



# Christmas *at New Life*

**2023 Christmas Planning Guide**

## | CHRISTMAS PLANNING GUIDE

At Christmas we make room for many things...for people, for presents, and parties. However, all this activity can often crowd out the real reason we celebrate. This Christmas we want to make room for Jesus and open our hearts and homes to experience God's love, joy, peace, and hope. As a church, we have the opportunity to make this Christmas special, memorable, and a life changing experience for those who come through our doors. As you think about the season ahead, here are a few questions to ask:

- How can we transform our Sunday experience for this special Christmas season?
- How can we welcome our communities and provide the themes of Love, Joy, Peace, Hope within our church? Think about the sights, sounds, and smells of Christmas!
- How can we encourage people to pray, give, and worship as we upon the Arrival of King Jesus at Christmas?
- How can we best reach, serve, and demonstrate the love of Jesus to our community this Christmas season?



## | 12 IDEAS FOR MAKING CHRISTMAS MEMORABLE

1. Mail a postcard to the surrounding community
2. Print invites for your congregation to handout to family and friends
3. Decorate the lobby, stage, and Kids Zone to create multiple photo ops
4. Plan a Christmas cookie exchange
5. Use the pre-made provided social media posts from series resources and post on your Instagram and Facebook pages to create excitement and engagement.
6. Host a family movie night with popcorn, cookies, and hot cocoa
7. Prepare the children's ministry to sing a special Christmas song
8. Plan a candlelight Christmas Eve service and sing Christmas carols
9. Give a special Christmas offering to local initiatives
10. Dress up your welcome team or have an ugly sweater Sunday
11. Have a family share a short testimony/story on video or live on Sunday
12. Host a Christmas bake-off and/or Tree-lighting and decorating night

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Brainstorm more ideas with your team and find ways to get everyone involved in the planning!



## | CHRISTMAS PLANNING MEETING

Email your key leaders and volunteers to a Christmas planning meeting. Include worship, tech, children’s, welcome, hospitality, creative, and anyone else you think could help make this Christmas amazing!

### ACTION STEPS

- Schedule your kickoff planning meeting date, time, and location
- Identify your Christmas team coordinators
- Invite your key leaders and volunteers

### ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

<b>Christmas Champion</b> <i>Deliver the weekly announcements, updates, and celebrations.</i>	
<b>Communications Coordinator</b> <i>Keep track of the weekly action steps and planning ahead.</i>	
<b>Social Media Coordinator</b> <i>Share weekly posts and engage with people online.</i>	

### SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: Will you help me?

In just a few weeks, all of the stores are going to be transformed into a winter wonderland. Starbucks will change their coffee cups from green to red and radio stations will begin playing Christmas music 24/7. Too soon?

At New Life, our Christmas planning begins now and we need your help! Will you be a part of our planning team and help us reach our community this Christmas? I want to invite you to join us for a Christmas planning meeting.

*Date*

*Time*

*Location*

Please let me know if you will attend and bring any ideas you have to make this Christmas season special. Looking forward to it!



# | CHRISTMAS OFFERING CAMPAIGN

## CLARIFY YOUR VISION

## IDENTIFY YOUR TOP 3 INITIATIVES

1.

2.

3.

## DETERMINE YOUR OFFERING GOAL

Take your average Sunday offering for the year	
Multiply a Single x 1, Double x 2, Triple x 3, Homerun x 4	
Total Christmas Offering Goal =	

## | CHRISTMAS INVITATIONS

Christmas is a great time of year to invite people to church. Many people are looking for a church to attend and are often more open to receiving an invitation from family and friends. There are several great ways to get the word out, equip your congregation, and reach the community!

### ACTION STEPS

- Outline your Christmas service times and special events
- Determine your Christmas invites and budget
- Order your invites and materials at [newlifeadmin.org](http://newlifeadmin.org)

### PLAN YOUR INVITES & BUDGET (PRICES ARE ESTIMATES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE)
































MATERIALS	QUANTITIES & PRICING				BUDGET
<input type="checkbox"/> Mailers	1000 = \$557	2500 = \$939	5000 = \$1,249	10,000 = \$2,229	
<input type="checkbox"/> Invites	100 = \$30	250 = \$45	500 = \$73	1000 = \$84	
<input type="checkbox"/> Banners	1 = \$51	2 = \$82	3 = \$114	4 = \$145	
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Ad	Minimum of \$100 budget (e.g. \$10 x 10 days)				
<b>START YOUR ORDER BY OCTOBER 30th</b>				<b>TOTAL</b>	

