

MAXIMIZE YEAR-END GIVING

**10 PROVEN PRACTICES
TO BOOST
CHURCH GENEROSITY**

B R E T T D E H A R T

1

Encourage IRA Distributions

Run this in your church communications (bulletin, emails) beginning in early November and continuing through the last day of the year that your church office is open:

Please Consider an IRA Distribution to the Church

Anyone making a required minimum distribution from their IRA should consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution to the church. The IRA account holder can have a distribution up to \$100,000 made payable directly to a qualified charity. The amount donated to the charity in this manner is not included in the donor's taxable income. Consult with a knowledgeable tax or financial advisor regarding minimum distribution procedures. Church finance contact: Helyn at Helyn@douglasFUMC.org.

2

Around Thanksgiving, send handwritten thank you notes to your top 10 to 20 givers

Thankfulness and appreciation often breeds more generosity. A simple handwritten message from the Pastor could read:

In this season of thanksgiving, I wanted to thank you for giving so generously to Aldersgate. It makes it possible for us do some amazing ministry! Blessings, Brett

3

Publicize a December Goal?

If you have a true need to hit a certain number, it can sometimes be helpful to set a goal for December giving and then update the congregation on your progress each week and especially during the final days of the year. Even if you don't have to hit a number, sometimes a goal motivates some people to give more rather than just a vague appeal.

“We need to raise \$____,000 in December to meet our operating budget needs.”

“We still need to raise \$____,000 more this month to meet our missional needs.”

“In these final days of the year, we still need to raise \$____,000 more to achieve our giving goal.”

If you come close or surpass the goal, make a very big deal about it in the first couple of weeks of the new year.

4

Don't Seem Desperate

Even if you are desperate, you can't seem desperate. Be very careful how you share negative financial news if you do at all. Instead, celebrate a great year of life-transforming ministry. Stay positive and upbeat.

People finance winners. They don't invest in sinking ships.

A reminder that you can't have an emergency every December. If you pushed really hard at the end of last year, you might want to be a little more gentle this year.

5

Create and Frequently Use a *Year-End Giving* Graphic

Use this graphic frequently in your communications (bulletin, emails, newsletter, social media, website) and on screens in worship during the offering time.



6

Videos in Worship on Giving/Generosity

Sometimes it is helpful for the congregation to hear the message from an outside authority. If you have video capability in worship, show two videos in December (on separate Sundays separated at least by a week) as a lead-in to the offering time or as the plates are passed. Videos can be found for purchase at www.worshiphousemedia.com.



Christmas Special Offering for a Ministry that Helps People Beyond the Church

If you aren't consistently raising money outside the operating budget, you are leaving money on the table!

It has been said that people give from different pockets. The theory is that people are pretty set on their giving to the operating budget based on a tithe, a plan, and/or a pledge. You might get them to reevaluate that number every so often and adjust it slightly upwards, but you are missing out if you don't ask for money out of the other "pockets." Most people have the capacity for more and it is found in those other pockets.

If you need all attention to be on making the operating budget number for yearend then you will want to soft sell a special offering, maybe just making it a part of Christmas Eve. Focusing on a ministry that doesn't benefit church people should motivate and inspire people to give beyond their normal church giving and touch the heart of church guests. It can be a church ministry, but it needs to clearly benefit people beyond the church.



Ask People to "Prayerfully Consider an Additional Gift"

Thank people for their generosity throughout the year and ask them for one additional gift. Most won't even consider it unless you ask.

It is even more powerful if the person asking for that additional gift (pastor, finance chair, board) to be able to say, "*join me* in giving one additional 2024 gift."



Use the Phrase “Remember the Church in Your End-of-Year Charitable Giving”

A huge percentage of charitable giving happens in the final week of the year (often as people consider their tax situation). The church needs to get its fair share of that giving.

It can be as simple as saying and writing the words, “Please remember the church in your end-of-year charitable giving,” throughout December.

The key reason we do the *12 Days of Christmas* (see below) is to keep us in front of folks as they make these giving decisions in the final days and hours of the year.

Most churches go dead for the week between Christmas Eve and New Year’s. What a huge mistake if most charitable giving happens during that week!

