

# Fuel God-Inspired Vision

Strategies for abundant year-end giving  
and growing generosity in the new year

— Generis® —  
**Year-End  
GIVING**  
— 2023 —

## STRATEGIES FOR ABUNDANT YEAR-END GIVING

If you've been around Generis for any length of time, you might've noticed one of our phrases: There's often a gap between your God-inspired vision, and your resources.

This year, we want to help you take your year-end giving efforts to a new level — one where you not only fund your God-inspired vision, but you set up 2024 to be the most generous year your church has ever experienced.

Why do we want to help you? Because when we help each other, God's kingdom expands. More people participate in church and grow deeper in their faith. More programs are created to reach people in our communities with the Good News of Jesus. And more love grows between givers, overflowing into the lives of others.

Let us equip you to have your best year-end giving campaign, while launching well into the new year.

Let's dive into your year-end giving resources....

## BUILD AN ONGOING CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

It's important to understand the difference between **transactional** and **transformational** stewardship strategies.

Too often, the unintentional expression surrounding church giving is transactional—"You do this so we can do that." But it's far better if churches aim higher by ensuring that giving and generosity are transformational experiences for both the giver and the church.

***<sup>17</sup> I am not trying to get something from you, but I want you to receive the blessings that come from giving.***

**Philippians 4:17 (CEV)**

This passage is core to a biblical understanding of generosity. Paul tells the Philippians that through their growing faithfulness in giving, his hope and desire are more about what God will grow in them spiritually than what will be accomplished for the Kingdom's work financially.

So, in building an effective **year-end giving** and **annual giving statement** strategy it's important to ensure that transformational aspirations for people are always the priority. If you don't make discipleship and transformation the focus, you are settling for less than God's best for your church.

## CREATE A COMPELLING & CONSISTENT YEAR-END GIVING STRATEGY

Churches that engage well in year-end giving and annual giving statement strategies have made this a part of their culture and their calendar. It's important to do these things (and do them well) every year because they should be part of an overall stewardship strategy.

Selected Strategic Activities for Year-End Giving, Month by Month

October:	November:	December:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess last year's year-end giving results: What went well, and what didn't?</li><li>• Determine your year-end giving goals, both financial and non-financial</li><li>• Create a calendar for all year-end giving communications</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Giver segmentation: Engage with lapsed, new, and high-capacity givers during this season</li><li>• Launch your year-end giving challenge</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creatively utilize existing communication channels to encourage participation in your year-end giving challenge</li></ul>

If you're asking people to expand their giving, it's wise to have a compelling and transformational reason for asking. Often, churches send a panicked letter to their congregations in mid-December, communicating the urgent message that giving is lagging behind their budget and they need help to catch up. This can convey a number of unintended negative messages, *leading the giver to wonder if the church has planned properly and questioning whether the church is being a good steward of their resources.*

**“Over the past eight years we've done focused missions giving at year-end to inspire generosity in the people of God. This allows us to better 'tell the story' of the ways we're making a difference and focus people's giving toward year-end generosity.**

BRANDON SAMUEL, LEAD PASTOR  
THE CHAPEL

Instead of only asking for money at the end of year because you are behind, or because you know it's a good time to ask, consider building a year-end giving challenge into your church's rhythm. While the annual messaging might change, there should always be a strong strategy in place.

Here are some ideas to consider for a year-end giving challenge:

- We will give away (externally) a portion of gifts received as a result of our year-end appeal and invest them in ministries in our community;
- We will use some of what comes in during this time to offset any deficits so we can catch up on funding our budget before the end of the year;
- We will set aside some of what comes in to ensure we have abundant resources in place to fund our ministry strategies for the next year;
- We will give a portion of what comes in to one or more of the missions we support as a church;
- We will use a portion of these resources to fund year-end bonuses for our amazing staff.

Don't try to do all of these things — pick a few. The idea is to create a consistent culture and rhythm around this **year-end giving challenge** so that each year people are ready to be generous but that the approach feels fresh. We recommend that your **year-end giving challenge** include no more than three or four things.

