THE FIRST PLACE OFFERING

Goal: $227,000
Now Through January 31, 2027

November 2026

Dear Journey Family,

Today I'm excited to introduce you to The Journey's **FIRST PLACE OFFERING** that begins this month and continues through January 31, 2027 with a goal of $227,000 to impact our city and our world for Jesus Christ!

God is doing some great things through The Journey Church. We have expanded to 4 Sunday services, we have baptized 4,000 people in the first 24 years of our church (including 127 who have already been baptized this year) and we're meeting more needs and serving more people than ever before!

But as we look forward to 2027 – I can't help but wonder what God could do through The Journey if, as a church, we were to truly allow God to be in **FIRST PLACE**. If we were truly to seek God's Kingdom above all else.

(Jesus) *"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."* - Matthew 6:33

That's what **The First Place Offering** is all about. Putting God first through our sacrificial giving (above your normal tithes and offerings) so we can see God move in some amazing ways in our church, in our city and beyond!

As we begin **The First Place Offering** to support missions, inner-city ministry, prison ministry and more – I want to make a special ask of you. An ask that will help you give Jesus FIRST PLACE in your life – but that will also help our church shine God's light brightly in the coming year.

Will you PRAY and ask God how much He would have you GIVE to **The First Place Offering** between now and January 31? And would you make an effort to give your BEST sacrificial gift this week or next...and then give as much as you can along the way

Think about it this way . . . what is the **best Christmas gift** you've given in the past few years? How much did you invest in that gift?

What if you gave the same amount (or more!) to **The First Place Offering** to show your love and gratitude to Jesus and to give him FIRST PLACE?

You can make a one-time gift or break your gift up over several gifts.

Here is a summary of the ministry initiatives that **THE FIRST PLACE OFFERING** will fund and how your giving will make an eternal difference.

First Place in Global Missions and New Churches



- ✓ Supporting global and U.S missionaries and starting new churches around the world. Including a new church plant in Metro Washington D.C.
- ✓ Continuing our missions partnership in South Africa to children who have been impacted by poverty and HIV/AIDS through Hope Christian Schools.
- ✓ Partnering with Moscow Christian Seminary to train new pastors to reach the former nations of the Soviet Union with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First Place in Reaching NYC for Jesus Christ



- ✓ Reaching the people of NYC with the love of Jesus through ongoing **Servant Evangelism** and other creative outreaches across our city.
- ✓ Providing for our **Easter 2027** outreach and promotion (our greatest opportunity of the year to reach New Yorkers for Jesus).

First Place in Serving Those with the Greatest Needs



- ✓ Meeting the spiritual and physical needs of the less fortunate in NYC through **Inner-City and Community Ministry**.
- ✓ Providing meaningful Christmas gifts (including requested clothing items) for every inmate at **Rikers Island Prison** (over 7,000 inmates).
- ✓ Funding the **2027 Benevolence & Counseling Ministry** to assist those in our church facing a financial crisis or emergency.

First Place in Investing in the NExT Generation

- ✓ Investing in the spiritual growth of our **children**, **teens** and **families** through necessary upgrades and new Bible-learning tools.
- ✓ A portion of The First Place Offering will be designated to **The NExT Initiative** and the goal of securing a permanent meeting location.

Please read through this packet to learn more about this exciting opportunity for us as a church to give sacrificially and have a great impact for Jesus. Will you begin praying now about what God would have you give (over and above your regular giving) to The First Place Offering? Allow God to stretch your faith!

Together – let's give Jesus FIRST PLACE in 2027!

Pastor Kerrick Thomas
Kt1@journeynyc.com

PS – This packet will give you an overview of **The First Place Offering** and will hopefully answer most of your questions. However, if you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the Journey staff at 212.730.8300 x200 or Giving@JourneyNYC.com.





THE FIRST PLACE OFFERING

The Journey's Annual Special Offering
Now Through January 31, 2027
Goal: $227,000

JourneyNYC.com/First

(Jesus) *"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."* - Matthew 6:33

THE FIRST PLACE OFFERING is a call to sacrificial giving with a goal of $227,000 to fund four vital ministry and missions areas in our church for 2027:

Even though we want to reach our goal for **The First Place Offering** by January 31, 2027 – we encourage you to automate your giving to this special offering so that you can support the missions and ministries listed below throughout the year.

- ✓ Give by filling out the enclosed **Giving Card** and writing the amount of your gift on the line designated as **First Place Offering**. Place your completed card in the enclosed **Offering Envelope** and drop the postage-paid envelope in the mail or drop it in an offering bucket on Sunday.

