

Beyond *the* Offering

Energizing Congregational Giving



Alexander-Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

First Things *First*



November 4, 2021
www.fundraisingcounsel.com



from the Carolina office of
Jerry W. Henry | Managing Partner for Faith-Based & Human Services

"The times they are a-changin'." Are you?

Wow! Bob Dylan's words are as true now as they were when he penned them in 1964! They're especially true for our congregations as we continue emerging from the challenges of the past 19 months of pandemic. But many clergy are concerned about the challenges our congregations face going forward.

Here are some comments (both in the form of concerns as well as in new opportunities), that I've heard from my clergy colleagues, or read in faith-based blogs:

1) A majority of attendees may no longer be in "the room." One clergy individual shared that rather than leading worship for a large group of 350 or more gathered in person for a Sunday worship service, the Sunday flock now consists of about 150. They are socially distanced still, some wearing masks and others without. Whereas, the space which comfortably seats 500 is now only one-third filled on Sundays, the worship leader recognizes that there are nearly 300 additional households worshipping via a live streaming format. Is this the "new normal?"

2) While trying to focus on "gathering," congregations have a greater need to explore new ways of "connecting." (And this relates back to #1!) While welcoming people back to the sabbath setting and other weekly gatherings at their churches, leaders recognize another set of challenges: those who were regular worship attendees (as one leader has said) *are no longer in the habit of coming to church – the physical space—every Sunday*. Looking out across the congregation, some clergy recognize that each Sunday they're seeing different faces.

3) Churches will likely need to envision their buildings in new ways. Many congregations built large education facilities in the 1950s and '60s to meet the needs of the growing Baby Boomer generation, only to find them sitting largely empty throughout the week in the '80s and '90s. Some rented out their spaces or formed new ministries to occupy the facilities. Likewise today, in light of changing

attendance or participation habits, churches will evaluate how to use or reconfigure those spaces in this emerging post-pandemic world.

4) Challenges of segmenting your messaging and outreach to your members especially given generational differences. According to a Barna/Stadia survey, 71% of Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) preferred physical worship as opposed to digital or hybrid church. Only 41% of Gen Z preferred worshipping together in a physical space. In fact, the majority of people surveyed preferred the hybrid flexibility of in-person and digital gatherings. As more congregations seek to engage younger families, they recognize more than ever that what works for one segment of the congregation may not work for all.

No matter what challenges or opportunities a local faith community is facing, it is more important than ever for congregations to focus on their mission.

But wait, Jerry. *Isn't a congregation's mission too grand to be measured...especially with all these uncertainties and seemingly changing times?*

David Odom, Executive Director of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School writes *A congregation's mission statement provides clues about what it should be measuring.* (See his complete article [here](#).)

I believe that strategic plans are important for churches – especially as we begin emerging from the pandemic. There is much talk about the fact that we are no longer dealing with “pivots,” (which are by nature reactionary), but are dealing with learning to be proactive and more “adaptive.”

Focusing on defining your mission and taking time to define your strategic plan is important – even for congregations. It offers the opportunity to discard outdated models and embrace new ideas to create a broadly shared prosperity. To be more adaptive rather than reactionary.

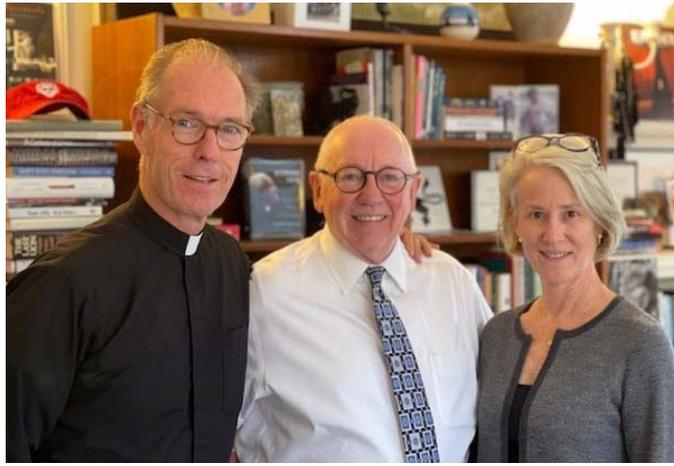
As Odom writes, *The challenge of the moment is to figure out what to measure and why...If we know the problem we are trying to solve and the people with whom we are working, we are on the way to finding the appropriate measuring tape.*

Even as these *times are a-changin'*, there's no time like the present to do this important work.

