



Digital Giving in the Faith Sector

A benchmark report presented
by Douglas Shaw & Associates in
collaboration with Fundraise Up



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SECTION 1

Introduction

Faith-based nonprofits are facing a unique crossroads in their online fundraising. After years of steady, double-digit growth in online revenue—largely related to the COVID-19 pandemic—revenue is starting to normalize.



Modest increases in donations are no longer enough to meet the exponential growth in demand within the communities these organizations serve.

Douglas Shaw & Associates and Fundraise Up partnered together to provide faith-based nonprofits with practical, data-driven research and insight into online fundraising performance. This collaboration combines the industry-leading Fundraise Up donation platform and its robust dataset with Douglas Shaw & Associates' decades of strategic fundraising expertise.



The goal: Empower ministries and mission-driven organizations to make informed, confident decisions in a rapidly changing digital environment.

It is critical to understand and apply data-driven optimizations and embrace the tools and techniques that drive continued generosity in the digital age.

Methodology

This report uses anonymous, non-personally identifiable information (PII) data from faith-based organizations on the Fundraise Up platform, along with transaction insights from Douglas Shaw & Associates' clients. It provides benchmark metrics to help similar organizations identify effective optimization strategies. To show performance trends over time, we focused on nonprofits with at least two full years of data.

SECTION 2

Digital Giving in the Faith Sector

In 2024, faith-based organizations served by Douglas Shaw & Associates experienced a 6% increase in online revenue and a 8% increase in the number of online gifts. This represents a significant shift from prior years when double-digit increases in online giving were common, and it contrasts sharply with the modest 2%* revenue growth reported across the broader nonprofit sector. For organizations that were anticipating continued substantial revenue increase, this slowed growth may have come as an unwelcome surprise.



More than 50% of traffic to any nonprofit organizations' websites comes through a mobile device. **The notable difference for faith-based organizations is that they see 9% more conversions on their donation pages when compared to other organizations.**

** M+R Benchmark Report*

Therefore, it is important to guide mobile users through the online donation process:

1 Optimize Your Path

Does the homepage and main navigation work well for mobile users, allowing them to easily click into the donation form? Does the website load quickly?

Test your website on a mobile device. If it requires too many clicks or there are long delays, these will have a direct impact on your conversions through the site. **In fact, Google's own analysis found that as load times go from 1 second to 3 seconds, the probability of a visitor leaving the site increases by 32%.***

2 Adopt Mobile-Friendly Payment Methods

Offering PayPal and Apple Pay in particular can have a huge impact on the number of mobile (and desktop) gifts coming through your form. Among faith-based organizations that offer PayPal and Apple Pay, an average of 30.7% of total online giving comes through these payment methods.



Almost 1 in 3 donors give through PayPal or Apple Pay when offered. Without these options, you risk making giving harder and losing gifts.

* <https://www.sitebuilderreport.com/website-speed-statistics>

Monthly Giving

Donors committed to making a monthly gift play a vital role in sustaining revenue for faith-based organizations. It is important to prioritize the opportunity to give monthly on your donation page:

Percentage of Online Revenue
from Recurring Gifts

Faith-based organizations	48%
Other organizations	31%

1 Make the option to give monthly easy to use and visible.

This requires more than just a small checkbox below the ask amount. Highlight this choice by using **bold font treatments**, triggering a pop-up that prompts donors to consider monthly giving, or adding icons, circles, or other visual cues that draw attention.

