



## HOW TO TALK ABOUT GIVING DURING TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY



# How to Engage Your Givers When Times are Tough

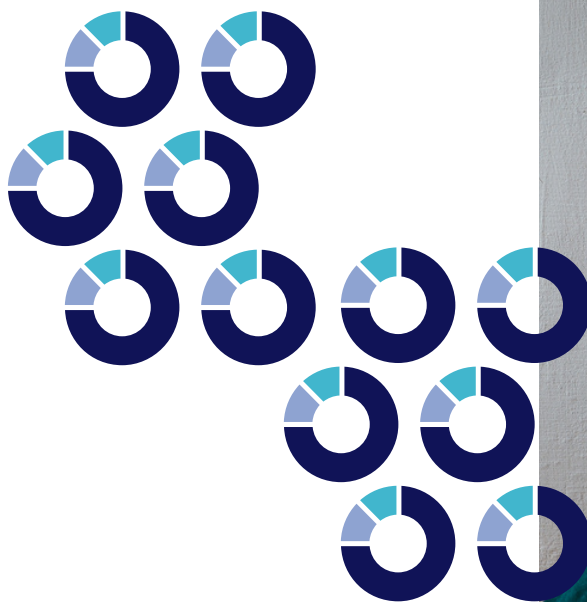
From the beginning of the 2020 pandemic, churches helped the community by distributing much-needed supplies and meals, offering online learning, mentoring, and counseling to the newly unemployed, and online church services to maintain their connection to each other and their faith.

However, the church needed financial resources to maximize their impact.

With the physical doors to most churches closed and individuals instructed to stay home, many churches initially saw a dramatic drop in donations.

Yet despite the rapid rise in unemployment, other churches found that effective communication and empowered mindsets for talking about giving enabled them to stay afloat and even thrive financially.

Supporting your members while accelerating giving growth.



# BEST PRACTICES FOR **CRISIS** GIVING COMMUNICATIONS

The leadership and tone you use in your communications will help instill confidence in your givers. Strengthen your own confidence and messaging with these tips.

## Overcome Your Discomfort With Talking About Giving

It's normal to feel uncomfortable or even self-serving when asking for gifts during a crisis. To be effective, it's important to realize that, yes, some givers are going to pull back on giving.

But what has always been true is this: Others will step up to help during times of extreme need.

Your members and your community need you more than ever, and many givers know this and will want to assist your efforts. But their generosity and willingness to shift their giving online will depend on your leadership and how well you are able to reconcile your desire to provide resources with your need to fund operations.

## Revisit Your Mission

During a crisis, priorities shift. It's time for Plan B, and you need to know what has changed before communicating.

As the need to help the hungry, homeless, sick and elderly rises, and as you move online, how might this impact or redefine your usual mission:

- What unexpected expenses have you incurred, such as tooling up to be an online church or providing services to the community?
- What planned expenditures can be postponed?
- What will your new volunteer needs be?



"Give donors the opportunity to surprise you."

Amy Eisenstein  
Fundraising Consultant

Being candid about what the church is doing to help in the crisis, how it's tightening its belt and where it cannot, and which expenses and volunteer needs have escalated during the crisis will be appreciated.



## Thank Your Givers

Gratitude is even more important when people are worried, impacted by crisis or stressed. Don't take givers for granted. Go out of your way to let them know they're appreciated.

## Anticipate That Many People Can Afford to Give

Even when the economy looks rough, don't make assumptions about what your givers can or cannot give. Many churches see an uptick in contributions during a crisis.

You might be surprised at how many (and which) of your givers have enough wealth to continue giving or even to give more. Others work in industries that thrive despite (or because of) the crisis. And many will be touched by rising needs and happily make sacrifices in their budgets because they genuinely believe we're all in this together.

So be bold and ask for what you truly need.

## Give Major Givers the Personal Touch

This group deserves special attention. Make a list of your top givers and schedule actual or virtual meetings with them as soon as possible.

Open your conversation by asking how they, their families and businesses are doing. Then let them know specific challenges the church is facing and the specific ministry opportunities that could use their attention or financial support.

## Look for Creative Ways to Ask

If someone completes a pledge, ask if they would like to transfer their gift amount to another ministry opportunity. Or, if you must cancel a paid event, ask ticket holders if they would like to donate their admission cost to help with current needs.

