



Empowering Churches with Solutions to Simplify
Complex Diocesan and Parish Church Management

ParishSOFT White Paper:

Year-End Giving

The Step-by-Step Guide for Parishes

ParishSOFT[®]

Throughout the year, mobile giving has increased in importance for parishes. During the past year, donations made on mobile devices has increased by 205% and 25% of all donations are made on mobile devices. The end of the year is the biggest opportunity for Catholic churches to raise money, which makes ParishSOFT Giving have even more impact for your parish.

During the month of December parishes typically receive 30% of their donations. For example, on December 31, 2018, the peak time for donations to be made was between 12:00 – 7:00 PM ET and ParishSOFT Giving customers overall processed twice as many donations that month as they did in November 2018.

Clearly, it's important for your donors that they have an opportunity to give back at the end of the year, but have you ever wondered what's really motivating your donors to give?

Some people might make a donation to your parish because they just want to make a difference. Others might want to feel connected to something positive during the Christmas season or perhaps they are strictly looking to take advantage of tax deductions. Whatever the reason, your donors will want to give to your parish at the end of the year. Is your parish doing everything it can to reach them and encourage donations?

Important Year-End Giving Statistics Every Parish Should Know

30%

of all annual donations occur in December

10%

of all annual donations occur on the last 3 days of the year

To assist your parish in this important task, ParishSOFT has created a year-end giving fundraising campaign guide that will help you maximize donations during the time of year that your donors are most likely to give.

1. Plan Your Parish's Communication Strategy

During the Christmas season, your parishioners and donors are bombarded with nonprofit organizations also seeking their financial support. It's important that your parish knows who you are trying to reach and the best way to reach them.

Segment Your Target Audience

- Millennials are 20-35 and are most likely to respond to a text message asking for a donation or to watch videos or respond to social media content.
- Generation X are 36-50 and are the group most likely to want to fundraise or volunteer for your parish, and respond equally well to text messages, phone calls, and to email. Plus, they are likely to check social media for updates. It's important to engage this group before launching your parish's year-end giving campaign if you want to raise the most money possible.
- Baby Boomers are generally 51-65 and are the group most likely to set-up recurring gifts. This group responds well to phone calls and can respond well to email or even text-messaging in some cases. But phone

calls are generally best for this age group to encourage donations.

- Greatest Generation members are 66 and up and may not be as willing to utilize ParishSOFT Giving as other generational groups, but they respond well to direct mail and phone calls, and are most like to give by sending a check in the mail.

Set Your Goals

The best way to determine if your campaign is successful is to set a realistic but lofty goal that is specific and measurable that can be tied to either your financial giving numbers or your parish's overall marketing goals. Some examples might include:

- Increase donations among existing donors by 5% in December 2019 compared to giving numbers from December 2018.
- Increase the number of new donors by 3% in December 2019 compared to December 2018.
- Sign up 100 parishioners with ParishSOFT Giving before the end of December 2019.

Create Your Campaign

First things first, every time your parish communicates to parishioners and donors, the look and feel of the campaign should be consistent. That means the parish logo and colors used in all marketing pieces should be similar enough that recipients recognize it's part of your parish's year-end giving campaign. Plus, the message and even the tone being communicated should also be similar from marketing piece to marketing piece. If possible, include photos and video that capture visually the mission of your parish and why your mission is important.

Donors love to read and hear how their donations are making a positive impact on the world. Create videos or testimonials that address the good work your parish is doing and individuals in the community or around the world that have been positively impacted by your parish. Compel the audience to take action by showing the good deeds they can help support with a donation using your parish's ParishSOFT Giving software. And if you still aren't convinced, consider this fact: the #1 reason that first-time donors do not give again is that they are unaware of the impact their donation has made. So take the time to let your audience know how their donation is making a difference. It will be time well spent.

Determine How You Will Thank Donors

Spread the Christmas spirit to your donors when they provide you with a year-end donation. A good initial step is to personally thank your donors on your social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter. You could single out a random recipient, or if you prefer, the messages could be more general. Similar messages could also be posted on your parish's website and in your parish's bulletin thanking donors and providing a status update on how much has been raised so far. When making your posts to social media or to your website, remind people who haven't donated that it's never too late to donate.

For those donors who use text giving to make a donation to your parish, send them a personal message thanking them for their general donation. For those donors that call in or mail in a donation, call them on the phone or leave them a voicemail thanking them for their donation and wishing them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. A personal thank you will go a long way in showing your donors that you value and appreciate their generosity.

2. Implement Best Practices

Here at ParishSOFT, we always say that ParishSOFT Giving won't replace envelope giving but it can certainly enhance it. ParishSOFT Giving helps your parish raise more money because you are providing your donors another way to share their monetary treasures with your parish. A younger donor prefers to give online or through text messages instead of mailing a check and ParishSOFT Giving allows your church to reach them with a year-end giving campaign more effectively than ever before.

