing to have such a brilliant example of selfless love and faithfulness in our midst.

I know the work can be difficult and you don't always see the results right away, but I hope you realize that your efforts are making a tremendous impact in our community. From what I've seen, you're doing a great job!

I pray that God continues to use your strengths and talents in ways that will bless his kingdom. I hope that you continue this journey with us as we strive to bring glory to our Savior. We're so grateful for everything you do, and we can't wait to see what God has in store for you next!

In His Service,
[Your Name]

#11 Sample: Letter of Appreciation to Church Leaders



Dear **[Church Leader Name]**,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the hard work, devotion and leadership you have shown to our congregation. As I reflect on the past **[year/several months]**, I am reminded that our church would not be able to fulfill our mission and calling without the service of people like you. I cannot thank you enough for the support and leadership you have shown throughout your time with our congregation.

There are hundreds of uses of the verb “to serve” in the New Testament. But the one that most closely resembles service in ministry, or literally “to serve others,” is “diakonia.”

The word and its variations are used more than 30 times in the New Testament alone. It is central to Jesus’s teaching about the church and its followers.

In fact, in Luke 22, at the Last Supper but following the meal, Jesus is attempting to assuage his disciples’ concerns. He also gives them instructions about how to live when he is gone. Among these directions, in verse 27, he says:

“For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.”

The world tells us that it is best to be served, to be the head, the leader, the authority. Common sense might lead us to believe this as well. But the words of Jesus compel us to turn what might seem natural and normal on its head, and to be the ones who serve.

I know that we at **[Church Name]** understand this, but we must continually remind each other of it, both in our words and our deeds. It is through your service that we perpetuate this perspective and mission through our congregation.

In closing, I want to express my thanks once again for your continued work and leadership at our church. It is a pleasure to serve as **[priest/pastor/minister]** for this congregation. May God continue to bless you and your family.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]

#12 Sample: Simple Memorial Gift Thank You Letter - Version 1



Dear **[Donor's Name]**,

Thank you so much for choosing to make a donation to **[Church's Name]** in memory of **[Deceased's Name]**. **[Deceased's Name]** was a valuable member of our community for **[number years/months]** and it was a blessing to have them in our congregation.

Your donation is an incredibly thoughtful way of remembering your loved one and supporting the work they felt so passionate about. We will always be grateful for the support they showed for **[specific events or causes]** over the years. They truly touched so many lives and your donation ensures that they will continue to do so.

We appreciate that this must be a devastating time for you and your loved ones. If you need support, please feel free to reach out to me and other members of the church community.

Thank you, again. May the Lord bless you and keep you. (Numbers 6:24-26)

With all my best wishes,
[Handwritten Signature]
[Name and Position in the Church]

#13 Sample: Simple Memorial Gift Thank You Letter - Version 2



Dear **[Donor's Name]**,

It was a blessing to us that **[Deceased's First Name]** could attend services at our church before their passing.

They gave generously to our church and shared many other gifts with us. As a person, they **[share stories about the deceased, e.g., were always happy to pitch in and help]**.

Your generosity celebrates the life and work of **[Deceased's First Name]** and ensures that their witness for Christ will endure. We appreciate that you've honored them in this thoughtful way.

Sincerely,
[Pastor's Name or Church Secretary's Name]

#14 Sample: Simple Appreciation Note for Family and Friends for a Group Donation



Dear **[Mr./Ms./Mrs.] [First and Last Names]**

I am writing to thank you and your group of donors who contributed to our church in memory of **[Deceased's Name]**. In addition to the generous donation, our church family is grateful for the encouragement and help you have given us.

We believe that your contribution to our church will positively impact many people. We appreciate your thoughtful gesture, which will keep **[Deceased's Name]** memory alive in the hearts of those who will benefit from the donation.

Once again, we would like to express our gratitude to you and your team of donors for all you have done during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,
[Pastor's Name or Church Secretary's Name]

#15 Sample: Thank You Acknowledgement Letter to Individual Donors



Dear **[Donor's Name]**

On behalf of the whole congregation, I'd like to thank you for your kind donation to **[church or a specific project, if applicable]**. We're so fortunate to have your help.

