

Websites & The Small Church: Starting Out

I had a phone call one day. A man called and told me that he and his family just moved to our town and was looking for a church. They had found our website and wanted to get together with my husband and me. (We do the pastoring together.) This is exactly why it's helpful to have a website. It's a way for people to find your church.

This post is the first of a series we'll be doing on websites and small churches who have no website or a very old one. This series is for churches that want to do something but feel overwhelmed. Feel free to print this post out and bring to your next council or deacons or trustees meeting. Share it with your friends at church. To give you a little background, I am a pastor who had no experience with designing websites. A friend set me up. She wanted a way for parents to sign up their kids for VBS. I basically figured it out from there. I don't know any of the technical stuff. This series is to show churches how to have an updated website that isn't too difficult to start and maintain.

The goal of a church website should be to help the general public find and learn about a specific church. The website needs to appeal to all sorts of people – Christians, those who have never gone to church before, and those in the community who might just need a phone number to your church. It has to make sense to someone who isn't already involved with the church. The website is a snapshot of what your church is all about and should reflect who you are already.

Before your church gets started, some workers or volunteers need to be identified. If there's a church secretary who can work on it, that's great! The church I serve does not. I do a lot of the work on the website myself for church I serve, but that might not be every pastor's cup of tea. Here are some volunteers that can be utilized for the website and a short job description:

- ◆ Website creators and updaters – These are the people who create and keep the website updated. If they are able to use Microsoft Word, and are comfortable using the internet, they can do the job. (My husband says if you can use PowerPoint, you definitely create a website. I honestly don't have much experience with PowerPoint, and I can still do it!)
- ◆ Photographers - Churches need pictures! People who already have cameras and take pictures are the ones you want to ask. Get them started now, so you'll have a library full of pictures to use on the website. Especially pictures of people. Website visitors connect with seeing people more than seeing buildings. (Don't worry, you can still include a few facility pictures. Make sure there's a good balance.)
- ◆ Writers – It would be helpful to have some descriptions of what your church does, like ministries, small groups, Christian Education, and blog writers. You may already have some of this done.
- ◆ Calendar keepers – Someone who is familiar with Google calendars can do this job. If they have a smart phone, it's really easy to do!

Next time we'll be exploring some of the technical start up stuff (which really isn't too technical). If you want to jump right in and start right away or have questions, feel free to email me at ck.blackey@gmail.com.

This column will feature a new “tech topic” each month by Kathleen Blackey. Please feel free to email Kathleen directly at ck.blackey@gmail.com

