

## Annual Giving Best Practices

Although every annual giving campaign is unique to the church in which it takes place, there are some practices that are more likely to help to ensure success.

- Annual giving campaigns should be joyful and celebratory in nature, thanking God for the abundance of blessings in our individual lives and in the life the church. Supporting the ministries and mission of the church should be a source of joy for campaign planners and donors alike.
- The spiritual foundation of annual giving should be grounded in scripture, and making a pledge should be a prayerful act.
- One size does not fill all--your church's annual giving campaign should reflect its mission. Campaign materials such as letters, pledge card, brochures, videos, etc. should present a clear and concise message provide specific examples showing how money is used in support of mission and ministry.
- Know your congregation and its annual giving history. Be aware of the implications of generational demographics, and understand the history and culture of giving in your church.
- Support from church leadership is key to a campaign's success. The church's clergy, vestry, and ministry leaders should all be visible supporters annual giving campaign. All members of the church community should make a pledge in support of the church's mission and ministries.
- Highlight stories of how annual giving has supported ministries that have made differences in people's lives. One way to have parishioners share their story is through ministry moments--a time in each service during the pledge campaign where a parishioner gives a personal testimony to the impact of mission and ministry of the church. These stories should celebrate all that is wonderful about your church and the church community.
- Tell church community members thank you! Send a personal letter of thanks when pledges are received.
- Provide multiple ways beyond a pew card to make a pledge and writing a check to donate.
- Follow-Up on pledges that have not been received. Develop a mechanism for reaching out to parishioners who do not submit a financial pledge.
  - Some congregations canvass their parishioners. They visit all parishioners personally, regardless of the status of their pledge. This strategy tends to work best if the visits take place prior to the start of the actual campaign. In large parishes, it may take more than a full year to personally visit all members.
  - Many churches follow up on outstanding pledges by phone or email. It is easier to communicate via email and phone than meeting in person on Sunday.

- Provide training to your volunteers regardless of your follow up approach. Provide templates for email messages or talking points for phone calls or in person meetings.
- What are the goals of your Annual Giving Campaign, beyond increasing revenue to your operating budget? Campaign goals should be clear and measurable, and materials should always reflect the campaign's goals.
- Annual Giving Campaigns require advance planning in order to be well-executed. There should be a clear kick-off event with visible support from clergy and leadership. Regular reporting and updates to the church leadership and congregation ensures transparency and reminders to pay pledges.