With your help, we can keep working toward **[relevant church project]** and ensure it is completed for the church's future. We are very thankful for your gift to help us accomplish this. **[If it's relevant, say something about how their ongoing kindness over the years has helped the church in a direct way. If it's their first time giving or they don't give very often, let them know how happy you are to include them as part of the church community.]**

If you have any questions about how your donation is being used, please contact **[Pastor's Name or Church Secretary's Name]** at **[contact information]**. Once again, our sincere gratitude for your generous contribution.

Sincerely, Yours in Christ,
[Pastor's Name or Church Secretary's Name]

#16 Sample: Thank You Letter to Close Church Member



Dear **[Churchgoer's Name]**

We appreciate you being here with us at this time of great sorrow. Our congregation will miss **[Deceased's Name]** very much.

We were informed of your donation in **[Deceased's Name]**'s memory and we appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity in their honor. **[Deceased's Name]** would be overjoyed to learn that you gave so generously to the church they loved.

I just wanted to let you know how fortunate our church is to have someone like you in our congregation. No words can describe how lucky we feel to have you in our lives.

Thank you once again.

Go in peace and love always,
[Pastor's Name or Church Secretary's Name]

#17 Sample: Thank You Letter to a Friend of the Deceased Not Known to the Church



Dear **[Donor's Name]**,

Although we have never met face-to-face, I feel like I know you very well thanks to **[Deceased's Name]**. The late **[Deceased's Name]** would tell us story after story about all the exciting things you did together in the past.

We are writing to express our deep gratitude for your memorial gift to our church in **[Deceased's Name]**'s name. We are both aware of their deep commitment to the church and their willingness to help anyone in need.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work through this challenging period. Even though you couldn't be here in person, we were comforted knowing that you were praying and thinking with us of **[Deceased's Name]**.

Our hope is to meet you soon and put a face to the great stories.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,
[Pastor's Name or Church Secretary's Name]

#18 Sample: Thank-You Message With a Request for Feedback



Dear **[first name]**,

We just wanted to reach out to sincerely thank you for attending our church event. We hope you enjoyed your experience and had the chance to meet some friendly new people.

We'd be incredibly grateful for any feedback you might have for us about the event. If you like, feel free to get in touch at **[email address or phone number]**.

Looking forward to meeting you again—we have **[next event]** coming up in **[period of time]**, and it would be fantastic to see you there!

Thank you again.

Kind regards,
[Name of pastor, priest, or secretary]
[Name of church]

#19 Sample: Simple “Thank You for Attending Our Church Event: Letter



Dear **[name]** and family,

We are more than thankful that you took time out of your busy day to attend **[name of event]**. We truly hope you enjoyed the experience.

If you would like to join us for worship on Sunday, services start at **[time]**. We would love to see you again!

Best regards,
Your friends at **[Name of church]**

#20 Sample: Personal Thank-You Template for Pastors



Hey **[first name]**,

I praise God for all the faces I see in my congregation on Sundays, but it's especially wonderful to welcome new visitors to our church.

Thank you for attending our **[name of occasion]** event last weekend. I know my congregation loved getting to meet you, and I sincerely hope you had a good time as well.

Please feel free to visit again anytime. We'll be holding another big event in **[month]**, but in the meantime, Sunday services take place at **[time]** each weekend.

Take care and God bless,
[Name of pastor]
[Name of church]

#21 Sample: Church Event Invitation and Thank-You Template



Hey friends,

We just wanted to say thank you for attending our church event at **[name of church]**! We were truly happy to see you and hope you had a wonderful time.

If you enjoyed **[name of event]**, we have some great news! We have another event scheduled for **[date and time]** if you would like to come. It would truly be wonderful to see you again—we hope you can make it!

Until next time,
Your friends at **[name of church]**

Want to Grow Giving?

ACS Technologies partners with Vanco to make online giving simple and intuitive for churches. Take the two steps thousands of churches have used to offer modern giving options to their contributors today.

1. **Let's talk!** Speak to our eGiving consultant to see our giving tools in action and plan the most optimal set of tools for your ministry.
2. **Launch** - Don't worry. You don't need to be tech-savvy to implement our giving solutions. We offer customizable launch resources to help you communicate the new ways your contributors can give.
3. **Enjoy an increase in donations!**

Let's Talk



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