

## Baptist General Convention of Virginia Fall Essentials for Ministry Success

The months of October – December are vital months for ministry planning in every church. October, in particular, is a pivotal month that is ignored by ministry leaders in preparing for the upcoming year of ministry visioning and initiatives. As the church's, associations, ministry partners, and ministry leaders of BGCVA enter the last quarter of the current year, we would like to provide you with the essentials needed for ministry success in the New Year.

Here are 6 essential that every ministry leadership should consider to prepare your congregations for the upcoming year.

1. **REFLECT** Upon Your Church's Current Year Vision: With only three months remaining in current year, October is the time for your church to reflect on the progress and hindrances it has had in fulfilling its vision and ministry plan for the current year. What parts of the vision have been fulfilled? What parts of the vision remain incomplete?

Many churches make the mistake of waiting for the New Year to reflect on the previous year. They provide "Year-In-Review" summaries to bring to the congregation's awareness the progress it made before the year ended. While it is always helpful to summarize the year, a fruitful addition is to have a period of reflection BEFORE the year ends. This will provide the membership a 3-month window of time (October – December) to make adjustments and "Finish the Year Well".

2. **RECAST** Your Church's Current Vision/Budget: In addition to reflecting on the church's vision, the last quarter (three months) of the year is an excellent time for Pastors and ministry leaders to recast the current year's vision and ministry initiatives.

Many churches wait until the year is over to issue contribution statements for tax purposes. However, contribution statements can revitalize a congregation's giving if they are issued at the beginning of the last quarter. *Interim 9-Month Contribution Statements* are a gentle way of providing a "while you still have a chance" reminder to each member. Not only do they show members their current giving status, they also remind members of ways their giving can be improved during the last quarter.

3. **REVITALIZE** Your Current Volunteer Base: Many members are reluctant to try serving in a new ministry because church volunteerism is often seen as an "Eternal-Forever Assignment". Members are asked to volunteer with no end date in sight. A **Fall Volunteer Drive** is an excellent way of encouraging members to commit to a 3-month volunteer commitment. Send your members a list of your church's ministries and volunteer opportunities and encourage your inactive members to volunteer for a ministry for the remaining 3 months of 2023. Many members may even be willing to serve longer than December 31<sup>st</sup>, but give them a reason to start by overing volunteerism with an "end-date".

4. **ASSEMBLE** Your Church's Calendar of Events for the Upcoming Year: October is the month for ministry leaders to discuss and share their church ministry plans for the upcoming year. October calendaring is always essential for both planning and budgeting primarily because it gives your finance ministry in last quarter of the current year a written visual of your church's expenditures might be in upcoming year. Ministry leaders should be advised and reminded that placing an event on the church calendar in the current year does not guarantee that it will be placed in the budget for the new year.

5. **PROJECT** Your End-of-Year Figures for the Current Year:

*"If our congregation continues its current level of giving/spending, our end of the year figures will be..."* One of the key factors of preparing a church budget is the ability to forecast at the beginning of October a 3-month projection of what the year end figures will be. How do you forecast figures?

**9 month total + (monthly avg. x 3) = Forecasted End of Year Figure**

- ✓ Calculate each line item's 9-month total for the months of January – September totals.
- ✓ Using the 9 month totals, calculate the monthly average received/spent for each line item.
- ✓ Multiply the average times the number of months remaining in the year (i.e. 3 as of October).
- ✓ Add the 3-month average to the 9-month total to forecast your end-of-year figure.

Your budget forecast figures can be shared with your church leaders and congregation to make the adjustments necessary to meet or exceed your current year's budget.

6. **PREPARE** Your Church's Budget Draft for the Upcoming Year:

As a reminder, **budgeted funds are not guaranteed funds**. The budget is what the church hopes to have at various points of the year. In your planning, the church budget process should always begin in the month of October for the following reasons.

- Starting sooner than October will not give you 9-month (January – September) figures needed to project and forecast your line item figures for the new year.
- Starting later than October does not give your finance ministry time to receive budget requests from ministry leaders and review the budget in detail.
- Three months of preparation gives the Finance Ministry time to meet with ministry leaders whose budget requests need to be reduced or adjusted.

Let's spend the last 3 months of this year preparing to increase our witness, worship, and praise to the Lord in the upcoming year.