One example of a solid **year-end giving challenge** would be:

- We will give the first \$xx,xxx to the Battered Women's Shelter for Christmas presents;
- We will give the next \$xx,xxx on a rotating basis each year of the missions we support
- If we're operating in a deficit of our budget in that year, any remaining year-end giving will offset that deficit; and
- If we're not operating in a deficit of our budget in that year, any remaining year-end giving will be used to directly offset the principal balance of our current debt.

This is a **repeatable strategy** that is **well-defined** for ongoing operation, and yet it has **variety** in what will be supported. Note that the dollar amounts are also defined. If you operate in percentages, it's possible to end up over- or under-funding something — particularly if someone gives a large gift. One church decided to split their year-end giving 50/50 between a Bible-translation mission and offsetting their current debt. A giver was ready to give \$250,000 gift but questioned whether \$125,000 was actually needed for the Bible-translation mission (it wasn't). Make sure to set clear parameters regarding how much money will be directed to various funds and in what order you will do so.

## DESIGN CELEBRATORY ANNUAL GIVING STATEMENTS

The IRS requires churches to send an annual statement to each giver every January listing a summary of the gifts they made in the prior year. The problem is that most churches design these statements to look tax statements or bills – very transactional — and who wants to receive that?

Instead, determine to surprise and delight your givers by sending an annual giving statement that not only lists their gifts, but shares stories and numbers that demonstrate how their gifts made a Kingdom impact this year. You might include infographics, pictures, or a hand-written thank-you note. Celebrate what God has done through the generosity of your givers!

### Let's take some inspiration from Paul in his letter to the Colossians:

<sup>1</sup> *This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.*

<sup>2</sup> *We are writing to God's holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. May God our Father give you grace and peace.*

<sup>3</sup> *We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, <sup>5</sup> which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.*

<sup>6</sup> *This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.*

Colossians 1:1-7 (NLT)

Paul probably had no clue what an **Annual Giving Statement** was, but he sure knew how to write one!

v2 - He **celebrates** their faithfulness and offers a blessing of grace and peace.

v3 - He **confirms** that he and his team are praying for them and thanking God for them.

v4 - He **shares** that their faithfulness and love for all of God's people is apparent.

v5 - He **affirms** that their confidence in God and their eternal destiny are clearly evident.

v6 - He **reports** the spiritual impact their efforts are making in the lives of others both locally and abroad.

Your **annual giving statement** should contain at least two components:

1. The actual statement of giving for the year that the giver can use for their records and tax preparation

2. A letter from the senior pastor telling the giver how you feel about their giving and why it matters.

- **Celebrate** their faithfulness.
- **Confirm** your support and prayers for them.
- **Affirm** your sincere **gratitude**.
- **Report** the ministry wins and Kingdom impact your church experienced last year and **connect** their giving to those wins.

**By creating and implementing a cohesive year-end giving and annual giving statement strategy this year, you can bring joy to your givers and boost generosity for God's work in the world.**

## NEXT STEPS

Are you interested in integrating these essential pieces of the year-end giving strategy puzzle — year-end giving and annual giving statement strategies — so your church can **Fuel God-inspired Vision?**

1. Here's a free, interactive tool to help you create a customized year-end giving challenge for your church: [bit.ly/Appeal\\_Letter](https://bit.ly/Appeal_Letter)
2. Here's another free, interactive tool to help you create a customized and inspiring annual giving statement for your church: [bit.ly/Giving\\_Statement](https://bit.ly/Giving_Statement)
3. Schedule a free 30-minute consultation with one of our Generis team members to learn about how we can further assist you in building the most successful year-end giving strategies possible this year: <https://resources.generis.com/yearend>
4. Some additional ways we can serve you:
  - Customized week-by-week communications calendar for year-end giving strategies
  - Specialized strategies for engaging with high-capacity givers between now and December 31
  - Ideas for a year-end giving video that will onboard new givers and inspire existing givers
  - Help creating next-level annual giving statements using infographics, photos, and stories

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