



The Stewardship Journal

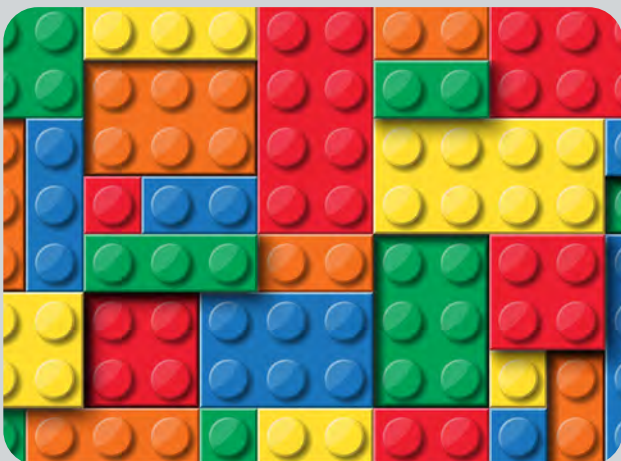
In partnership with StewardshipJournal.com



**From My Desk
to Your Inbox**



**How to Have
End-of-Year Success**



**Begin with the Right
Building Blocks**



**The 2024 #GivingTuesday
Playbook**

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

From My Desk to Your Inbox

We say this every year, but it's true – it's hard to believe 2024 is rapidly coming to an end. With that in mind, do you have a plan for end-of-year giving?

Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, kicks off this week's Journal with this thought, "***The last six weeks of this year and the first six weeks of the New Year will largely determine how your financial year goes.***" In this column, Mark shares key building blocks for an effective year-end strategy.

This week's second post, ***Begin With the Right Building Blocks***, elaborates on those blocks and how to use them. According to Mark, "The right tools at the right time are crucial."

Don't skip the Bonus Section where Mark helps you think through and plan for one of the biggest end-of-year events, #GivingTuesday. You'll learn how to use this event to increase giving awareness, and how the same principles can be applied to any special offering during the year.

If you are new to the Stewardship Journal or missed a week, past Journals can be found at stewardshipjournal.com or LouisianaBaptists.org/Stewardship.

Keep Looking Up,



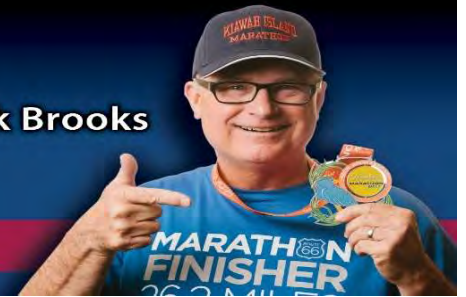
Dr. Steve Ham

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

THE STEWARDSHIP COACH
REVERSING THE DECLINE IN GIVING

sponsored by  OnlineGiving.org | acts17coach.com

Mark Brooks



How to Have End-of-Year Success



The last six weeks of this year and the first six weeks of the New Year will largely determine how your financial year goes. That is how important having a seasonal strategy is. To help you prepare, this *Coach* is entitled **How to Have End-of-Year Success**. I will show you in this issue some key building blocks you need for an effective year-end strategy. As we move into December, I will lay out the strategy you need for the first six weeks of the New Year. Let's focus on your end-of-year strategy to prepare you for a great start to 2025.

End-of-year planning is not just important; it's essential for every church. If any of these reasons resonate with you, then this is a must-read!

1. **Closing the year out strong builds momentum for the New Year.** As much as 30% of non-profit giving comes in the last six weeks of the year. Let's finish your calendar year strong, setting up a good start to the New Year.
2. **It builds confidence in your key donor base.** Donor confidence is one of the most important building blocks for a church's maintenance and increase in giving. People will not give to what they lack trust and faith in.
3. **It allows you to vision cast giving.** A well-thought-out and delivered plan gives you an opportunity to remind members of why you exist and how they can be a part of something bigger than anything: building the Kingdom.
4. **It is a great tool for gaining new donors.** To get people started on the generosity journey, you must get that first gift. End-of-year giving strategies are one of the best ways to gain new donors. I'll show you how!
5. **It is a great tool for increasing consistency of giving.** One thing I recommend is always reminding donors how easy it is to set up their giving to be automated and automatic. This helps make your January and July manageable.

The above fits every church in America. My goal for end-of-year giving is to fulfill all of the above. How do you do this?

