



G U I D E L I N E S



Communications

Tell Your Church's Story



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Tell Your Church's Story

United Methodist Communications

COMMUNICATIONS

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Blessed to Be a Blessing

If you are reading this Guideline, you have said yes to servant leadership in your church. You are blessed to be a blessing. What does that mean?

By virtue of our baptism by water and the Spirit, God calls all Christians to faithful discipleship, to grow to maturity in faith (see Ephesians 4). The United Methodist Church expresses that call in our shared mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, or the *Discipline*, ¶120). Each local congregation and community of faith lives out that call in response to its own context—the wonderful and unique combination of God-given human and material resources with the needs of the community, within and beyond the congregation.

The work of servant leaders—your work—is to open a way for God to work through you and the resources available to you in a particular ministry area, for you are about God’s work. As stewards of the mysteries of God (see 1 Corinthians 4:1), servant leaders are entrusted with the precious and vital task of managing and using God’s gifts in the ongoing work of transformation.

In The United Methodist Church, we envision transformation occurring through a cycle of discipleship (see the *Discipline*, ¶122). With God’s help and guidance, we

- reach out and receive people into the body of Christ,
- help people relate to Christ through their unique gifts and circumstances,
- nurture and strengthen people in their relationships with God and with others,
- send transformed people out into the world to lead transformed and transforming lives,
- continue to reach out, relate, nurture, and send disciples...

Every ministry area and group, from finance to missions, engages in all aspects of this cycle. This Guideline will help you see how that is true for the ministry area or group you now lead. When you begin to consider all of the work you do as ministry to fulfill God’s mission through your congregation, each task, report, and conversation becomes a step toward transforming the world into the kingdom of God.

Invite Christ into the process to guide your ministry. You are doing powerful and wonderful work. Allow missteps to become learning opportunities; rejoice in success. Fill your work with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

God blesses you with gifts, skills, and experience. You are a blessing when you allow God to work through you to make disciples and transform the world. Thank you.

(Find additional help in the “Resources” section at the end of this Guideline, in *The Book of Discipline*, and through <http://www.umc.org>.)

Biblical Basis for Communications Ministry

Congratulations! By accepting the position of communications coordinator, you will help your congregation get important information and share the Christian message with one another and the community. It's a wonderful, multifaceted job filled with opportunity. No matter how you choose to carry out your mission, chances are the experience will influence you forever.

Local church communications is a ministry that shares the church's story in ways that move people toward becoming disciples of Christ. By being a local church communicator, you are following the ways of the Bible. In the following verses, include "communicator" (you) as one of the gifts to the church.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13 NLT).

As a communicator, you are a storyteller and listener, helping equip people with information, insight, and ways to respond in order to do God's work. You also provide the congregation with means to tell their own stories.

In Matthew 13:10, the disciples ask Jesus why he tells stories. He replies,

"Because they haven't received the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but you have. For those who have will receive more and they will have more than enough. But as for those who don't have, even the little they have will be taken away from them. This is why I speak to the crowds in parables: although they see, they don't really see; and although they hear, they don't really hear or understand." (verses 11-13)

Think of the ways you as the communicator tell the story of the church, *creating readiness and nudging the church community toward receptive insight*. For example, you may help locate videos to put a face to people and ministries who benefit from the congregation's offerings, use the newsletter to connect Sunday school teachers with resources from the conference media center, or publish personal stories on the website that entice individuals

to get involved. You may coordinate banners on the church grounds to let the community know exciting things are happening, use social media tools to engage people and move the church toward being more welcoming, or coordinate revolving bulletin board information from ministries in the church.

You provide vital links within the body of Christ!

Consider also how these passages apply to your ministry: “He taught them by telling many stories” (Mark 4:2 NLT). “As she came in, the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. The king had just said, ‘Tell me some stories about the great things Elisha has done’” (2 Kings 8:4 NLT).

We have the greatest story of all to tell, and in this digital, multimedia world, we have more options than ever before—and more challenges as a church to be relevant in telling our story in a way that inspires and engages people. That is why a communications coordinator is more important than ever!

Perhaps Philippians 1:9 summarizes the goal of local church communications. “This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight.”

Just as Mary was instructed to “Go, tell” when the tomb was empty, you now have the opportunity to “Go, tell.”

Understand Your Role and Responsibilities

You are part of a leadership team that brings to life your church's vision and mission. Your role is to be a storyteller and connector, employing communications practices and tools to share the story of the church—its ministries, programs, opportunities, people, and faith—in planned, compelling, accessible ways. Your goal is to develop a reliable process, in which everyone can participate, for hearing and telling the church's story.

In its broadest sense, church communications is the sum total of everything we do, say, or show. Churches constantly communicate, whether they mean to do so or not. *Intentional* communication is the cornerstone of an effective communications ministry—and the essence of your job.

Your Role

Your hats may include what the secular world knows as “marketing,” “advertising,” and “public relations,” both inside the church and in the community.

As one local church communicator put it, “Communications ministry provides a way to take a large number of ministry events, needs, activities, and opportunities and package them for presentation to the congregation and the community.”

You will want to interact frequently with the church council members. They are charged with coordinating programs of the church—elements of the church's story. They likely need your communications expertise. It will be helpful for you to read the other *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation* in this series to learn more about everyone's jobs and to understand their communications needs.

Your Responsibilities

The ministry of communications encompasses such a wide and varied arena within the life of the church that it is difficult to identify exactly and accurately the responsibilities or resources for every communications coordinator.

One size does not fit all. In general, the purpose of the communicator is to keep the congregation “in the know” about what's happening in the church and throughout the denomination and to challenge the congregation through stories of faith in action—bringing people closer in their walk with God.

It is important that you discuss with the nominations and leadership development committee and pastor(s) your role and responsibilities so expectations are clear. One challenge that communicators face is creating a manageable work life. There is so much to do! Let's

look at a few areas that may be considered communications functions in the local church. One way to look at the tasks is to divide them according to complexity or responsibility.

ACTION ITEM: Use the following lists as a discussion starter with your pastor and others about what fits your role, what others can do, and where this position can go.

Suggested Basic Responsibilities

- Promote the church's mission through communications.
- Coordinate communications to and from members (print/electronic newsletters, announcements).
- Share information about members (bulletin boards, special recognitions).
- Promote church-related events and opportunities to church members to encourage their participation or involvement.
- Promote events and opportunities sponsored by the church to the community.
- Work with a communications committee.
- Make suggestions and contributions to the church's website.
- Use social media tools to create engagement, dialogue, and community.