10

Twelve Days of Christmas Email and Social Media Campaign

Over the twelve days of Christmas (December 25-January 5), send a daily email (also post on social media) highlighting positive things from the year and your hopes and dreams for the new year. It keeps the church in front of the congregation during the biggest charitable giving time of year (encouraging year-end giving) and furthers the spirit of celebration and progress. Don't ghost your congregation over the last week of the year!

It is important that these emails are not too salesy. We only mention giving or use the Year-end Giving graphic sporadically and always at the end of the email as a soft reminder.

This worked extremely well as we set records for online giving, particularly in the final days of the year. We had quite a bit of ground to make up in December and we ended the year raising \$30,000 more than the previous year.

Sample items highlighted one year:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Dec 25 | 1. Celebration of best things accomplished |
| Dec 26 | 2. Venezuela Crate |
| Dec 27 | 3. Local schools |
| Dec 28 | 4. Kid/Youth revitalization (church office open Thursday) |
| Dec 29 | 5. Missions (church office open today for last minute giving) |
| Dec 30 | 6. Lebanon missionary |
| Dec 31 | 7. Messy Church |
| Jan 1 | 8. Church Became Debt Free! |
| Jan 2 | 9. University of Georgia Wesley Foundation |
| Jan 3 | 10. Congregation meals and worship snacks |
| Jan 4 | 11. Young families (Marriage enrichment) |
| Jan 5 | 12. 2023 Advances (Goals) |

Here are a few samples:



On the first day of Christmas.....

Merry Christmas Aldersgate! Over these 12 Days of Christmas, we will send you a daily email highlighting positive things from 2022 and our hopes and dreams for 2023.

This time of year I begin to reflect on all the amazing ways God has worked in and through the church during the year. Here are a few:

- Significant growth in kids and youth ministries connecting with 40 students
- Ten sessions of *Messy Church*, consistently drawing over 40 people each month and becoming a consistent, solid faith community. 56 people served in this ministry this year.
- Served each month at *The Master's Table* soup kitchen (27 people served at least once this year)
- \$4,240 given to send a crate of baby formula and medicines to churches in Venezuela
- \$3,000 support of our Lebanon missionary, Joy H (and she had a baby!)
- \$5,062 support for the University of Georgia Wesley Foundation including our own missionary, Julia B
- Grocery gift certificates for families in need through five local schools totaling \$3,000
- Provided a \$20 gift card for supplies to every teacher at Warren Road Elementary School in August
- Hundreds of socks and underwear and \$500 donated to Project Refresh in October
- Angel Christmas Gifts for 65 people through Safe Homes Domestic Violence Center
- Augusta Urban Ministries supported with \$5,000
- \$496,488 of church debt paid off, completely eliminating a \$1.4 million loan from 2009

I'm one proud Pastor! I can't wait to see how God moves in our midst in 2023.

Blessings,

Brett

Rev. Brett DeHart

December 27 – email

Over these 12 Days of Christmas, we are sending you a daily email highlighting positive things from 2022 and our hopes and dreams for 2023.

On the third day of Christmas.....

We are consistently blessing the six schools in our mission field:

Elementary:

A. Brian Merry
Lake Forest Hills
Warren Road

Middle:

Tutt
Langford

High:

Westside

To encourage teachers and staff this year, we rented an ice cream truck to provide treats at two schools in the Spring, provided frozen treats inside for four schools in August, and provided coffee pods for the teachers breakroom at one school. We gave a \$20 gift card for supplies to every teacher at Warren Road Elementary School in August.

At Easter, we gave away grocery gift certificates for families in need at five schools totaling \$3000.

As the schools go, so goes our community. Every joy and challenge of our community is present within our local schools. Supporting our schools and encouraging and praying for administrators, teachers, and staff is an excellent way to work for the Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.



(Note that this is the first day that we have included any mention about giving)

December 28 – email

Over these 12 Days of Christmas, we are sending you a daily email highlighting positive things from 2022 and our hopes and dreams for 2023.

On the fourth day of Christmas.....

In February, we were blessed that God led Tara Wimberly to us to lead our Kids Ministry. She did such a wonderful job, we added Youth to her portfolio in the summer. Here is her report on the revitalization going on in these ministries:

“I am thankful to report that we have served over 40 kids and youth consistently this year at Aldersgate (not including *Messy Church*). I am extremely grateful that the Lord has answered our prayers and continues to do so by sending our church more and more sweet children to love and serve.