Make your appeal appealing! From your platform announcements to your screenshots to text and email messages, if the appeal, aka vision of your "ask," isn't clear, concise, and, most of all, compelling, you will not get their attention.

Start with a bang! I write like a preacher because I am one! So, like the introduction of a sermon, I know we need to grab our audience's attention fast, or we will lose them. For instance, take emails. Your subject line and the first sentence will determine if they open and read further or move on. Grab their attention. Here are three real examples I have used.

Subject line: Babies Still at Risk in Typhoon Recovery

"Babies Still at Risk in Typhoon Recovery" was the headline that got my attention Saturday morning. As I read this article, I couldn't help but think, what could our church family do to help?

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Subject line: "I cannot let that woman die...."

"I cannot let that woman die."...These were the recent words of Zambian medical missionary, Sal Marini, to his wife after receiving a call at 3:00am from a woman who had just given birth to a baby but was unable to deliver the afterbirth."

Subject line: What does 83% mean for the destiny of children?

83%. According to a study by the International Bible Society, that is the percentage of all Christians that make their commitment to Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14. Every week here, we impact hundreds of children between those ages.

Solve a crisis. Years ago, a non-profit consultant wrote about the three-pronged approach to any appeal. It starts with a crisis—mothers dying in childbirth—followed by the need for a safe place for mothers. Finally, it concludes with the appeal that your gift can help mothers in Africa. Craft your appeal so that the opening lines grab the listener or reader's attention, causing them to want to find out more. Then, make sure the opening sentence keeps their attention. Whether in a snail mail appeal or a text message, by following this formula, you will increase the likelihood of donors responding to your appeal.

Get in and get out! I try to use short, simple paragraphs. Again, tell them what crisis you want to address. Tell them about the need this crisis has created. Tell them how their gift can help meet this need and thus solve the crisis. Make the "ask." Tell them how they can give, then thank them for their consideration. Short and sweet assures that your appeal will get read or listened to from the platform.

Take the time to do it right! If you have a staff, involve them in the process. Get the input from your spouse or a few others that you trust their judgment.

Why spend the time on this? A few years ago, a pastor, almost on a lark, decided to implement my strategy in a December 31st email. He raised almost his weekly offering in less than 24 hours! After that, he signed a contract with me to be his Stewardship Coach. You can experience similar results, but you must do it right.

I'm designing the *Stewardship Journal* to be your go-to source of stewardship information and planning. This issue is a great example of my desire to give pastors and church leaders all the resources they need for every season in the church's life. I have reprinted a post I wrote for OnlineGiving.org entitled ***Begin With the Right Building Blocks***. We moved my Bonus Section to the end, and it gives you my **2024 #GivingTuesday Playbook for free**. As a result, this edition of the *Journal* will be longer than usual. When it comes to helping you be fully funded, I'm your guy!

Let's get to work!



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach

mark@acts17generosity.com



OnlineGiving.org, the leading online giving processor in America, sponsors my writing. Find out more about their services at <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Begin With the Right Building Blocks

The following post is reprinted with permission.

25% to 30% of non-profits annual giving comes in during the last six weeks of the year. In my experience, churches can also see a significant bump in year-end giving *if* they have and work a plan. A good end-of-year plan must have the right building blocks supporting that plan.

I'm helping churches put together their end-of-year plans, helping them make sure they have what I call the basic building blocks needed for communicating their message. In my last post, I shared the importance of your message. You want to cast a compelling message of how your end-of-year offering will make a difference for the Kingdom. Yet, with your members being bombarded daily with thousands of messages, how do you get *your* message or story heard? You must have the systems in place to tell that story. I call these the Basic Building Blocks for generosity communication.

Every year, I write an end-of-year giving plan for church leaders. The following is a page from that plan. These are the basics you need. Make sure they are in place now so that you can use them to help boost end-of-year giving. Here is my list...

1. Dynamic website. Your website is the first place most people will visit *before* they ever darken your doors. Make yours a good and secure one! Here is a great post on the importance of a secure online presence:

<https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/a-trustworthy-giving-platform>

2. Robust online giving platform, including text giving. You should aim to have most of your giving come through digital means. Here is a post that shows how our platform allows our partners to accomplish this:

<https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/the-power-of-instant-communication>

3. Social Media platform and presence. Like it or not, many people spend much of their time on social media. If you are not there, you miss an opportunity to connect with your people and those in your community. Here is a post that shows how to utilize our platform and social media: <https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/share-the-vision-with-social-media>

