

Planned Giving for the Church

Frequent Questions

Why does our Church need planned giving pages online?

Because the money is there, but your parishioners are making their gifts to other charities that have more robust planned giving outreach. The United States may consider itself the most religious Western nation, but its churches rank near the bottom of U.S. charities in soliciting and closing major and planned gifts. Having planned giving pages online is the first step toward reversing this trend.

How can planned giving possibly bring in more money than our collections, which we have at every service?

Only 5% of this nation's wealth is in cash. The rest is in assets. Your parishioners can't put gifts of stock, real estate or IRA Gifts in the collection basket — but they can make those gifts through a planned gift. A typical planned gift is 200 to 300 times the size of a donor's largest annual gift.

Our congregation isn't wealthy.

Your congregation is perfect for a planned giving program. Low- and middle-class parishioners are giving the most — a 2015 Sharefaith article shows people with a salary of less than \$20,000 are eight times more likely to give than someone who makes \$75,000. Many of your parishioners want to give (or want to give more), but feel like they're not in a financial position to do so. Planned gifts allow them to donate with no financial impact during their lifetimes.

We've been losing donations for a while. How can we afford a planned giving program?

You can't afford not to have a planned giving program. In addition, planned giving is more of a mindset — it does not cost much to create and maintain a small program.

According to The Giving Institute, charitable giving is up in the United States, but the percentage of those giving to churches

has dropped — from 53 percent in 1987 to 32 percent in 2015. A planned giving program shows parishioners your church takes philanthropy just as seriously as the other nonprofits they're giving to — and it allows them to give without affecting their day-to-day budgets.

But we don't have the time, budget or know-how to implement a program online.

This is an extremely affordable, turnkey product that includes hosting and content. It's designed specifically for churches, and we do all the work. You just supply some information and a few pictures.

What if we want something more robust, or need help with brochures and direct-mail products?

We offer higher-end solutions as well as complete planned giving marketing solutions and collateral, such as direct mail, brochures, and estate planning toolkits, just to name a few. We also offer numerous leave-behind pieces for donors and board members.

We already have a planned giving program — why aren't we getting more donations?

Because your parishioners either don't know about it, or don't understand it. Studies show the same prospects who receive and respond to planned giving promotions from schools, hospitals and cultural organizations haven't heard that their church has to build its endowment and wants them to consider a planned gift. This is where a simple marketing program that includes an online presence and plain, simple descriptions of gift options is critical.

Won't we lose cash donations if we pursue planned gifts?

On the contrary. Studies that after a planned gift is made, his or her monthly and yearly cash giving goes up.