Suggested Intermediate Responsibilities (Building on the Basics)

- Provide creative communications counsel and direction for various ministries within the church as people organize and produce various events and services (e.g., identifying audiences, creating communications plans, and sharing effective presentation ideas).
- Create a public relations plan for the church for both internal (congregation) and external (community) audiences.
- Write news releases and maintain proactive media relations.
- Write and design promotional and informational print materials.
- Ensure the church building, property, and congregation communicate "Welcome!" and promote good public relations.
- Coordinate "marketing" efforts of the church to support evangelism in reaching out to the community.
- Plan and place regular and seasonal advertising.
- Oversee the design and management of the church's Web ministry.

All these are "tasks." They are only as important as the reason behind doing them. Consider, what is the church's mission and vision? How does communication breathe life into vision and mission statements?

Necessary Skills

You will need communications and organizational skills, a sense of humor, the ability to juggle several projects at once, a little patience, a love for The United Methodist Church and its people, a sense of mission, and an *occasional* ability to say no.

If you are the electronic communications coordinator, your work and tools will be different from the print person's, but your focus will coordinate with that of other communications staff and volunteers.

In the Beginning

This resource will help you answer vital questions related to communications; yet, it represents one foot in the water, just breaking the surface. If needed, you will want to tap additional resources for more in-depth discussion.

If you are new to this role, we expect that you will need answers to four basic questions:

1. What is my job?
2. Where do I begin?
3. How do we reach people in the congregation?
4. How do we make our church more visible in the community?

Where Do I Start?

As part of your work, ask yourself, “What do communications for this church look like? What *should* communications look like, and how do I make it happen?” The answers will change over time, but the questions are a good point from which to launch a journey of discovery.

You know the adage, “It’s not *what* you know; it’s *who* you know.” That is also a good place to start—finding the people who will support your efforts. The United Methodist Church is connectional, which means all United Methodist churches connect in various ways, and help is available through the connection.

- Get clarity on the expectations of your position.
- Learn about your annual conference.
- Contact the conference director of communications, the district office, and other local church communicators.
- Understand what you bring to the position and develop a concept of what local church communications means for your local church.
- Form a communications team.

Know Your District and Annual Conference

As a brief review, your local church is in a *district* within an *annual conference*. A district superintendent oversees several churches in the district. Get to know the superintendent and administrative specialist in your district office.

The district superintendent and administrative specialist likely publish a newsletter and maintain a website. It is critical for you to access this information for promotion of district events and ministries, as well as local church events through the district. Ask for

placement on newsletter mailing lists—and ask how you can serve the communication needs of the district.

In the United States, an annual conference may include churches in one, part of one, or more than one state. A bishop leads each annual conference. The United States has nearly 60 annual conferences; the number changes as annual conferences merge. The number of churches in annual conferences ranges from 200 to more than 1,000. (Europe, Asia, and Africa include about 70 annual conferences.)

Tap into the Annual Conference

The annual conference office employs a staff that works with all aspects of ministry, including a director of communications. Early in your new position, call the director. (You should be able to obtain contact information from the conference website or from your pastor.)

Ask the conference communicator for advice with the following:

- Which programs, resources, and workshops would be useful to a new local church communicator?
- When the conference is promoting ministry opportunities or sponsoring events, for example, what is your role in terms of promotions?
- What criteria make a story in your church a good subject for conference news? Check the conference website and Facebook page often for ideas and resources.

Who are the other local church communicators with whom you could visit? Learning how others walk the path will save you time and stress.

ACTION ITEM: Visit your annual conference’s website to gain ideas from its content.

Get Acquainted with General Agencies

The annual conference is part of the general church, along with 13 general boards and agencies. United Methodist Communications in Nashville, Tennessee, the denomination’s official communications agency, tells the church’s story around the world. United Methodist Communications offers tools, services, training, and resources that inform, inspire, and engage local churches to carry out the mission of the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

ACTION ITEM: Visit www.UMCom.org and check out the websites of other general agencies, such as Discipleship Ministries, the General Board of Global Ministries, and The United Methodist Publishing House. You will find resources to support many of your assignments. Find a full list of agency website and contact information on pages 37 and 38 of this Guideline.

Build a Communications Team

Because it is difficult for one person to plan, implement, and evaluate local church communications effectively, a team-based approach is the best option for brainstorming ideas and spreading the work and opportunities.

Consider the following as you build your team:

- Who should serve on the team?
- If the size of your congregation allows, include members on your committee who work and/or volunteer in communications fields such as:
 - o writing,
 - o photography,
 - o digital/social marketing/communications,
 - o public relations,
 - o advertising.
- Include people who are new to the church.
- Invite members from various age groups who enjoy trying new strategies. Youth and young adults should have their own communications conversations and have a voice on the team. (See the Guideline for Small-Group Ministries for ideas on working with your committee.)

After assembling your team, decide how often you will meet and for what reasons. If the team is a working group, empower members to take on assignments. The next order of business is to create an understanding of local church communications.

ACTION ITEM: Give all team members a copy of or access to this resource. In addition, you may want to invite a communicator from another congregation—or from the annual conference office—to visit and provide insights.

Identify Communication Needs

Performing startup research will help your team to chart a road map for success. One way to find your destination is to ask an important question: What do we want to happen or to be different because of effective communications?

Take three important steps during this process:

1. Ask church leaders. Spend time with the pastor, communications team, and church council to learn about their goals for more effective communication. Afterward, establish your agreed-to goals in concrete terms and write them down. Here are a few examples:

- We want 10 percent more of our congregation to be involved in hands-on mission work.
- We want to increase Special Sunday offerings by 5 percent.
- We want the congregation and others to have access to daily devotional resources.
- We want to have our special services included on community calendars in newspapers and on radio.

2. Listen to the congregation. Specificity will help your team choose effective communications strategies. Ask church members what information they want and how they want to receive it. What do they want to know about the church and its ministries to help them grow spiritually as disciples of Jesus Christ?

To improve your team's listening options, consider these ideas:

- Survey the congregation by written/electronic questionnaires and/or listening sessions.
- Distribute printed questionnaires to reach a large portion of the congregation.
- Encourage participation in information gathering with a note or statement from the pastor.
- In your surveys, list your current methods of communication and ways you might communicate in the future. Ask for preferences and comments.
- Because differences in age, background, and level of church involvement will affect responses, ask demographic questions (age, frequency of church attendance, church activities, etc.) in a respectful manner.
- Consider holding listening groups to glean preferences and new ideas. As a side benefit, people participating in these groups often are motivated to take an active role in creating solutions. If you do not want to be this formal, just ask people what they think during normal conversation.
- Include church leaders, such as Sunday school teachers, United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women, lay leaders, youth leaders, and, of course, the pastor(s) to find out what communications they need to do their jobs better.

3. Share findings among the communications team. As a team, study the surveys and identify trends. Through this effort, the types of communications people want and the ways they prefer to receive messages should emerge. Note differences in the demographics of responses. These will become your different audiences (more on that later). With experience and this information in hand, you and the team will become the experts in addressing your church's communications needs.

Now, combine the goals from leadership and the needs from the congregation to create a plan. Going forward, the team will create, implement, and evaluate that plan. Speak to your leaders and to the congregation about the survey results and your plans for reaching strategy goals. Survey participants will appreciate the communication as confirmation of their partnership in ministry.

Build Community

Communications is about not only providing information but also building community among the congregation and other people associated with the church. A veteran local church communicator points out, "People can only get involved if they know what's going on. Ministry and education are done in community, and communication is what creates and helps maintain that community."

Effective communication makes people feel valued and provides connection to meaningful experiences and relationships. Being a valued member in a community of believers inspires people to share the same love and caring with others. This is what John Wesley called a response to God's transforming grace in our lives.

Communication helps the congregation:

- grow spiritually,
- be uplifted,
- feel a part of the church community,
- participate actively in the life of the church,
- make informed decisions (about giving, for example).

Assess Your Communications Tools

After learning your church's communications needs, audit the communication tools your church currently uses or may plan to use. This is an effective way for team members to express their opinions and their passion for communications. Discuss the ways to share information and to build community through communications that fit your church's unique needs.

ACTION ITEM: Break into small groups and assign the group a few of the tools until you have assigned all the tools. Report and discuss in the large group. For each tool, identify:

- Are you using the tool?
- How does it meet identified needs?
- For print and electronic pieces: Are the look, feel, and message consistent? (Do all pieces contain the church logo, for example?)
- How do you rate its effectiveness?
- Should you keep it, improve it, or drop it?
- If not in use, is it applicable in the future?

Communications Tools and Resources

Announcement fliers	Outdoor advertising
Brochures/bulletin inserts	Podcasts
Bulletin boards	Posters
Bumper stickers	Pulpit announcements
Church directory	Radio broadcasts/radio ads
Church website	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.)
Clothing w/church logo	YouTube, Instagram, Door hangers, Pinterest, etc.)
Direct mail	Table displays
DVDS	Television ads
Email and e-newsletters	Text messaging
Handwritten notes	Web-based discussion groups
Invitational Sundays	Welcome packets
Newspaper ads	
Online advertising	

Plan Ahead

It is time to plan for the next 18 months. By creating a “big picture” plan this far ahead, your team has greater assurance of implementing its plans. While January may seem too early to make detailed plans for a June vacation Bible school, it is not. Here is how:

Develop a Calendar

- With your pastor, church council chair, communications committee, and a large 18-month planning calendar, identify the important times and major events in the church year, including Special Sunday offering times. The official United Methodist program calendar may be useful (see Resources, page 36). If you are not certain of exact dates, indicate the month in which they are likely to happen.
- Determine if your publicity should center on one event (vacation Bible school) or multiple events and activities (Advent and Christmas season).
- Identify the audiences for your communication and what tools you will want to use. Estimate what budget you will need—and plan how to fund it.
- Set a date to make your plans and dates for implementation. Note: It is common to begin planning even before you finalize all details.
- Within a week or two following an event or season, evaluate your efforts—and begin planning for next year.

Next Steps

- Use your 18-month calendar information to develop an *overall* communications plan. Address the goals identified in your discussion with church leaders. Also, look for times of the year when your church calendar is less full.
- Identify ministries and missions you wish to publicize. Maybe you provide a food ministry to the community or offer enrichment activities for neighborhood children year around. How will you build awareness and participation in the congregation and community? How about “Thanksgiving in June” to restock the food pantry?

ACTION ITEM: With your team members, identify all the stories you would like to tell about the church. Decide which communication channels will tell them best.

Create a Communications Plan

As you list your events and opportunities, keep this in mind: “6 times, 3 ways.” The key is repetition. The goal is to find ways to expose your audience(s) to your church’s message

six times in at least three different ways. Perhaps this includes two postings in the newsletter, one month on the bulletin board, six weeks on a banner, personal contact/presentation, a phone call, and/or a bulletin insert. At the bare minimum, post regularly on your church's website.

In addition, consider hands-on experiences that engage all your audience's senses—sight, sound, touch, and even smell in some cases!

Sample Communications Plan Outline

The following is an outline of a communications plan appropriate for single events or activities. Adapt it to present your full communications plan.

I. Objectives

What do we want to accomplish?

How will this event advance the church's vision and mission?

II. Communications

- A. What is our message? (Force yourself to write this in one sentence!)
- B. Who is the intended audience?
- C. What three (or more) communication tools will best reach the audience?
- D. How will we deliver the message so people see it six times?
- E. What communications barriers can we anticipate, and how will we overcome them?

III. Implementation

- A. Who will coordinate and monitor this communications plan?
- B. What is our timeline for implementing each part of the plan?
- C. Who is responsible for each task?
- D. What checkpoints ensure the plan is working?

IV. Budget

What will be the cost? Consider finances, time, and volunteers.

V. Evaluation

- A. How will we assess what we did?
- B. Do we need immediate follow-up?
- C. What will we do differently next time?

Strengthening Your Existing Methods

Take an opportunity to note your team's communication successes and to determine how to build on them. For example, study the four primary ways your church communicates with members. Now ask yourself and your team: Can we make those tools even more effective?

Begin this effort by outlining your primary communications approaches. Here is an example:

Communicating with the Congregation

- Weekly email updates
- Face-to-face sharing: setting aside time during the church service for personal stories of outreach, etc.
- Newly designed worship bulletin that contains information about opportunities to serve and join in ministry together
- Start or expansion of a church Facebook page

Communicating with the Community

- Weekly advertisement in the newspaper
- Upcoming events in community calendars
- Monthly news releases about special people, ministries, or community involvement

Welcoming Guests and Visitors

- Brochure and video about the church
- Newcomer packet with church brochure, Q&A sheet, bookmark, or magnet with a memorable message “Brought to you by _____”
- Welcoming training for the congregation (available through United Methodist Communications)

Using Strategic Public Relations

- Participation in community-wide events (parades, special observances)
- Classes to meet the needs of the neighborhood or community. As an example, residents of one neighborhood needed to know about pest control. The church provided that information.

Engaging Internal and External Audiences

- Website evaluation and update: Consider the benchmarks you use. If a team member has knowledge of website analytics, ask him or her to provide a dashboard related to audience use of your site.