4. Postage-prepaid envelopes. I know this sounds old school, but this can be a great tool if used properly. We can help you process those checks seamlessly and quickly. Here is a post about our amazing check-scanning capabilities:

<https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/the-case-for-checks-and-cash>

5. Extensive database of your donors. Having all your members' email addresses is a given. Yet, you need to be able to break this list down by various subgroups, like first-time givers, consistency, etc. Here is a great story of how one church used its database and our platform to reach hundreds of new believers: <https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/how-todays-tech-advances-a-2000-year-old-story>

6. A mass email platform. There are many platforms to help you send out emails in multiple batches. Some offer free services for a limited number of sends. Most cost only a few dollars a month. Find the tool that suits your church database best. Here is a great post on how to utilize email and our platform: <https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/3-little-letters-for-fundraising-success>

With today's technology, any church can have the above tools in place. These become the systems and tools upon which you build out the story of your message or appeal. You can have the best message, but if your members and potential donors never hear that message, they won't give to support it. The most effective and impactful end-of-year giving strategies have a compelling message and the most up-to-date technology to get that message heard.

With as much as 30% of their yearly revenue coming through end-of-year giving, non-profits can't afford to let their message go unheard. That's why their plans are already in place, and they are working on that plan. Do you have a plan? We strive to ensure our partners do.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Our partners at OnlineGiving.org have access to my comprehensive end-of-year giving plan and all my seasonal giving plans. These plans and tools are designed to help our partners effectively utilize their life-changing message across our platform, boosting their results. If your current provider does not offer such plans and tools, we are here to support you. Contact us at (615) 206-4000 or drop us a line at support@onlinegiving.org. We give you the building blocks plus a plan of action to succeed. We can help make your end-of-year giving your best ever!

The preceding post, and others like it, can be found at <https://www.onlinegiving.org/support/begin-with-the-right-building-blocks>

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

The 2024 #Giving Tuesday Playbook

My Goal for this Playbook

“My goal in preaching is for you to come back next week and bring a friend.” I once heard Andy Stanley make that comment at a preaching conference. When it comes to the goal of this playbook, let me borrow that phrase and tweak it a bit. The goal of this playbook is for people to give to your church and then come next week with another gift. We want to help you use #GivingTuesday as a springboard to building your church’s generosity culture.

It's a given that the money we raise will go to help make an impact on the Kingdom. But why not use this event to help new donors discover the joy of generosity? #GivingTuesday is perfect for this.

What is #GivingTuesday?

#GivingTuesday started in 2012 and is a push by non-profits to use the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving to garner financial support for their work. It has been, up to now, a mostly non-profit-driven event. [#GivingTuesday this year will be on December 3rd.](#)

Churches have typically not participated in #GivingTuesday. A few years ago, I attempted to get my clients to utilize this day as a generosity starter. I came up with seven reasons why every church can benefit from #GivingTuesday. Here is my list of why you should consider #GivingTuesday.

1. **You give members a unique opportunity to express their generosity as a part of the worldwide #GivingTuesday movement.**
2. **It shows the compassionate side of your church.**
3. **It allows you to show an outward focus.**
4. **It allows you to connect with your community.**
5. **It allows your church to model generosity.**
6. **It gives your church great PR when we desperately need it.**
7. **It gives you a chance to attract new donors.**

After convincing my clients of the value of #GivingTuesday, we have seen thousands of dollars raised by churches across the country. The money raised did immense good, *and* they gained new donors.

This playbook will show you how to use #GivingTuesday to do the same at your church. Here are my **#GivingTuesday keys to success** –

1. **Make the offering about a cause outside your church.**
2. **Give all the money away to that cause.**
3. **Develop a plan of action for #GivingTuesday and work on your plan.**

Plan? Don't worry. We have a plan laid out for you—a game plan that will lead to a successful #GivingTuesday! Let's start by learning how to use the power of vision to connect generosity.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

The Connecting Power of Vision

Dollars follow vision. Big visions get big dollars. Do you know what else follows vision? People. The more people you have, the more dollars you can raise. The more dollars you raise, the easier ministry is. Since dollars follow vision, the story of the cause of your #GivingTuesday offering strategy must connect with people. We need to use **The Connecting Power of Vision.**

Your first step is to decide what cause or mission you are attempting to connect people to.

Determining your cause. I encourage you to look for some cause in your community that needs help. Is there a mission that supports the homeless in your city? While it doesn't have to be Christian-based, gifts given *through* your church should be consistent with your overall mission and direction. One question to ask is, who needs our help? Another is, who would benefit most from our help? The greater the need, the greater the response.