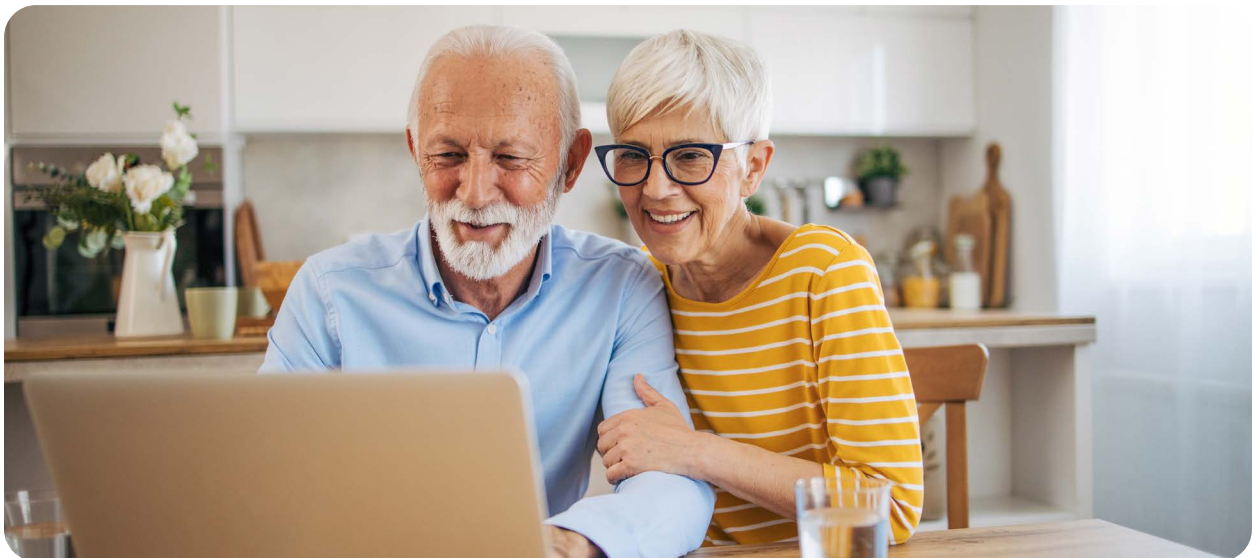
2 Pair the monthly giving ask with donor impact.

Don't simply ask your donors if they want to repeat their gift monthly. Instead, remind them of their impact. For example, if your organization provides a printed copy of the Bible for \$2.70, you can ask donors to repeat their gift monthly and provide 12 people with a Bible. Or, calculate how many people could receive Bibles during the course of the year based on their selected gift amount.

SECTION 3

Optimizations That Make an Impact

There's an important balance between inviting donors to give and leveraging tactics to influence their decision. As you explore ways to optimize your donation form—analyzing where you want to fall on the spectrum of which tactics you implement to enhance the ask—start by considering the impact your adjustments will have on giving. Then make sure your invitation is aligned with your organization's voice and values. An effective optimization must both drive results and remain true to your mission.



After looking at hundreds of different donation form layouts and optimizations, what stands out is that no two organizations have exactly the same process. However, there are some consistent elements that increase donation form performance:

1 Monthly Giving

Most organizations include a monthly donation checkbox or toggle in the early steps of the donation. In our study, however, some added a dedicated step *before* submission focused solely on

a monthly gift upsell or offered donors the chance to switch to monthly giving immediately *after* their donation. These prompts weren't presented to all donors each time, but both approaches increased the number of donors who said yes.

	Monthly donor conversions
Pre-donation monthly gift ask	2.1%
Post-donation monthly gift ask	1.3%



Optimizing your monthly gift ask can make a dramatic impact. One organization doubled their number of monthly donors in just 12 months by implementing a pre- and post-donation monthly gift ask!

2 Fee Coverage

Allowing donors to pay the payment processor and credit card fees on top of their gift means your organization receives the full intended donation.

This ultimately increases the amount

of revenue coming into your organization with very little effort. Even better, including it on your form doesn't decrease conversion rates, and most donors choose to cover the fees.

	% of donors who choose to cover fees
Fee coverage pre-checked	76.6%
Fee-coverage not pre-checked	54.9%



Adding fee coverage won't hurt conversions—and most donors choose to cover the fees.

3 Social Proof

Social proof is a small box often found at the bottom of the donation form—or screen—that shows the first name of someone who recently gave. The goal is to help your donor feel like they're part of a movement or group making an impact. It can help reduce some of the friction, or hesitation, a donor might feel when completing the donation.



Adding social proof improves online giving by 3.5% on average!

4 Abandoned Cart Reminders

The average conversion rate for a main donation page is just 11%,* while faith-based nonprofits on the Fundraise Up platform see closer to 33%. The stark reality is that most

visitors leave without completing a gift. Abandoned cart reminders—whether shown as donors continue browsing your site or sent via follow-up email—can effectively bring them back to finish their donation.

	Increase in conversions
Reminder on website	1%
Reminder through email	10.2%

* M+R Benchmark Report

SECTION 4

Unique Solutions for Digital Fundraising

Online donation page optimization matters. The reality is that **89% of people who reach a donation page leave without giving.**

Let's put this into perspective: if your organization raises \$1,000,000 per year online with a donation page conversion rate of 11%, and if you increase that to 20%, you could see your online revenue grow to \$1.8 million.

Every percentage point gained in online donation form conversion directly translates into more dollars for ministry.

