

# Virtual Stewardship 101: Campaigns and Offering Plates

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# It's all about relationship!

Fundraising, like any human venture, is about forming, nurturing, and respecting our relationships. This is even more important in communities of faith, where we ask each other for our gifts of **experience, wisdom, and resources** to build our churches and sustain our mission.



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# It's all about relationship!

*Basic concepts of relationship are hallmarks of fundraising and stewardship whether we are gathered in-person or virtually*

- Frequent, genuine communication
- Teaching and learning about money and meaning
- Clear and concise case for giving. While you might develop multi-page brochures, narrative budgets, or your essential mission and case for giving should be able to **fit on one side of a 3x5 card**.
- Transparent and accountable finances and leadership
- Gratitude and timely acknowledgment
- Thanksgiving and celebration
- **Follow-up relating the gifts raised to the ministry supported**



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# You can talk about money in church!

**40% of Jesus parables** are about money or possessions.

**We put so much emotional weight on money**

- Hopes & Dreams
- Security
- Fears
- Failure
- Success
- Perception
- Joy & Happiness



When we talk about money with our sisters and brothers, rather than being limited conversations about wealth and pledges, we have conversations about family, anxiety, love, health, and the fullness of life



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# Why this year is different

As congregations and dioceses respond to local health mandates, our congregations will approach stewardship this year, as:

- 100% virtually gathered
- Hybrid – some choosing to stay home and participate online, others gathering in person, as allowed and advised
- What is almost certain is that no congregation will be fully gathered together in person this year

**Stewardship campaigns should respond** to this challenge this year.

1. Send materials by mail and email
2. Create small groups focused on stewardship (more on this later)
3. Preach and teach on stewardship themes!



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# Small Groups in Virtual Times

A powerful connection and deepening relationship is possible when members ask each other for their gifts or enter into dialogue about the mission and priorities of the church. **Your stewardship campaign this year should create small groups focused on formation and mission. Small groups are the best way to develop meaningful formation about money and mission.**

In times of physical distancing, small group meetings, led by members of the **vestry, stewardship committee, or other lay leaders** facilitate the education of mission and the teaching of good stewardship fundamentals.

- Facilitated Small groups
- House churches
- Bible studies or topical studies



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# Small Group Bible Studies on Stewardship

**Genesis 1:27-28** We are made in God's image

**Psalms 30** The world belongs to the Lord and all that is in it

**Malachi 3:7-12** Robbing God

**Matthew 3:1-12** What does our baptism mean for us as stewards?

**Matthew 5:1-12** The Beatitudes and stewardship

**Matthew 6:7-14** Praying the prayer Jesus taught us as stewards

**Matthew 25:14-30** The Parable of the Talents

**Mark 4:21-25** A Lamp on a Stand

**Mark 10:17-25** The Rich Young Man

**Mark 12:41-44** The Widow's Offering

**Luke 12:13-34** The Parable of the Rich Fool giver.

**Luke 12:22-34** Where is your heart?

**Luke 15:1-10** The Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

**Luke 15:11-32** The Parable of the Lost Son

**Luke 18:9-14** The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

**Luke 18:18-27** The Rich Young Ruler

**Luke 19:1-10** Zacchaeus

**Luke 5:1-11, John 21:1-14** Two Fishing Stories

**John 6:1-13** The Feeding of the 5,000

**Colossians 3:12-17** Paul's guidance for living lives as God's Children

**1 Peter 4:7-11** Stewards of the manifold grace of God

**1 Timothy 6: 17-19** Be rich in good works

**1 Corinthians 4:1** God loves a cheerful



# Small Group Bible Study Format

- Opening Prayer: perhaps a prayer of thanksgiving or a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to be present during the meeting and particularly the engaging scripture.
- Ask someone to read the passage the first time.
  - Group Conversation: What word, phrase, idea, or sentence stands out for you?
- Ask a different person to read it a second time, perhaps from a different bible translation.
  - Group Conversation: What is God/Jesus/this passage saying to you?
- Ask a third person to read it, perhaps from yet another bible translation.
  - Group Conversation: What is God/ Jesus/this passage calling you to do?
- Close with prayer for each person, that each of you may become more and more the faithful, loving, generous stewards God calls us to be, that each of us may indeed respond to what God is calling us to do and to be.





