Digital Giving: How can you get started?

Digital giving (such as online and mobile) provides additional ways for you to reach and engage with your parishioners and visitors. Mobile apps are a quick and easy way you can ensure you can meet people where, when, and how they wish to give. Giving trends show large shifts in the way church members give. All generations accept and embrace on-line purchasing and/or mobile app transactions; donating and giving is no exception.   By including mobile giving as part of your giving / pledging toolset, you will reach more people that are ready to help directly support your church and its ministries.

There are a variety of different on-line giving formats that churches can utilize:

- **On-line giving:** donors access through your website or via shared link to website
- **Mobile Apps:** donating via your mobile phone is the fastest growing (and easy) way to give
- **Text Giving:**   text a donation may be an option with a mobile app
- **Kiosk:** physical location allows donor to swipe credit/debit card (or be an event registration hub).

Each format has its pro's and con's: some have different pricing plans, some provide flexibility to fit your size church, some allow you to provide a branded donor interface, and some provide additional tools.

Below are a few examples of mobile on-line giving tools that churches can utilize:

- **Tithe.ly:** www.tithe.ly
  *easy to use mobile app / digital giving suite
- **EasyTithe:** www.easytithe.com
  * customizable giving platform
- **Venmo:** www.venmo.com
  * payment / money transfer app
- **Qgiv:** www.qgiv.com
  * giving platform for non-profits
- **Givelify:** www.givelify.com
  * online giving and text to give app

Mobile Reigns Among Digital Giving

Not all e-giving is equally appealing.

57%	MOBILE
24%	WEB/ONLINE
14%	TEXT
4%	CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR*
<1%	KIOSK
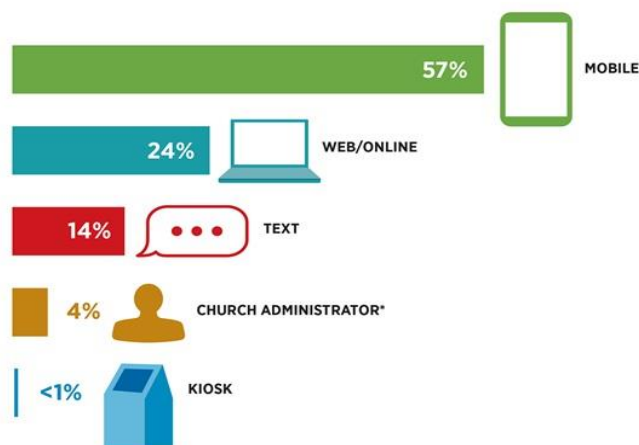
*A church administrator enters a gift into the church's online account based on information the donor provides.
Source: Nonprofit Digital Giving Report, a two-year study completed in 2017 by Tithe.ly of 1,500 churches that use its various giving platforms.

ChurchLawAndTax.com
A ministry of Christianity Today

A few places to learn more about Church Technology options / trends:

- **Church Tech Today:**   www.churchtechtoday.com
- **Christianity Today:**   www.christianitytoday.com
- **Capterra Church Management Blog:** www.blog.capterra.com/articles/church-software/
- **Techsoup.org:** www.techsoup.org

A Few Recommendations about Digital Giving...

Develop a giving strategy

Bring church leadership up to speed on your digital options. Open up the conversation to the rest of the church; find out what giving methods they would prefer. Discussing the types of giving options that are available to your congregation provides more insight and buy-in on your decision.

Start out Simple

Start with one or two digital giving method first. Your church's fundraising needs and culture can help dictate the best options. Based on a congregation's size and demographics, gauge participation and results. Start with online and mobile before text and kiosk.

Promote Digital Giving Early and Often (Tell them how to give!)

That means prominent mentions during worship services and announcements, reminders via social media and your website, and notifications in the church newsletter or bulletin.

Give with your Mobile Phones!

Almost 60% of all church e-giving today is done via mobile phones. Most sitting in the pews already have their phones with them; leverage that. Mobile apps may not be for everyone but most in your congregation already use them daily; they check the weather, use Instagram / Facebook, purchase coffee at Starbucks, use Google maps, or listen to their favorite music.

Allow for recurring donations

Online giving platforms allow donors to set up recurring donations. Members can schedule a payment to process and those transactions are processed whether they are in church or on summer vacation.

Emphasize the Ease of Digital Giving

Amazon and Venmo have made one-click commerce second nature for many users. If your members can show you pictures of pets/family/friends on their phone, then they can just as easily navigate a mobile giving app. Show them!

Be Transparent About Fees

Most tools charge a modest fee for their services — typically between 1 and 3 percent per transaction, often coupled with a 30-cent surcharge. This is similar to most online payment services your church may already use.

(Sources: BizTech Magazine, Qgiv, Church Law & Tax)

Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast