

Communication in Your Congregation

Church Signs

- ❑ Make sure all signs convey welcome and hospitality.
- ❑ Post a directional sign to your church along the nearest major road.
- ❑ Designate your parking lot and especially visitor parking spaces.
- ❑ Designate handicap parking.
- ❑ If not naturally apparent to a newcomer, note which door is the main entry.
- ❑ Provide directional signs inside for rest rooms, the office, nursery, etc.
- ❑ Locate your church sign in front of your church so that it is easily seen and read from all approaches.
- ❑ Erect the sign so that it is perpendicular to the street or road and as close to it as possible.
- ❑ Use large and plain letters in an uncomplicated design.
- ❑ Include a descriptive phrase such as “A Welcome Place.”
- ❑ Include the times for worship and Sunday school.
- ❑ Include the church and the pastor’s telephone numbers.
- ❑ Keep the information on the sign current.
- ❑ Light up the sign at night especially if it’s located on a busy roadway or thoroughfare.

This handout provided by the Northeastern Ohio Synod Communications Committee
Written by Pastor Walter Jordan

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A Church Brochure

- ❑ Design your brochure with the unchurched in mind.
- ❑ A tri-fold works best for layout and readability.
- ❑ Take care that the text is well written and attractive.
- ❑ Don’t use more than two or three different fonts.
- ❑ Use the brochure to **introduce** your congregation.
- ❑ Keep it simple and uncluttered. Don’t make the mistake of saying too much.
- ❑ Avoid your church history. Unchurched folks can’t identify with it.
- ❑ Avoid using “churchy” language such as “fellowship” or “chancel” or “Holy Week”, etc.
- ❑ Include a picture of your church and a small map locating it in your community.
- ❑ Include pictures of people with captions.
- ❑ Give basic information about the church’s schedule and introduction of the pastor/pastors.
- ❑ Ask each of your members to carry five brochures in their car, ready for distribution at every opportunity

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Using the Printed Media

- ❑ Be thoughtful in using the printed media like newspapers.
- ❑ The primary goal is to place a mini-gospel message in the community.
- ❑ In the church there are various “points of entry” for newcomers. Although worship is an important entry, remember that most people enter the church where the church best meets their needs.
- ❑ Highlight a specific human need such as loneliness, separation, grief, etc. and highlight your congregation’s ministry that addresses it.
- ❑ To reach the unchurched, be careful which day the ad runs and which page it runs on. Ask yourself on what page you think the unchurched people might best spot a church ad.
- ❑ Newspaper articles in the religion section or on the church page are not effective ways for reaching the unchurched folks in your community.
- ❑ Use outdoor billboards and keep in mind that companies have a certain amount of free public service space available.
- ❑ Use creative bumper stickers such as
“Spirit Happens At a Lutheran Church Near You.”
- ❑ Print and freely distribute business size cards with the name of your church, the mission statement of your church, address, website and phone number.

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Using Radio and Television

- ❑ Because of the cost, consider using this medium to publicize occasional and larger events in the congregation such as Easter or Christmas worship.
- ❑ Submit newsworthy events to the assignment editor of the radio or TV station.
- ❑ Broadcasting a worship service is not the best use of time and resources in reaching the unchurched. It is a good medium to reach the homebound persons of church and community.
- ❑ The program can be “live” or “taped.”
- ❑ Market your program and the time of its broadcast by way of bulletin announcements and letters to homebound persons.
- ❑ To reach the unchurched consider broadcasting 30-second spot announcements which revolve around basic human needs and the fact that help is available at your church. Extend an invitation.
- ❑ Any broadcast should contain a mini Gospel message geared to sensitize people to God or to Christ-like attributes. End each spot with the name of your church, address and either a phone number or website.
- ❑ If your community has one or more cable TV channels assigned for local programming, ecumenically network with other congregations to broadcast a program that represents the entire faith community.
- ❑ Make frequent use of the local cable access channel “bulletin board”. This is sometimes a free service for churches for a brief period of time. Additional time can be purchased for a nominal fee.

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Using the Yellow Pages

- ❑ Studies show that Yellow Pages are used most by those under the age of 40.
- ❑ Yellow page advertising can be effective in reaching new residents and visitors in your community.
- ❑ Create as large an ad as possible and include your advertising theme such as “A Welcome Place,” etc.
- ❑ Be sure to provide worship and other services mentioned at the time noted. Don’t change the schedule after you print the ad.
- ❑ Make sure that your pastor is listed in the Yellow Pages under the heading of “Clergy.”

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The Sunday Bulletin

- ❑ Make your bulletin visitor friendly. Include a statement of welcome and an invitation to register their presence.
- ❑ Make your bulletin easy to read, clear and neat in appearance. When viewed from a distance, does your bulletin appear well laid out?
- ❑ Would you bother to read your bulletin in church or take it home for future reference?
- ❑ If possible print out the liturgy in full text. *Augsburg-Fortress Publishing* has a CD of the liturgy, which can be copied to your bulletin. 1-800-328-4648 or <http://www.augsburgfortress.org/index.asp>
- ❑ Include the name of your congregation, your pastor(s), denomination, address, telephone number(s), website and email address.
- ❑ List all worship participants
- ❑ Note supportive services such as child care during worship and where it is located.
- ❑ Be sure to note Sunday school, time and a contact person with telephone number.
- ❑ Project upcoming events with zest and interest and invite newcomers to be involved.
- ❑ Include notes of thanks and prayers of concern.

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A Friendly Answering Machine

- ❑ Make sure your machine speaks with clear quality sound and good volume.
- ❑ Use a welcoming and energetic voice for an outgoing message.
- ❑ Speak with a comfortable and deliberate pace.
- ❑ Make a **brief** announcement regarding worship times and office hours.
- ❑ Keep the announcement message current.
- ❑ Invite callers to leave a message.
- ❑ Check incoming messages regularly and return calls in a timely fashion.