Strategic Planning and Discerning Your Next Steps as a Congregation

We can help! Contact **Jerry W. Henry**, Managing Partner for Faith Based & Human Services, for additional information and help in assessing your congregation's needs.

Hot off the Press....or Plane



In Person – At Last!!!

For the past year, Alexander Haas has provided campaign services to **St. Mark's Episcopal Church** in New Canaan CT – all virtual via Zoom until now! Recently, **Jerry Henry**, Managing Partner for Faith-based organizations and Lead Counsel for the St. Mark's campaign spent two days in Connecticut for his first onsite meetings to celebrate the successes of this campaign. Shown here at St. Mark's Church are (L to R) **Fr. Peter Walsh**, Rector; Jerry Henry; and **Laura Watt**, Director of Stewardship & Development. It's wonderful to be meeting face-to-face!

We Think You Should Know

Attendance Falling at Small and Midsize Congregations

Half of the country's congregations had 65 or fewer people in attendance on any given weekend. The most recent round of the *Faith Communities Today* survey, or FACT, found a median decline in attendance of 7% between 2015 and 2020. The survey was taken before the coronavirus lockdown. That's a drop of more than half from a median attendance level of 137 people in 2000, the first year the FACT survey gathered data.

Key Findings

- Mainline Protestants suffered the greatest decline, at 12.5% over the past 5 years, with a median of 50 people attending worship in 2020.
- Evangelical congregations declined at a slower rate (5.4%) over the same five-year period and had a median attendance of 65 people at worship.
- Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches declined by 9%.
- The only groups to boost attendance over the past five years were non-Christian congregations: Muslim, Baha'i and Jewish.
- The survey found that half of the nation's congregations were in the South, even though only 38% of the U.S. population lives there.
- Nearly half of the country's congregations are in rural areas (25%) or small towns (22%), while the 2020 census found that only 6% of Americans live in rural areas and 8% in small towns.
- Midsize churches with an attendance of 100 to 250 that have declined the most precipitously — the median decline was 12%.
- Congregations with 1,500 people in attendance were best able to avoid decline; 71% of those large churches grew over the past five years.

A bright spot in the study: Congregations are becoming more racially diverse. In 2000 only 12% of congregations were multiracial. In the latest survey, the figure climbed to 25%. The survey defined

multiracial congregations as those where 20% or more of participants are not part of the dominant racial group. *RNS, 10-14*

Only 13% of Evangelicals Tithe

While a majority of evangelicals say tithing — giving 10% of one's income to the church — is a biblical commandment, only an estimated 13% engage in the practice, while half give away less than 1% of their income annually.

A new study, *The Generosity Factor: Evangelicals and Giving*, reflects data collected from 1,000 American evangelical Protestants and highlights how and where evangelicals give money. It also reveals significant differences in giving among age groups.

Key Findings

- The average giving for all evangelicals, including those who give nothing is 2.4% of income to church and 0.8% to charity, for a total of 3.2% of household income going to church or charity.
- The median for church giving is 0.57% —just over one-half of one percent — while for charitable giving, it is 0.1% (or one-tenth of one percent).
- The average evangelical gave \$1,923 to the Church and \$622 to charity over the past 12 months, for a total of \$2,545 in giving. At the median mark, evangelicals gave \$340 to the Church and \$50 to charity, for a total of \$390.
- For those who donate to church, the average church giving is \$2,603, with a median of \$800.
- Evangelicals with a household income below \$30,000 annually, the median total giving was found to be \$300. This doubled to \$600 when people earned \$30,000 to under \$60,000. It more than doubled to \$1,400 when the income was \$60,000 to under \$100,000. At six figures, median giving registered at \$2,200.