Create the Tie That Binds

Your church stands as a place of faith, love, and hope to both members and visitors. To help your church maintain and grow in stature in your community, your team should create a consistent look and feel throughout all print and electronic materials. This includes business cards (for laity as well as clergy), letterhead, brochures, newsletters, fliers, and your church’s website.

Consider The United Methodist Church’s denominational promise of “Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.” We take seriously and embrace that statement. We encourage churches to proclaim it through everything from websites to T-shirts. The same applies to our denomination’s Cross-and-Flame logo. By adopting these visual standards for your local

church, you are joining the identity of United Methodist churches around the world and establishing a sense of belonging among members. See Resources, page 36, for information on obtaining and using these communications tools.

The rest of this resource highlights information that will provide support for developing your communications plans. Talk with your conference communicator about various training opportunities.

Know Your Audiences

Your audiences' actions and reactions have real influence on your communications campaign. How do you determine which audiences are best served by your messages? Begin by identifying the audiences you want to reach by family life-cycle groups (unmarried, newly married, full nest, empty nest), generation, lifestyle, and any other relevant factors. Within each group are subgroups. Consider these differences as you develop your messages and plans.

With this guidance at your side, you are ready to help your church reach out in more powerful and personalized ways than ever before.

Select the Right Vehicle

If your communications plan is a road map, what vehicles will you use to get to your destination? The next several pages outline various options.

The Church Newsletter

A good newsletter can be one of the most effective tools for your church or ministry. Far more people will see a print or e-newsletter than hear a weekly sermon. A newsletter can be a great vehicle for advancing your church's vision and mission. Conversely, a poor-quality newsletter can have a negative or embarrassing effect.

Many local churches use both print and electronic newsletters, and post them on the website after you send them. You can create electronic newsletters in the body of an email or using HTML formatting. HTML creates the ability to add color, font styles, and layout. We will talk more about HTML best practices later. Newsletters make it simple to send timely messages to your entire church or targeted messages to specific groups, such as worship leaders, ushers, or Sunday school teachers. They can direct readers to the website for additional information.

Why Publish a Newsletter?

The purpose of the church newsletter should be to *educate, inform*, and, most of all, *boost and sustain congregational morale*—a key ingredient in community building. Boosting morale means including stories that make the church stand out in the community, such as how much money the congregation raised in the CROP walk compared with the rest of the community. It also means explaining issues affecting the church, such as new construction or receiving a new pastor, and addressing readers' questions and concerns. Listen to questions you hear the congregation ask. Reflect on people's needs identified earlier in this Guideline. Think about how to create content that meets those needs.

Newsletters and website stories can include new-member profiles, issues, activities, interpretations of numbers and actions, and information about the structure and polity of the denomination. In the stories, answer for the reader, "How does this affect me?" or "What does it mean?" Use the newsletter to stimulate interest in service and ministry by highlighting opportunities and putting a face to those opportunities through readers' real-life experiences. Remember, you are a storyteller.

Readers will look for names of people they know. Highlight a volunteer or member each month. Let their stories of service and faith walk encourage others. Use photographs! Our brains process images 60,000 times faster than text. This is why images capture such

interest. A calendar of events is especially helpful. Short summaries of general church news from UMC.org and United Methodist News Service and of district or conference news help to keep people involved with our connectional system. Conduct readership surveys every 18 months to learn what people want.

Who Is the Newsletter Audience?

The primary audience for the newsletter is the congregation. Beyond that, the newsletter can serve as a news source and public relations tool. You may choose to send it to guests and visitors, media representatives, other clergy, district and conference communicators, members in the armed services, missionaries, college students, former members who have moved away, people who have participated in or contributed to the church or its ministry, and medical offices and other places with waiting rooms.

Tips for Effective Print Newsletters

- Find an attractive format and theme and stick with it. This theme will be a part of your brand and help people identify your church in the community. You may want to use a template that is part of your word-processing program. The newsletter style you select portrays an image of the church: traditional, contemporary, and so forth.
- Most readers find 12-point type for body copy comfortable. Headlines should be larger and in boldface, and should create interest in the story.
- A two- or three-column format works best. The ideal line has seven or eight words, between 40 and 50 characters.
- Put the most important story on the top of Page 1 under the nameplate. Discourage the pastor from putting his or her column here.
- Use provocative titles, but do not dupe people into reading a story that is not as good as the title suggests. Use Google or other search engines to search your main theme. Use the titles in search results to spark good ideas for your title.
- Write stories that give a “face” to the church and its ministries.
- Use statistics and figures to report the successes AND failures of certain ministries. Knowing when to end a program is just as important as knowing when to continue it, so full reporting will help when people need to make important decisions.
- Write about what is coming up, not so much about what has already happened.
- Remember the readers who will only glance at the newsletter for 30 seconds. What will catch their attention?
- Use standing columns that people will look for each time.
- Highlight members’ names in bold.
- Remember to include who, what, when, where, why, and how in all stories.
- Recruit others to edit and proofread.

Tips for Effective E-Newsletters

- Always offer recipients the option to subscribe or unsubscribe.
- For e-newsletters, consider using a simple email service such as Constant Contact

or MailChimp. These services have ready-made templates and tools that make producing your e-newsletter much easier. MailChimp has a great nonprofit program that allows free sends and reporting.

- Create a subject line that identifies your church or ministry e-newsletter and lists the theme of the e-newsletter or the lead article.
- Mix both internal and external content in your newsletter. If you have no exciting internal content, you might search the Web for an excellent resource, devotional, or story. High engagement will keep people from unsubscribing and translate into higher overall opens and clicks.
- Create a table of contents at the top of the e-newsletter to help readers navigate easily and locate articles they want to read.
- Remember: Articles can be as long or thorough as you want, providing everything is concise and interesting. Google search rewards thorough content, but penalizes if content is not engaging.
- Do not put full articles in the e-newsletter. It should include only a summary and link to the full article. Keep summaries short (just like the average Web surfer's attention span). Strive for 20- to 60-word summaries.
- Review analytics after you send your e-newsletter to see what topics interest your audiences. Plan future content based on that knowledge.
- Keep it consistent. Follow the same template each time to brand your church e-newsletter and help readers identify your church easily.
- Enhance your top articles with a beautiful or engaging photo. Do not go overboard and pair every piece of content with a photo or display an entire photo album. Post the album on your Facebook page or website and create a link in the e-newsletter.
- Create a plain text version of your e-newsletter for recipients who can only receive plain text. Most email service providers have this feature built in so you can create an all-text version with minimal effort.
- Set a delivery schedule. Send e-newsletters at least once a month to keep the lines of communication open. Try to stick to the same day and week so people anticipate recurring news and calendar updates.
- Always provide your church's physical address, phone number, and links to your website and social media pages. Group these elements in the same place of each e-newsletter for easy reference.

