

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a blue sleeveless top, is sitting at a wooden table and looking at a tablet. A man with short brown hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt, is sitting across from her, looking at a smartphone. They are in a bright, sunlit room with white vertical blinds in the background. The scene is warm and collaborative.

Avoiding the Summer Slump: A Step-by-Step Guide for Your Church

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We have some good news and some bad news.

Good news: Summer's fast approaching!

Bad news: Church giving tends to drop as much as 13% as we welcome the warmer weather.

Better news? That's not the whole story.

With kids out of school, vacations nearing, and endless days of beautiful weather, it's easy to stay busy this time of year. While summer is a blast for kids, families, and people of all ages, it's definitely a challenge for many churches and ministries. Vacations, hectic schedules, and local activities make it difficult to keep your church community engaged.

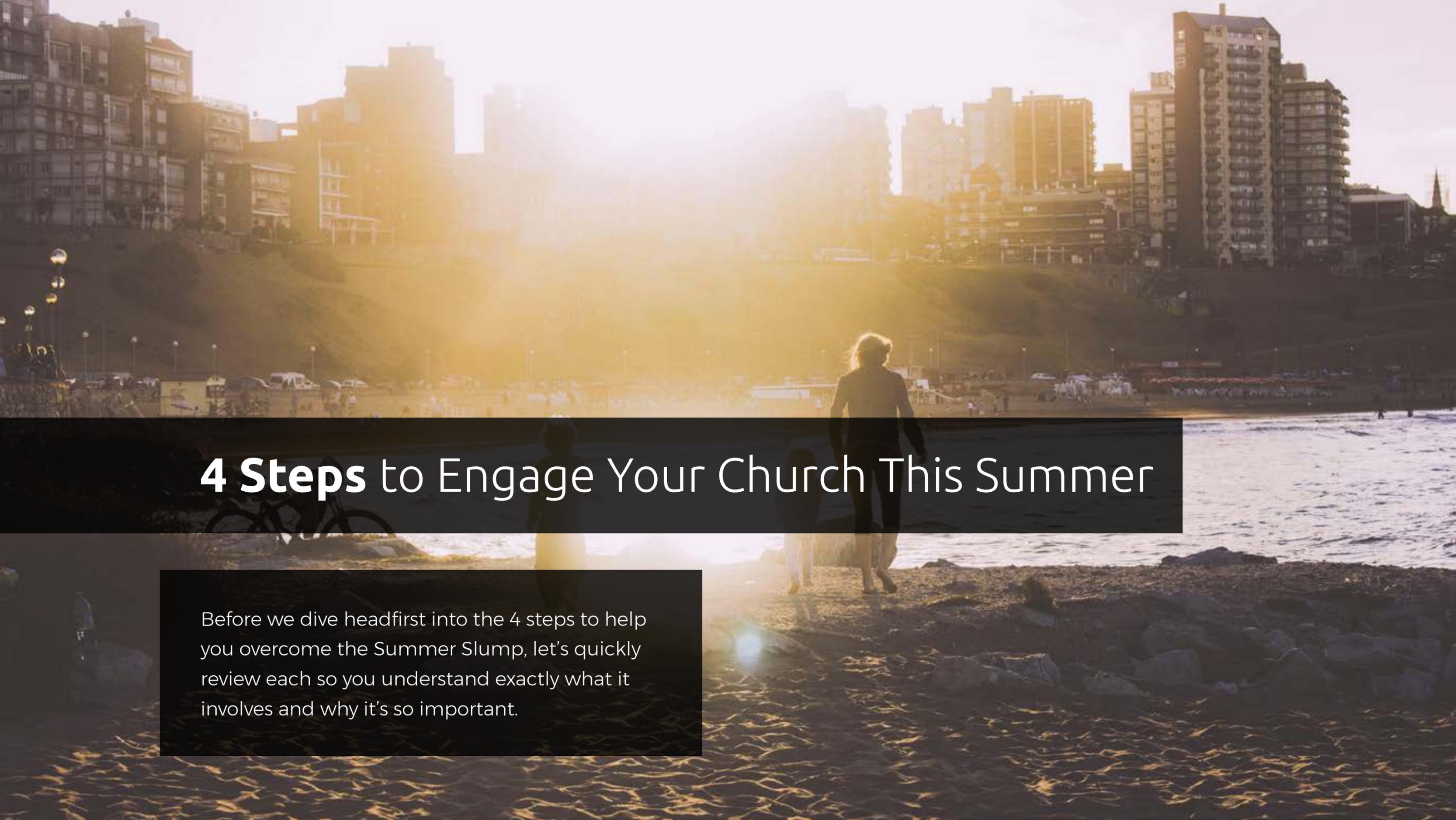
As summer hits its peak, churches see their greatest number of empty seats. In fact, during July alone, attendance decreases an average 34%. Combine these smaller services with the 13% drop in giving we mentioned above and you might start feeling like you're at a loss.

