

# Pass the Digital Offering Plate

How Your Church Can  
Accept Offerings Online  
(And Why You Should)

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## How Your Church Can Accept Offerings Online (And Why You Should)

According to [Church Mag](#), only 14% of Protestant churches in the United States are raising money online. If your congregation is missing out, Network for Good is here to help!

We power more digital giving than any other platform! Since 2001, we've processed over \$1 billion for more than 100,000 nonprofits. Plus, we're registered in every state for online fundraising. We have everything you need to get started!

- Easy-to-use digital donation pages
- Professional communications software
- Donor database systems
- Expert advice and reviews
- Step-by-step tutorials
- Fundraising templates
- Online events management



### In this guide, you'll learn:

- Why online giving can help your church increase offerings
- Who is using online giving and how they're succeeding
- How you can start an online giving program at your church

# Why Your Church Should Embrace Online Giving

If you're reading this, your congregation is probably part of the 86% who don't accept online gifts. It might be because you, your pastor, your financial secretary, or some other decision maker is an online-giving skeptic. Here are three big reasons why you should start fundraising online:

## 1. 100% of your members don't attend 100% of your services.

The reality is that not all members are present when the plate is passed every Sunday. Members who don't regularly attend services (and those who don't bring their checkbooks) can conveniently give online. A digital donation option and an email engagement strategy can help you keep connecting with your congregants. Plus, reaching out to members who have lapsed in attendance and offering them another giving option presents the perfect opportunity for members to reengage with their church family!

## 2. Raise more money with an additional form of offering.

Online giving can impact so many different areas of your ministry. The possibilities are endless!

- Youth group members can share your online giving page when asking for mission trip donations.
- International outreach ministries can instantly receive funding when a crisis hits.
- Local programs can extend their reach thanks to members near and far who contribute online.

The way that you accept gifts online does impact giving totals. Network for Good's analysis of online giving in 2013 shows that when an organization has a customized online giving page, [they receive a 30% larger gift on average than a shopping cart-style experience.](#)



*Credit: Liz Ragland*

Additionally, organizations that give an option for recurring giving see a big return. **Donors are 31% more likely to set up a recurring gift** if there is an easy way to do so on the organization's branded online donation page. Monthly tithing has never been so easy!



### **3. Your congregants are already distributing funds (and doing so many other things) online.**

Your congregation is already primed for online giving. Did you know that:

- 81% of American adults [use the internet](#)
- 66% of U.S. consumers [pay bills online](#)
- 65% of people [donated to a nonprofit online](#) in 2012

Think of all the things your church members can do online. They can order pet supplies, schedule doctors' appointments, register for an event, and send birthday gifts to friends. But can they make a gift to their church? Become a regular part of their online routine with a dedicated giving page.

**Let's start the conversation and raise more money!**

# Online Recurring Gifts: A New Way to Tithe



What's a recurring gift?

Imagine automatically receiving monthly donations and tithes. No need to process checks from the offering plate, the funds go directly into the church's account and a donation receipt is sent to the donor via email.

Sounds pretty great, huh? This new way to tithe online also makes giving extremely convenient for church members. Members can set up their monthly tithe during your church's annual stewardship campaign and they don't have to think about bringing their checkbook to worship every Sunday. It's really that easy!

**How can this new way of giving help your church? Here are three examples:**

**1. Pledges from last year don't always turn into monthly gifts this year.**

**The Problem:** Mr. Smith's family pledged \$200 a month during the annual stewardship campaign but its March and they haven't been to church all year. That expected \$600 was built into our budget to cover youth group expenses and now we won't be able to send four youth to the spring break retreat.

**The Solution:** Online recurring giving is easy for churches and members to set up. Members can schedule a monthly tithe to be automatically taken out of their account and sent to their church. Members can also log in at any time to change the amount and can always add an extra gift in addition to their tithe.





