

SURVIVING A PANDEMIC

with **ONLINE GIVING**





Surviving a Pandemic with Online Giving

During the 2020 pandemic, churches were taken off-guard when forced to close to their communities as the coronavirus raged on. While scientists and health officials tried to understand COVID-19, churches throughout the world struggled to minister to their flocks in new ways. However, one thing that the staff of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church didn't have to keep at the forefront of their minds was how to keep regular donations from dropping, thanks to the **WeShare Engagement Campaign**.

The quarterly engagement campaign uses electronic and print communications to create targeted messages that on average triples the growth rate of donors and doubles recurring online donations. For St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, the campaign allowed the parish to gently remind their members that although they may not be in the pews each week, their presence is still needed to keep essential ministries alive.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

Located in Wake Forest, North Carolina, the parish is home to 4,200 registered families, a huge amount when considering most churches struggle to keep families and young adults as faithful members of the parish. According to Shari Pender, finance director of St. Catherine of Siena for the past 25 years, the parish is a thriving hub of parish faith groups and community outreach ministries that are a staple in the community. But in order to keep these ministries alive and church administration working, a steady stream of monetary donations is necessary.

The parish first began offering online giving in 2014, when it became obvious that parishioners, especially the younger generation, preferred digital giving over

checks and cash. Parish leadership knew that if they wanted to keep meeting the needs of their members, they had to offer them an easier way to give.

"We realized that we had to find a way for people to donate to our parish online, because that's just what they were really wanting to do," Pender says. "The time was right to bring that avenue of giving to our church."

The parish took advantage of WeShare's free kick-off marketing materials in order to get the word out to parishioners that they now had electronic giving. From seasonal pew cards and bulletin inserts, to announcements before and after Mass, even letters from the pastor, more members took to tithing electronically, instead of writing out a check or placing cash in the offertory basket each week.

KEEPING THINGS ON TRACK

Online donations collected through LPI's WeShare has been instrumental in keeping things moving through COVID-19 and beyond, according to Pender. And the WeShare Engagement Campaign was extremely helpful, too. Even if not all members took advantage of their online giving platform, just the reminder to give was a great help in keeping donations steady during this time of uncertainty.

"When our parish first closed to the public, regular giving did go down dramatically," she explains. "But we have a steady stream of faithful parishioners. It didn't take long before members began to sign-up for online giving and to drop off or mail their checks to the office each week. We have a yearly pledge drive, and I'm thankful to say that we are now on track to fulfill it!"

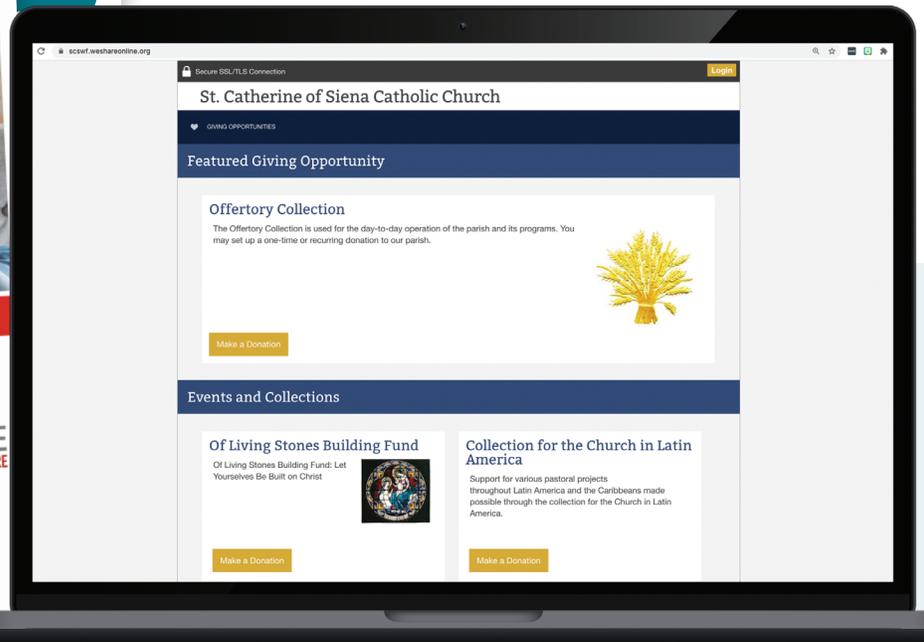
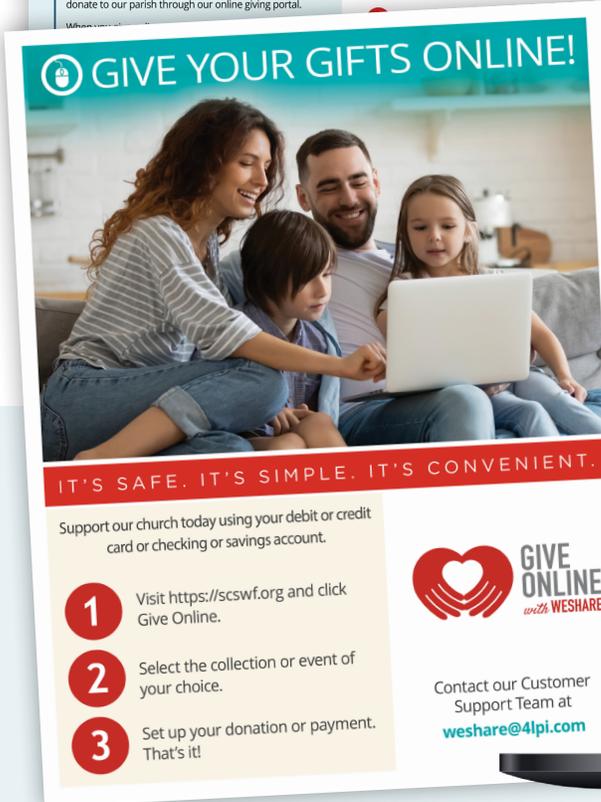
SEEK ANY & ALL OPPORTUNITIES

According to Pender, it's a challenge to keep track of so many member contacts, especially emails. But the key to a good list is the constant ability to update it whenever the opportunity presents itself.

"We just try to keep up with people as the opportunities come," Pender explains honestly. "In addition to any kickbacks to any mailings we do send out from the parish, we also make sure to ask people regularly to update their postal and email addresses through their pledge cards and other communications that indicate a change."

While running a parish can be challenging work, being able to focus on mission, rather than maintenance, has been a true godsend, says Pender.

"So many people are hurting and in need, not just in our community but all around the world. The fact that St. Catherine of Sienna can continue its mission to make disciples and take care of those less fortunate, is a major blessing." -Shari Pender



With LPI's WeShare, we not only set you up for success — we're with you every step of the way to ensure you have everything you need to engage your parishioners. Visit www.4lpi.com/weshare-engagement to learn more!

**BECAUSE
BUILDING A
VIBRANT
CHURCH
MATTERS**

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