

How to have “the Talk”

If this is new to your church, create a communications plan to make people aware of the new opportunity. Carefully consider your wording, and make it easy to find.

If you have a mostly older population in your church, you can always encourage them to mail their tithe in. The most important piece here is safety, and you need to reiterate it.

Places to communicate:

- In an email
- On social media
- Landing Page of your website
- Menu on the landing page of your website
- In your email signatures

Sample Social Media Post:

“GREAT NEWS: We’re mobilizing our church so we can be the church when you need it most. We are continuing to be faithful with what God has given us, and are grateful that we get to be the church together.

If you need help during this difficult time, please reach out. We’re here to help.”

Sample Email Copy:

“Dear _____,

Introduction

Thank them for being a part of (church name). We are so grateful for you, and all that you bring to our church home.

Share the Update

As you know, we’ve been making a lot of changes to keep our whole church family safe, cared for, and protected.

So far we’ve implemented.

- *Thing 1*
- *Thing 2*
- *And we’ve just set up our online giving through (company name). Please create an account and set up either a one-time tithe or ongoing tithe so we can not only attend to the needs of our church, but also our greater community.*
- *INSERT STORY OF A NEED YOU’VE RECENTLY MET*

Conclusion

Whether we are meeting in person or online, we are still called to be the Church. While I’m saddened that we are walking through such a difficult time, I am encouraged that this is when the Church shines its brightest.

May we be the light together.

(Your Name)

It doesn't have to be awkward

Choosing the right tool is an important decision, but it's actually not the most important opportunity in front of you.

A lot of tools will work. It's how you introduce or emphasize them that makes the difference. The best digital giving tool in the world that isn't used by your congregation won't move the needle.

So let's talk practically about what to do.

1. Ask your people to give online.

The first thing to do is to clearly ask your people to give. Let them know your church is still meeting, you're just meeting in a different place. Let them know you're still doing ministry. Keep the conversation focused on ministry, not just bills.

Here's some great language from RECHURCH:

"While our public services are cancelled for now, the mission and ministry of RECHURCH is moving forward! If you would like to invest in what God is doing in and through Restoration Church, you can click below to give online (it takes just a minute or two)"

When you ask them to give online, make sure you're making the process as quick and easy as it can be. Remember, the easier something is the more likely people are to follow through. People give up after too many clicks.

Amazon knows about the power of one-click purchases. They know every additional step is a barrier. The same is true for online giving.

When you catch your breath, take a few minutes to make a donation on your own website. Hit a timer and go through the process on your own. Do the very thing you're asking others to do.

2. Ask your people to set up automatic, recurring contributions.

Not only do you want people to give online, you want them to set up automatic, recurring contributions. This is where you want to slow down and really talk them through how to do this. Explain how it really is best for the church. Show people the exact steps to take.

Recurring donations are better than digital donations.

3. Communicate REGULARLY with your donor segments.

At first, this will seem like a next level task or something to get to once things quiet down. But this is a really powerful principle and an important step to take now.

All of the people who give to your church are all equally important to God. Everyone matters!

But there are people who fund your church at a deeper level. Wise leaders understand this principle and recognize they have a significant opportunity to speak to regular supporters differently.

The 20% of the people who fund 80% of your ministry are more like family. You can be more parental or pastoral with them. You can be a little more straight-forward or a little more authentic.

It's to communicate with your whole congregation, but this group of people needs more personal and more heartfelt communication. They probably feel more connected to the church so they need a little more attention.

This is not a value question, it's just good leadership. You can also anonymize any reports and not see names and amounts. There's a way to do this and still not show favoritism.

4. Help people who might be unfamiliar or uncomfortable.

No matter the average age of your congregation, there will likely be people in your church who are just unfamiliar or uncomfortable about making transactions online. Don't pressure or guilt them, but offer to help them.

We've seen churches set up tech support lines for seniors (or really anyone) who need help logging onto a webcast or zoom meeting. And the same thing can apply to helping people get set up with digital giving. Let people know you can walk them through the steps without seeing their banking information or giving amounts. Help them make a \$1 donation if necessary.

It's important to remember that people are also worried about their personal financial situation. While your donors certainly care about the church, there is a lot on their minds. They need to hear positive, encouraging messages.