Your Church Needs a Website.
Might as Well Make it Awesome

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You care deeply about your congregation. You want your church to be a relevant part of your community, engaged and engaging with people, teaching about Christ, serving others and worshipping God.

So, you need a church website.

Already have one? Great, proceed to Section Two. If not, continue.

Section One.
Failure to Compute.

There's really no excuse for not having a website–the online world is growing at an exponential rate and you don't want to be left eating the world's cyber dust. For most people, an organization that doesn't have a website doesn't exist. You can almost guarantee that anyone interested in your church is checking you out online before ever setting foot on church property. They have important questions, and you can provide the answers.

A church website doesn't have to be fancy and it certainly doesn't have to be complicated. Just give the people what they need. What time is service? Where are you located? What are your church's key mission priorities? Is Sunday School offered? Will I be welcome? How can I contact you for more information?

Having these details available on a website is easy–and PCCWeb is here to help.

PCCWeb is a free web hosting and technical support service offered to PCC congregations and groups through the Communications Office of the Life and Mission Agency. Funded through gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*, PCCWeb allows you to quickly and easily set up your church's website using pre-created themes and features. To get started, all you need to do is fill in details about your congregation using an online form. You will then receive log-in information for your new church website using WordPress, a popular online content management system. WordPress is an easy-to-use, intuitive program that enables you to make regular text updates, add photos, post slideshows, list upcoming events and much more.

To learn more about PCCWeb and watch tutorials, visit presbyterian.ca/pccweb. Over 270 churches and groups already have their sites hosted through PCCWeb. Add yours today!

Section Two. World Wide Wow.

Earlier this year, the Communications Office received a phone call from a rather annoyed Mrs. X who was

calling to complain about a local church's website. She was interested in attending a service but couldn't find any information. The church had a website, but the site was poorly maintained and the "Church Hours and Location" page was blank. "Not that I'm planning to attend anymore," she clarified, "I just thought someone should know."

Don't let your website become an online weed. An inaccurate, stagnant website is almost worse than not having a site at all. It can cause people to turn away before they've even walked through your door, so a little attention to your site can go a long way.

There are a few key elements that should be on every good website.

- Current, detailed contact information. A map to your church is nice. A photo of your ministerial team and congregation is extra nice.

- Navigation that makes things easy to find, using clear, descriptive titles such as "Location," "Worship Information," "Contact" and "Sunday School."

- Relevant, timely information. Don't link to the church barbecue from 2009 on your homepage. It may have been a great event, but it's no longer useful. Post the latest news and take down everything else. Your website isn't an archive of church materials—make it a place to highlight only the most appropriate information.

- A clear purpose and message. What is your church's focus? Give visitors an opportunity to get a 'feel' for your congregation. If you're mission-focused, make sure your website reflects that. If you are proud of your community presence, explain it. Make it clear that visitors are welcome. Highlight your church's strong points.

A website isn't just for new people; a good church website is important for current members as well. There is a plethora of information you can share with church members that can help them make the most of their church experience and bring ministry beyond the church walls.

A great church website can:

- provide space to chat with one another or ask questions, and can make sermons more dynamic and interactive. It's difficult to take questions from the pulpit, but when someone needs additional details on your Advent message, posting to an online board or submitting a comment on your website can provide a valuable discussion.

- highlight recent successes and news stories that you can't cover in more detail during announcements.

- offer podcasts of sermons for those who are unable to attend.

- let people know about guest speakers, special events, mission projects and fundraisers. Adding a news item about the upcoming church bowl-a-rama or Christmas toy drive reminds churchgoers to bring ticket money or gifts for donation to the next worship service.

Remember, a helpful church website provides the information visitors are looking for, quickly and easily. Think of your site's layout and navigation from the perspective of someone who isn't familiar with your church. Post a photo of the church building. Would someone know how to find information about Sunday School programs or how to join a committee? Would someone new be familiar with church lingo or should more description be provided?

When no one is available to pick up the church phone, your church website can answer questions and serve as a valuable resource. Internet usage is growing at an exponential rate and Canadians are some of the most voracious consumers of bandwidth.

Your community is online. Shouldn't your church be too?

For more information about PCCWeb or how to improve your church website, visit presbyterian.ca/pccweb or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 243.