Can it be something within the church walls? My advice would be only if it pertains to helping your mission to others. For instance, a low-income daycare that needs toys, furnishing, etc., might be compelling to new donors. I still advise using #GivingTuesday as an outward-focused event. Remember, one of our keys is to give the money away.

Once you determine the cause worth giving to, it is time to Visioneer your appeal.

What is vision? My friend, Herb Buwalda, came up with what I think is the best definition. He says, "Mission," answers the question, "Why are you here?" "Vision" answers the question, "Where are you going; What is God asking of you now to impact the mission?"

To successfully use **the connecting power of vision**, always run your appeals through what I call...

The Three C's of Vision - Your vision must contain these three C's to be heard. Your vision needs to be:

1. **Clear** – What are you asking people to give to, and why? What difference will their gift make? Remember, Keep It Simple Somehow!
2. **Concise** – Can people repeat back in two to three sentences what you are asking them to give to? Try writing the vision driving your "ask" in one short paragraph. Then write a one-page more specific information sheet. We live in an information-overloaded society; thus, we must be short and to the point.
3. **Compelling** – Does it touch their heart? If not, then the response will be less than you hoped for. What stories can you focus on or show that will move people to support the cause of your "ask?"

Start thinking about how best to use the Three C's to connect people to the power of your vision.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Here is my one-page playbook for #GivingTuesday.

Pre #GivingTuesday Planning and Preparation

- Start planning *now!* The greater the planning, the greater the results. So, start now thinking and planning how to make #GivingTuesday impactful.
- Decide where the money will go. Again, I think this should be outside the church to support some ministry or cause your members would willingly support. New donors will be attracted to giving to support a cause they feel is worthy. As with every offering, the more compelling the "ask," the more likely new donors will give to support it.
- Use multiple platforms to get the message across.
 - Set up a page off your website that explains the cause your #GivingTuesday offering will go to support. At least one week before #GivingTuesday, make that page public. That URL will be used in multiple places.
 - Set up your giving portal to allow for a designated gift to #GivingTuesday.
 - One week before #GivingTuesday, use your Social Media platforms to tell the story of what causes your #GivingTuesday offering will support. Use your #GivingTuesday URL page on all posts.
 - Send an email one week before #GivingTuesday explaining your church's drive. Use the URL to link them back for more information. I call this my Save the Date email.
 - The Sunday before #GivingTuesday, announce it from the platform, use screen announcements, bulletin inserts, and other means to get the message out.
 - Use the offering time to preview #GivingTuesday.

#GivingTuesday Actions:

- Use social media throughout the day to highlight your campaign.
- Send the email asking for support for the cause you are championing. Your email should be short and to the point, containing multiple links to your giving portal.
- Send a text to give appeal later in the day.
- Rejoice and Follow Up! Remember, the goal is to gain new donors. You want to thank them immediately for their gift and keep their information for putting another cause in front of them in a few months. A short email thanking them for their generosity will help pave the way for the next "ask." Consider an email blast out within 24 to 48 hours, sharing the success of your #GivingTuesday offering results to the entire congregation.

For more ideas and tools, check out # GivingTuesday's website at: <https://www.givingtuesday.org>

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

You can use the following samples in your setting by simply editing the information. We are using a non-profit charity in Tulsa, Oklahoma that houses and feeds the poor called **John 3:16 Mission**.

Announcement Text – Use this in any print material like your bulletin or social media.

Help us feed the poor of Tulsa! December 3rd is a worldwide giving event called **#GivingTuesday**. We want to participate by taking up an offering we will give away! One ministry we support at First Church is John 3:16 Mission, which cares for our city's homeless and poor. We want to help them feed the poor this Christmas. We encourage everyone to give a special gift before or on **#GivingTuesday, December 3rd**. Every penny given will be donated to this great cause. Help us care for the poor by giving generously. For more information, go to <http://FirstChurch.org/#GivingTuesday>.

Offering Talk – Use the following on the Sunday before #GivingTuesday, before the offering time.

Caring For Those in Need

As we approach our worship time through the offering, I wanted to take a few minutes to say a word about what your offering accomplishes. Each week, because of your generosity, we impact scores of children, students, and adults with hope and healing. We could never do what we do without you. So, thank you.

