

40 Percent of Total Donations from e-Giving

Constance Evangelical Free Church



An early adopter of electronic giving, Constance Evangelical Free Church began offering an ACH option for members in 1998. Today, the church also accepts donations made with debit and credit cards through online, text and smartphone giving options.

One of e-Giving's main benefits is how much it has evened out giving during the summer, Church Business Administrator Jeff Piehl says. "Our giving in the summer now goes down just marginally, which helps us to better budget and plan our programs throughout the year."

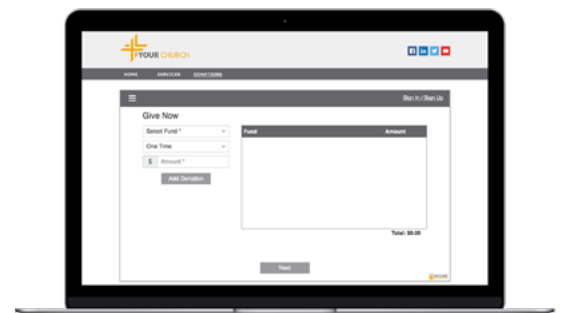
How did the church grow its e-Giving program from zero to 40 percent of its total donations?

A presentation at the church's annual business meeting was followed by messages in the church bulletin and on the website, Piehl recalled. "We emphasized how people pay their water bill online and that they could use the same convenience for tithes and offerings. Later, we added a QR code to communications that took people directly to the giving website. It provided a helpful link for people to scan and go right to our giving page."

The church finds e-Giving more secure because donor information is not in file cabinets that could be broken into, and because the staff is handling less cash, Piehl says. e-Giving also automates many administrative tasks, opening up time for other efforts.

"During a weekly group meeting, one of our members always gives online. If he didn't have this option, he may not have become such a reliable giver."

— Jeff Piehl,
Constance Evangelical Free Church



Vanco's reporting options provide information that helps the church understand the state of the donation plate by tracking and reporting on group or individual giving trends.

Here are a few more strategies the church employed to create its successful e-Giving program:

Leadership from the pulpit

If you want more e-Giving investment from members, church leaders need to make the case. It was very powerful for members to hear the senior pastor talk about how he pays virtually all of his bills online and contributes online, according to Piehl. All six of the church's pastors took the time to champion electronic giving options to various groups, explaining how it helps the church with budgeting, and with convenience.

Outreach to senior members

About 20 percent of the church's regular attendees are under 25 years old, with the rest evenly split between the 25-50 and 50-80 age groups. Older members received e-Giving information through the church's active seniors ministry, and found it easy to adopt as more of them are getting smartphones and going online to check whether they've received retirement benefits electronically, or to keep up with family and friends on social media.

Offer e-Giving for special funds

While most donations are made weekly to the general fund, members also use e-Giving to support mission trips for middle school and high school students, small group ministries for all ages and many other programs.

Find the right e-Giving partner

Recommendations from other churches are important, according to Piehl. When the church researched potential partners, Vanco was frequently mentioned as a reliable and trusted provider with e-Giving and payment solutions especially designed for churches.

Continue to grow your giving program

The church created a smartphone app to take advantage of Vanco's mobile giving options. "It's amazing how many people on Sunday morning use their phones to practice generosity even when they are physically passing the plate," Piehl says. "And, the app gives those worshipping online a way to give during the offertory."

About Constance Evangelical Free Church

Constance Evangelical Free Church has roots in Andover, Minn., that go back more than 130 years, beginning with a Sunday School that led to the formation in 1893 of the Free Church of God, later known as Constance Community Church. Today, Constance Evangelical Free Church is a robust, modern ministry with an average attendance of 1,500 each Sunday.



About Vanco Payment Solutions

Vanco Payment Solutions helps churches effectively manage and grow financial stewardship. Working with more than 20,000 churches, we're the largest provider of electronic giving and payment solutions designed especially for faith-based organizations. For nearly 20 years, we've listened to our loyal, longtime family of customers, understood their giving needs and supported them through every step of building a complete electronic giving program. We can help your church select the right combination of services and grow e-Giving across your congregation.