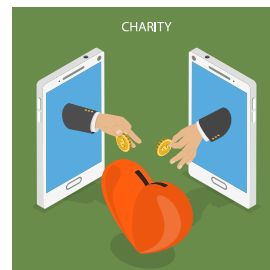


Online Pledge Forms and Donation Pages

Best Practices

Your online giving portals are important tools in telling the story of your mission. They should quickly communicate your ministry and your impact, and with an economy of words, help would-be pledgers and donors take the desired action of filling out their pledge/promise form or making a gift.



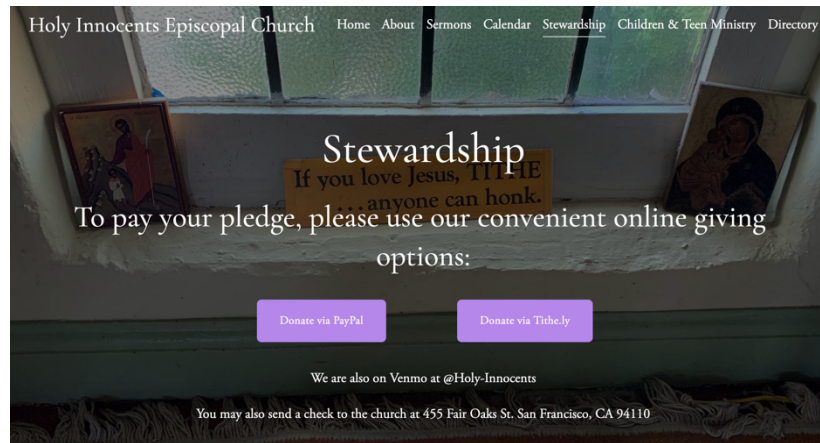
- **Make it simple to find.** It should be one click away from your top level website navigation. For example, your url should be something like: <http://www.stswithens.org/stewardship/pledge-form>
 - *This tells us that there is a dedicated area for stewardship on your website which might be used to house information, formation opportunities, financial information, and where the user might learn how to make a gift or a pledge*
- Your donation form should be **branded to look like your website**. If you are using a third-party vendor like Tithe.ly or NetworkForGood, you should upload your logo and other features that look like your church's site
- **One Click to make a gift.** Don't bury it deep in your menu options. Make it clear, bold, obvious.
- Keep the number of **required fields to a minimum**. Sure it would be nice to have your members' birthdates and other information, but you really only need to know their name (children and spouses too!), contact information, and their communication / donation frequency.
- It is ok to have some extra fields, but leave them **unrequired to submit**. This includes things like newsletter sign-up or interest in a planned gift / estate plan.
- Make sure your donation site is **responsive** – that it works on screens of all sizes, including phones and tablets.
- Don't forget to switch on a **recurring gift option**
- Include instructions for making a gift through securities, retirement accounts, or by check
- **Invest time in creating a thoughtful thank-you** or confirmation page upon completion. Let your members know their gift was received, what comes next, and how grateful you are for their giving.

Useful Links and Examples

1. [This article from Tithe.ly](#) contains great tips for your church fundraising page with examples of successful ministry fundraising websites and donation forms.
2. [An article from Church Development](#) reviews four great platforms for small- and mid-size church online fundraising programs.
3. GiveWP is a plug-in that can be implemented in WordPress sites that is [designed specifically for faith-based giving](#). They list some great tips and tools.

Examples of successful church giving websites

Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church, San Francisco, California



This is a great example of a [mid-size Episcopal Congregation](#) using an online pledge form and a variety of online giving tools to complete gifts for their pledge campaign.

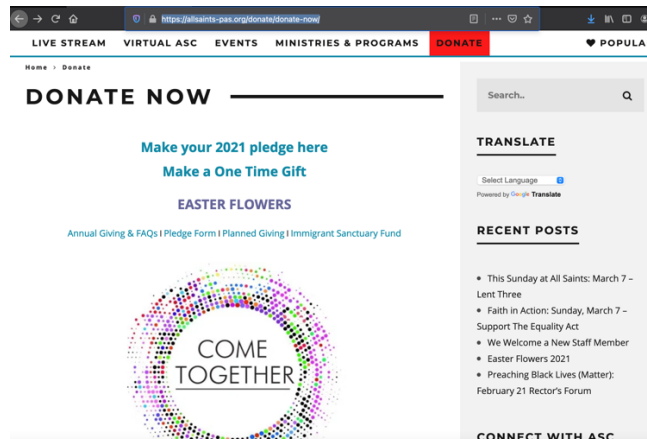
Some of the commendable features of Holy Innocents' stewardship page including:

- **One click from the main navigation** to access
- Pledge form is directly on the page itself – **easy to find**
 - Note how their pledge form includes **"time and talent"**
- Links to make gifts on Paypal and Tithe.ly

Some misses on this page:

- No instructions for **making gifts from other channels** like checks, securities, or bill-pay
- No other FAQ or other information about **membership or pledging**

All Saints' Episcopal Church, Pasadena, California



All Saints' Pasadena, a corporate-sized parish in the diocese of Los Angeles has a fully integrated giving site accessed by a [prominent blue Donate button](#) on their main navigation.

Best practices include:

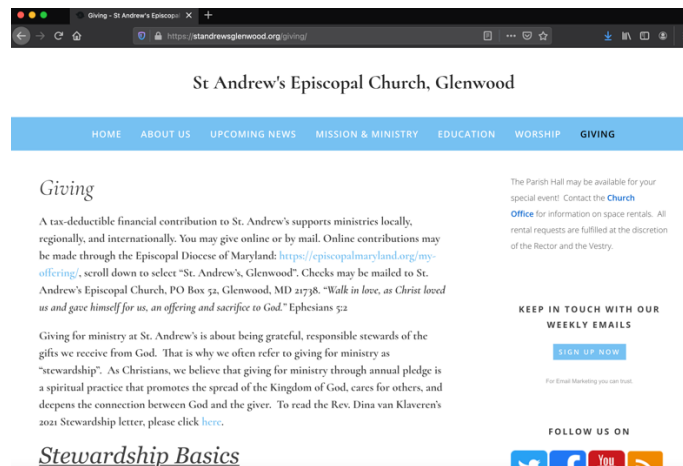
- **One-click to making** a pledge or a one-time gift
- Links for multi-channel giving
- **FAQ** with answers to commonly-asked questions

A note on Fundraising FAQ's: They will never be perfect. There is no FAQ that can answer every anticipated question, but here are a few that you should always cover:

- Average pledge in a congregation. This gives people a place to start
- A way to learn more about where or how the money is spent
- Who participates in the committee or campaign team
- Information about the tax advantages of giving (simple, and straightforward)
- Links and ways to learn more
- Multi-channel giving, for example, securities/stocks, IRAs, planned gifts, and other giving channels

Please note that there are other giving opportunities for things like flowers or other parts of the life of the community. **It's ok to have multiple asks on a website, so long as the annual support is prominently displayed.**

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Glenwood, Maryland



St. Andrew's, Glenwood, Maryland has a well-integrated donation site. With a single click from the main navigation, a donor can get to the resources. Among the many great things about this site, are the following:

- The main giving site has great facts about stewardship at St. Andrew's, anticipating questions that donors might have
- It's only one more click to get to the pledge forms
- The section on "Pledging" is particularly helpful. It answers questions that many of us may have about how much we should consider, and why we do it in our tradition.

We hope that these ideas inspire creativity whatever the size or budget you have for your congregation's ministry. For more ideas, please visit our Resource Library at www.tens.org