

# 2019 Guide to **Year-End Giving for Churches**

Everything you need to prepare for **#GivingTuesday** and **Year-End Giving**



With **#GivingTuesday** kicking off the charitable season in November to the last day in December—there's A LOT to get ready for (and we've got you covered!).



'Tis the season when givers feel the most charitable and are looking for causes that they can relate to and support. This typically results in an influx of giving activity for nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and churches alike.

While this time of year helps further your vision, looking at the calendar can be intimidating for staff in charge of organizing generosity campaigns. With #GivingTuesday kicking off the charitable season in November to the last day in December—there's A LOT to get ready for (and we've got you covered!).

In order to make the year-end giving process seamless for you and givers, we created this helpful guide. It's packed with tried and true practices to keep you organized and make the most of the season that overflows with generosity. We'll begin with a few statistics and facts that show why your church should participate in the biggest giving days of the year, and what trends you can expect. Then, we'll dig into the 2019 Year-End Giving Guide. Let this guide serve as a starting point for your #GivingTuesday and year-end giving campaigns.



## Facts & Stats

- ◆ **Faith-based nonprofits** now receive the largest percentage of all #GivingTuesday online gifts<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 26% of digital gifts on #GivingTuesday were made on **mobile devices** last year<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ **Online giving increased on #GivingTuesday by 28%** in 2017 compared to 2016<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ **\$132 was the average online gift** for #GivingTuesday last year<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Nearly 30% of all giving happens in **December**<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ 1 in 5 people give **more** during Christmas<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ #GivingTuesday always falls on the **Tuesday after Thanksgiving** (much like the consistency of Black Friday, but for generosity!)
- ◆ This year, #GivingTuesday will be celebrated on **December 3rd**



## 5-Part Action Plan for the year end

1. Get organized (with SMART goals)
2. Plan a Generosity Campaign
3. Seamless Follow-Through
4. The Importance of Follow-Up
5. Review Accomplishments





## PART 1

### Proven methods to stay organized for a successful launch

A study focused on strategies for achieving goals found that 70% of people were successful when they wrote them down, emphasizing direct actions to reach them. Only 35% of individuals achieved their goals when they didn't write them down.<sup>5</sup>

Faith-based organizations around the globe apply the famous acronym **S.M.A.R.T.** to help reach goals when planning a generosity campaign. When writing down your goals, apply each letter listed here:

#### **S**pecific

Create specific goals using numbers. Instead of writing that you want to increase giving, write that you want to increase giving by 10%.

#### **M**easurable

Have a system in place to measure goals throughout the campaign (like customized reports from your church giving software).

#### **A**ttainable

Have a system in place to measure goals throughout the campaign (like customized reports from your church giving software).

#### **R**ealistic

We often shoot for the moon when setting goals, so make sure what you put on the page is achievable.

#### **T**imely

Create timelines to track the progress you're making on your goals, whether daily, weekly, or some other frequency.





## PART 2

# Steps to take before launching a generosity campaign

Preparation is a significant part of your #GivingTuesday and year-end generosity campaigns, and the to-do list can feel overwhelming. By taking it one step at a time, you'll not only get ahead of schedule—you'll enjoy the process!

The first step is to set up a digital giving solution if you don't already have one. Solutions, such as your giving software, are easy to sign up for and have you accepting gifts in as little as 24 hours.

Be sure to look for a comprehensive solution that fits all of your church's giving needs—even beyond year-end giving. Your giving software offers multiple ways to accept gifts (online, mobile app, text, and kiosk) and offers price plans to fit all church sizes.

After getting your digital giving solution set up, create a special giving form for your campaign whether it's for #GivingTuesday or the year-end. A custom form that can be embedded on your church's website appeals to potential givers a lot more than sending them away from your website to complete their donations.

Once you've created your form, send it to a few staff members to test before the big day to make sure everything's just how you want it.

## Beyond setting up your digital giving platform, do the following before launching your campaign:

- ◆ Analyze past year results
- ◆ Choose your team
- ◆ Budget your campaign
- ◆ Assign team member duties
- ◆ Select your narrative
- ◆ Identify your church members
- ◆ Decide communication style







### PART 3

## Ways to ensure the follow-through is seamless

Now that you've done the hard work of setting goals and preparing for the generosity campaign, it's time for the follow-through.