# Other Topics for Small Groups

Appreciative Inquiry is a model of design thinking or development that focuses on what is possible, what is good, what is exciting. It purposely does not ask negative questions or frame problems. It is a solutions-based, inclusive way to engage in respectful conversation.

1. What ministry of our congregation is most hopeful or most exciting to you? Why?
2. If money were no object, what service to our neighborhood / neighbors would you hope to begin? Why?
3. What are examples that you can name of nonprofits, organizations, or other churches that are doing remarkable work in our community? Why are they inspiring to you?
4. Which of your gifts are you most willing to share with our church? (some examples: music, accounting, website, answering the phone, yardwork, translation, invitation, having fun, leading groups, cooking food) Why?



# Modeling Stewardship

## Dialogues: Making the ask

- **Develop a short and simple script** around the core mission of the congregation – three to five talking points that can be shared
- **Write** some questions for each group to answer as they gather
- Allow natural conversation to occur. This is not a place to bring tough questions or strong opinions – no agendas or axes. **Just conversation between parishioners**
- Ask each participant to review the materials they've received, pray about their giving, reflect on their household budget, and submit pledges by a due date.
- Ask each participant one direct question: **Will you support the mission of our church this year?** Do not ask for the amount -- just a yes or a no.
- Regardless of the answer, thank them for their time, and ask them to follow up with you (or the appropriate people) for more support or answers to questions they have.



# Liturgical Resources for your Virtual Stewardship Campaign

- TENS offers weekly meditations on stewardship related to each Gospel from St. Francis Sunday through Christ the King (October and November Sundays).
- Each reflection has thought-provoking questions that can be used in small-group meetings or coffee hours (virtual or not).



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# Liturgical Resources for your Virtual Stewardship Campaign



*Cartoon by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham and the Church Pension Group*



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# Liturgical Resources for your Virtual Stewardship Campaign

## *Best Practices for the Virtual Offertory*

**Invite:** Use one of these alternate offertory sentences specifically developed for virtual gathering. These come from the Rev. Kay Sylvester, Rector of St. Paul's, Tustin, CA

- Let us offer our gifts, so that God will bless and break them like holy bread, and use them to nourish the world.
- As Jesus fed thousands on a hillside from a small, shared meal, let our shared gifts multiply and bring God's kingdom near.
- Creator God, gather our gifts from the four sacred directions as we give you thanks.
- Let us offer our holy gifts as seeds; may we plant and water them with God's help; may God's grace yield a harvest of new life.
- With grateful hearts, let us give what we have. With joyful hope, let us give for what can be.
- Let us love God and love one another by offering our gifts to the work of love.



# Liturgical Resources for your Virtual Stewardship Campaign

## *Best Practices for the Virtual Offertory*

**Gather:** In this moment, we take time to virtually pass the offering plate representing our gifts, hopes, and prayers to the Creator and our community. When gathered virtually, take the time to observe the solemnity of this moment

- Ask people gathered remotely to use this time to make their weekly pledge online
- Have a moment of silence for people to complete the action of online giving, or to give gratitude for what they have received

**Bless:** Making an action of Orans, bless the gifts that have been presented virtually by our members, give thanks

**Break:** Just as the gifts of bread and wine are broken and shared, so too our gifts of treasure, time, and talent are shared with a needful world. Take a moment to name the ministries supported by your congregation as a remembrance that our virtual work has very real impact in our world.



# Best Practices for your campaign this year

1. **Select the technology** that you will use for virtual offering plates. I have done some research for you, you should do your own. Many times these can take a few business days to set up and require verification and bank account information
2. Whatever platforms you are currently using for your virtual services, you should use for stewardship: Zoom, Facebook Live, Google Hangout, etc.
3. **Develop your case** / collateral to be sent electronically
4. Download the **free TENS resources for virtual campaigns**. Use the **weekly meditations and liturgical resources** to focus your campaign
5. Select leaders to **facilitate small-groups**
6. **Enroll everyone** in up to three sessions: A review of the budget and need; a Bible study or other topical discussion; the stewardship ask where materials are handed out and distributed
7. **Celebrate, Acknowledge, Thank!**



# What is a virtual offering plate, and why should you have one?

Every congregation should have the ability to collect donations and pledges online and via mobile platforms in times of virtual and physical gathering.

