



LEADER GUIDE: EPISODE #8 HOW TO CRUSH A YEAR-END CHRISTMAS OFFERING

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH CHANGER:

It's time to rip the lid off your leadership and push past organizational pain points holding you and your church back. **Church Changer** is designed to equip church leaders with practical tools, proven strategies, and best practices to help you reach more people for Christ and shatter growth barriers in your ministry. Listen today, and put key takeaways into practice tomorrow! We're here to collaborate with you and cheerlead for you. Join Co-hosts Pastor Tim Lucas and Lauren Bercarich, along with special guests, as they outline a clear path forward so you can increase your impact, and let's have some fun in the process! New episodes drop the first Tuesday of each month.

EPISODE NOTES:

Overview

This episode is a guide to help you launch a successful year-end Christmas Offering that casts vision, warms hearts, and unleashes generosity in your church! Why? In the average church, 20% of their annual giving comes in the last 4 weeks of the year. But the reality is: Most churches HAVE NO PLAN for communicating with donors and intentionally stewarding generosity at Christmas time. We believe that God blesses leaders who both pray and plan to strategically maximize year-end giving at Christmas. This could be a GAME-CHANGER for your church, because while the congregation doesn't set the vision, they can set the pace at which you achieve that vision. But, you have to invite them in... and actually give them an opportunity to participate! Here's how...

The Foundation: You Need To Start With Vision.

Christmas is the perfect season to cast vision with your church for what God is calling you to strategically invest in the coming year. It's like a sneak peek, looking ahead to the year to come. So to be clear: A Christmas Offering is NOT a strategy for "paying the bills" or "give so we can fix our shortfall." This is about VISION, and what God is uniquely calling your church to invest in the year to come.

Select Your "Mission Critical" Needs.

At Liquid Church, our Christmas Offering typically spotlights 3 to 4 "mission critical" needs for our church. These can be compassion projects, they can support organizational goals...but all align with the vision God has uniquely given our church. When you're considering what those needs are for your organization, consider 5 pockets of generosity.



5 Pockets of Generosity:

- **Compassion** - Examples: Feeding the hungry, caring for the homeless, supporting your special needs ministry.
- **Buildings** - Examples: Renovation or remodeling. A new children's wing, a new cafe, expanding the auditorium.
- **Evangelism** - Examples: Campus Expansion or Events designed to reach the lost with the Gospel in your community.
- **Next Generation** - Examples: Investing in the Next Generation of Young Adults, Students, and Kids with special programs or assets, like a College Shuttle Bus.
- **Missions** - Examples: Think global. For Liquid, this is the Clean Water Cause impacting families in Rwanda and Central America.

Vision Sunday: Sharing The Vision With Your Congregation.

We recommend that each year you set aside the Sunday of Thanksgiving Weekend as **"Vision Sunday."** This should be an annual event and celebration. On that Sunday, your Lead Pastor preaches a special message laying out the vision for our church for the entire congregation. Always consider the special elements to weave into your message for storytelling impact ... it could be testimony videos, guest interviews on stage, surprise moments that leave everyone in tears or cheering. This is a feel-good, inspiring message that rallies the church. This is the moment to invite the congregation to be a part of the vision God has for the church.

Thanksgiving is a strategic time to cast this vision for several reasons.

- 1) It's the start of the holiday season.
- 2) Everyone is thinking about giving back at Thanksgiving.
- 3) People are gathered with family and friends.

You'll also notice this is when other ministries start vying for donor dollars - just check your mailbox and you'll see solicitations from World Vision and UNICEF, etc. Most people are looking for ways to contribute "above & beyond," but they don't think about the local church. Unless, of course, you invite them into that conversation!

Liquid Church Vision Sunday Message Examples:

- [2018 Vision Sunday Message](#)
- [2019 Vision Sunday Message](#)
- [2020 Vision Sunday Message](#)
- [2021 Vision Sunday Message](#)

Create A Christmas Offering Brochure.

On Vision Sunday, we hand out a Christmas Offering Brochure as part of the service. A digital version is provided for Church Online. The brochure is a guide that has all the INFORMATION our folks need. The Lead Pastor can use the brochure as a tool, preaching through it biblically and casting vision with passion. A brochure is useful in the moment, but the magic is that congregants get to hold onto it and pray about how God is calling them to participate throughout the month of December. The idea is that people have a runway to process and pray about the offering.



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Now, this does require an investment on your part. Printing a quality brochure does cost money, but you'll see that return ten-fold. We believe that you need to give folks something to "return to" to review and pray over. This is also great for parents, who can use the brochure and the offering as a teaching tool with their kids. This is a chance to teach kids that Christmas is not just about getting what we want, but giving to those who need it most!

Brochure Key Components:

- A letter from the Lead Pastor with a clear ask.
- The financial goal of the campaign.
- Instructions on when and how to give. (e.g., by December 31st at LiquidChurch.com/Give)
- Information on your "mission critical" needs for the church.

Liquid Church Brochure Examples:

- [2018 Christmas Offering Brochure](#)
- [2019 Christmas Offering Brochure](#)
- [2020 Christmas Offering Brochure](#)
- [2021 Christmas Offering Brochure](#)

Each year, our brochure visually matches the look and feel of our overall Christmas campaign. The design, imagery, colors all align with our Christmas Series and Christmas Eve celebration. We are sure to include photographs and scripture to help bring the brochure to life!

