

The WELLSPRING Group

Fresh Approaches to Stewardship

Perspective:

- Have a grand mission. (Begin with why)
- Address the head and the heart
- Don't be afraid to ask
 - If you don't ask, someone else will
 - Pray and preach
- Ask individuals
- Thank individuals

Toxic Myths:

- They're giving all they can
 - 80-20 80% of money given by 20% of members
 - 2% = 40 % 18% = 40 % 80% = 20 %
- Donor fatigue
- We must pay down this mortgage over time

Practical:

- Recruit good stewards
- Always have some \$5k - \$25k projects ready for funding
- Electronic giving cards
- Provide monthly - adjusted giving reports
- Promote legacy giving
- Share your best stuff with others
 - And look at what others are doing
- Ask in December
- Personally sign the letters!

The WELLSPRING Group



Erika Roland, MBA, CFRE, Executive Fundraiser

Erika Roland is the founder and owner of The WellSpring Group. Erika began fundraising in 1995 and believes it is her divine calling. During her time at Wheaton College, she felt called to full-time Christian ministry and, immediately after graduating, began raising money to become a missionary teaching English at a university in Asia.

She has raised millions of dollars for new buildings, renovations, debt retirement, stewardship, and annual campaigns to help churches, schools, and charities better fulfill their mission.

To better do God's work, she returned to school and completed her MBA from the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, in 2016. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University.

Erika is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). She manages campaigns from start to finish with integrity, grace, and professionalism. Despite her lifelong pursuit of a warmer climate, she lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, just three miles from where she grew up.

Here are some recent noteworthy results:

- Raised \$4.5 million in pledges for a building renovation for St. John's Lutheran Church and School in Chaska, MN (2024)
- Raised \$6.4 million in pledges for a building renovation for Holy Family School in Albany, MN (2024).
- Raised \$15.6 million for a new addition for Heritage Christian Academy in Maple Grove, MN (2023)
- Raised over \$8.6 million for building renovations for The Salvation Army Minneapolis Adult Rehabilitation Center (2022)
- Raised over \$2.7 million to build a new worship center for Covenant Pines Ministries in McGregor, MN (2022)
- Raised over \$1 million for a building renovation for Holmeswood Baptist Church, Kansas City, MO (2021)



Why Should We Hire a Church Capital Campaign Specialist?

By Erika Roland, MBA, CFRE

When looking at the cost of hiring a fundraising consultant, it's easy to think that it might be money you don't need to spend. After all, as a part of church leadership, it is your responsibility to be good stewards of God's money—especially the money collected in the offering plate.

There are many sound reasons to hire a fundraising consultant. The true cost of a capital campaign is not the cost of a consultant, but the amount of money you don't raise. **With a do-it-yourself campaign, a church will only raise about half as much as its potential.** That's right, instead of raising \$2 million, the church would only raise about \$1 million. You only have one opportunity to do it right. Many building decisions will be made based upon how much you raise and those decisions will affect your church for years to come. So why limit your church's potential?

A do-it-yourself church capital campaign can waste very precious resources—including your pastor's time, staff time, and volunteer time. I've never met a pastor and church staff who have plenty of extra time on their hands. It can be quite frustrating to waste time in long volunteer meetings trying to figure out how to proceed with conflicting suggestions. Hiring a consultant can also help you avoid costly mistakes.

A fundraising consultant knows best practices and what works for other churches and can provide you with a valuable outside perspective. Every church member has different motivations for giving, and it's important to not miss something that could cause one of your biggest givers to contribute. **With a fundraising consultant, you can avoid potential issues that could derail your campaign.**

A fundraising consultant will put together a timeline and schedule for a campaign and will keep things on track. Deadlines won't be missed, and campaigns won't drag on and on and on. Furthermore, a consultant can help you determine fundraising goals so you know what to aim for.

It can feel overwhelming to start on such a huge project. Churches need a consultant they can trust who can give them confidence at each step of the process.

Here's What to Look for When You Interview Fundraising Firms

By Erika Roland, MBA, CFRE

It's a good idea to interview a few fundraising firms when you are looking to hire a fundraising consultant for a church capital campaign, that way you can get a feel for how they differ. In addition to asking about fees and other expenses, here are a few things you should also ask:

Tell me about your experience. Be careful with this question. You want to know about the experience of not just the firm but the consultant who will be on site. Campaigns have a lot of moving parts and need someone with a lot of fundraising experience—not just experience in sales or event organizing—and not even someone who has pastored a church.

How many days will you be on site? There is no replacement for face-to-face time with a fundraising professional. Days on site make the biggest difference in the cost of hiring consultants. Having someone onsite is how you can take some of the pressure off the pastor, staff, and volunteers. You need someone there to mind the shop. An average of once a week for the campaign's duration is a minimum.

Will the consultant be at the meetings with some of the largest givers to the church? Here's where the consultant can add some of the biggest value. Having an experienced consultant there when the pastor meets with some of the largest contributors brings a sense of professionalism to the meetings, helps ease everyone's nerves, and means you will be closer to meeting or exceeding your fundraising goals.