Yet, some needs are simply outside of our abilities to meet. For instance, we can't (mention a cause that your #GivingTuesday appeal is about) feed the poor of Tulsa. So, from time to time, we have partnered with John 3:16 Mission, which does that daily. We think it is important for us to model generosity outside the walls of our church.

This Tuesday, an international giving event called #GivingTuesday will be held. Launched in 2012, this charitable initiative will raise millions worldwide for charity this Tuesday.

So, we thought, why not use the emphasis of #GivingTuesday to raise money we could give away to John 3:16 Mission? Every dollar in our #GivingTuesday special offering will go to John 3:16 to help them care for those in need. Every Christmas, they feed the poor and homeless of Tulsa. What if our offering paid for everyone's dinner?

So, while we encourage your continued support of our work here through this offering, we want to challenge you to participate in our John 3:16 #GivingTuesday offering. You'll get an email from me on Tuesday, so keep an eye out for it. It will show you what to do to help feed the poor of Tulsa. You can also go to our web page <http://FirstChurch.org/#GivingTuesday> for more information.

Let me end by reading Psalms 41, which says, *"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble."* Let's show our regard for the weak this #GivingTuesday.

Save the date email one week before #GivingTuesday – Email something similar to your entire congregation to put #GivingTuesday on the radar.

Subject Line: Help Us Feed Tulsa!

Dear _____,

For less than \$2.50 a meal, John 3:16 Mission feeds hundreds of people every year in the heart of Tulsa. This Christmas, we at First Church wanted to help John 3:16 feed the homeless and poor of our city through a special offering.

December 3rd is a worldwide giving event called **#GivingTuesday**. We want to participate by taking up an offering we will give away! Find out more at, <http://FirstChurch.org/#GivingTuesday>.

We encourage everyone to give a special gift before or on **#GivingTuesday, December 3rd. Every penny given will be donated to this great cause.** To give or find out more information, go to <http://FirstChurch.org/#GivingTuesday>.

Watch for our special email on #GivingTuesday, December 3rd! Let's show Tulsa that First Church cares and loves them!

Blessings,
Pastor Mark

PS. You can give ahead of time by going to <http://FirstChurch.org/give/#GivingTuesday>.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

#GivingTuesday suggested email copy.

Subject Line: Help us feed the homeless of Tulsa!

Dear _____,

Did you know that for less than \$2.50 a person, John 3:16 Mission will be able to host a Christmas meal for the homeless and poor of Tulsa? Our First Church family has supported John 3:16 Mission in the past, and we want to help them provide a Christmas meal for those in need. **Give now at <http://FirstChurch.org/give/#GivingTuesday>.**

Today is #GivingTuesday, an international event focusing on giving gifts to charitable causes. We have decided to participate by giving away every penny to our special #GivingTuesday offering. We chose this year to support the work of John 3:16 Mission. You can learn more about this amazing ministry and how you can help by giving to our #GivingTuesday offering at <http://FirstChurch.org/#GivingTuesday>.

Let's show our love for Tulsa with an amazing offering of support! Remember, every penny given will go directly to John 3:16 Mission! Let's feed the homeless of Tulsa!

Blessings,

Pastor Mark

PS. For around \$2.50, you can feed one person. How many people will your gift feed? Give now at <http://FirstChurch.org/give/#GivingTuesday>.

#GivingTuesday text blast sample:

Did you know that for less than \$2.50 a person, we can provide a Christmas meal for the homeless and poor of Tulsa? Our First Church family, working with John 3:16 Mission, wants to ensure that no one in Tulsa goes without a Christmas meal! Give today at <http://FirstChurch.org/give/#GivingTuesday>.

#GivingTuesday thank you email to be sent out after Tuesday, December 3rd.

Subject Line: Thanks to you, homeless Tulsans will eat this Christmas!

Dear _____,

Generous donors like you contributed \$12,285 to our #GivingTuesday special offering, which will help John 3:16 Mission feed the homeless this Christmas! Every penny of that \$12,285 will be donated to John 3:16 Mission. Thank you for your generosity.

Our First Family stepped up in amazing ways! From the youngest to the oldest, the stories of how our church rallied to support our church's homeless and poor are truly amazing. I am grateful for the generous spirit in our church, not simply during the holidays but year-round. Thank you, First Church family!

I am reminded of Psalms 41, which says, **"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble."** I'm praying that for you today!

Thanks again, First Family, for showing the love of Christ to Tulsa!

Blessings,

Pastor Mark

PS. Please find out more about our special #GivingTuesday results at <http://FirstChurch.org/give/#GivingTuesday>.