Email

Email can keep the congregation connected in ways we once thought impossible. Email provides a wonderful opportunity to share news on short notice, such as illness, deaths, or job openings; promote your church; publicize activities; and grow your ministry with little to no cost. Save trees and money!

Targeting your message is easy with emails as you can maintain different lists for different ministries. Growing your ministry is as simple as hitting "Forward." People are more likely to spread your message with the "Forward" button on their email account than to

share something they read on paper. This will increase your church's exposure and keep your members informed.

Just follow these quick tips and remember always to proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.

- Typically, choose email (as opposed to an e-newsletter) when you have one special thing you are trying to communicate or one special action that you would like recipients to take.
- The subject line may be the most important part of your email. To pique reader interest, make sure subject lines and messages are concise and relevant. Techniques include using fascination, asking questions, providing advice, creating urgency, using seasonal themes, and including a VIP's name. Just be careful not to use fascination or urgency if the email content is not interesting enough to warrant that type of subject. Sometimes you have to push boring content. In those cases, to avoid unsubscribes, be extra transparent about the content.
- Aim to keep subject lines between 25 and 50 characters.
- Your call to action should not be subtle; it should be simple, clear, and located front and center at the top of the email. Everything else should support that one call to action. You may include a secondary call to action, but make it less prominent and place it further down. If the information is not relevant to the stated call to action, it should probably be in another email.
- Using bold headlines and bulleted lists, tell recipients why they should act. This helps engage people who like to skim.
- Go big. Include big buttons, big headlines, and ample space between elements to avoid clutter. Recipients are much more likely to click a linked button than a text link.
- Email "from names" should be the church or ministry, not the name of an individual.
- If you use an email service provider such as Constant Contact or MailChimp (as opposed to a Web or desktop email client like Outlook or Gmail), the domain (e.g., @firstUMC.org) in the "from name" should always be the same. It will probably be the domain of your church website. This will help with deliverability issues and get your emails into recipients' inboxes instead of their spam folders. You can change anything before the @ symbol, but that should stay consistent, too.
- Use the BCC (blind copy) field to contact groups. This ensures recipients' privacy and keeps them happy if they have not given you permission to share their email addresses. (Note: BCC and CC features are usually not available when using email service providers.)
- Avoid adding large attachments. Put everything in the body of the email or create links to additional information on the Web. Most email service providers do not give attachment functionality unless you pay additional costs.
- Promote your church with an email signature. Most email applications allow you to create a signature to insert automatically each time you send a message. In the signature, include pertinent contact information with links to your website and social media pages.

- Consistently check and respond to incoming email messages to keep lines of communication open.
- Regularly keep track of email address changes and immediately delete contacts who ask for removal from your list.

Church Brochures

Your church may have several brochures. Each must have a particular purpose (such as highlighting one ministry) and carry out that purpose by combining form, design, content, and language to communicate effectively. Yet each should look as if it belongs in the same church family of design.

A basic publicity brochure about the church is especially useful for distribution to new and prospective members. It summarizes the congregation's purposes, ministries, services, and so on. When designing the brochure, ask, "Why would someone be interested in this church?"

Use good quality paper, interesting pictures, compelling graphics, an attractive layout, and succinct, well-written copy. Keep the brochure focused and simple. Assume the reader knows nothing about your program or ministry. Use language the reader understands (remember *audience*). Focus on the human element, and do not be afraid to use "you." If possible, use design elements that tie to the website.

Ways to Use Church Brochures

- Make available in high-traffic areas in the church.
- Mail to neighbors.
- Supply to area real estate agents.
- Include in visitor packets.
- Supply to the local chamber of commerce.
- Send to other ministers.
- Include in a media or press kit.
- Display in area hotels, motels, and transportation terminals.

Website and Web Ministry

With the prevalence of the Internet, church members and seekers increasingly expect churches to have a Web presence, both for basic information and as a tool for evangelism. You can minister to a congregation that is larger than your surrounding community is by maintaining a website and creating a Web ministry. Check your church listing on the online denominational directory at www.UMC.org/find-a-church. It is easy to update your listing any time, right on the site.

Building a Website

Many seekers look at a church's website before they decide to visit. It allows those searching for a church to learn more about the church first.

Here are a few things to consider when building a website:

- Consider the initial purpose and mission of the site. Will you share news and information? Use it as a ministry? Introduce the church?
- Think about your primary audience. Are you targeting church members? Web surfers? Church seekers?
- Visit other local church websites to get ideas for your own. Evaluate what you like about their sites and what you would do differently.
- What is the budget for your website? Consider using online courses and resources to get your website up and running (available at www.umcom.org/training).
- Designate someone to design, administer, and maintain the site.
- Include the following foundational sections: about us, theological background of your church, worship and regular event times, current events, directions to the church, profiles of your pastor(s) and staff, program/ministry descriptions, and basic contact information.
- Provide links to related sites where viewers can get additional information about your activities and The United Methodist Church.
- Make sure your website is mobile friendly.

Creating a Web Ministry

Having a website is just part of growing a dynamic, interactive Web ministry. Web ministry offers avenues of timely, critical response and engagement with members and seekers around the world and helps you connect with billions of Web users 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. Web ministry adapts the unparalleled tools of the Internet to fulfill the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Consider these quick tips for establishing your church's Web ministry:

- Form a team of at least three people who have a passion for using technology as a ministry tool.
- Secure buy-in from key people and groups to ensure everyone is on board with your Web ministry plans and prepared to assist, as needed, to keep the ministry alive.
- Develop a purpose and goals for your ministry that align with your church's overall mission.
- Identify your ministry's target audience and get to know what they expect and need from your online presence.
- Create a podcast. Post weekly sermons or special presentations.
- Consider taking the online Web ministry course for guidance in using Internet tools for ministry at www.umcom.org/YourChurchWebsite. United Methodist Communications also provides turnkey website solutions for your church. Learn more at umcchurches.org.
- Establish a presence on the Web to help your church be accessible, current, accurate, quick, and comprehensive. Show the world how God is at work in your church.

Social Media

Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube are great ways to engage your congregation and help members stay connected between worship services and other church events. They are also a good way to increase visibility of your church and make information available to members, seekers, and visitors for little to no cost.

Used effectively, social media can create engagement, dialogue, and community so that communication is no longer one-way. You are passing along information, creating conversation, and connecting people with one another.