Don't throw in the towel quite yet! There are a lot of ways to avoid the summer dip in attendance and giving and we hope this guide will help you do both. Whether you have fewer than a 100 attendees at your church or you manage multiple campuses that serve thousands, you'll find these ideas effective and easy to execute.

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Let's jump in!

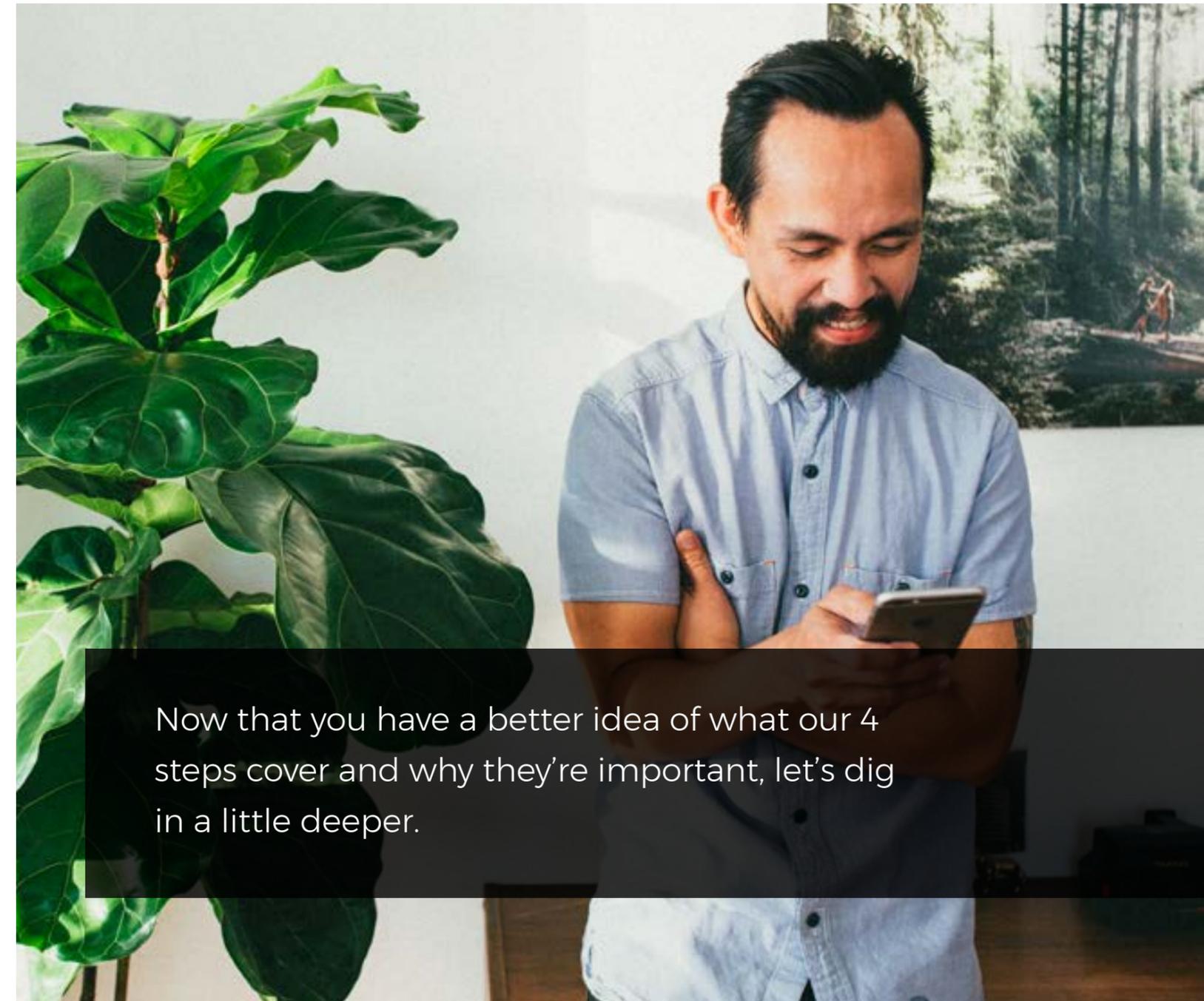
A person is walking away from the camera on a dark, rocky beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong golden glow and lens flare. In the background, a city skyline with several tall apartment buildings is visible against the bright sky. The water of the ocean is to the right, with gentle waves washing onto the shore.