## Be Sensitive

Make sure none of your members are falling through the cracks. Someone feeling overlooked won't appreciate a request for a gift, but those benefiting from or contributing to the church's service to members and the community will be more likely to feel benevolent.

Exclude from your giving requests families that are enduring known financial difficulties. Sometimes those least able to give take these messages to heart the most and then feel pressure or guilt.



# REVIEW YOUR GIVING EXPERIENCE

In times of uncertainty, it's more important than ever that your giving experience be compelling and seamless. Before you promote online giving, double-check these elements.

## Make it Easy to Find Your Giving Page

Simplify your website menu and home page. Make it very easy to find your giving forms wherever they are on your website or church app.

## Include Giving in Announcements

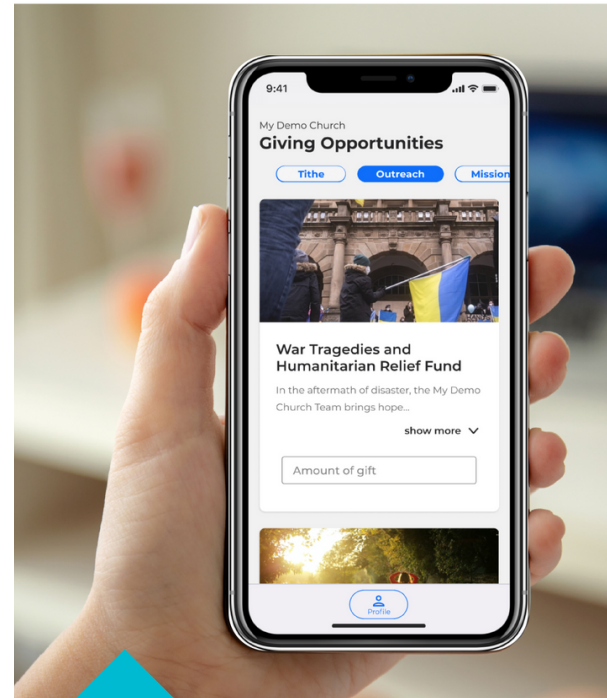
People often intend to give but forget. Our data shows text-to-give gifts spike during Sunday morning worship times, likely because of a brief, no-pressure reminder of online giving options.

## Include Giving Opportunities in Live-Streaming Experiences

Giving is an act of worship, so don't forget to direct people to your online giving options before, during and after the live stream. Many churches receive donations far beyond their normal reach as online worshippers find their streaming service and donate, even though they are not members.

## Enrich Your Giving Opportunities

Use imagery, embedded links and video to educate and encourage givers about the why behind your ministry efforts. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words! And giving can be just the beginning of engaging givers more deeply into the life of the church.



*Vision2's media-rich Give Stories inspire givers to greater engagement.*



## READY TO START YOUR ONLINE GIVING CAMPAIGN?

If you're ready to try your hand at transitioning more givers to convenience and predictability of online giving, check out these two companion resources on the [Resources and Tools](#) page of our website:

- A step-by-step campaign guide with sample email copy you can use verbatim for every stage of your campaign
- An illustrated Givers' 3-Step Guide to Online Giving you can use on your website, announcement screens and in emails, or print for handouts and mailers.



## Personalize Gift Acknowledgments

Ensure that givers are addressed by name in your "thank you for giving" emails. It's also best if your thank you emails come from your church, not from your giving platform. This gives you the opportunity to have the "last word" with them as you express your gratitude.

## Refresh Content Regularly

Don't let givers get the impression that you've put this important act of worship on autopilot. Keep both your giving page and your gift acknowledgments fresh and updated regularly. Give them something to look forward to, instead of same old/same old, week in and week out.

## Ask for Recurring Gifts

Make sure your giving platform lets you ask givers on your giving page if they'd like to make their gift recurring. If someone completes a pledge, ask in your thank you email if they'd like to transfer their pledge amount to another ministry.

## Ensure Your Giving Platform Inspires Giving, Not Giving Up

Engage givers with dynamic ministry designations that go beyond the typical drop-down menu. [Here's an example.](#)

Studies show that 83% of the charitable gifts people begin on your website are never completed due to common online giving obstacles that LIMIT your givers' generosity. [Learn more about those here.](#)

# Ready to learn more?

Vision2 is more than giving software.  
A true solution like Vision2 solves  
your church's giving challenges.

# Do Good. Better.™

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## Our Promise:

As your partner, we'll support you every step of the way.

