

## **Thank You Letters** **Tips, Templates and Ideas**

A culture of generosity is built on a foundation of gratitude. Just as we thank God for the blessings in our lives, we can express thanks to the people who bless us.

Below you will find some tips and templates for writing thank-you letters to people who support your congregation's ministry. And as a bonus, at the end are some ways you can say thank you beyond a letter.

### **Tips**

A thank-you letter doesn't have to be long – as long as it's personal and genuine. Be sure that you aren't asking for another gift or extending an invitation to do something more (like volunteer). It should be a simple and clear thank you, celebrating the generosity of the gift. And remember to send it as soon as possible!

- 1) Incorporate a scripture verse that speaks to you and what you are writing about.
- 2) Make it personal. Write as if you are writing a greeting card rather than a business letter. Address the person by name, rather than "Dear Friend". Handwritten, short notes are wonderful if possible!
- 3) Be creative. Grab the reader's attention with the opening sentence. Draw them in by saying something as simple as "You made a difference..." or "I am so grateful to God for your generosity. . ."
- 4) Be sincere. Don't worry about crafting the perfect letter—if it is genuine, people will know.
- 5) Add specific examples of how your church will use the donation. Think about where you have seen God at work and share a story or two about your church's ministry. People who give to your church want to share in your excitement. Use your best storytelling techniques to describe the impact of their gift.
- 6) Conclude with a final expression of appreciation.
- 7) Sign the letter – by hand if possible. The person who signs could be the minister, clerk of session, key leader or treasurer – depending on the nature of the gift. More than one person can send and/or sign a thank-you letter!

## Templates

Feel free to adapt these templates to let people know just how much their gifts mean.

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### **A thank-you letter in a time of COVID-19**

Congregational Letter Head

Use a Bible passage which relates to the content of the letter

Dear [Title or personal first name],

(Write a brief personal intro)

In this time of chaos and uncertainty, your gift brings hope and encouragement.

(Say what you are thankful for and why)

I am thankful to God for your faithful support. Your generosity has encouraged and empowered the mission and ministry that we do together and is a tangible example of Christ's love alive in the world today. You have helped us. . . (Be as specific as possible about what they have helped accomplish.)

(Share a story or two)

Even in this difficult time, I celebrate that we can worship God together, though it is not as we expected. It reminds me that God can span the distance between us, and that God is always here, even when we feel sad or lonely or angry or confused.

I am grateful for the care that I have seen as the congregation reaches out to care for one another and the community. It was wonderful that we could support the local food bank as they provided food to vulnerable neighbours. The other day I was able to pray with a woman who lost her mother and while I couldn't give her a hug, I knew God was there as we grieved together from a distance.

(Conclude)

This ministry continues because of your gift. As we make our way through the difficult days ahead, let us remember that we are not alone. We are a community of faith, in ministry together.

In Christ,

Name

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**A celebration letter, around the time of Easter**

Dear

(Write a personal intro. Be as creative as possible.)

I love this time of year when spring finally begins to emerge after the short, cold days of winter. Even when the days are grey and rainy, I am thankful for the new life which bursts forth as dull brown transforms to a thousand shades of green. It makes Easter, as we reflect on the life and death and resurrection of Christ, so wonderfully poignant.

(Say what you are thankful for and why.)

Thank you for your faithful support of xxxxx. Your generosity has encouraged and empowered the mission and ministry that we do together and is a tangible example of Christ's love alive in the world today. You have helped us . . . (Be as specific as possible.)

(Share a story)

The impact of your gift was seen . . .

(Conclude)

As you enjoy the spring, I hope you know how truly grateful we are for you. Thank you once again for sharing in this ministry with us.

In Christ,

Name

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**Memorial Gift thank-you letter**

Dear

We thank God for the time that (first & last name of the person who died) worshipped with (name of church), and for the many gifts she shared with our congregation. She was the type of person who . . . (share some memories of the person who died)

Your gift honours (First name's) ministry – and will continue to shine Christ's light in the world, as she always did. Thank you for remembering her in this way.

Sincerely,

Name

## Year End Letter

Dear

I want to thank you for being a partner in the ministry and mission of (name of church). Your generous support in (year) has made a difference in the lives of many people and helped our church reach them with the Good News of Jesus Christ. God has done and continues to do remarkable things through us and with us – things that matter in our community!

We take stewardship very seriously, which means we value spending our time and resources wisely. In (year), our church (List several mission/ministry activities: eg: preached the Gospel each week, equipped children and youth, baptised \_\_\_ babies, welcomed \_\_\_ new members... etc.) We supported community organizations (eg: AA, food bank, etc.) and ...

We know that when the early church gathered, they did so with glad and generous hearts. We have witnessed such a spirit of true community among our congregation. Jesus invites us to bring all that we have when we become a follower, a disciple of Christ. Your support is helping us to advance further on the pathway of discipleship.

Giving is where we find the true meaning and purpose for our lives. The ministry and mission of our church takes place because of the spiritual and financial gifts our members and friends choose to share. Thank you again for your generosity, as together we reach out in the name of Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

In Christ,

Name

## Recognizing Gifts beyond the thank-you letter

Here are a few ways you can celebrate gifts beyond a thank-you letter. These can be used for special or larger gifts, but they could also celebrate annual gifts. Decide what makes sense based on the gift and the giver. Use your imagination. Honour confidentiality when requested. Keep it personal and simple.

1. Connect with the donor to thank them personally for their gift and discuss if or how they would like to be thanked by the congregation. The visit may be in their home, at a coffee shop, on the phone or a virtual meeting online. Explain clearly how their gift will be celebrated and used. If they want to remain anonymous, be sure that you respect their desire for confidentiality. Close the visit with a simple prayer thanking God for their generosity.
2. Celebrate the gift when it is given and also when it is used. Even when donors wish to remain anonymous, the gift itself can still be celebrated. It is also important to let the congregation know when and how special gifts are used.
3. Involve the children of the church. One congregation established a children's ministry fund, and the Sunday School children made simple thank-you cards for people who donated. It simultaneously taught them about giving and saying thank you.
4. Consider establishing a donor wall or special book to celebrate and remember special gifts given to the church. Besides being a concrete way to honour donors, this provides an important historical record for future generations.
5. Have an annual service of celebration and dedication for special gifts given during the year. Publicize the service in advance and invite the friends and family of those who have given or who were honoured by special gifts to the church. You may want to combine the service with a special service to remember those who have died the previous year. Anniversary Sunday or All Saints Sunday is an appropriate time for such a service.
6. Tell stories of generosity. One congregation has a yearly "Foundation Month" to tell stories of people who have donated to their endowment fund over the years. These brief stories have become sacred moments in the life of the congregation.
7. Have a recipient of the gift say thank you in worship. What better way to celebrate a gift than for the beneficiary to tell in their own words the impact the gift has had on them?