4 Steps to Engage Your Church This Summer

Before we dive headfirst into the 4 steps to help you overcome the Summer Slump, let's quickly review each so you understand exactly what it involves and why it's so important.

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3...4!

- 1** **Step 1** explores how text and online giving can help you grow your church. Last year, June and July averaged an 8.9% growth in online giving. By having the right technology in place, you can increase giving—even during the summer!
- 2** **Step 2** focuses on recurring giving. Once you have a giving platform in place, there's no better way to work with vacation schedules and the draw of endless warm weather than a recurring giving campaign. In 2017, monthly giving grew 32% overall for nonprofits, demonstrating a significant percentage of givers who notice and prefer the convenience of recurring giving.
- 3** **Step 3** places the spotlight on planning your summer event calendar to grow attendance. According to one study, planned events represent the 4th most well attended church days. When executed strategically, events encourage your community to visit, as well as bring back active members distracted by the promise of summer.
- 4** **Step 4** reaches your church far and near. Just because your church family will be away more often in the summer season doesn't mean you can't connect with them. There are a lot of ways to expand your reach and keep your church family close, even when they're hundreds of miles away.



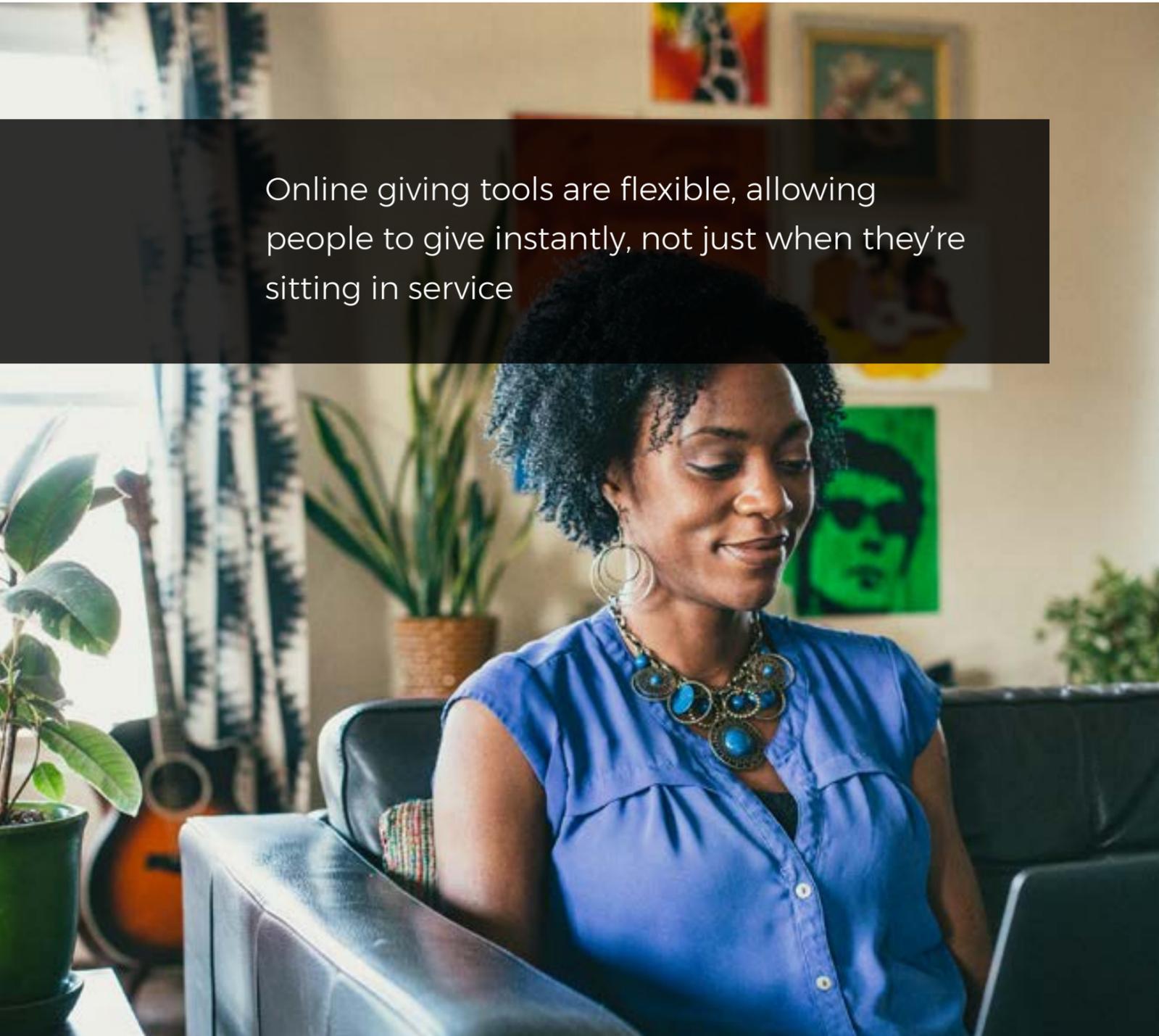
Now that you have a better idea of what our 4 steps cover and why they're important, let's dig in a little deeper.