The average generosity for the lowest-income evangelicals is 2.4%, rising to 3.2% for those earning \$30,000 to less than \$60,000. But then it only bumps up slightly to 3.5% for those earning \$60,000 to under \$100,000, and slightly again to 3.7% for those with six-figure incomes. So the lowest-income evangelical households show lower giving levels, but there is relatively little difference in average generosity levels between an evangelical in a household earning \$50,000 and in one earning \$150,000. *Christian Post, 10-29*

More Philanthropic News

#GivingTuesday November 30

Yes, it's just a few days away, and by this time you should have crafted your plan of attack for this growing in popularity, and results, international day of fundraising. Let's look at some statistics from 2020:

Key findings include:

- Giving in 2020 grew an estimated 5.2% year-over-year when compared to 2019.
- The sector experienced more donor mobility than ever before, with big gains in new donor acquisition largely offset by big drops in donor retention.
- The multi-year trend of fewer donors overall was reversed in 2020. A 1.3% top-line gain in donors was driven almost completely by an 11% growth in small donations between \$101 and \$500, the highest growth for this donor size in five years.
- Key giving moments in 2020 corresponded to upticks in COVID-19, pivotal events such as action for racial justice and election activity, and #GivingTuesdayNow, a day of unity and giving held as an emergency response to COVID-19 on May 5, 2020 and GivingTuesday (December 1, 2020) giving

events. These moments were largely driven by many donors giving smaller amounts.

This should encourage you to work harder. Take last year's new donor and show them what an increased gift can do for your institution. Highlight a student or program. Be loud and be proud of the work you do.

The #GivingTuesday website [has a toolkit](#) that offers advice and resources to help pull your program together. It's not too late.

More Donors Made One-Time and Monthly Online Gifts in 2020

Charities' revenue from one-time online donations grew more than 15% in 2020, according to a new report from **Blackbaud**. Before the coronavirus outbreak, revenue from one-time online donors declined 1% from 2019 to 2020. But as nonprofits moved the bulk of their fundraising appeals online during the pandemic, the average size of those gifts grew to \$169.59 — a more than 3% increase.

Other Key Findings

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- The charities in the study recorded 43.2% more gifts in response to a fundraising email in 2020 than in 2019. Revenue from these transactions grew by more than 42%.
- Nonprofits increased the volume of emails they sent nearly 14%, and the volume of readers who clicked on links in the emails jumped 29%.
- The number of one-time donors who gave online grew by nearly 16% in 2020, despite declining in 2019.
- Monthly donors boosted their giving 18% from 2019 to 2020, and the monthly gifts were slightly larger — about \$1 more in 2020 than in 2019.
- One in 40 donors now makes a monthly recurring gift.
- Growth in revenue from sustaining donors has now outpaced growth in dollars from one-time donors for nine straight years.

COP, 10-6

America's Wealthiest Got Wealthier in 2020, But Their Giving Was Stagnant

Forbes magazine assigns wealthy Americans a philanthropy score from 1 to 5. The number of those with a top score of 5 (for giving away at least 20 percent of their wealth) dropped from 10 to eight last year. Most of the rich on the list received a score of 1, meaning they have given away less than 1 percent of their net worth, or no philanthropic information was available. George Soros was the biggest giver relative to his wealth for the second year in a row. Others who were notably generous included MacKenzie Scott, Michael Bloomberg, Gordon Moore, Julian Robertson Jr., Amos Hostetter Jr., Lynn Schusterman, Ted Turner and Denny Sanford. The laggards include Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk. *Forbes*, October 2021

We Want You to Know....

Transforming Institutions

For more than 30 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with both large and small faith-based organizations, helping sew the seeds of compassion, hope and charity.

[See a list of our faith-based client *partners*...](#)

Our Transformational Services

Raising the funds to meet the mission and ministry needs of churches is becoming increasingly challenging. At Alexander Haas, we understand the challenges that congregations face in raising the funds to support their mission. More importantly, we understand how to overcome those challenges. We offer a variety of stewardship services for the unique needs of faith-based organizations.

[What can we help *you* with?](#)



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