

Have a Holly, Jolly (and Generous) Christmas

By Karina Corona

Don't lose track of what matters most during the season of giving.

Cookie baking, gift shopping, party planning. The season of Christmas ushers in the busiest time of year for many of us. But all that focus on friends and family comes with the risk of forgetting about the needs of the larger community. Making time to volunteer and pay forward the gifts God has given you—your time, talents and treasures—helps you stay grounded in what matters and keeps the season's stresses in check.

Give Your Time

Across the country, Americans are living generously.

62.6 million volunteers provide **7.8 billion hours** of service annually and help contribute **\$184 billion** nationally.¹

This Christmas season, gather friends and family to volunteer for a cause. Here are a few ideas to jump-start your thinking:

- Organize a community **toy or coat drive**.
- Build and distribute **blessing bags** for the homeless and include items like socks, gloves, scarves, sunscreen, toothbrushes and toothpaste.
- Help **prepare meals** for members of your local homeless shelter.

Share Your Talents

As you review your holiday to-do list, consider visiting a local nursing home or elderly community. Here are four ways you can share your talents with that community:

- **Organize a recital** for the elderly at your church or a nursing home.
- Create and distribute handmade **Christmas cards**.
- **Deliver groceries** to someone who doesn't have a car.
- Partner with a community outreach center to host a **holiday gathering**.



For many, this time of year is a welcome chance to connect with friends and family. But for the **28%** of people age 65 and over who live alone, the holidays can be lonely.²

Offer Your Treasures



December is the month of generosity: It's when **18.2%** of annual U.S. charitable giving takes place.³



62% of religious households give to charity, compared with **46%** of households without a religious affiliation.⁴



\$176,000,000

Thrivent members are particularly generous. In 2017, members helped raise **\$176 million** through Thrivent programs for people in need, churches and other nonprofits.*

As you and your family prep for Christmas, take time to discuss shared interests and determine where to donate dollars. For example, are you passionate about feeding the hungry or sheltering the homeless? There are many local, national and international organizations from which to choose. Not sure where to get involved?

Here are some resources to help choose your cause:

- » **InFaith Community Foundation** is a **national, faith-based charity** with a mission to serve donors, spread joy and change lives. inFaithFound.org
- » **Thrivent Choice**[®] in partnership with InFaith Community Foundation **provides an online platform for making personal donations** to causes and nonprofits. Thrivent pays the processing fees so 100 percent of your donation goes to help. Eligible members also can recommend where Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable funding by directing Choice Dollars[®]. Thrivent.com/choice
- » **Thrivent Action Teams** allow you to **organize a team of friends and family** to meet a community need. Thrivent provides \$250 to help you kick-start your project. Thrivent.com/actionteams
- » **CharityNavigator.org**
- » **GoFundMe.com**

¹ "New Report: Service Unites Americans; Volunteers Give Service Worth \$184 Billion," Nov. 15, 2016, Corporation for National and Community Service; ² "2017 Profile of Older Americans," April 30, 2018, The Administration for Community Living; ³ "2017 Charitable Giving Report," March 5, 2018, Blackbaud Institute for Philanthropic Impact; ⁴ "Giving USA Special Report on Giving to Religion," Oct. 24, 2017, Giving USA

* For the year 2017 and as of Dec. 31 2017.