## 2. Tax receipting takes up way too much time.

**The Problem:** Jane and John Doe always tithe but request a receipt for their offering every month. Our financial secretary doesn't have the capacity to do this. She only does this type of reporting once a year, right before tax season. How can I politely tell Jane and John that we won't be able to give them what they need in terms of monthly tax receipts?

**The Solution:** Churches who encourage recurring gifts set up through their online donation tool will benefit in so many ways—even when it comes to administrative costs. Network for Good's online donation solution automatically sends tax receipts so members who'd like to update their tax records every month can do so with ease. Churches don't have to take on time consuming tasks like resolving expired credit card issues. Plus, reporting and exporting donation details is a snap and changes to the donation page are as easy (or even easier) than updating your Facebook profile picture.

## 3. Forecasting revenue in slow months is tricky if not impossible.

**The Problem:** Our emergency property fund is really low but the air conditioner just went out and Vacation Bible School starts next month. I've asked our financial secretary to put together a forecast for gifts that will be made over the summer and it looks like we will be able to make the repairs. But without knowing who will actually follow through with their tithes makes it hard to know for sure. Should we spend the money we think we will have or just hope and pray that July won't be as hot as last year?

**The Solution:** Revenue forecasting is easier when you can view how many members are committed to a set, monthly gift that is charged to their debit or credit card.



# How We Help Oro Valley Church Raise More Money for Its Mission!

Over 5,000 nonprofits are raising money online with DonateNow, Network for Good's easy and affordable fundraising tool, including religious groups like Oro Valley Church of the Nazarene.



Oro Valley Church of the Nazarene is a Protestant church in Arizona.

## CONVENIENT GIVING AND REPORTING

- Since 2010, Oro Valley Church of the Nazarene has raised **\$301,988** online.
- Recognizing that its congregation likes to do activities online, the church enabled online donations and became a more effective fundraiser. Parishioners now prefer to donate online and like that DonateNow makes giving quick and simple.
- Worship Pastor Larry Vinyard enjoys the ease of logging in and generating reports, and he appreciates that the interface is user-friendly and flexible.



**DonateNow makes tithing more convenient for parishioners compared to writing checks.**

**It's all about offering folks an additional giving option.**

LARRY VINYARD, WORSHIP PASTOR



# Churches Thinking Outside the Box

These congregations are using Network for Good's turnkey tool, DonateNow. With this tool, churches receive their own branded donation page that they can customize and update with no previous website or tech experience required.

[St. Peter's Episcopal Church](#) does a great job of outlining different designations to their general fund, endowment, or their children's ministry. This helps members remember that money given to the church goes to so many different projects, not just the pastor's salary and the electric bill.

## St. Peter's Episcopal Church


The DIOCESE of VIRGINIA

**Giving Opportunities**

- + Stewardship
- + Memorials
- + St. Peter's Parish Foundation

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

8400 St Peters Lane  
New Kent, VA 23124  
804-932-4846 >>



The DIOCESE of VIRGINIA

Home [1/2](#) Donate Now

[Log in to edit a recurring donation](#)

### Donate Now to support the Ministries of St. Peter's Parish Church, New Kent, Virginia

St. Peter's has several giving opportunities. They are listed below under Program Designation. We welcome and appreciate all donations.

**General Fund**--Use this fund for pledge payments or contributions that you want to be used for parish operating expenses

**Book of Remembrance**--Funds given in memory of parishioners. These funds are traditionally reserved for the purchase of durable items associated with the church, worship service, or cemetery.

**Endowment**--Funds given to the St. Peter's Parish Foundation

**Rector's Discretionary Fund**--Funds used to address needs among congregation and community members, including payments for food, rent, utilities, and medical bills

**Matthew's Haven**--An interim relief assistance program serving children in the community

If you have any questions, please email us at [stpetersadmin1@gmail.com](mailto:stpetersadmin1@gmail.com).