As you optimize your donation form, a simple but key place to start is to evaluate your *value proposition*. This is the message that communicates to donors the impact of their gift and why they should support your organization. Your value proposition is conveyed through both the copy and visuals on your donation page and should clearly answer the following questions for your donor:

Why should
I give?

What does
my gift do?

Why should
I give now?

These answers are unique to your organization and demonstrate to donors that, of all the ways they could spend their dollars, this is the impact they want to make and the ministry they want to support.



For prospective donors, your organization's online donation process is often one of the first steps in their decision to give. The value proposition communicates the impact of their gift, while the technical experience demonstrates what it will be like to partner with you. If it's easy, seamless, and efficient, it signals that your organization is well-managed, trustworthy, and capable of achieving its mission. A well-defined

message of impact and a smooth donation process create a strong first impression and establish a foundation for long-term support.

SECTION 5

Top 5 Focus Areas for Donation Process Optimization

Multiple elements on your donation page can be adjusted, and it can be difficult to know where to start! Balancing the potential revenue impact and the difficulty of implementation, here are five items to consider for your form:

1

Value Proposition

Remember that when a donor visits any of your online donation pages, they are still in the decision-making process. Use these questions to make sure a donor gets the answers they need:

- Does your donation form have a strong photo that shows impact?
- Does the copy answer key donor questions like:

Why should I give?

What does my gift do?

Why should I give now?

2

Mobile Prioritization

The majority of your website traffic is mobile (56% on average).

Make sure you are always testing and keeping a simple process for your mobile users. Prioritize offering PayPal and Apple Pay payment methods to help mobile users get through the donation process quickly.

3

Fee Coverage

Donors want their gift to have the biggest impact possible. Give them the option to increase their gift slightly to help cover the processing costs. Most donors will choose this option (76.6% when the option is pre-selected), incrementally putting more funds directly into your mission.

4

Monthly Giving

Make monthly giving easy, highly visible, and tied to impact. **Move beyond the checkbox labeled “Make my gift monthly,” and instead, add a dedicated section or step in the process that highlights the difference a recurring gift makes.** This prompts donors to make a conscious choice to become a monthly supporter and increase their impact.

5

Remember to Remind

Stay in front of potential donors who don't finish the donation process. This can be done with digital ads, website session reminders, and (when possible) an email nudge to help those who are interested in giving not get lost in the process. Each method improves the number of donors who ultimately make it through your form.

Conclusion

As faith-based organizations, you know donations are more than financial gifts. They are invitations into ministry, drawing donors into partnership with the good work God is doing through your organization.



Friction in the giving process can discourage a donor from giving. By making the giving process easier, you can welcome more people into the good work you do. Every investment you make now in technology and strategy helps transform more lives around the world.

Thank you for your ministry! We hope this research grows your impact and helps you continue being a part of what is right with the world.

About Douglas Shaw & Associates

Douglas Shaw & Associates is a team of dedicated direct response fundraising professionals who want to help organizations like yours be a part of what's right with the world.

Serving nonprofits for over 30 years with robust data and analytics, compelling creative, disciplined execution, and an innovative team—we help identify, attract, and retain donors to support the important work you do, allowing you to fulfill your mission.

Through collaborative consulting, we craft a comprehensive strategic fundraising communication plan that focuses on inspiring donors to be a part of the good your organization is doing. Our omnichannel fundraising strategies are created and executed just for you, utilizing a custom mix of print, online, and media channels for donor acquisition, retention, and reactivation of your individual donors.

We partner with organizations on a variety of platforms and technology and come alongside them to optimize their donor experience and improve their fundraising performance.

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If you are looking for a fundraising partner who listens, walks with you, and delivers results, contact us today.

About Fundraise Up

Fundraise Up is the world's leading platform for digital giving. Built for enterprise nonprofits, our technology transforms the donor experience—making giving faster, smarter, and more personal.

Trusted by organizations like UNICEF USA, the Salvation Army UK, and the Canadian Red Cross, Fundraise Up helps nonprofits raise more by removing friction from the giving journey. Using machine learning, the platform personalizes donation amounts, optimizes conversion across channels, and supports 135+ currencies and more than 40 languages.

Every detail is engineered for performance and reliability. With Fundraise Up, nonprofits see higher conversion rates, larger gifts, and more recurring donors—all while maintaining enterprise-grade compliance and security.

We believe giving should feel effortless—for donors and for the teams who inspire them. That's why we're building the future of online fundraising: intelligent, global, and designed for the next generation of giving.

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