- ✓ Give **ONLINE** by Credit, Debit, PayPal, Venmo, Cash App, Google Pay or Apple Pay at: JourneyNYC.com/First. Debit/Credit PayPal venmo Cash App Google Pay Pay

- ✓ Give by **TEXTING** the amount you want to give + "First" to 212.730.8300. (For example, text 250 First to 212.730.8300 to give $250 to The First Place Offering.)

- ✓ Give **STOCKS**, **BONDS** and other **IN-KIND GIFTS**. For more details contact us at 212.730.8300 x200, Giving@JourneyNYC.com or JourneyNYC.com/Stocks-Bonds.





THE PURPOSES OF THE FIRST PLACE OFFERING

First Place in Global Missions and New Churches

Supporting missionaries taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world.



We are a church that supports missionaries who are taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the globe, especially to the parts of the world where they haven't heard about Jesus yet. Through cooperative efforts with other mission-minded churches, we are designating a portion of the Special Missions Offering to support over 7,000 International and North American Missionaries.

Partnering with Hope Christian School in South Africa to provide Christian education, clothing and food to at-risk children / youth.



For close to 20 years we have been showing God's love in South Africa through **Hope Christian School** (First City Baptist Church in East London) and their mission to educate and meet the physical and spiritual needs of children and families who live in difficult circumstances. Most of the families they serve live in extreme poverty and face unimaginable hardships – including families devastated by HIV/AIDS.

Through **The First Place Offering** we will continue to assist and expand Hope Christian Schools. When we started supporting the school there were just a handful of children. Now the school educates over 300 students pre-k through 12th grade.



Plus, this year we will send more mission teams from The Journey to South Africa to serve with Hope Christian Schools. Maybe God wants you to go on our July mission trip? Your giving has a tangible impact on the lives of these children!

Partnering with Moscow Seminary to train pastors to start new churches in the nations of the former Soviet Union.

During the 70 years of the Soviet Union – an estimated 200,000 Christian leaders were martyred, 500,000 were imprisoned and close to 100,000 church buildings were destroyed. Even today, Christianity in Russia faces great government opposition and persecution.As a result – over 90% of Russians have no connection to the church!



Your giving to the First Place Offering will help fund the theological training of up to five future pastors or missionaries and help change the spiritual landscape of Russia.

NEW...Starting a New Church in Metro Washington DC!

In 2027 The Journey is going to help start a NEW CHURCH in Metro Washington D.C.!



Washington DC is a rapidly expanding metro area. And God has called Pastor Ron Owens to start **Upland Churc**h in one of the fastest growing and most strategically positioned areas of Metro Washington DC. This new church plant will is located just south of our nation's capital in a thriving community a strong military and federal workforce. It's a great opportunity to reach new families and professionals who are commuting into the capital every day.



Through your giving to **The First Place Offering**
- The Journey will be able to help Upland Church start strong.
Expected launch date – EASTER 2027!

First Place in Reaching New York City for Jesus Christ

Reaching NYC in creative ways with the life-changing love of Jesus.

New York City is still our GREATEST mission field!The Northeast is the most unchurched region of the country, and New York City ranks as one of the most "post-Christian" cities in America.

With over **22 million people** living in the metro New York City area, 8.5 million people in the five boroughs and 1.6 million in Manhattan, there are millions of people in our sphere of influence who don't have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.



The First Place Offering will expand our evangelism efforts in NYC – including through Servant Evangelism (our efforts to show God's love in practical ways to New Yorkers) and other creative outreaches.

In addition – your giving to the First Place Offering will allow us to pursue more **digital advertising** in places like YouTube, Instagram, Google, and other streaming services...so we can be aggressive in getting the word out and continue to reach our city with the love of Jesus!

In the 24-year history of our church – we have baptized over 4,000 people. Over 400 in just the last two years. With your help – that impact will continue!

Funding our Easter 2027 outreach and promotion.



Easter Sunday 2027 is Sunday, March 28. We will have the opportunity to reach more people with the love of Jesus on that day than any other day of the year. Your giving to The First Place Offering will help our church be aggressive in our outreach and promotion efforts and through our online presence for Resurrection Sunday.

First Place in Serving Those in Greatest Need

Meeting the spiritual and physical needs of the less fortunate in our city through Inner City and Community Ministry.

We are a church that serves the least of these. Through **The First Place Offering** we have a unique opportunity to help those in the greatest need in our city by meeting their spiritual and physical ways in a Christ-centered way.



