The initial results are in. In only its third year, #GivingTuesday has helped to raise over $45 million for non-profits. Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving has quickly been branded the national day of charitable giving. Fueled predominantly through online giving and social media, #GivingTuesday dominated tweets and Facebook shares for 24 hours with over 20,000 participating partners registered to take part. The numbers are expected to grow as offline donations are included.

DID YOUR ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATE? With such popularity and as a top trending topic on social media, it would be difficult not to take part. #GivingTuesday has helped brand giving. In an often competitive charitable marketplace, the movement has united non-profits, at least for a day, with a common message to give over spend. While supplanting consumerism in this season may be too tall of an order, #GivingTuesday has succeeded in at least expanding the conversation to include generosity. And the movement’s website is full of resources to assist non-profits in building a case for their own #GivingTuesday appeal.

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATED IN GIVING TUESDAY, HOW SO? Of course, simply linking your website and employing the #GivingTuesday hashtag is not enough. These giving trends are a great opportunity, but like any others, we must ask how any appeal fits with our mission and vision. Have we focused on what we are asking donors to do, how they might engage with us? While all the data is not yet in, we know that small gifts, first-time donors, and a younger donor demographic predominate on #GivingTuesday.

HAVE WE CREATED MECHANISMS TO FOLLOW UP WITH THESE FIRST-TIME DONORS TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR INTERESTS AND HOW WE MIGHT ENGAGE WITH THEM LONG-TERM?
#GivingTuesday may be a relatively new part of the charitable giving portfolio, but year-end giving is not. Many charitable organizations depend on long-time donors and larger donations at the end of the year to balance budgets and fund special programs. The contexts might be different, but the same organizational questions apply. Non-profits cannot rely on the same year-end plea for resources to make ends meet. Donors want to know how your appeal matches their passion. Mission and vision must still lead as we think about engaging donors as year-long versus simply year-end givers.3

The end of the year is a busy time for religious and non-profit leaders, but taking time to consider how #GivingTuesday or year-end appeals fit our overall stewardship and fundraising goals is important. HOW DO THESE PARTICULAR TIMES OF YEAR HELP US CREATE CULTURES OF GENEROSITY AND YEAR-ROUND GIVING?

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1 Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and the Case Foundation. “Significant growth in online giving seen on #GivingTuesday 2014, initial data from major donation processing platforms show.” Online: http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/news/article/significant-growth-in-online-giving-seen-on-givingtuesday-2014-initial-data-from-major-donation-processing-platforms-show

#GivingTuesday 2014 data were collected in partnership with Blackbaud, DonorPerfect Online Fundraising Software, Razoo, Network for Good and GlobalGiving. These organizations process charitable contributions on behalf of nonprofit organizations.

Infographics presented by the Case Foundation.

2 Stay tuned for the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and Giving USA’s full special report to be released on January 15, 2015.