Our attendance has grown through the implementation of Wednesday nights, which offers a meal, skit, lesson, games, and activities/crafts. We also have Sunday afternoon gatherings, meals, and outings where we are able to fellowship and have fun together. The kids especially love the different adventures such as a trip to Riverbanks Zoo and Steed’s Dairy.

Our kids and youth are always eager to hear what is planned for the month and often call or text me with suggestions. While of course we can’t do everything, I do take their suggestions and try to make them happen. These kids have blessed me as much as I pray I have blessed them. We have fun, fellowship, and learn about how great Jesus is!”

Would you consider an additional gift to the operating budget here at yearend to support this important work? The church office will be open tomorrow (Thursday, December 29) from 10:00am-2:00pm to receive final gifts for 2022. You can also give online anytime at www.AldersgateGives.com



December 29 – email

On the fifth day of Christmas.....

Missions is strong at Aldersgate. It is privilege, responsibility, and calling for every church and every Christian to join God in what God is up to in the world. Here are the highlights from our efforts in 2022:

Local Missions

- Served each month at *The Master's Table* soup kitchen (27 people served at least once this year)
- Grocery gift certificates for families in need through five local schools totaling \$3,000
- Multiple efforts to bless teachers and students at A. Brian Merry Elementary School, Lake Forest Hills Elementary School, Tutt Middle School, Langford Middle School, and Westside High School.
- Provided a \$20 gift card for supplies to every teacher at Warren Road Elementary School in August
- Hundreds of socks and underwear and \$500 donated to Project Refresh in October
- Angel Christmas Gifts for 65 people through Safe Homes Domestic Violence Center
- \$5,062 support for the University of Georgia Wesley Foundation including our own missionary, Julia Baughn
- Augusta Urban Ministries supported with \$5,000
- Assembled 10 adult tricycles to be given to for senior adults through Augusta Urban Ministries
- \$3,210 donated for the annual UMCOR Sunday offering and another \$1,450 given for Ukraine-specific relief efforts.
- \$2,650 donated to support Family Promise through their golf marathon
- 20 people participated in GriefShare
- Hosted *Wellroot* Easter and Christmas events for local foster families
- Mission Team's "Hands On" ministry built six large wooden food boxes for DCCM food pantry as well as several projects around the church
- Supported Downtown Cooperative Church Ministries (DCCM) food pantry, GAP ministries, Family Promise, and the Burn Center.

International Missions

- \$4,240 given to send a crate of baby formula and medicines to churches in Venezuela
- \$3,000 to support our Lebanon missionary, Joy (Zimmerman) Heneine

Your consistent, faithful giving to Aldersgate makes all of this possible. Thank you for your generosity.

Would you consider an additional gift here at yearend to support this great work? The church office is open today (Thursday, December 29) from 10:00am-2:00pm to receive final gifts for 2022. You can also give online anytime at www.AldersgateGives.com



December 31 – email

On the seventh day of Christmas.....

Messy Church is an interactive experience for kids and adults to explore faith together. Each session includes games, crafts, Bible story, and a meal for the whole family.

Now in its second full year, our *Messy Church* has matured into a consistent, solid faith community. We are reaching families that we would never be able to with our traditional offerings.

In 2022, we offered ten sessions, consistently drawing over 40 people each month. We also experimented by offering two *Eat Pray Play* gatherings at Warren Road Park in the Fall.

The Aldersgate congregation has embraced this ministry as 56 people served at least once this year.

Please continue to pray for this effort. Because of your generosity and evangelical spirit, we will reach even more families from our community for Christ.

Please note- today is the last day to get 2022 tax credit for charitable giving. You can give online anytime at www.AldersgateGives.com

(Year-end giving graphic with link)

We don't mention giving at all January 1 through 5.
In the last couple of days of this campaign, we focus on our church goals for the new year.

Year-End Checklist

- PRAY
- Encourage IRA Distributions
- Send handwritten thank you notes to your top 10 to 20 givers
- Publicize a December Goal?
- Don't Seem Desperate
- Create and Frequently Use a *Year-End Giving* Graphic
- Videos in Worship on Giving/Generosity
- Christmas Special Offering for a Ministry that Helps People Beyond the Church
- Ask People to “prayerfully consider an additional 2023 gift”
- Use the Phrase “Remember the Church in Your End-of-Year Charitable Giving”
- *Twelve Days of Christmas* Email and Social Media Campaign

Special \$79 Strategy Session Offer

Don't do this alone! Brett implemented these strategies at his church and not only made up a significant deficit but exceeded previous year giving by \$30,000.