That's why we partner with **Graffiti Community Ministries** on the Lower East Side to support their after-school programs for kids and youth, clothing and food programs for the poor, and job training and GED programs. In addition, we partner with **The Relief Bus** to make a difference through the giving of food, toiletries, baby formula and other needed items.

Showing God's love to the inmates at Rikers Island Prison this Christmas.



Rikers Island is one of the largest, most notorious and most violent prisons in the US. The over **7,000** inmates are often forgotten, but the Bible tells us to remember those who are in prison as if we were there ourselves (Hebrews 13:3).

This Christmas we want to show Jesus' love in a very tangible way to the least of these by providing **meaningful Christmas gifts and a reminder of God's love to every inmate at Rikers Island**. Your giving to the First Place Offering will allow us to provide approved gifts and requested clothing items to every inmate.



Not only will a team from The Journey travel to Rikers to deliver the Christmas gifts, but we hope to be able to visit the prison regularly in the coming year to pray for inmates and staff to lead worship services.

Funding the 2027 Benevolence & Counseling Ministry for those in crisis.



We are a church that comes alongside those in our spiritual family who are struggling financially and emotionally and need assistance getting through a time of crisis. And never has there been a greater time of need in our church – with so many hurting financially, emotionally, relationally and physically.

The **Benevolence Ministry** has allowed The Journey to provide one-time aid to those in distress due to difficult financial times, a loss of a job/apartment or a death in the family. We also are committed to being able to provide help for those who need professional Christian counseling. Marriages have been strengthened and lives given hope through Christian counseling.

Because of your generous giving to the First Place Offering, we hope to be able to approve every valid request for benevolence and counseling in the coming year!

First Place in Investing in the NExT Generation

Teaching the next generation about Jesus in Journey Kidz and Journey Youth.



We're a church that loves to invest in children and youth. And over the last year we've seen so many new families getting plugged in at The Journey.As we grow – in 2027 we want to invest in expanding our ministry to children, teenagers and their families.

Each week at the AMC Empire Theater in Times Square our team creates a meaningful, fun, Bible-based experience in Journey Kidz. Over the last year we have integrated a new interactive Bible-centric curriculum in Journey Kids that is both Bible-based and allows parents to carry over lessons into the home during the week.

Not only that – but we now have more teenagers in our church than ever before. Our teens meet every Wednesday night for Youth Growth Group and have regular game nights and fun events at the Faith & Life Center!



When you give to **The First Place Offering** – you provide for upgrades in Journey Kidz with needed supplies and equipment, assist our families in raising their children in a godly way and empower our team to teach these kids about Jesus.

Celebrate our 25th Anniversary by securing a future meeting location and ministry center for The Journey Church through The NExT Initiative.

In 2027 we will celebrate our 25th Anniversary! God has done amazing things in our first 24 years.During that time, we have met in over 30 different locations and 5 different office spaces. A permanent ministry center would provide a sense of stability for weekly worship and would secure the future of our church for generations to come.

THE JOURNEY CHURCH NYC
NExT
INITIATIVE

By securing the future of our church, doubling our ministry impact and providing for a permanent meeting location – our hope is that The NExT Initiative will enable The Journey to impact New York City for Jesus for generations to come.

A portion of **The First Place Offering** will be designated to The NExT Initiative and set aside to help us reach our goal of $20 million over 20 years to secure a permanent ministry center for The Journey. This ministry center would provide:

- A large auditorium for our church to worship together every Sunday.
- Office space for our staff to work and our volunteers to serve.
- Educational space for our Journey Kidz Ministry and for the spiritual growth of those who call Journey home.
- A ministry center from which we can do more outreach and ministry in our city.
- A permanent space where our church can grow and serve NYC for Jesus for generations to come.

Let's not limit what God can do. Instead, let's DREAM BIG DREAMS and PRAY BIG PRAYERS for our future! Your giving to Above & Beyond will help make all this possible!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why a Special Offering?

As part of God's plan to grow the faith of His church, He calls us to sacrificial giving at times. The First Place Offering is an opportunity for us to grow our faith and prepare for what God wants to do through our church in 2027 and beyond.

This offering is not because we are behind on budget, but rather is to position us to make a greater impact in our city, in our church and around the world in 2027 and to strategically position our church for the future by funding The NExT Initiative. The opportunities and needs are greater as we head into the next year than ever before.

What's the Difference Between my Regular Offering and this Special Offering?

