



The Stewardship Coach Volume 2 / Issue 20

20

We are 20 weeks into the year and the key question is, how is your giving compared to your budget needs? My prayer is that you are ahead of budget. Yet for many churches, for a variety of reasons, you may find yourself behind budget. Why is it that churches often find themselves already behind budget only twenty weeks into the year? Here are some reasons.

An overly aggressive increase in the budget not matched by giving increases. This is the number one issue. I find that too often churches in the planning stages for the next year's budget base it upon what they need not what they can afford. Need does not always translate into dollars. If you increased your budget by more than 5% to 10% you might find it difficult to make budget.

Inclement weather causing low attendance also hurts your ability to be on track. The last two winters have been brutal for many churches. Yet if you live in the Snow Belt you need to anticipate this in your future planning.

Hopeful negligence is another reason churches find themselves behind budget. Too many churches hope next week or next month will be better. They put off doing anything and the failure to act is simply negligence.

Lack of a plan to recover lost offerings also contributes to being behind. Whatever the reason for the shortfall few churches have a plan to actually do something about the decline. As I always say, "If you fail to plan you are planning on failure."

That is all well and good but what can you DO to reverse a decline in giving? Just this week a client called and asked me this question. Here is the advice that I gave him and will pass along to you.

First, Nip it in the bud! The longer you wait to act on a decline in giving, the worse it will get. If after twenty weeks you are behind on the budget you are past needing to address the situation. So act now to correct the decline before it gets worse.

Come up with a plan of action. So, you are behind, now what are you going to do? Have some plan of action so that donors see you are acting to close the gap.

One key thing to keep in mind is that whatever plan you come up with make sure you are not coming off looking desperate. The typical appeal letter in summer comes off looking that way. You have to be as positive as possible in whatever appeals you make while at the same time being honest about where you stand.

Go to the group that is most likely to help. Frankly the group that is most likely to help you is your key givers. They have the maturity and the means to respond. So any appeal must first start there.

One thing I recommended to the client that called this week is for them to hold a meeting with their leaders as soon as possible. We talked about making the meeting about focusing upon the missions and ministry initiatives for the summer. Then we talked about someone giving an accurate assessment of the finances. Then we are going to ask for their support to help reverse the decline.

Finally, make an honest up front yet positive appeal for giving. Don't dodge the issue but as with all our offerings help them see how their gift matters and is so important. That kind of appeal will go a long way toward reversing your decline. **See the Sample Section for an example.**

Last of all, keep connecting the dots. Don't stop doing what you have been doing. Keep the focus upon what giving accomplishes and you are more likely to see giving increase. So, let's get going!



Mark Brooks
The Stewardship Coach

Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach is at 11 AM! – To connect go to, <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7544634751104790017>

Elevator Pitch Your Offerings!

The following offering is the first of the sixteen Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This week's focuses upon Memorial Day.

The Forgotten Memory of Memorial Day

Americans love Memorial Day in part because it gives most of us a three-day weekend. Who doesn't like an extra day off? Yet the sad thing about this weekend's Memorial Day festivities is that for most of us we are ignorant of the day's true meaning.

Memorial Day, which is celebrated on the last Monday of May, was first started to commemorate fallen Union soldiers that died in the Civil War. By the 20th century it had been extended to honor all Americans who have died in all wars. It developed from there into a day for general expressions of memory for deceased relatives whether they had served in the military or not. So the day is supposed to be a day of remembering and honoring those that have gone before us.

Now, however, it is marked more by time spent outdoors and, in our minds at least, the start of summer. My hope and prayer for all of us is that while we do enjoy our time off and the great outdoors, we at least remember those who have gone before us. Their sacrifice paved the way for the things we enjoy today.

Speaking of sacrifices, have you ever considered that all that you enjoy here at YOUR CHURCH NAME is due to those who went before us? TELL BRIEFLY THE STORY OF YOUR BEGINNING AND THE SACRIFICES MADE THROUGH THE YEARS. Those people gave freely and sacrificially so that YOUR CHURCH NAME could be the lighthouse for the Good News we have become.

As we take up the offering this Memorial Day weekend I want to encourage you to give a gift that would be worthy of those that have gone before us. Let your gift be a memorial to their faith. Let your gift help pave the way for future generations to be impacted by YOUR CHURCH NAME. The best way to honor those that have gone before us is to give in the same manner they did.

Sample Section

In my opening I talked about a strategy for when you find yourself behind on budget. The following letter is from a member client that took one of my offering talks and utilized it for a letter on giving.



Just say... **YES!**

Recently, while out to lunch with friends, a woman overheard me say that I am a Christian. She shook her head and said, "No Thanks, too many rules and the answer from God is always NO! Can't do this, can't do that..." Then she left the restaurant.

I believe God's favorite word is YES! Here is a scripture that supports this view-- 2 Corinthians 1:20 says: "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are Yes in Christ." We Christians are called to share the Good News that in Christ we have all of God's promises. The Bible is not a book about "NO" but a book about "YES!"

Here at Snoqualmie Valley Alliance we say ...

- **YES! To people.** We welcome everyone to worship with us! God loves people more than anything. All people.
- **YES! To missions.** We believe people need Jesus! We will go wherever He calls us to proclaim His name and serve His people.
- **YES! To students & children.** We believe reaching children early paves the way for a life walked in faith. It can be tough navigating the world today, our youth need equipping.

At SVA, every time you give, you are helping others realize the "YES" in Christ.

Giving for the first quarter of 2015 is: 251,687.14 Budget: 300,000.00

Short by: 48,312.86 or 16%. Will you say "YES" with a donation today?

You can visit www.svaonline.org and click Give at the top of the screen. Consider the ease of a scheduled or recurring gift. You can write a check and place it in the postage paid envelope enclosed. You can drop a donation in the giving kiosks in the church lobby. Or simply text the word "Give" to 1-855-581-1777 and follow the prompts.

As always, I am blessed to serve alongside you, shoulder to shoulder in the greatest story ever told. Contact me if you need anything!

Jan Van Liew

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Monday Mornings with Mark



As a member, you are invited to join me every Monday morning for *“Monday Mornings with Mark The Stewardship Coach!”*

During each session I will be teaching for about fifteen to twenty minutes on a crucial issue related to stewardship tailor made for you my partners. It will be a pure teaching time with no commercials! Then afterwards you can ask me anything pertaining to the topic or any other stewardship issue and I will do my best to answer questions until time runs out.

These weekly sessions allow you to receive personalized help for your ministry. This is an exclusive time for members of The Stewardship Coach.

[Click Here](#) to register for the next session or go to

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7544634751104790017>

Missed A Session?

If you would like to access the recordings of past Mondays With Mark

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