Step 1: Increase Your Ministry with a Church Giving Platform

Technology keeps us connected in ways we never imagined possible. While it can be distracting at times, technology serves a purpose in ministry. Websites, giving platforms, emails, and more can further your church's mission by allowing you to meet your church where they are and to grow more connected with your broader community, regardless of where they're located.

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Online giving tools are flexible, allowing people to give instantly, not just when they're sitting in service

Giving platforms are an affordable way for churches of all sizes to expand their reach, cast their vision, and increase giving.

It's no secret that people of all ages are comfortable doing everything online now, from making dinner reservations to paying bills. In fact, people spend an average of 87 hours a month browsing on smartphones, not to mention the time spent on computers and tablets. With everyone on the go during the summer months, now is the ideal time to connect with people using a giving platform.

Let's take a moment to look at the top benefits of online giving:

Top benefits of church giving platforms for givers:

- Online giving tools are flexible, allowing people to give instantly, not just when they're sitting in service
- Card and bank information is securely stored for easy accessible from any device
- Easily set up a recurring gift so there are fewer opportunities to forget in the midst of life

Top benefits of church giving platforms for staff:

- Simplified tracking and reporting
- Faster gift processing
- Decrease costs and increase giving

Hopefully you're beginning to see why an church giving platform is essential to further your Church's mission.

Once you join an online giving platform, make sure to customize your giving page. People are 7X more likely to give on branded pages than unbranded ones.

Next, share the multiple ways to give to your ministry, so givers can choose the one that's most convenient for them. Some may love the ease of on-the-go text giving while others prefer to give from desktops in the comfort of their own homes. In fact, studies show churches that provide multiple ways to give average a 33% increase in gifts.

Always keep your website up-to-date, and don't be afraid to try new things! Technology opens multiple avenues to communicate with your ministry. There's a range of online channels you can use to further the reach of your church, like videos, podcasts, and social media.

You can use our [Ways to Give slide](#) to remind your church how they can give!

[GRAB THE SLIDE >](#)



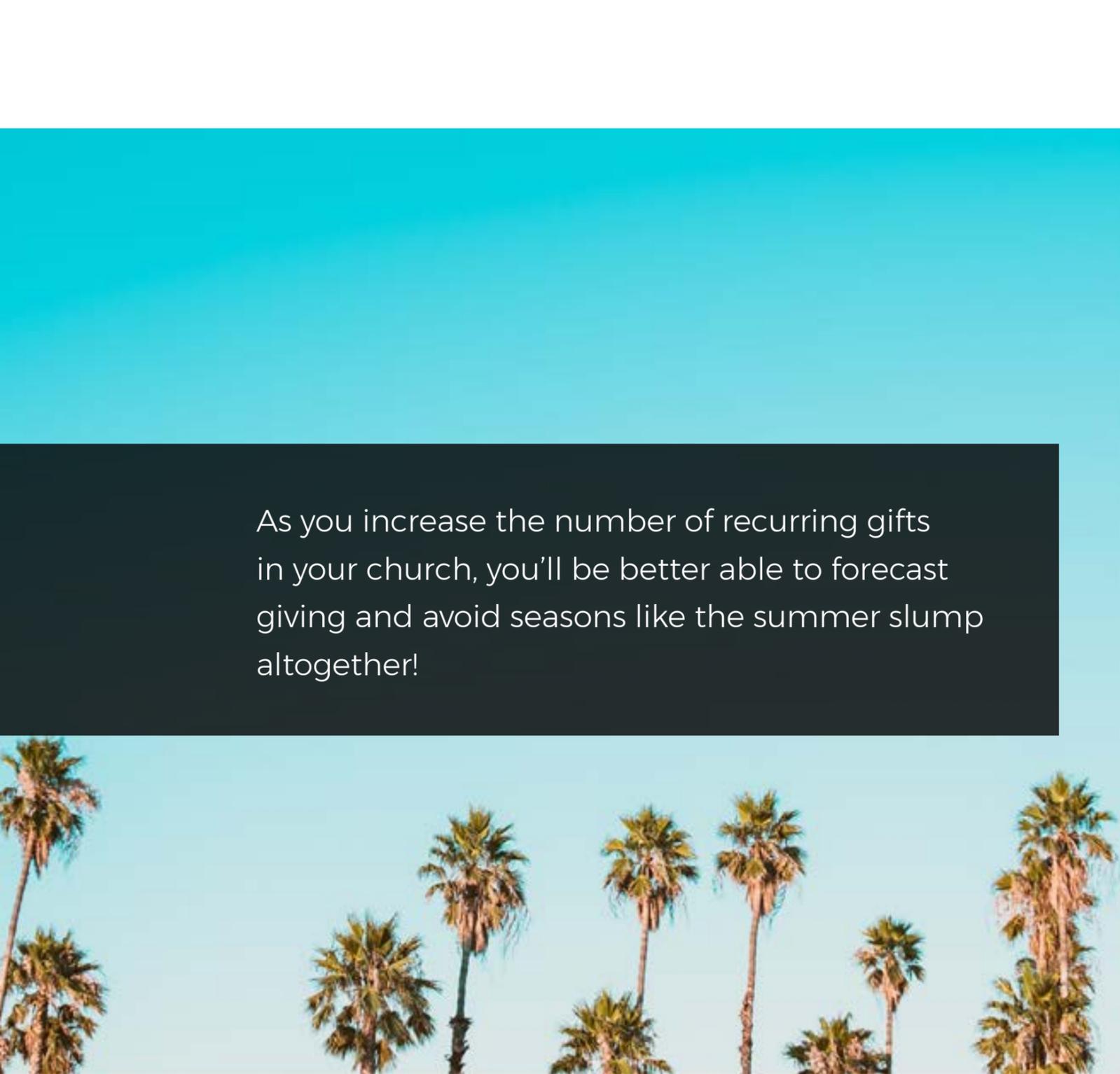
Did you know? In 2017, online giving grew 12.1%, and faith-based organizations experienced the highest growth of online giving last year compared to other nonprofits