The regular Journey offering is the proportional amount (the full tithe of 10%) that we set apart on a systematic basis and give throughout the year to support the on-going ministries of The Journey. But from time to time there are opportunities to give in a sacrificial way. The First Place Offering is one of those sacrificial opportunities to grow your faith. This offering should be over and above what you regularly give.

How Will The First Place Offering Be Designated Among the Different Areas?

If we reach our goal – approximately 15% of the offering will be designated for The NExT Initiative and an opportunity fund with the goal of securing a future meeting location and ministry center for The Journey Church. 85% of the offering will be designated to fund the special ministry and missions opportunities described in detail in this information packet.

How Much Should I Give?

Since the goal is $227,000, The First Place Offering will involve everyone. Please prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift that will stretch your faith. The precise amount you give is between you and God.Many in our church can give a $5,000, $50,000 or even a $100,000 gift. Others will be able to give between $100 and $500. Some may not be able to give a lot right now because of lost jobs or wages. Some can give more to help make up that difference. The issue is not equal giving, but equal sacrifice.What amount can you give that will stretch your faith?

Why is the Goal So Large?

Since the beginning of The Journey in 2002, we have been a church that has dared to dream big dreams for God. The ministries supported by this offering are God-sized – supporting global and U.S. missions, funding local organizations that assist the poor and needy, funding the Benevolence and Counseling ministry, blessing inmates at Rikers Island, investing in our children and youth, reaching NYC for Jesus, securing a permanent meeting location and more.

Big dreams require big faith and big funding.The accomplishment of these big dreams will be determined by your gifts to The First Place Offering.

When Should I Give?

The best time to give is the first Sunday after you receive this packet. Pray about making your best gift on that day. However, you can continue to give through January 31, 2027.

Give by filling out the enclosed **Giving Card** and writing the amount of your gift on the line designated as **First Place Offering**. Place your completed card in the enclosed **Offering Envelope** and drop the postage-paid envelope in the mail or drop it in an offering bucket on Sunday.

Can I Give Online, by Paypal, by Text and in other ways?

Yes. When you give at JourneyNYC.com/Giving via online giving you can give by credit or debit. Select **First Place Offering** under the "Fund" drop-down menu.

You will also find information there about how to give by PayPal, Venmo, Cash App, Google Pay and Apple Pay. Just designate your gift in the memo line as "**First Place Offering**."

To give by text, simply text the amount you want to give + "First" to 212.730.8300 (ex. text 250 First to 212.730.8300 to give $250 to The First Place Offering).

Can I Give Via Bank Check or Through Auto-Debit?

Yes. Use your bank online payment option to send a check to the church. Simply mark in the memo area that your gift is for **The First Place Offering**.

If you would like to make a special, one-time auto-debit over and above your regular giving, simply call 212.730.8300 x200 or e-mail Giving@JourneyNYC.com – it's simple and easy.

Can I Give In-Kind Gifts of Stocks or Bonds?

Of course! Since The Journey is a 501c3 organization there can be tremendous tax benefits for you by giving stocks, bonds or in-kind gifts. For information on this type of giving, simply call 212.730.8300 x200 and speak with our team or e-mail Giving@JourneyNYC.com. You can also find details about giving stocks, bonds or other in-kind gifts here: JourneyNYC.com/Stocks-Bonds.

Are My Gifts Tax-Deductible?

All gifts to The Journey, whether via the regular offering or this Special Offering, are completely tax-deductible. Your gift will be deductible in the tax year given (i.e., gifts given in 2026 will be deductible on your 2026 taxes).

Please be sure to include your name and address when you give so that a receipt can be sent to you for your tax purposes. You are not required to use a tax-deduction for your gift, but it is available for all gifts.

How Did We Arrive at a $247,000 Goal?

The $247,000 goal was prayerfully set by The Journey Pastoral Team. It is approximately seven to eight times our regular weekly giving. It is a God-sized goal that can only be reached by 100% participation and sacrificial giving by our Journey attenders and members. Since we are expecting God to bless this Special Offering, it has been determined that any amount over and above our goal will be divided equally between The NExT Initiative and our general budget.

How Will I Know if We Reach Our Goal?

Please pray that we reach our goal. You will be updated on our giving progress through the This Sunday @ The Journey weekly email updates and during the Sunday services.Reaching this goal will be a celebration of what we can do together as we stretch our faith under God's leadership!

THE FIRST PLACE OFFERING

Have additional questions about The First Place Offering?

Please contact us at Giving@JourneyNYC.com
or call 212.730.8300 x200.