### COMMUNICATIONS TIPS & REMINDERS

- Keep your communication clear and simple - dates, service times, address, website. Don't miss the basics!
- Make sure your website is up to date. People will visit your website before they visit the church. Current information and photos will make a great first impression.
- Postcards are an effective way to invite thousands of people to church. Postcards have a long shelf life, so be sure to get them out early.
- Facebook ads are an inexpensive way to promote your services. Choose a great photo of your people, write a short, friendly invite, and link to your website for more information.
- Assign someone to take photos and/or video of your service. Not only can you share the photos and videos online to celebrate, but it also gives you updated pictures for your website and invites next year!
- Remember to update your website after Christmas. Change service times back to regular times, remove Christmas graphics and outdated events. Add a new homepage photo from your Christmas services! (Email updates to [website@newlifechicago.org](mailto:website@newlifechicago.org))


# COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR

Here is an overview of the Christmas communications plan and timeline.

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
NOVEMBER	OCT 29	30	31	1 	2	3	4	
	5 	6	7	8 	9	10	11	
	12 	13	14	15 	16	17	18	
	19 	20 	21 	22 	23 Thanksgiving	24 	25	
	26 	27	28 	29 	30	1 	2	
DECEMBER	3 	4 	5 	6 	7	8 	9	
	10 Christmas Offering	11 	12 	13 	14	15 	16	
	17 	18	19	20 	21	22	23	
	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Christmas Day	26	27 	28	29 	30	
	JANUARY	31 	1	2	3 	4	5 	6

 Announcement

 Email

 Prayer

 Social Post

## | WEEK 1 - OCTOBER 30

This week is all about getting your core team, leaders, and members excited and engaged for the Christmas season. As you meet with your team, gauge their interest, excitement, and encourage them to ask questions for clarity. This will help sharpen the vision and messaging.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Finish vision planning worksheet (see page 3)
- Meet with your leadership team to share the vision
- Pray together for the Christmas season ahead

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

November is finally here! We love this time of the year when the weather gets a little crisper and we are days away from getting all the best sweaters out! Before we know it, Christmas decorations will be out, and we will all be thinking about the best Christmas songs. Christmas at New Life planning has begun, and you all are about to be filled in on all that we have in store for you this season.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Happy November! What are you most excited about for this month?

“I will praise the Lord, and may everyone on earth bless his holy name forever and ever.” (Psalm 145:21)

53 days until Christmas! But who’s counting? (Post on November 1)

## | WEEK 2 - NOVEMBER 6

This week is all about sharing a powerful story of a life that has been impacted during this past season. It can be a baptism testimony or someone who connected in a small group. Find one thing to celebrate what God has done this past season.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Contact life group leaders for potential stories
- Meet or call the person to hear their story
- Prepare them to share on Sunday or for a video for social media

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

It has been an incredible Fall season here at New Life and today we want to share with you a brief story of someone who has been impacted by our church family.

(Share story, interview, video)

Wow! Praise God for this story and life that has been changed. This is what it's all about and we're looking forward to Christmas at New Life and hearing more powerful stories just like this.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Share a photo of a fun Fall activity or share the video of your story!

"Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his." (Psalm 100:3)

No peeking! (post a photo of your team working on Christmas behind the scenes)



## | WEEK 3 - NOVEMBER 13

This week is all about showing gratitude to the many people who serve your location and all of New Life every Sunday. Highlight the various ministry teams in the church and celebrate your volunteers.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Highlight ministry teams and volunteer opportunities
- Send a personal thank you to key ministry leaders
- Host a volunteer appreciation lunch/dinner

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

With Thanksgiving around the corner, we want to take a moment to say thank you to the many people who serve here at New Life. Let's give it up for them! Everything that happens here at New Life is because of these faithful men and women who love Jesus and love people, and we couldn't do what we do without them. Thank you.

As we get ready for the Christmas season, we want to prepare our teams to be ready to welcome, care for, and love the people who will be coming through these doors this next month. So today, we want to encourage you to sign up and get involved with one of our Sunday ministry teams.

(Highlight a few opportunities available)

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Post a photo of your volunteers in action and say thank you!

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.” (Psalm 90:17)

Help us get ready for Christmas! Sign up to serve with one of our ministry teams this Sunday!



## | WEEK 4 - NOVEMBER 20

This is the week you invite everyone to celebrate the Christmas season at New Life! Share the vision for this next season, announce the Christmas offering date, and equip the congregation to invite their family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers to experience Christmas at New Life.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Hand out invites for Christmas
- Share the vision and highlight your initiatives
- Announce Christmas Offering Date

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

This coming week we will celebrate Thanksgiving with our family, friends, and loved ones. It's a special day and a chance to thank God for all that He has given to us. We also want to take a moment today to thank God for our church family here at New Life and the incredible ministry God has blessed us with.

