

Consumer Alerts

From the Federal Trade Commission



[Worshippers targeted by gift card scam](#)

by Colleen Tressler
Consumer Education Specialist, FTC

We're seeing a new spin on gift card scams. This time, scammers are pretending to be a pastor, rabbi, priest, imam, or bishop. They're asking worshippers for gift card contributions for a worthy cause. Appeals are often made by email, but we've heard people are also getting texts and phone calls, too.

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Worshippers targeted by gift card scam

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July 29, 2019

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The bogus emails often include the name of the local pastor and a legitimate looking email address. But a closer look should raise some red flags. For example, the email address isn't the one normally used by the church, and the service provider is different, too. The message may begin with a simple "Hi," but doesn't include a recipients' name. There also may be spelling errors, including the pastor's name.

The imposter asks you to buy a popular [gift card](#) — frequently, iTunes, Google Play, or Amazon — and then asks for the gift card number and PIN on the back of the card. Those numbers let the scammer immediately get the money you loaded onto the card. And once that’s done, the scammer and your money are gone, usually without a trace.

If you or someone you know paid a scammer with a gift card, report it as soon as possible. Call the card company and tell them the gift card was used in a scam. Here is [contact information](#) for some of the gift card companies that scammers use most often. Then, tell the FTC about it at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint). Your reports may help law enforcement agencies launch investigations that could stop imposters and other fraudsters in their tracks.

Report gift card scams

Amazon

- Call 1 (888) 280-4331
- Learn about Amazon gift card scams [here](#).

Google Play

- Call 1 (855) 466-4438
- Report gift card scams online [here](#).
- Learn about Google Play gift card scams [here](#).

iTunes

- Call Apple Support at 1 (800) 275-2273, then say “gift card” to be connected to a live representative.
- Learn about iTunes gift card scams and how to report them [here](#).

Steam

- If you have a Steam account, you can report gift card scams online [here](#).
- Learn about Steam gift card scams [here](#).

MoneyPak

- Call 1 (866) 795-7969
- Report a MoneyPak card scam online [here](#).