If you are responsible for a social media account, your role is to create and share content, listen, respond, engage, monitor, and moderate. First, you will need to develop a social media strategy that is in line with your overall communications objectives.

When it comes to developing a communications strategy, knowing your audience will make it easier to determine the most relevant information to post.

- Who are your followers (think of them as your subscribers)? You probably have three different types of followers: members and regular attendees, potential visitors who have yet to visit, and organizations or people in the community who are interested in keeping up with what is going on at your church.
- Who is the primary audience you want to reach? What do you hope to accomplish? This helps in deciding the messages and themes to post and in prioritizing your time and energy to create meaningful content.
- What are followers' interests? Possibilities might include children, youth, and adult Bible study classes; choir rehearsals; volunteer opportunities; daily devotions; topics of upcoming sermons; and more.
- What problems can you help them solve? They may want to know times for worship services, how to contact a pastor, or information about a special event.
- Determine how to measure success, whether it is reach, engagement, number of followers, click-throughs, or something else.

Aim for a good mix of content. You can share photos and videos, post events, create discussion groups, pose conversation starters, ask for feedback—in short, get to know one another. You can also post links to stories that are relevant to your congregation, whether related to your local community or the larger global church.

Be sure to cross-promote things already communicated elsewhere. Do you have a new message on the marquee sign? Take a photo and post it. A calendar of events? Post it daily. Trying to decide between two themes for the next sermon series? Ask followers for input and feedback.

A good place to begin is www.umcom.org/socialmedia, which offers a wealth of information about social media strategies and how to use them in ministry.

Videos

Making messages come alive through video can be an effective approach to telling the church's story and putting a face on ministries and programs. Videos have the advantage of

creating images through sight and sound. They can take a person on location and create a mood or an intended emotional response.

One word of caution: Videos/DVDs made for young people need the guidance of a professional or someone who understands the pacing, pictures, music, and graphics necessary to keep a video interesting for the digital media generation.

Before planning to make a video, consider this important point: Does the subject matter lend itself to a video format? That is, can the pictures tell the story? Talking heads are not a good use of your video resources. Video is the medium of action.

Use a story format. For example, if your goal is to explain where apportionment dollars are spent, you might focus on the story of an individual who has benefited from a project made possible by apportionments.

Be mindful of the needs of your audience. Your goal should be to connect the audience to your message: to reinforce their thinking, inform them, make them feel good about the ministries, and inspire them to take action.

UMTV offers compelling video stories of United Methodist church members and ministries changing the world today. Churches can use these features in worship services, Sunday school classes, and other group settings.

Multimedia

Remember “6 times, 3 ways”? Multimedia can help. Perhaps you want to tell the story of a mission trip to encourage others to participate. Write a story for the print newsletter and one for the Web, where you can add pictures and comments from participants, plus a short video clip. Reference the Web story in the newsletter. Put a blurb in the electronic newsletter (maybe even a teaser for an upcoming newsletter story) and link to the Web story. Show the video during coffee time or in the narthex. See how this ties your media together, increases visibility, and says, “Hey, this is important!”

Interpret Connectional Giving

In The United Methodist Church, giving is about people working together to accomplish something bigger than themselves. In so doing, we effect change around the world, all in the name of Jesus Christ.

When we describe the vibrant ways that The United Methodist Church serves Christ, we allow our members to join God's ministry in tangible ways. We do that most effectively as we share stories and provide resources that help pastors and other leaders and that offer members glimpses of how their gifts work around the world.

Telling about these ministries and promoting the support of the churchwide Special Sundays with offerings, the apportioned funds, and The Advance is an important task of your congregation's leadership team. As communications coordinator, you can locate stories and resources and suggest strategies to communicate effectively. Fortunately, materials and people can help. Find important online links in the "Resources" section.

- Consult your pastor first. Resources describing the work of the wider church are available 24/7 online and through regular mailings. Pastors can pinpoint people and resources within your congregation as well as in your region.
- Talk with leaders responsible for missions. They may know regional resource leaders who can provide ideas and stories.
- Check with your conference treasurer or your district office for printed and audio-visual resources that will help tell the story of United Methodist generosity.
- Find many ready-to-use materials online to promote the mission of the global church. Order printed resources for you and your congregation (shipped to you at no expense to your local church). Call United Methodist Communications customer support at 888-346-3862 or shop online.
- Discover "Mission Moments and More." Inspire generous giving through compelling stories, offertory prayers, and newsletter nuggets.
- Subscribe to "Giving Notes," a bimonthly e-newsletter with tips and tools you can use to help your church create generous givers.
- Find comprehensive information about The United Methodist Church and the ways we live out our global mission in the current edition of the *United Methodist Handbook*. Whether you are a church leader, member, or newcomer, you will find it an invaluable resource. It is available free online or by calling 888-346-3862.
- Take a free online course, "Turning Connectional Living into Connectional Giving" (CG101) that will answer many of your questions. You will sharpen your mission storytelling ability, learn how to describe the difference the church makes in the world, and discover how to "make the ask" in your congregation. This interactive

course allows participants to move at their own pace. Discussion forums, simple quizzes, and other activities make the class engaging and participatory.

- Download how-to e-books, social media posts, preaching helps, questions about giving, and other ready-to-use resources. Read stories and watch videos about the ministries supported through our United Methodist giving.
- Order the Official Program Calendar of The United Methodist Church, an excellent source of information.
- Highlight key ministries on United Methodist churchwide Special Sundays. Work with your pastor to schedule these observances. Materials are available to interpret each observance.

Be creative and have fun sharing the stories and connecting your congregation with our church at work around the world.

ACTION ITEM:

- Explore www.umcgiving.org to learn more about connectional giving and to find resources to make your assignment easier.
- Connect your church to the Connectional Giving Facebook page to receive the ongoing updates of new resources at www.facebook.com/umcgiving and make your work easier.

Project a Positive Image

Projecting a positive image is important to your existing congregation and to the community.

Create Visibility in the Community

How do you get people in the community to notice you? You become more visible through invitation, public witness, word-of-mouth, advertising, and good public relations. While publicity about activities is certainly a key element in attracting attention, so are new and exciting programs and ministries that meet the needs of the community and have people talking.

Public Witness as Public Relations

Public relations is a communications tool that seeks to influence attitudes in order to gain support. How your church handles its reputation and image, based upon its witness, affects its public relations. Through outreach ministries, you can demonstrate to the world that faith in Christ is active and that church is not a place, but rather a way of life. That's communication! It tells a story about your church.