How many campaigns will the consultant manage at the same time as ours? Depending upon the number of employees, firms can have many clients. You want to know how many campaigns your consultant will be working with simultaneously. If a consultant is working with more than three churches simultaneously, you won't get the attention you need. It also indicates that the firm is using a cookie-cutter approach to fundraising.

Where are you located? Hiring a local firm isn't a must, but be aware that travel costs such as airfare, car rentals, and hotel fees add up.

Who will be working directly with us? You will, without a doubt, interview a very engaging salesperson—but that might not be the person who will be assigned to your campaign. You need to get a feel for the consultant who will be onsite. Is this person a good fit? The best way to do this is to meet that person.

How long will the campaign last? One way a firm can cut corners is by shortening the length of the campaign. It takes six to nine months for a small or medium-sized church. The larger the church and fundraising goal, the more time it will take.

The bottom line is that you get what you pay for, and an upfront investment pays for itself in spades.

Phases of a Capital Campaign

The first phase of a capital campaign is the **Feasibility Study**. This study is important to ensure that your campaign will be successful. Feedback is sought from some of your most active and generous supporters to determine if and when you will be ready to embark on a campaign, what fundraising goals should be set, and what messages should be communicated to engage broad support.

Before the Feasibility Study begins, you should have a pretty firm understanding of needs and those costs. From start to finish, a Feasibility Study takes about eight weeks to complete and fees range depending upon the number of interviews.

Assuming the results of the Feasibility Study are favorable, the capital campaign is then launched. A campaign takes about six months. A Fall Campaign typically runs June through December and a Spring Campaign typically runs November through May. This takes into account dates on the Church calendar such as Christmas and Easter, as well as school summer break.

The next phase of the capital campaign is the **Preparation Phase**. During this phase, themes and logos are set, communication messages are finalized, and all marketing materials are prepared, such as brochures, a video, and newsletters. Campaign co-chairs and cabinet members are recruited.

Once the leadership structure is in place, it is time to secure some initial large gifts, often starting at \$30,000 or more, during the **Pacesetting Gift Phase** of the campaign. Typically, about 40% of donations are pledged during this phase. The pastor and the consultant meet with these individuals twice: first to make a request and second to gratefully accept whatever they decide.

Once the Pacesetting Gift Phase has been completed and a small group of volunteers have been trained, it's time to embark on the **Advanced Gift Phase** of a campaign. This phase is kicked off with a special event in a small group setting, and some of the most active and generous supporters attend. By the end of this phase, sixty percent or more of your fundraising goal should be reached before the campaign goes public.

The **Community Gift Phase** of the campaign is launched with fanfare and excitement. All families are informed and invited to participate in the campaign with a financial pledge of support. One week is designated as Commitment Week, where everyone is encouraged to make a pledge. Following that week, a reminder phoning is conducted to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Pledges can be given in a variety of ways. A financial pledge can be payable over three years; so even a modest amount becomes significant when given regularly over time. Non-cash gifts such as stock, land or property, or valuable possessions can be gifted toward this effort, too. Lastly, legacy gifts, such as a charitable bequest in a will or living trust, will support the mission for years to come. The phase ends with a celebration event when we thank God for His generous gifts through His people.

The final phase ensures that the amount pledged is met or exceeded over the course of the next few years. Proper **Follow-up** must be done to continue to inform supporters of the progress of their fulfillment, how their finances are being used, and to encourage new families to give.

Each phase of the campaign is vitally important to ensure a cohesive, successful, and enjoyable campaign.



Heritage Christian Academy



Heritage Christian Academy (HCA) in Maple Grove, Minnesota, was growing and needed more classrooms. In addition, they wanted to add a performance hall and a new place for students to eat instead of in the gym.

The 35,000 sq. foot addition was projected to cost approximately \$17.5 million.

This was a huge undertaking for HCA. In 2022, HCA contracted with another consulting firm which determined HCA could raise \$2.0 to \$2.5 million. After hearing this discouraging news, a friend of HCA recommended they work with Erika Roland of The WellSpring Group.

In March 2023, HCA engaged The WellSpring Group to develop, plan, and manage their campaign.

By December 2023, they had raised over \$15.6 million in pledges, and one year later, nearly an additional \$1 million had been pledged.

From the Leadership of *Heritage Christian Academy* In Their Words:

"I was able to observe Erika's interactions as professional, genuine, and prompt. Erika knows fundraising."

"Erika handles the natural complexities of working with a number of [people] at one time in a professional and calm manner... she is prepared for the challenges that go along with a capital campaign."

"Erika assumes responsibility with sincerity."

- Mrs. Tonya Scott, HCA President



Redeemer Lutheran Church *and* Redeemer Christian Academy



Redeemer Lutheran Church and School had dreams to attract new families, make them feel welcome and share Christ's love.

In short, they needed to raise a minimum of \$845,000 to maintain and update their facilities such as updating the auditorium and the administrative office entrance; ensure the kitchen, restrooms and elevator would all be fully functioning and meet code requirements; and preserve the beauty and enhance the functionality of the Sanctuary.