Reach Everyone With A Mailer.

There's one more KEY piece to produce for the Christmas Offering and that's a mailer. On the Monday following the Vision Sunday message, send out a letter from your lead pastor with that Christmas Offering brochure tucked inside along with an offering envelope. Mail this first class, for a quick arrival. This makes sure you reach ALL the active members of our congregation... not just those who attended church on Sunday.

A note about that offering envelope. This may seem "old school" to some - after all most people give online. But, you don't want to lose the money that comes in via an offering envelope, especially if it's postage prepaid (we'd recommend that), so it can be mailed into your church. And realize this: the envelope is also a visual cue that this is an opportunity to be generous. So, although most of those envelopes may end up in the trash because the majority of people choose to give online or via your app, we feel including the envelope is still an important part of a mailing outreach.



Letter Key Components:

- Use storytelling to add inspiration to the information you're providing. Open your letter with a short story and photo.
- Be clear about the ask - to pray and process about making a gift.
- Be clear about the financial goal of the campaign.
- Be clear about when and how to give.
- Let the brochure do the heavy lifting on explaining your church's "mission critical" needs.
- Keep the letter to one page front and back.

Liquid Church All Church Letter Examples:

- [2018 Christmas Offering Letter](#)
- [2019 Christmas Offering Letter](#)
- [2020 Christmas Offering Letter](#)
- [2021 Christmas Offering Letter](#)

Keep Casting Vision Throughout December.

Guess what? You're not done yet! You have to keep casting this vision throughout the month of December! Here's how:

- Leverage your offering moment in-service each weekend. Dedicate this time to reiterating your vision and inviting people to make a gift before the end of the year.
- Use social media channels for additional inspiration and storytelling related to the offering.
- Send out a few reminder emails and app push notifications throughout the month.
- Send out a "Church Is Fun" video on December 26th - a last call to submit a year-end gift before December 31st.

"Church Is Fun" Video Examples:

- [2013 Throwback! Pastor In Pajamas Video](#)
- [2018 Pastor In Pajamas Outtakes](#)
- [2019 Pastor Tim's Dinner Goes To The Dogs](#)
- [2021 Pastor Tim & Friends](#)

**It's important to note that follow-up communications are NOT heavy-handed. They are inspiration focused. However, we know that people are busy and we want to remind them that they still have an opportunity to be part of something bigger than themselves at Christmas.*

Proof Of Concept: Our Conversation With Nithin Thompson.

Nithin is the Lead Pastor at [City Alliance Church](#) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. He's served in that capacity for nearly 18 months now and is making an incredible impact already. Beforehand Nithin served on the Teaching Team at Liquid. And before that Nithin worked in student ministry for more than 6 years. He's a graduate of Alliance Theological Seminary, where he focused on intercultural and multicultural and diversity studies. Most importantly, Nithin is passionate about reaching people with the Gospel.

Last year, Nithin took our template for launching a Christmas Offering and ran these plays at City Alliance Church with much success! Here are some additional takeaways from our conversation.



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- Nithin set their Christmas Offering goal at \$35,000 and they exceeded that goal, raising \$55,000. The congregation signaled that they had the capacity to give when the vision was cast for them to contribute to the local church.
- In mid-December City Alliance reached their goal. The learning here was, don't stop the Christmas Offering. Leave it open and let God work.
- In order to create supporting materials - a brochure and videos, Nithin leveraged the gifts and talents of people in the congregation who volunteered their time to create these assets, showcasing that even churches with a small staff can tap into the skills of their congregation.
- By inviting the congregation to be generous, Nithin saw a culture shift. In the new year, congregants continued to be generous. They were inspired! People saw needs and volunteered to help - replace the doors to the church, build a new soundbooth and more.
- Be creative around "mission critical" needs that aren't terribly exciting. City Alliance raised money for a new bathroom. During the Little League World Series, the church had its doors open and offered people access to a free and clean bathroom throughout the event. Imagine that the first time some people stepped foot in a church might have been to use the restroom!
- If you've never done a Vision Sunday message before, Nithin recommends watching messages from other churches to find a template you can adjust for your own context. This is particularly helpful if you feel uneasy about asking for money.

"Within 2 to 3 weeks, I got a call from my treasurer and he said, 'we just hit our goal.' He asked me what we should do. And I said, I don't know... should we stop, should we keep going? We decided to keep it open and let God work."

- Nithin Thompson

City Alliance Resources:

- [2021 City Alliance Christmas Offering Brochure](#)
- [2021 City Alliance Christmas Offering Letter](#)



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Continue the conversation! Here are questions to ask yourself and your team to help your church thrive. We hope Church Changer will inspire you to put into practice what we discuss each month!

- 1. What do you need to do THIS WEEK to begin preparing for a Christmas Offering Campaign in 2022?**

- 2. What should your fundraising goal be? Remember that as a general rule of thumb, it should be 10% of your overall budget?**

- 3. What are the "mission critical" needs of your church you can spotlight in the Christmas Offering? Use our "5 Pockets of Generosity" as a guide.**



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4. Are you uncomfortable talking about and asking for money? If so, what can you do to alleviate that discomfort and prepare well?

5. If you've done a Christmas Offering Campaign before, what's one thing you will repeat and one thing you will do differently this year?

We are rooting for you! May this be the year you shatter growth barriers in your ministry!

