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==== *First-Time Donor Letters:* ====  
**18 LESSONS FROM 12 CHURCHES**

RICH BIRCH

## FIRST-TIME DONOR LETTERS: 18 LESSONS FROM 12 CHURCHES



Churches making a difference in their community have a robust stewardship system that encourages people to give to the mission. [ref] Core to that system is ensuring that when people give to your church for the first time, you acknowledge it. It's a strategically important "first contact" that helps shape a donor's experience.

We asked 12 churches that we love to send us their first-time donor letters so we could learn from them. Then we uploaded the letters for you to check out and use what you like! Here are the lessons that jumped out as we looked at what these churches do with these letters:

- **Be Thankful** // Obviously, these letters need to thank people for choosing to give to your church. You can't overdo this part ... make sure you are abundantly clear that you are thankful people are giving to the mission of your church.

- **Explain Ways to Give** // Make sure you explain 3-4 different ways people can give to your church. You want to provide a few options that make giving simple and convenient. This is a great place to introduce first-time donors to these various methods, plus it encourages them to give again.

- **A Personal Contact** // A best practice among these first-time donor letters is including a personal contact for someone on your team that the recipient can connect with. Often, donors have technical questions about their giving. Ensure that someone from your financial team can be quickly and easily contacted.

- **Build Confidence** // When people give to your church for the first time, they are subconsciously looking for cues as to whether they can trust you. Make sure to communicate

that your church can be trusted through referencing your review (or audit) process or by acknowledging that you are entrusted to be a good steward of the resources donors provide.

- **Point to a Next Step** // Ultimately, we want to move first-time donors to becoming regular donors. Give them a next step to move toward regular giving. Point toward a 90-Day Tithe Challenge or give them a message on stewardship to listen to. A number of the churches below gave their donors a small booklet that elegantly communicates what happens when people give. Encourage people to take the next step!

- **Affirm Spiritual Growth** // Giving is an inherently spiritual act. People are pushing back against the normal human desire to spend and hoard; instead, they are choosing to invest in what God is doing at your church. Point out this fact. Encourage donors about the positive steps toward God they are taking through giving. Don't be so "functional" in your communication that you miss the pastoral opportunity that this letter presents!

## 12STONE CHURCH // GEORGIA

- The last paragraph of this letter gives the sense that it is not a form letter. A nice touch for a tool like this! [[Check it out here.](#)]

## ELEVATION CHURCH // NORTH CAROLINA

- We like how this letter points to the history of the church and how sacrificial generosity has been a part of it from the beginning. [[See the letter.](#)]

## ELIM GOSPEL CHURCH // NEW YORK

- This first-time gift mailing is stunning. It's a vision-infused piece that gives people a sense of the mission of the church and its style of ministry. [[Don't miss this one.](#)]

## LIVING HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH // KENTUCKY

- This church's staff doesn't see the donations ... they do a good job explaining that and thanking people for their generous gift at the same time. [[Check out their letter here.](#)]

## NEW HORIZON CHURCH // NORTH CAROLINA

- Check out this handwritten note for the first-time gift ... and the quick note they send when they receive the second gift affirming that people are becoming consistent givers! [[First-time note](#)] [[Script for second-time handwritten note](#)]

## PASSAGEWAYS // KANSAS

- This isn't from a local church but we were struck by the "narrative approach" to the letter ... how could your church do something similar? [[See the story here.](#)]

## REAL LIFE CHURCH // INDIANA

- We love how this church connects how giving makes a difference close to home and also internationally. (The links "to more" is a nice touch too!) [[Check it out.](#)]

## ROCK CITY CHURCH // OHIO

- They provide a letter as well as a small card that describes giving options for donors. [[Check out the letter and card.](#)]

## ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH // MARYLAND

- Their letter on church letterhead comes with a booklet on giving. [[See the letter.](#)] [[PDF of the booklet they mail along with the letter.](#)]

## THRIVE CHURCH // VIRGINIA

- They include a handwritten note to people who give and send them a booklet about giving. [[Handwritten note script.](#)] [[PDF of the booklet they mail along with the script.](#)] [[Bonus: The letter they used to send before they switched to a handwritten note.](#)]

## THE CHURCH // OKLAHOMA

- If you are looking for a short and to-the-point letter that still infuses personality and vision ... this is it! [[Download it now.](#)]

## WINSLOW BAPTIST CHURCH // MAINE

- Their first-timer letter includes an explanation of their financial controls to help people gain confidence in the church. [[Download their letter now.](#)]

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