Year-End Campaign Primary Best Practices

- Make it easy for donors to give anywhere, anytime from a variety of devices.
- Make it easy for volunteers to sign up to help your parish.
- Allow you to easily kick off your year-end giving campaign on Giving Tuesday, which is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (this year it's on Tuesday, November 27, 2018).
- Allow you to effectively leverage potential corporate partnerships.
- Allow you to communicate on numerous communication channels (ie. your website, social media pages, in emails, via text message, and via phone calls) at once.

Provide Donors Several Ways to Give

In order to raise the largest possible amount of money for your parish, provide your donors with a chance to give in the way they are most comfortable. And remember, what might be the ideal way to give for one age group might be least convenient for another age group. By providing several different ways to give, you are providing your parish with the best possible chance of receiving a donation from all parishioners. Allow donors to give on your online giving website, at a giving kiosk, by text message, by check, or over the phone. And if possible at your church, parishioners might enjoy seeing an online campaign fundraising results tracker or thermometer that allows website visitors to track how much money has been raised in your year-end giving campaign so far.

Use #GivingTuesday to your Parish's Advantage

#GivingTuesday takes place every year on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and is an ideal time to launch your parish's year-end giving campaign. By planning your parish's year-end giving campaign in advance, you can effectively communicate with different age groups with a message that is most likely going to solicit a donation. For those people who check your parish's social media pages for updates, be sure to thank donors and perhaps even single out one person per day who has made a donation thanking them for their generous gift. And on your parish's website, post a running total of the amount collected during your year-end campaign.

Another way to increase awareness of your parish's campaign is to take a photograph. When you take a photo of yourself with your smartphone, it's called taking a "selfie." In the case of year-end giving, encourage donors to post an "unselfie" which could be a simple Word document created by your parish like [this example](#) from the GivingTuesday.org website that allows the individual to type in why they gave, print the document, and take a photo of themselves with the paper to increase awareness of your parish's fundraising efforts.

Make Your Parish's Final Appeal

As remarkable as it sounds, 10% of all giving from 2018 will occur in the last three days of the year. Between December 29-31 ask your supporters to make a last minute donation before New Year's Day to help your parish reach its giving goal. Send a text message to those donors for whom you have a valid mobile phone number, send an email to all past donors, or post to your social media pages asking for last minute donations. One

great way to get noticed is to consider having a member from the parish staff create a short but personal video asking for donations and why it's important to give what you are able. And be sure to include a short, easy to remember link where donations can be made.

3. Promote Across All Channels

Your parish's year-end fundraising campaign should allow donors to find information about your parish, how your parish works to spread the Gospel and help your community. Information should be easily accessible and donation forms should be able to seemly collect fund whether the form is accessed from a computer, on a smartphone, or from a tablet.

Provide Giving Button on Websites

Make it easy for your parishioners and donors to find your giving website by placing a "Give" or "Make Donation" button prominently placed at the top of your parish's website. Create a link as well on your parish's Facebook page. On all your parish websites, include a link at the top for donations to be collected. And be sure that your donations page is optimized to reinforce the impact of year-end giving by providing suggested donation amounts, recurring gift options, "in memory/honor of" options, and custom data collecting fields that collect the information your parish needs to capture from donors.

Provide One-Click Donations from Email

From your year-end emails, include a "Give" or "Make Donation" button prominently that takes the email recipients automatically to the donation form. Make sure that you are tracking every donation that comes from one of your email campaigns. And if you have a mobile phone number for email recipient, it can't hurt to also send them a text message asking them to make a donation.

Post Reminders on Social Media Pages

One of the great things about a multi-channel brand presence is the ability to turn as many of your social media followers into donors. You can do that by providing short social media posts with links to videos and by embedding photos that show the good work your parish does, a link to a story about someone that was positively impacted as a result of donations, or a testimonial from someone who was helped by the parish or found God after joining the parish. Encourage people to make donations even if it's a donation of just \$1.

Send Multiple Messages Before Asking for a Donation

Even though you may provide a prominent link to a button where donations can be made, your parish should not start an email campaign by actually asking for a monetary gift until after you have sent a couple of messages, ideally at least 2 or 3.

The best way to start a year-end giving campaign is by providing compelling content centered around stories of what event took place that year that have helped the community, spotlighting the groups that have benefited from the good work the parish does throughout the year, and the various religious education events including VBS that have educated youth about God and his unending love for each one of us. While your parish's goal is to raise money, it first must sway hearts before pocketbooks will open.

When launching a year-end giving campaign, your parish needs web-based giving software that is made for parishes like yours, that includes online giving, text giving and giving kiosks. To learn more about ParishSOFT Giving, [sign up for an upcoming ParishSOFT Giving online demo](#) or call us 866-930-4774 x6.



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