### Donation REQUIRED

\$ Amount

How often do you want to make your donation?

One Time

Monthly

Quarterly

Annual

### Payment Information REQUIRED

Please click below to choose your payment method.

Credit/Debit

PayPal

WWW.NETWORKFORGOOD.ORG/NPO

Who Is Using Online Giving

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Grace Cathedral chose to integrate their DonateNow giving page into their website's design. They also ask for gifts right in the middle of the top navigation bar, which makes it easy for visitors to find where they can make a gift



GRACE  
CATHEDRAL

Cathedral Life

Visit

Support Grace Cathedral

Home / Support Grace Cathedral / Donate To Grace

Share on Facebook | Share on Twitter

## SUPPORT THE VIBRANT MINISTRY OF GRACE CATHEDRAL, SAN FRANCISCO

For over one hundred years Grace Cathedral has been a house of prayer for all people in the city and the broader Bay Area. Through worship, prayer, civil conversation and service, members of this cathedral work to transform themselves and the greater community. Your gift will support the socio-economic diversity of The Community Preschool; Dinners with Grace sharing meals with residents in the Tenderloin; and worship that is at the core of our existence. Please give generously.



Donation REQUIRED

\$ 10

\$ 25

\$ 50

\$ 100

\$ 500

Other

\$ Amount

How often do you want to make your donation?

One Time

Monthly

Quarterly

Annual

CityLight Church clearly state's their mission on their giving page. Members and friends can be reassured that their gift will be used to help their church fulfill its mission to be a city on a hill and the light of the world!

## Contribute to Citylight's Mission

Join Citylight Church in Multiplying Disciples and Churches. We exist as a church on mission to be "a city on a hill" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

Please select your gift amount.

\$ Amount



Donation Frequency

One Time

Monthly

In addition to making a standard offering, [Trinity Presbyterian](#) includes the option to contribute to Vacation Bible School expenses and youth activities.



## TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Choose your donation amount.

\$ 50

\$ 100

\$ 200

\$ 350

\$ 500

\$ 750

\$ 1000

\$ 2000

Other

\$ Amount



### Youth Events

Activities for youth (6-12th grades) and sponsors.

Qty



### VBS Child Registration Fee

Register one child for Vacation Bible School. Fee includes 3% credit card fee. Maximum quantity is "2" per family.

Minimum Donation Amount:\$25.75

Qty



### VBS Child Registration as Volunteer

A discounted registration fee is offered for the children of adult VBS volunteers. Maximum quantity is 2 per family.

Minimum Donation Amount:\$20.60

Qty

# The 10 Commandments for Online Giving Success

Network for Good's giving experts have been helping organizations raise money online since 2001. We know that a successful online giving program is more than just having a way for congregants to give through your website. Just like any new project your church takes on, a successful online giving program takes some effort, strategy, energy, and prayer. If your church needs to refresh the way your online donation experience works or start off on the right foot, here are 10 helpful tips for great results!

## 1. Get online now.

If your church doesn't have the capacity for a full blown website, what about a simple Facebook page? Build your church's online presence now, there is no time to wait!

You don't need a website in order to accept donations and tithes online but your church does need an online "home" where members and visitors can get the overall view of your church, your ministries, worship opportunities and any other activities that will bring people through the doors and into the pews.

## 2. Put yourself in your congregant's shoes.

Members want to be inspired. While they are in the act of giving online, remind them of why they want to give.

Donors give to charities, churches, and fundraisers because they want to feel connected to others and to something bigger than themselves. They want to make a difference, which will then make them feel good. Plus, happy members will give again, have a positive relationship with their church family, and help support your ministries in ways beyond financial tithes.

## 3. Make it obvious where members can give.

If your online giving page is hidden, nobody will ever find it! Place your donate or "give now" button on your website's main page and every other page. Here at Network for Good we recommend that the placement be big, bold, and above the fold.