Step 2: Encourage Consistency with Recurring Giving

In 2012, a church stewardship consultancy surveyed 1,078 churches with questions about their finances. The survey found that 14% of churches exceeded their annual budget.

The survey then analyzed those high-performing churches to isolate the factors contributing to their financial success. They identified 5 key “giving practices” these financially secure churches shared. #1 one on their list? The ability to accept automatic, recurring gifts.

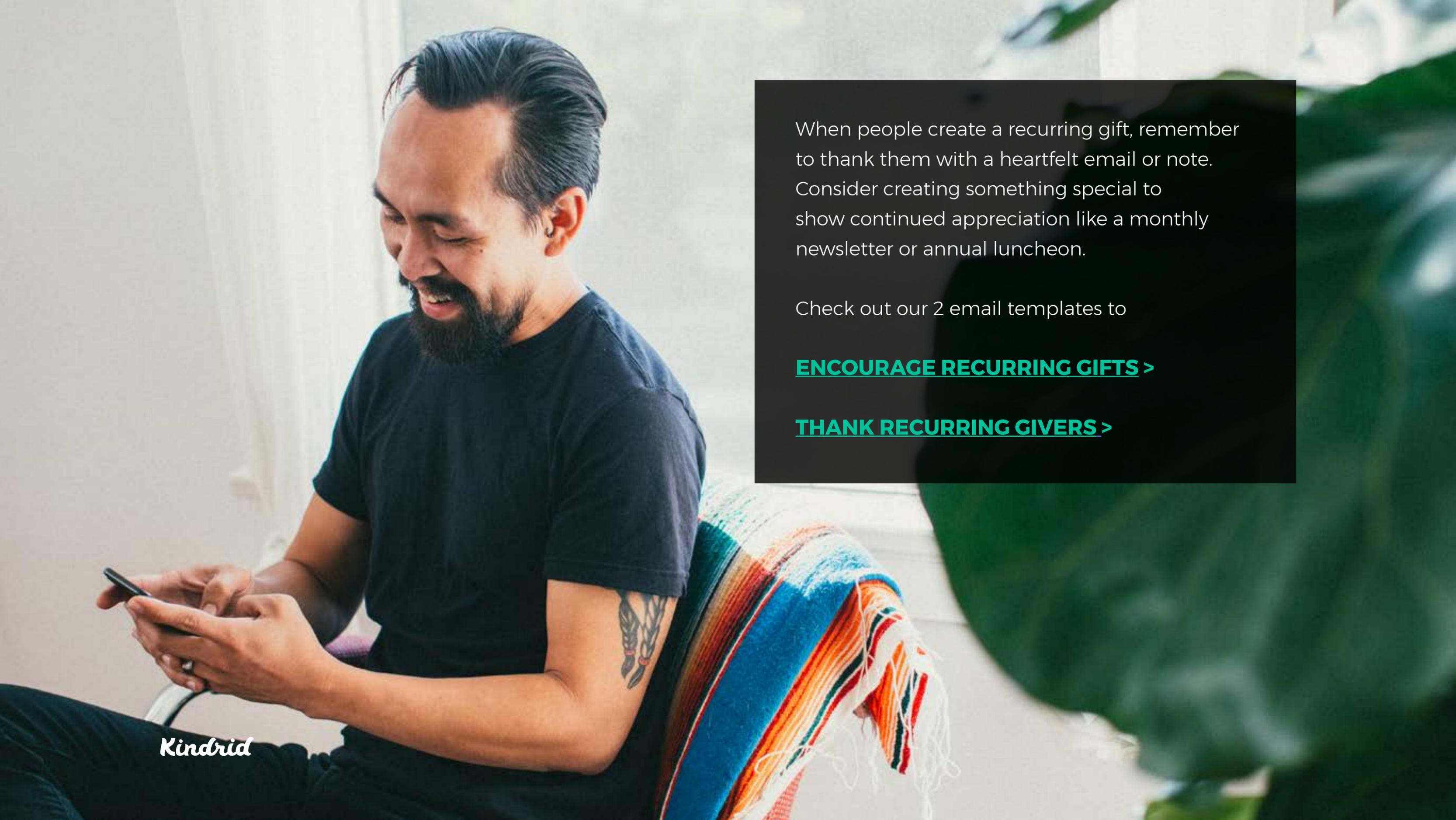




As you increase the number of recurring gifts in your church, you'll be better able to forecast giving and avoid seasons like the summer slump altogether!

Plain and simple: recurring giving works, especially when it comes to avoiding the summer slump. Here are 3 simple ways to get it right:

- 1** **Customized it!** Blank and boring forms belong at the DMV, not your church's website. Take advantage of branded giving pages that reflect your church's logo and colors. On average, recurring gifts created on branded giving pages are 43% larger than gifts created on generic giving pages. And that makes sense, right? Would you be comfortable making a financial gift through a page that looked totally different than the rest of your church's website?
- 2** **Keep it simple.** Give people flexibility with when, where (that means making Bank Giving easy!), and how often their recurring gifts are drawn. Equip them with the ability to manage, modify, or even cancel the gifts after they're created.
- 3** **Talk about it!** If you want people to take recurring giving seriously, you need to teach them why it's important and how to get started! And then do it again (and again, and again). Consistency is key, especially in the beginning. The goal is to ensure that every attendee at your church knows exactly where and how to give whenever the opportunity presents itself. **USE THIS SLIDE** to spread the word!



When people create a recurring gift, remember to thank them with a heartfelt email or note. Consider creating something special to show continued appreciation like a monthly newsletter or annual luncheon.