They engaged Erika Roland of the WellSpring Group to develop, plan and manage their campaign from beginning to end.

In the end, they had raised over \$900,000—a stunning amount to most of their members—and had enough funds to begin working immediately to update the auditorium before school started in the fall.

THE LEADERSHIP OF Redeemer Lutheran Church and School

IN THEIR WORDS:

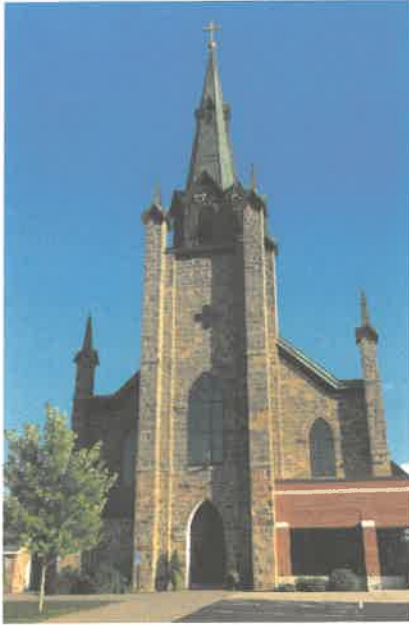
"This spring Erika oversaw by far the most successful capital campaign in our congregation's history.

"\$900,000 in pledges was raised by our small congregation, a stunning amount to most of our members, who were expecting far less. Erika's people skills, knowledge of fund-raising and a positive, persistent attitude bore the fruit of a very successful campaign.

"Erika's methods are both savvy and Biblically-based. I recommend her to the highest degree."

Steve Ferber, Pastor

Renewing Sacred Spaces



The Church of Saint Joseph in Saint Joseph, Minnesota needed to address many issues in the sanctuary. The walls and ceilings were cracked and needed repair. The pews were worn and needed attention. Major changes needed to be made to shore up the floor substructure and adhere to handicapped accessibility codes. In addition, a fire suppression system needed to be installed.

The estimated cost to address these issues was approximately \$1.5 million.

This campaign included a unique challenge. The church had just completed a five-year capital campaign to fund a new fellowship hall and parishioners were concerned about conducting two campaigns back-to-back.

The Church of Saint Joseph hired The WellSpring Group in November 2017 to conduct a feasibility study. A capital campaign was launched in May 2018 with a minimum goal of \$1 million and a stretch goal of \$1.5 million.

By December of 2018, The Church of Saint Joseph had over \$1.65 million pledged which exceeded the stretch goal by \$150,000! Additionally, they had already received over \$550,000 in donations towards those pledges.

THE LEADERSHIP OF *The Church of Saint Joseph*

IN THEIR WORDS:

"We were pleased with Erika's performance from beginning to end. She had a great plan for our campaign. She was prompt in answering our concerns, and interacted nicely with church staff, volunteers and parishioners. She made adjustments to her plan in accordance with our needs, and came in under budget. Erika exceeded our fundraising goals, and left us with a sense of excitement for the work yet to be done."

"We certainly recommend Erika Roland of the WellSpring Group as you may be prayerfully considering a capital campaign at your place of worship. You will not be disappointed, as she delivers more than she proposes."

Dean & Dede Budde, Co-Chairs

"The final result was beyond our best guesses. I highly recommend Erika Roland and her team of workers for helping with any capital campaign. Her method, personality and diligence will insure a very successful outcome."

Fr. Jerome Tupa OSB, Pastor



HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL

In 1886, Holy Family School began teaching parish children and instilling Catholic teaching and values in their hearts and minds. Since then, five generations of children in the Albany, Minnesota, area have been blessed by those humble beginnings.

The current school building was built in 1910. The brick exterior needed tuckpointing, and the building needed new windows. The electrical and plumbing systems were over 100 years old, and the building needed a new HVAC system. In addition, the building did not have an elevator.

In 2017, the parish hired The WellSpring Group to raise \$1 million for a new parish house and office link. In 2024, the parish hired The WellSpring Group again—this time to preserve and upgrade the school building.

The task was enormous. The school needed to raise over \$8 million to complete the entire project in one phase since a long-term mortgage was not prudent. Most people thought the school could only raise \$2.2 million, which was not enough even to complete the first phase of the project.

Within eight months, over \$6.4 million had been pledged from school families, four parishes, alumni, and community businesses. With the help of The WellSpring Group, they hope to raise the full amount within three years.



From the Leadership of Holy Family School In Their Words:

“Our volunteers responded positively under Erika’s leadership, personal faith convictions, and keen understanding of Christian Stewardship. Her enthusiasm, friendly approach and drive to succeed were just the right mix for us.”

“We want to personally thank Erika for her professionalism, guidance, and insight that helped make our capital campaign a huge success.”

- Jim and Jean Sand, capital campaign co-chairs



5108 West 74th Street #422, Minneapolis, MN 55439
952-412-7007
erika@thewellspringgroup.com
www.TheWellSpringGroup.com