## 4. Put out a welcome mat.

Make your page inviting and attractive with suggested gift amounts, photos of your church's ministry, and colors to match your brand.



## 5. What for?

Show the impact of a donation. Your church supports so many great programs, so be sure to tell your members about them and answer their question, “What is my donation or tithe for?” It’s obvious that money collected every Sunday covers building expenses, salaries, and administrative needs, but overhead costs don’t necessarily touch the hearts of your congregants. Tug at their heartstrings and remind them of why your church exists in their community.

## 6. Why now?

Why should members give now versus next month? Is the deadline for camp registration this week? Are you raising money for your homeless ministry and have a big quarterly goal? Make people want to give right now!

## 7. Why me?

Are you making sure your online stewardship efforts are relevant to your congregants? Make a personal connection and they will be more likely to give and give more.

## 8. You have to tell people.

If you build it, they won’t come. Email your congregation and spread the word. Talk about the option to give during Sunday morning announcements. Mention it in all newsletters. Remind parents that they can donate to youth programs online. You may be tired of hearing yourself talk about the option to tithe online, but your congregants will have to be reminded multiple times before they take action.

### **You have to make it easy.**

Your online donation process has to be easy to use or you will drive people away. Make sure your donation process collects only required information. Asking for birthday, spouse’s name, or date of membership is not needed and adds an extra barrier to people who want to make a quick gift online.

## 9. You have to keep the door open

Make recurring giving easy. When members make a simple, one-time gift, they should also have the option to give again with a recurring giving option. You’ll increase overall offerings if you build this option into your online giving form.



# How to Start Talking About Online Giving

Now is the time to talk about online giving with your church family. Use our suggested conversation starters to speak with your pastor, committee, or board. Or, if you're ready to launch online giving right now, [visit our website](#).

- Where can we ask for gifts online?
- What does our church's online presence look like today?
- A giving button is a must for our website, but what about including an ask in our eNewsletter? Or on our church's Facebook page?
- Can a staff member or a team of volunteers invest resources and time to make sure we communicate about online giving in the best way possible to our church members and friends?
- How will the stewardship committee, or any other relevant committees that are involved in church member's giving, actively make sure our congregation will embrace online fundraising?
- When is the best time to launch online giving?
- Does our congregation have a special campaign at the end of the year, a seasonal ministry that needs financial support, or a stewardship campaign to increase pledges and encourage tithing?
- How can we encourage online donations and raise more money for our church and the missions we support?
- Know your audience and understand their expectations.
- Think beyond your organization's traditional means of giving. More people prefer the ease of donating online to dealing with cash or checks.



# About Network for Good

Network for Good powers more digital giving than any other platform. Since 2001, we've processed over \$1 billion for more than 100,000 nonprofits. We are Level 1 Audited PCI Compliant and accredited by the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, meeting all 20 of its standards for charity accountability. Plus, we're registered in every state for online fundraising.

We're a mission-minded organization, just like you, so we understand the challenges you face. We're here to help.

Our suite of affordable fundraising solutions helps nonprofits raise money and engage supporters online—plus we provide the training that will make you a fundraising superstar.

1. **Online fundraising:** Get an easy-to-use, branded, and secure online donation page with DonateNow. With built-in best practices and mobile-friendly giving options, you'll raise more than ever before.
2. **Professional communications:** Email campaign and newsletter tools by Constant Contact for sending and tracking emails and telling you which messages work best.
3. **Fundraising Fundamentals premium training:** Exclusive access to Network for Good's expert advice with personalized reviews, step-by-step tutorials, fundraising templates, and more.
4. **Online event management:** EventsNow powered by givezooks! for accepting donations, registrations, and ticket purchases online.

## Free Fundraising Tips

Get weekly fundraising advice delivered right to your inbox.

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## Make a Case for Giving!

Use these eight steps as a guide to help your church craft a compelling case for giving.

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Find out how you can attract more donors and raise more money online.

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