

May finds us all celebrating spring. In Louisiana, the freezes of winter are long gone and they give way to the warm days of May. May is a great weather month before our tropical heat arrives. May finds the church celebrating Mother’s Day. Many congregations will recognize their high school seniors as they move into another chapter of their educational journey. Still other congregations will receive their confirmation class into full membership during May.

Some congregations are saying farewell to their pastors and preparing for a change in appointments. Likewise, some of us clergy are on the move and May is a month in which we are saying goodbye and doing our final packing. For ministers remaining in their charges, May can be a month of anxiety. The finance committee has probably met and is anticipating the summer slump. The summer slump is something that used to happen in churches, but I wonder to what degree it is still a valid concern. Regardless, there are steps you as the pastor can take in diminishing the impact of a real slump or a perceived slump.

May is a great month to write a letter to the congregation highlighting the activities of the summer. Without going through the litany of what goes on during the summer, one can start with Vacation Bible School and move on to the relaxed casual services that are held in many places. Depending on your comfort as a pastor, you can encourage your congregation to have a great vacation but to remember to be in church when they are in town.

As a part of that letter, you might even, in a playful way, suggest that while the people take vacations, their tithes and offerings should stay at home doing the work of the church. Taking your offspring on vacation is an acceptable practice, taking your offering on vacation is not.

The book of James tells us that we “have not because we ask not.” May is a great month to ask your congregation to remain faithful in their giving, even while they are on vacation. It is also a great month to send out a statement of giving to remind people where they are on a “year to date” basis.

If you don’t want to have a summer giving slump, you don’t have to have one, but you have to use the opportunity May gives you to plant the seed for faithful summer giving.