For the plate:

- It is no longer usual for individuals to carry cash. More and more people use their credit and debit cards for transactions.
- Even in healthy times, passing a plate suggests many people touching a common item, spreading viruses
- Receipts are automatic, as are thank-you acknowledgements
- Most donation software gives you at least basic information to reach out to visitors – at bare minimum an email address or phone number tied to a real name



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# What is a virtual offering plate, and why should you have one?

Every congregation should have the ability to collect donations and pledges online and via mobile platforms.

For pledges:

- More donors rely on online or mobile platforms to make recurring or one-time gifts to nonprofits than ever before.
- Fewer people carry checkbooks and cash
- Receipts and tax information are automatic and accurate
- Gifts are directly deposited into your bank and reports can be easily imported into your accounting software



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# What about people who like cash and checks?

*Having the option and availability for a virtual offering plate does not mean you need to give up conventional ways of pledge fulfillment and giving.*

- People may still write paper checks and send them into the church
- Some people prefer checks and paper statements



# Tell me about mobile giving

*People have their cell phones in church. Let's give them a reason to use them!*

- Text-to-give and other mobile giving campaigns can have inspiring, immediate results
- Individuals can choose to share their giving on social media, and promote your case for giving to their networks



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# Tell me about mobile giving

You've heard about Venmo ...

- January 2020: Venmo is no longer accepting new applications for nonprofits and churches
- It was purchased by PayPal and is focused only on person-person giving
- *If your congregation was already set up, you may continue using it*



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# Offer as many ways as you can to fulfill pledges and receive gifts

*There is no reason to limit the number of platforms or methods for giving.*

- Donor-centric – this means that we make it easy for the giver
- Don't leave money on the table (or in the purse). Offer as many ways as you can implement for your offering plate
- Pick platforms that integrate well with your accounting software. Most of the ones I'll be recommending integrate easily with Quickbooks



# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## PayPal

- There is a possible custom page for churches
- It has the least friendly backend support, with little donor information going back to the congregation
- No option for recurring donation
- It has wide trust and brand recognition in the marketplace
- Least expensive transaction cost
- Set-up: Free
- Transaction: 2.2% + \$0.30



# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## Easytithe

- Works on websites and mobile platforms
- Very easy to set up and has a reasonable backend support.
- Add-on features (these do cost) include streaming services, sermon recording, event registration
- Set-up: Free
- Transaction: 3% + \$0.39



# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## FaithStreet

- Customizable and easy to implement.
- Includes add-ons for text-to-give and campaigns within campaigns
- Great back-end reporting
- Allows donors to absorb transaction costs
- Set-up: Monthly fee of \$42
- Transaction: 3.5% + \$0.30





# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## PushPay

- Short of having your own integrated CRM/CMS (like Raiser's Edge, for example) this is the most robust add-on donation site.
- Donations online and mobile
- Relationship management pieces for development and stewardship
- Set up: tiered depending on church size
- Transaction: 2.5% - 3% per transaction



# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## Giving Tools

- It's a virtual giving platform / portal
- Allows you to run a whole campaign with multiple appeals (e.g. annual budget, flower guild, outreach, special collections, discretionary fund)
- Monthly Fee: \$10-\$30. You get a lower transaction rate with the higher packages
- Transaction Cost: 2.2% + \$0.30 or as low as 1.9% + \$0.20



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# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## Zelle

- Works with most large banks, but not smaller banks or many credit unions
- There is not much ability to track donor information apart from the user name or phone number / email
- There is no fee to use Zelle either to send or receive, but your banking institution might charge a fee.



# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## Tithe.ly

- Text-to-give, one-time, and recurring donations all possible
- Backend reporting is robust
- Auto-responders and limited branding are easy to set up
- **TENS members receive a discount**
- Set-up: Free
- Transaction 2.9% (discount 2.75%) + \$0.30
- Donors can elect to pay the transaction cost themselves, giving 100% of the donation to the church
- Text-to-give \$19/transaction (discount \$9)



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# Some Common Virtual Offering Plates

## Facebook

- Facebook has an integrated giving tool for qualified nonprofits and churches.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic (and possibly longer, it's pretty popular) **Facebook is not taking any transaction fees or other costs** for setting up fundraisers on its platform.
- If your congregation is using Facebook Live to stream services, adding a button to your profile connecting it to a Facebook fundraiser is an easy process



# Your Questions or Comments



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**2020 resources** <https://www.tens.org/resources/member-resources/>

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