Body Language as Public Relations

Congregational communication is not limited to verbal and printed messages. Churches exude a kind of body language that may either reinforce or contradict their other messages. Churches that proclaim, "All are welcome," but ignore visitors are guilty of false advertising at the very least.

Some of the most eloquent messages from your church are unspoken. The church building, the grounds, and the sign are on view 24 hours a day. All of them send silent signals that may affect the way people perceive your church.

As communications coordinator, it may be your responsibility to see that everything connected to your church carries out its vision and mission in a positive way.

The saying, "You have only one chance to make a good first impression" might have been coined for church communications. Studies have shown that visitors make up their minds in the *first 11 minutes* whether or not they are coming back to a church. That time is usually spent finding a parking place, locating the proper entrance, being greeted, and finding a seat.

No matter how eloquent the sermon, unspoken messages often shape a visitor's opinion long before the service begins!

Body Language Tips:

- The **church sign** should be at right angles to the street in front of the building, visible to people driving in both directions. It should be seen easily from the far lane with letters large enough to be read from a moving car. Include worship times—and if those times change on a particular Sunday, be sure to change them on the sign. Never underestimate the invitation value of your sign!
- The **church grounds** should reflect cleanliness, order, and harmony. Good landscaping, neatly trimmed grass, and an absence of leaves and litter indicate a high level of pride. We hear stories of people deciding to attend a church because of how neatly the church grounds are maintained. Clearly mark buildings and doors so a visitor will know where to enter.
- Make sure the **church entrance** is well lighted and inviting. Mark bathrooms clearly, and place directional signs in the foyer leading to the nursery and the church office.
- **Bulletin boards** may be one of the first things a person notices inside the church. These should convey a positive image of the church and connect church members to it. They should evolve constantly to reflect the changing dynamics of church life. If they do not change, people quit looking at them.

Telephones as Public Relations

Telephones provide personal contact and reflect the church. A caller will decide in the first few moments of contact whether your faith community is friendly, professional, and reliable.

Voice mail may be the first point of contact with your church, so it is an important element in successful communications. After hours, the voice on your answering machine should be cheerful, enthusiastic, and friendly. Especially on weekends, your recorded message should include the church address and times of the services, and a number for emergencies, *but little more*. Invite the caller to leave a detailed message and make sure to return all calls promptly.

Welcome as Public Relations

As prospective new members, visitors are a transfusion into the lifeblood of the church. If your communications evangelism brought the visitors to the church, then they are your invited guests. Congregations are discovering how important it is to practice intentional invitation and develop a welcoming lifestyle.

Assist People with Special Needs

Integral in being welcoming is providing accessibility for those with limiting physical conditions. With an aging population, it is a benefit worth promoting. Include the accessibility logo in ads and posters. Provide clear directions to accessible entrances. Advertise services with Deaf interpretation.

Media Ministry: Send the Word

Even as your church prepares to carry out meaningful events and ministry in your area, you may encounter challenges that hinder successful communication. With that in mind, here are three ways to jumpstart your media efforts with a limited budget:

1. Build on the foundation of The United Methodist Church's national advertising. Our advertising presence runs throughout the year. Research indicates that people who are not currently involved in church are receptive to spiritual messages during Lent (the weeks before Easter), back-to-school (August–September), and Advent (right before Christmas). The United Methodist Church places national advertising during these special times, as well as during times of disaster to provide messages of hope and help. To learn more, contact your conference communicators and visit www.umcom.org/rethinkchurch.

2. Reach out to seekers with Rethink Church. The Rethink Church website is more than a thought-provoking online presence related to faith-based actions. It is also a destination for modern ideas about ministry and about how to live one's faith beyond the church walls. Part of that outreach involves creative elements available to help local churches build a multimedia presence. In addition, media purchased by The United Methodist Church to emphasize Rethink Church are customized to specific audiences that have an interest in faith but are not affiliated with a denomination.

Church Story Possibilities for Media Attention

- New staff members in key positions
- Notable guests
- Outstanding volunteers
- Response to disasters
- Unique or new programs or approaches
- Community initiatives and events
- Record-breaking or award-winning projects
- Travel by congregation members involving a special activity
- Participation by staff or members in national or international meetings
- Construction/remodeling, both beginning and completion
- Local angles to national religious stories

3. Send news releases about your ministries. Writing a news release is about effective storytelling. Use Google or other search engines to research advice for proper structure of a news release. The point is to help your reader navigate the story easily with a quick read. Later, follow up with contacts at media outlets to make sure they received the release, and make yourself available to answer questions.

Maintain Good Media Relations

Learn to work effectively with the local media. Get to know reporters who cover church and community news for the daily paper, the news directors at popular radio stations, the editor of the local weekly newspaper, and other reporters who cover the type of stories you are promoting. Build good working relationships with them. Learn about their needs, deadlines, and policies; what they consider newsworthy; and what kinds of stories run most often.

Compile a list of names of reporters, editors, and news directors, along with their phone numbers and email addresses. Be sure to spell names accurately, and update your list regularly.

Reporters are not interested in giving publicity to people and churches. They are looking for news stories that interest people. You can help them find those stories. Frame your story in a way that shows why it is significant for the local community and how it influences people outside the church. In other words, consider your audience and ask yourself how this news relates to them. Don't wear out your welcome with the media by sending what news reporters consider mundane stories about the church bake sale or the Wednesday night potluck. When sending a news release to a print publication, include a high-quality photo, if appropriate. The more distinctive or original the photo, the more likely it is to be used.

Television stations will be more interested in reporting your story if it has a creative or unique visual element. An event or activity that is out of the ordinary is more apt to attract television cameras.

Once you establish a relationship, ask all your media contacts if they want you to put them on your church mailing list to receive the newsletter and other special mailings. *Update your media contact list frequently.*

Explore the Media

Imagine the impact on the early church had print or broadcast media existed centuries ago. Today, our messaging capabilities are much greater, yet a litany of communications that demand our attention bombard us daily. Understanding your audience's day-to-day media habits will help your team consider all of the communication channels available, and the extent to which each fits your needs.

- **TV.** Television conveys emotions and images that reflect the message you want to communicate. However, when broadcast television is unaffordable or unavailable, local cable television may be an option.
- **Radio.** If you know your audience, radio will help you reach them through specialized formats such as adult contemporary, rock, and talk. Do not choose radio,

however, if your church is far from the metropolitan area where a station is located. You may end up spending money on messages to an audience who will not attend your church because of distance.