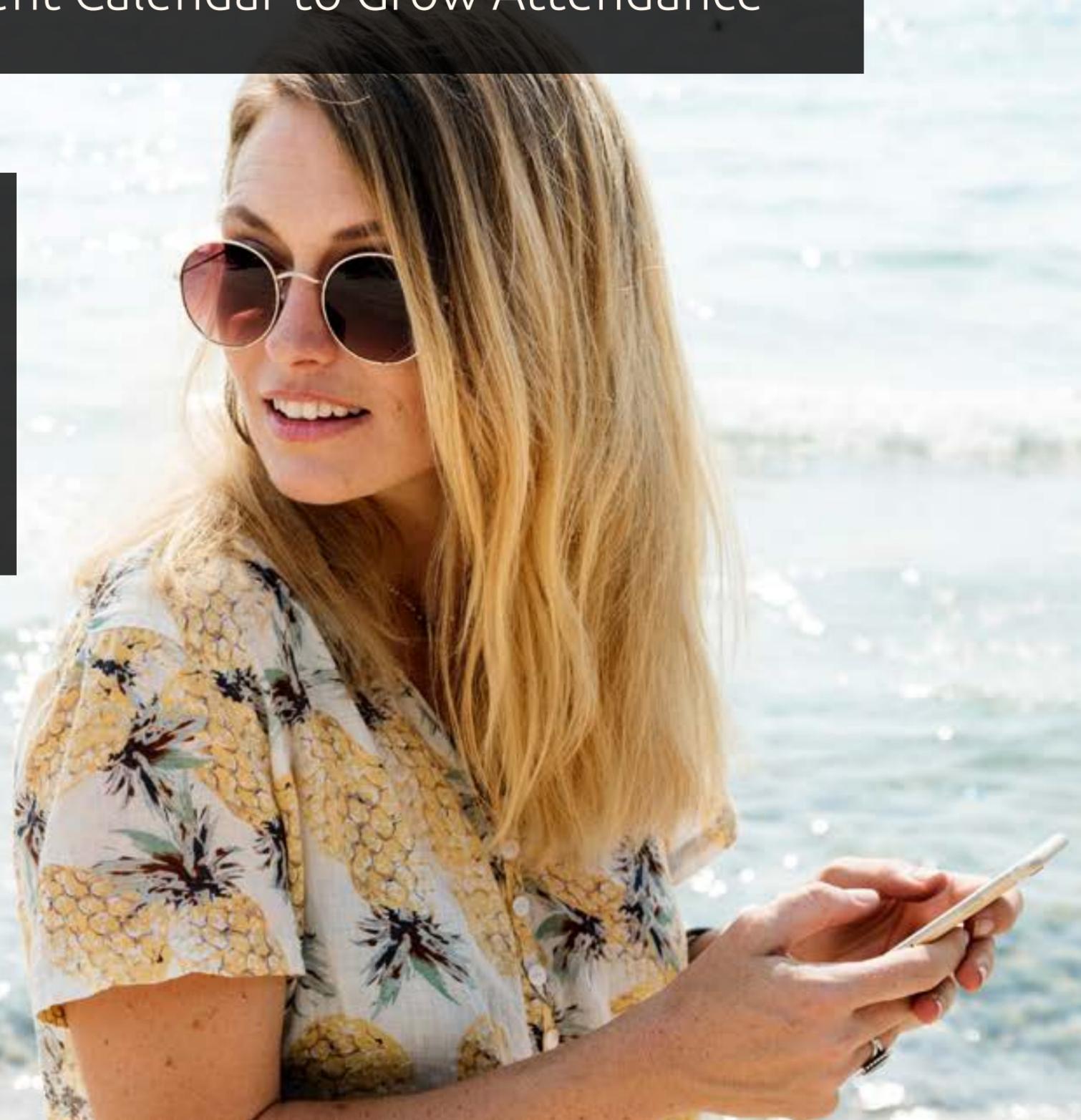
Check out our 2 email templates to

[**ENCOURAGE RECURRING GIFTS >**](#)

[**THANK RECURRING GIVERS >**](#)

Step 3: Organize Your Summer Event Calendar to Grow Attendance

If you want to boost summer attendance and grow reach, it's essential to strategically organize your summer event calendar! Through special events, you can connect with young families, new community members, and those who normally attend but may be distracted by summer.



A recent study focused on special events sponsored by the church, found participants felt 70% more connected to the local church after attending the event. The same study also found that these special events greatly appealed to people ages 18-45. You can choose to do one big event in the summer, or you can pepper smaller events throughout the season.

Whatever frequency you choose, here are a few popular ideas that will bring your church family and members of the community together:

- Invite a popular guest speaker or musician from your community
- Hold a fundraiser highlighting a special cause
- Plan an outdoor event like a cookout or church field day
- Host a homecoming
- Organize a retreat

Make your summer special event even more engaging by following this quick checklist.

- Enlist volunteers
- Get the word out on your website and social media
- Send personal invitations
- Include instructions for text giving
- Incorporate food and beverages
- Have something to do for all age groups

Stepping outside of your normal routine is a natural part of summer, and your church's calendar should reflect that. Do remember that it's crucial you organize your calendar in a way that makes sense for your church based on size and resources.

Mindfully consider elements like timeframes, budget, and volunteers to ensure you aren't spread too thin. And remember, 1 or 2 thoughtfully planned events in the summer will further your church's vision more than 10 rushed events.



Step 4: Reach Your Church Far and Near

In the final step of your summer plan, we focus on reaching churchgoers far and near. Sure, it can feel like everyone's on vacation, but that's not the only reason for the summer slump. Many people are simply spending time at home or out in the community. You can still reach them, even if they aren't in attendance at service.



