

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



# *The 1 Tactic*

***YOUR CHURCH NEEDS TO DO  
TO BOOST YEAR END GIVING***

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RICH BIRCH



We are just heading into the largest giving period of the year for charities across the country. In fact, **30% of all charitable giving will be done during the month of December.** [ref] Many nonprofits have been working, for months, on the plans for these last 31 days of the year. Their strategies and tactics have become almost stereotypical; you can see the marketing machines turn up the pressure to encourage people fund their causes:

- The “gift” catalogue where you can purchase a goat and somehow send it to a kid in a developing country.
- Social media barrages of heart warming stories delivered with an elegant ask to fund the mission.
- Multiple direct mail pieces landing at the perfect time to encourage you to help with a special project that launches soon.

We’ve talked in other places about the importance of designing and executing a year end giving campaign. **Over the years we’ve been attempting to help churches add it to their funding flywheel, in order to increase the generosity of their people and we’ve seen a 10-15% increase in giving in several churches.** Here are a few examples of resources, which are designed to help your

church raise additional resources in the last 45 days of the year:

- [8 Phases of Effective Christmas Giving Campaigns](#)
- [6 Important Reasons to Work on Your Church’s Christmas Generosity Campaign in the Summer](#)
- [60-page Digital Magazine on Generosity](#)

**If you haven’t planned a full year end giving campaign - you’re probably too late. But there is one tactic you need to plan now.**

Effective year end giving campaigns needs to be thoughtfully planned out and elegantly executed. If you don’t have one planned out at this point and you attempt to rush it you would be risking doing damage to your donor relationships. But don’t worry there is one tactic you could still pull together and see it encourage more generosity as we approach the end of the year.

10% of all charitable donations will be given during the last 48 hours of the year. That’s \$625 million an hour for the last two days of December. A total of \$30,000,000,000 in such a short period of time. [ref]



**Send an email to all of your people during the last 48 hours of the year, asking them to invest in the mission of your church.**

That's the tactic. Sending an email to your church community, in the last two days of the year, will encourage your people to give to the good things that are happening at your church. It also reminds people, when they are thinking about their last-minute giving, of the amazing ministry your church has performed and inspires them to be included in the plans.

**3 Reasons People Wait Until the Last 48 Hours of The Year to Give**

- **Taxes** // Clearly, people wait until this time of year because they are reminded of the fact that gifts given at this time of year can be written down against their income tax.
- **Businesses** // Related to taxes, many business owners need to wait until the end of the year to observe how their businesses performed financially so they can plan their giving in such a manner that it minimizes personal and corporate taxes.
- **Procrastination** // People can sometimes be lazy. We're called to shepherd our people and sometimes the sheep are slow moving animals and need some encouragement! ;)

**Sample of a Year End Giving Email to Your Church**

Below is a template of an email that you can copy & paste, to send to your entire church community. While sending this email, we recommend you to send it to as wide a possible group that you can. This isn't an email to be shy about sending to people. Send it to everyone you have contacts for!

SUBJECT: As we close out the year...

Frank & Francine,

As this year winds to a close, I simply **wanted to shoot you a quick email to remind you of three cool things that happened at our church this year.** These are directly related to the investment which our people have made in the mission; so, you've got a big part in this.

The student ministry continues to grow on Wednesday night. This fall, we had more kids out for these events than we've had in a long time. **It's exciting to see so many young people connecting with the message of Jesus!**

Our Christmas Eve services made a real impact. After this year's services, **I received several phone calls, texts and emails from people telling me about the huge difference it made in their lives.** I'm thankful that God is using our ministry to impact all kinds of people!

Remember, in the summertime when we had that mission trip to Mexico? I am extremely proud that we're the sort of church that **looks beyond ourselves to spread love far, past the four walls of our church services!**

Thank you. **Thank you for being a part of what God is doing through our church.** Your giving to our ministry this year has made all the difference!

As we come into these last few hours of the year, I'm wondering if you'd be willing to make a final gift to the mission of our church? **We rely on faithful giving from people like you, and your gift today would help us start next year off strong.** It would be our honor if you could give a gift as we ring in the New Year!

[Click here to give online now.]

**Thank you for your generosity.** It really means a lot to us.  
The best is yet to come!

Pastor Mike

P.S. All gifts given to our church, whether given online or dropped in mail before the end of December 31st, are 100% tax-deductible.

## 6 Elements of a Year End Giving Email to Your Church



- **Personalize It** // Make sure that the salutation in the email does not say “Dear Donor” or “Hey Friends”. Use your email service to insert people’s names. Just using Gmail? [Check out this step by step guide by Kenny Jahng on how to do mail merges with Gmail and Google Drive.](#)
- **Remind & Recall** // Point out to your people 3 highlights from the last year of ministry. Talk about things that apply to a wide variety of people. Try to pick things that are both recent and also from a few months behind.
- **Thank Them** // Your people have fueled the mission all year long. You can’t “over thank” people. Be as effusive as you possibly can be. Thanking before asking is the best practice.
- **Make the Ask** // Don’t miss this opportunity. Be clear and compelling. Don’t shy away from letting them know that you need financial resources.
- **Link to Online Giving** // Give people a way to contribute right away. Link to an online giving platform that is simple and straightforward. BONUS TIP: Make sure your online giving platform is mobile friendly because a large percentage of these emails will be read on smartphones.
- **Don’t Waste the P.S.** // Studies have shown that if people don’t read anything else in your email they will read the P.S. [\[ref\]](#) Make sure the P.S. is call to action oriented. In the example above we used it to remind people of the tax-deductible benefits of giving soon and reminded them they could also mail in a check.

## 3 Ways to “Spice Up” a Year End Giving Email to Your Church

- **Use Photos** // Rather than just listing 3 things that happened at your church, you should show three photos from the past year. 65% of your people are visual learners and the “recall” will be much stronger with compelling images.
- **Use Video** // Shoot a quick smartphone video that’s fun and engaging and send it out to people. Check out Pastor Tim from a retro “[Pastor in Pajamas](#)” video that Liquid Church sent out a few years out. It’s personal, fun and to the point!
- **Use Audio** // Record a quick one-minute MP3 and attach it to the email. Since a large portion of the audience will be viewing these emails on a phone, audio is a clear way to get more information and emotion into an email like this.

### Are You Sending a Year End Giving Email to Your Church? We’d love to know about it.

We’d be intrigued to hear about your experiences this year in sending out a year end giving email. We’re looking for church leaders who would be willing to share what they’re doing, in a future post to help even more leaders next year. [Drop me an email if you are in.](#) Thanks in advance for being willing to help!

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