- **Daily Newspapers.** This medium skews to an older audience. If your target audience is people without a church home, consider placing your ad in the sports, business, or classified sections. If you are trying to attract someone looking for a church, put your ad in the religion section.
- **Community Newspapers.** Generally published weekly, these focus on a smaller area, which gives them a longer shelf life than dailies.
- **Billboards.** The more desirable the location, the more expensive billboards can be. Use no more than seven words of copy with professionally done artwork. The message must be eye-catching and easily understood from a moving automobile within two to three seconds.
- **Direct Mail.** This medium is about precision. Each item can reach an exact address. Mailings for church events are best when sent six to eight weeks before an event. The key to success in direct mail is an accurate mailing list and clear instructions for the intended call to action.
- **Wearables.** A T-shirt is a traveling advertisement for your church. As with billboards, keep your message simple.
- **Online Advertising.** Keep it simple: United Methodist Communications can assist you with media planning and buying to ensure efficiency. For more information, call 877-281-6535 or email Rethinkchurch@umcom.org.

Venture Forth

ACTION ITEM: Have committee members identify three things they found most important or useful in this Guideline. Discuss how the committee will put those things in place.

You are not alone in your work. You have your conference director of communications, United Methodist Communications, and a host of colleagues throughout the connection. Consider joining the United Methodist Association of Communicators or attending its annual meeting. For more information, talk with your conference communicator and go to www.umcommunicators.org. Contact the staff at United Methodist Communications in Nashville, Tennessee, at 888-278-4862 to let them know you are a local church communicator and want to participate in the life of United Methodist Communications.

Thank you for your work. Know that most church communicators pray for patience, more help, and more hours in the day. Be blessed as you select the most important things you can do.

Here is expert advice from a local church communicator:

First and always, pray about your calling.

Second, keep a sense of humor. Someone always wants something at the last minute.

Third, accept that you will never get everything done. Just do your best—and pray some more.

Resources

Official website of The United Methodist Church: www.umc.org.

United Methodist Communications (UMCom); communications agency of The United Methodist Church: www.umcom.org.

Advertising plan for a local church: Call 877-281-6535 or email Rethinkchurch@umcom.org.

Communications technology for social good: umcom.org/ict4d.

Communications training: www.umcom.org/training.

Connectional Giving: www.umcsgiving.org.

Customer service: 888-346-3862 or email csc@umcom.org.

Find-A-Church online directory: www.find-a-church.org.

InfoServ, United Methodist Information Service: www.infoserv.umc.org.

Local church communication-audit resources: www.umcom.org/ccresources.

Local church marketing: www.umcom.org/churchmarketing.

Rethink Church events (advertising grants): www.umcom.org/impactcommunity.

Social media ministry: www.umcom.org/socialmedia.

TechShop (discount hardware, software, and Web solutions): www.umcom.org/techshop.

Web ministry: www.umcom.org/webministry.

Welcoming ministry: www.umcom.org/welcoming.

Connectional Giving

Learn about connectional giving: www.umcsgiving.org

Subscribe to “Giving Notes”: www.umcsgiving.org/why-we-give to subscribe

Connect your congregation to the Connectional Giving Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/umcsgiving

Order Special Sunday materials: <http://www.umcsgiving.org/pastors/resources>

Use “Mission Moments and More” and other resources: www.umcsgiving.org/pastors

Explore The United Methodist Church’s mission: www.umc.org

Check out the United Methodist handbook: <http://shop.umc.org/giving/connectional-giving> or www.umcsgiving.org/umc-handbook. Korean or Spanish digital editions: www.koreanumc.org and www.hispanic.umc.org. French, Portuguese, and German digital versions: www.shop.umc.org.

Order the Official Program Calendar of The United Methodist Church:

<http://shop.umc.org/category/search/2017-calendars/400>

Take a free online course, “Turning Connectional Living into Connectional Giving”:

<http://www.umcom.org/learn/connectional-giving>

Contact United Methodist Communications Customer Support Team: www.shop.umc.org

Ethnic Communications

Hispanic/Latino communications resources, www.hispanic.umc.org.

Korean communications resources, www.koreanumc.org.

Publications and Resources

Interpreter (United Methodist Communications), official ministry magazine of The United Methodist Church: www.interpretermagazine.org.

MyCom (communications e-newsletter from United Methodist Communications): www.umcom.org/mycom.

Official United Methodist Program Calendar (United Methodist Communications): call 888-346-3862 or order online at www.umcom.org/store.

Speaking Faith: The Essential Handbook for Religion Communicators (Religion Communications Council): order at www.religioncommunicators.org.

The Church Communications Handbook by Wanda Vasallo (Kregel Publishing, 1998); ISBN 9780825439254; a comprehensive look at local church communications: available at www.cokesbury.com.

United Methodist News Service (news, videos, features, photographs from United Methodist Communications), official news agency of The United Methodist Church: www.umns.umc.org.

UMTV (video stories about people making a difference from United Methodist Communications): www.umtv.org.

Organization

Religion Communicators Council: www.religioncommunicators.org.

United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC): www.umcommunicators.org.

UMC Agencies & Helpful Links

General Board of Church and Society, www.umc-gbcs.org, 202-488-5600; Service Center, 1-800-967-0880

General Board of Discipleship (d/b/a Discipleship Ministries), www.umcdiscipleship.org, 877-899-2780; Discipleship Resources, <http://bookstore.upperroom.org>, 1-800-972-0433; The Upper Room, www.upperroom.org, 1-800-972-0433; email: info@umcdiscipleship.org.

General Board of Global Ministries, www.umcmmission.org, 1-800-862-4246 or 212-870-3600; email: info@umcmmission.org

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, www.gbhem.org, 615-340-7400

General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, www.gbophb.org, 847-869-4550

General Commission on Archives and History, www.gcuh.org, 973-408-3189

General Commission on Religion & Race, www.gcorr.org, 202-547-2271; email: info@gcorr.org

General Commission on the Status & Role of Women, www.gcsrw.org, 1-800-523-8390

General Commission on United Methodist Men, www.gcumm.org, 615-340-7145

General Council on Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org, 866-367-4232 or 615-329-3393

Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting (General Commission on United Methodist Men), www.gcumm.org, 615-340-7145

The United Methodist Publishing House, www.umph.org, 615-749-6000; Curric-U-Phone, 1-800-251-8591; Cokesbury, www.cokesbury.com, 1-800-672-1789

United Methodist Communications, www.umcom.org, 615-742-5400; EcuFilm, 1-888-346-3862; InfoServ, email: infoserv@umcom.org; *Interpreter Magazine*, www.interpretermagazine.org, 615-742-5441

United Methodist Women, www.unitedmethodistwomen.org; 212-870-3900

For additional resources, contact your annual conference office.