Next Sunday is the start of our Christmas season and we want to invite you and your family to experience it here at New Life! (show invite) I want to highlight the next three weeks for us:

- The Christmas season is upon us as we start our next series.
- We have special events coming up for you and your family.
- We also have a special Christmas Offering on Sunday, December \_\_\_\_.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

It's an exciting month ahead and we hope you'll be here with us! You can learn more and connect online at [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org).



## **SAMPLE EMAIL**

Subject: Would you pray for us?

I love this time of year...holiday parties, Christmas trees, hot chocolate, and the spirit of generosity that swells in our hearts. There's something about celebrating the greatest gift ever given, Jesus Christ, that makes me think about other people a little more than usual.

This Christmas, we have a special opportunity to give and make a difference in our church and community. On Sunday, December \_\_\_\_, I want to invite you to participate in a special Christmas Offering.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

Please join us in praying for God's vision to be done through our giving and generosity. Learn more and connect online at [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org).

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

This week set aside time with your team to give thanks and praise to God for all the blessings he has provided this year. Ask Him to help ready your hearts for all that goes into preparing for Christmas - that through all the hustle and bustle you still are able to find slow and quiet moments to spend in His Word.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Happy Thanksgiving to our New Life family and friends!

"The Lord is near to all who call on Him to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him, he also hears their cry and saves them." (Psalm 145:18-19)

Post your Christmas events on Facebook

## | WEEK 5 – NOVEMBER 27

This is the week you want to build momentum and excitement for Christmas. The decorations are up, the music is on, and the whole place smells like Christmas!

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Decorate the main entrance, lobby, stage, and kids' areas. Create a photo station for people to take photos and share on social media.
- Hand out Christmas invites
- Highlight Christmas Offering and initiatives

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

It's Christmastime at New Life! We're so glad you are here today as we begin the Christmas season. We have an exciting month ahead and don't want you to miss anything, so let me take a moment to share what's coming up.

- Today after service, stop by our Christmas photo station.
- Next week we have a special event for you and your family.
- In two weeks, we will have a special Christmas Offering.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

It all culminates with our candlelight Christmas service. It's a great time of year to invite a friend to church with you! Go to [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org) for more information.

### **PRAYER FOCUS**

Prayer this week should be focused on the first initiative you have identified to benefit from this year's Christmas Offering. Ask God to bless this initiative and pray for the impact it will have on your church and community.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Christmas at New Life is here and now all we need is you!  
(Post a photo before Sunday showing your Christmas decorations)

"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3: 21-23)

Highlight your Christmas initiatives.



## | WEEK 6 - DECEMBER 4

Keep the momentum going. Celebrate some of the fun and exciting things taking place at New Life.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Encourage people to take photos and share #christmasatnewlife
- Hand out Christmas invites
- Highlight Christmas Offering and initiatives

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

You know one of the things we do at Christmas is we give gifts to one another. And if your family is anything like mine, you probably find it hard to know just what to give. We know the feeling and so we've tried to make it clear about what we are giving to this Christmas at New Life.

Next Sunday is our Christmas Offering and we hope that you will give a special offering to help support these initiatives.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

We hope you'll consider giving a special offering this next Sunday.



## **SAMPLE EMAIL**

Subject: Are you ready?

Season's greetings! We've been busy planning and praying for the Christmas Offering happening this coming Sunday, December \_\_\_\_\_. My wife and I, along with our team of elders, are so excited to give to the Lord and be a part of an initiative that will impact more lives than ever before. We've taken the time to pray, talk and decide on a faith goal for each of us to start the season off strong. I encourage you to do the same.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

To make a donation now, click the link below and follow the instructions on the page.

Learn more and give online at [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org).

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Prayer this week should be focused on the second initiative you have identified to benefit from this year's Christmas Offering. Ask God to bless this initiative and to work through your team to find the best way to communicate the potential impact of achieving these goals will have on the community. Pray for great attendance and generosity next Sunday.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Take a family photo this Sunday in our lobby!

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

How can we pray for you this Christmas season?

## | WEEK 7 - DECEMBER 11

The week you will receive the Christmas offering. Remind people of why we give and how their giving will make a positive impact.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Prepare Christmas Offering envelopes for Sunday
- Highlight Christmas Offering and initiatives
- Receive the Christmas Offering

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

At New Life we believe that our giving is an act of worship. It's interesting that when Jesus was born, the Magi brought gifts to honor and worship Him. Read Matthew 2:9-12. These may sound like unusual gifts to us today, but in that time and place, these gifts had a great meaning and significance.