Let him help you do the same.

For just \$79...

One Hour Zoom Strategy Session with Rev. Brett DeHart

plus Brett's eBook, *Funding God's Mission: Cultivating Generosity in the Church*, which reveals 25 generosity strategies for the new year.

Email brett@brettdehart.com today.



About the Author

Rev. Brett DeHart is an active United Methodist Pastor in Sarasota, Florida. He has led churches for over 20 years (worship attendance 25 to 1800). With a passion for reaching new people, churches he has pastored have launched Messy Church, Recovery Church, Dinner Church, and other Fresh Expressions.

Brett was recognized with the Harry Denman Evangelism Award in the North Georgia Conference UMC in 2023. While serving at Austell First UMC, the church won the city's Business of the Year award for its service during the historic flood in 2009.

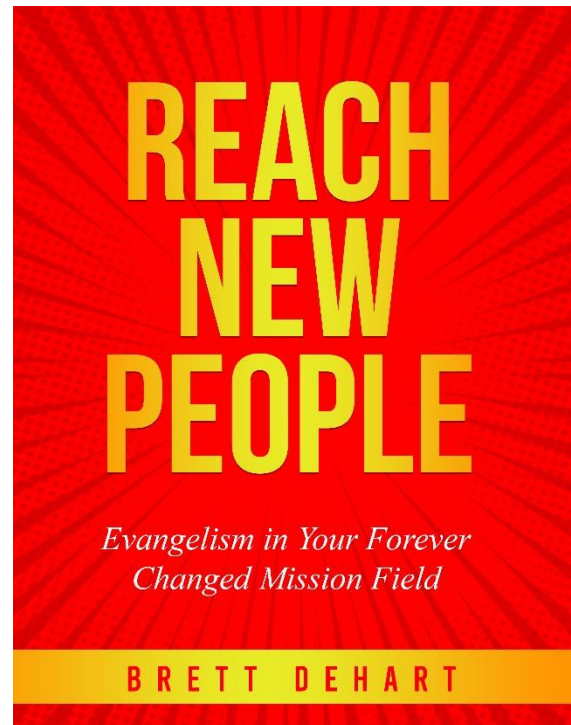
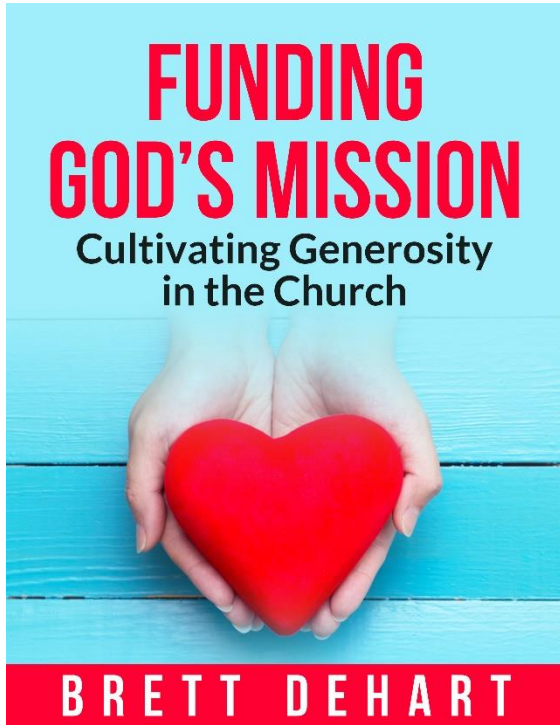
Before entering ministry, Brett spent six years as a sportscaster and ten years in business.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Florida State University and a Master of Divinity degree from Emory University's Candler School of Theology.

Brett and his wife, Candy, were high school sweethearts and have been married for more than 30 years and have two children in their 20s (a clinical dietician and a flight instructor).

Brett is available for trainings and coaching in-person or online. Details at www.brettdehart.com or contact him at 941-350-5321. Areas of Expertise: Reaching New People in New Ways, Hospitality, Generosity.

Also Available from Brett DeHart at www.brettdehart.com/ebooks
(some titles also available on Kindle and free on Kindle Unlimited)





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