There are 3 essential techniques to ensure this is seamless:

- ◆ Set a timeline
- ◆ Track progress
- ◆ Communicate

### Set A Timeline

Setting detailed timelines is key to a smooth giving campaign. Break your big goals down into small, attainable pieces, and mark those on the calendar. If, for instance, your primary goal is to increase giving by 10% by year-end, start by identifying big giving days, like #GivingTuesday and special events. Write down a smaller goal for these days such as to increase giving by 3%. Then, measure the results the day after.

Three percent is more attainable than trying to get 10% at once. It moves the needle closer to your goal, giving you and your team a motivational boost and something to celebrate!

### Track Progress

Tracking progress is a wonderful way to keep you and your team motivated. It's also nice to have notes and giving reports to look back to next year. Find a system that works best for your church, whether it's an online spreadsheet or reporting tools from your giving software.



## Communicate

We've all worked in conditions when communication was lacking, and it can make a world of difference between a smooth follow-through or a bumpy one. When creating your calendar with timelines and goals, make room for weekly meetings and updates with your team—even if it's just quickly over the phone or at your favorite lunch spot.

**When communicating with your church family on the day of a campaign, such as #GivingTuesday or the last day of the year, use the following timeline to guide you:**

### Morning:

- ◆ Send out your initial email to donors announcing that your campaign has officially launched and provide them links to your giving form. Make sure your campaign is visible on your website and start sending out social media updates to followers.
- ◆ Send out social posts with a link to a blog post or case study that tell people more about what your church is doing.

Here are some useful social media / email graphics for you to send out to your congregation.

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

### Midday:

- ◆ Send out a status update via email and social media at the midpoint of the day and let donors know where you're at in reaching your goal. In your email, include an emotional appeal in the message such as a testimonial video or a link to a blog post.
- ◆ Give a second status update through social media.
- ◆ Post a photo or video of your mission in action on social media.

### Evening

- ◆ Give a third status update through social media.
- ◆ Send a final appeal via email to get any last minute gifts before the clock strikes 12!

**It may seem that you're communicating too much, but in truth, your givers want to help you reach your goal and are interested in knowing your progress. And, if they know exactly what dollar amount you're trying to reach, they will push to get your message out to other people in their social circles.**

- ◆ Send out your last updates via social media and make sure to include a sense of urgency and let them know exactly how much more you need to make your goal. If you already made your goal, encourage people to help you smash that goal and raise even more!



When you send a quality and heartfelt thank-you note, **41% of people are more likely to give again,** and 24% increase their current gift before the year is over<sup>6</sup>.

#### PART 4

### How and why you should enhance the follow-up

Many people think that the follow-up comes when the generosity campaign is complete, but in reality, it should be peppered throughout the giving season.

For an impactful thank you, send the note out within two to three weeks of receiving the gift. Keep in mind, 46% of people prefer a personalized letter sent to their mailbox, and 35% prefer email<sup>6</sup>.

When you send a quality and heartfelt thank-you note, 41% of people are more likely to give again, and 24% increase their current gift before the year is over<sup>6</sup>.

We've prepared a helpful email template so you can focus on getting your church ready for the season of generosity.

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)



## PART 5

### Prepare to ring in the New Year with confidence!

What a fantastic feeling to have wrapped up your year-end generosity campaigns—great job! Now you can take a breath and reflect on the experience. Everything we go through, we can learn from, and this is an excellent time to gather the data and think about how the campaign went.

File this guide on your computer or print it out, and over the years you can customize your action plan even further. Every year, analyze the results and make notes of what was successful, and what could use improvement.

Consider the tools that made tithing easier for you and your congregation like kiosks, text giving, branded donation pages, and a mobile app.

Soon, you and your team will be a well-oiled machine, prepared for another successful giving campaign!



Do you know a friend or local church  
that could use this guide?

**SHARE IT WITH THEM!**





## Sources:

1. ["#GivingTuesday: A Global Movement."](#) 2018.
2. ["nfpSynergy blog."](#) 2011.
3. ["Online Giving Statistics."](#) Charity Navigator. 2016.
4. Source: ["The Ultimate List of Online Giving Statistics for 2018."](#)
5. ["Study Focuses on Strategies for Achieving Goals, Resolutions."](#) Dominican University of California. 2015.
6. ["Donor Retention Matters."](#) Urban Institute. 2013.