In a moment, we are going to pray and receive our Christmas offering. This is a special offering, above and beyond our regular tithes and offerings. And like the Magi, our giving is an act of worship, when we acknowledge Jesus as God and King.

Over the past few weeks we have been sharing about some of the initiatives that our giving is going to support. And we want you to know that here at New Life, our giving has meaning and eternal significance.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

You may give today using the designated Christmas Offering envelope or go to [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org) to give online. Let's pray together.



## **SAMPLE EMAIL**

Subject: Christmas is coming.

Christmas is almost here, and the year is already coming to a close - I can't believe it! God has done so much for us this year and I can't wait to see what is just around the corner. This week we held our annual Christmas Offering.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

It's not too late to contribute! As you review your giving this year, please consider supporting our Christmas Offering. To make a donation now, click the link below and follow the instructions on the page. All online contributions made this week will go toward the Christmas Offering.

You can give online at [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org).

P.S. Don't miss out on our special Candlelight Christmas Service this upcoming Sunday! It's the perfect time to invite friends and family to join in the celebration.

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Give thanks to God for working through his people to provide for the Christmas Offering. Ask him to provide additional guidance and wisdom in determining the best ways to use the Offering for his people.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Post photos from Sunday's service

"But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, so that those who love your name may exult in you." (Psalm 5:11)

This Sunday is our Christmas at New Life offering! It's an opportunity for each of us to give a special offering and make a positive impact in our community.





## | WEEK 8 - DECEMBER 18

This week celebrate the Christmas offering and share the total that was received to date. Encourage people that they may still give a Christmas offering.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Highlight the total Christmas offering given last week
- Send thank you notes to those who gave a Christmas offering
- Remind people that they can still give today or before the end of the year

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

We are so thankful to God for the many blessings He gives to us. Last Sunday was our Christmas Offering and as a church we gave \$\_\_\_\_\_ to this special offering.

(Share the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives)

We want to thank everyone who gave last week and let you know that there is still time to give before Christmas. You may give using the designated Christmas Offering envelope or go to [christmasatnewlife.org](http://christmasatnewlife.org) to give online.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Post photos from your Christmas events.

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

A huge THANK YOU to everyone who gave to our Christmas offering!  
Together we raised \$\_\_\_\_\_.

## | WEEK 9 – DECEMBER 25

It's the final week of the year. Celebrate, give thanks, and worship God for what He has done! Build off the momentum from this past season to launch into the next year. Remind people of the big vision they are a part of and commit the year ahead to the Lord.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Highlight the total Christmas offering given to date
- Send thank you notes to those who gave a Christmas offering
- Remind people that they can still give before the end of the year
- Consider making a year-end video/slideshow to highlight the past season/year

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas celebration with your family and friends! On this final day of the year we want to say thank you to everyone who participated in our Christmas at New Life initiatives. Together as a church we were able to give \$\_\_\_\_\_ for our Christmas offering and support these important initiatives.

(Celebrate the vision for your Christmas Offering and highlight the initiatives).

(Play year-end video/slideshow).

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

What was your favorite memory from this year?  
(Share your year-end video/slideshow online).

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:36-39)

We have received \_\_\_% of our Christmas offering! Help us reach our goal before the end of the year. You can give online at (your website link).

## | WEEK 10 – JANUARY 1

As you begin the New Year, commit the next season ahead to a time of prayer and fasting.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Outline your top 3 prayer goals for the year
- Send thank you notes to those who gave a Christmas offering
- Commit your vision and initiatives in this next season of prayer and fasting

### **WEEKLY SCRIPT**

Happy New Year New Life! It's the first Sunday of the year. Can you believe it? It seems like it was only a couple of weeks ago we were celebrating Christmas, opening presents, and enjoying food and parties. . . oh wait we were!

The new year brings about new dreams, goals, and possibilities. Here at New Life we have a vision to reach 1% of our city. That is 30,000 people! It's a big vision that God has called us to and we can only accomplish this vision by His power.

We are beginning a season of 21 days of prayer and fasting. We want to begin the year by seeking God together, growing in Him, and hearing what He wants to do in our lives and in our church. We have 3 prayer goals that we would like to focus on during these 21 days.

(Highlight your top 3 goals/initiatives for the year ahead).

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Happy New Year New Life!

“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”  
(Psalm 37:4)

Download our New Life app for daily readings and resources to guide you during the 21 days!

*NEW LIFE*

COMMUNITY CHURCH