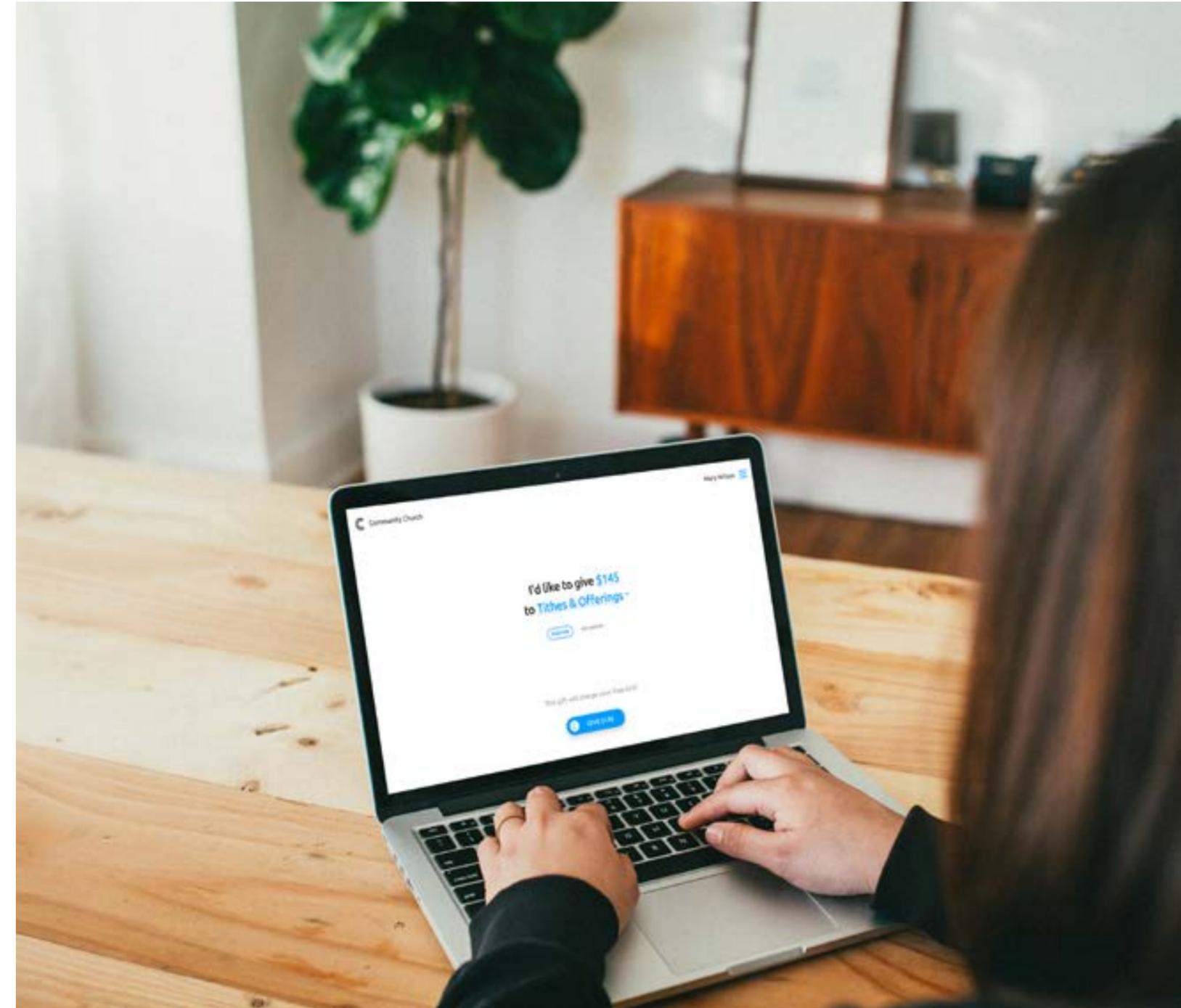
Record sermons (or stream them live). Post these on your website so anyone can join, whether they're at home, right down the road from the church, or on vacation hundreds of miles away.

In fact, 64% of churchgoers say the most important part of your website is downloading and listening to sermons. Link to your branded giving page so they can give during the service, just like they would if they were there.

Send an email or text. It's okay to send an email or text letting your church family know you miss them and hope they're enjoying summer! You can also include a save-the-date for upcoming calendar events. Once again, include a link leading them back to your giving page.

Engage and share on social media. Don't let your church's Facebook page grow stale in the summer. You can bet eople are still scrolling through their feeds. Use that to your advantage! Spread the word about upcoming church activities on social. If you haven't added a [giving button to your Facebook page](#), summer is an excellent time to make it happen! This way, people can give directly from your Facebook page to the church.

Invest in those who ARE coming to church. Spend extra time with those that do attend actively throughout the summer, and encourage them to bring friends, neighbors, and family. This can also be a good time to recruit volunteers or create a small summertime group that meets for activities like Bible study or exercise classes.



Before you go...

Remember to track your progress as you make your way through the summer. Use your giving platform's reporting tools, personal notes, and feedback from your church family to measure your efforts. Next year, you can refer back to these results to refine your summer strategy even more.

Summer doesn't have to be defined as the slump season for attendance and giving. By sticking to these 4 steps, you can unleash generosity and grow attendance this summer!

