

CHURCH LEADER GUIDE

Helping you
communicate
all the good
you can.

Our world is in need of **hope**.
Words of **encouragement**.
Warm messages of **love**.
Stories of **joy**.

It's up to us, as church leaders and disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim God's endless grace to all people.

Effective communication is key, as we seek to cut through the noise and conflict that so often fills our communities, to speak one vital message: **you are loved**.

Communicating love in meaningful ways is at the heart of everything we do at United Methodist Communications.

Partner with us by exploring these tools that will help you and your church **communicate all the good you can**.



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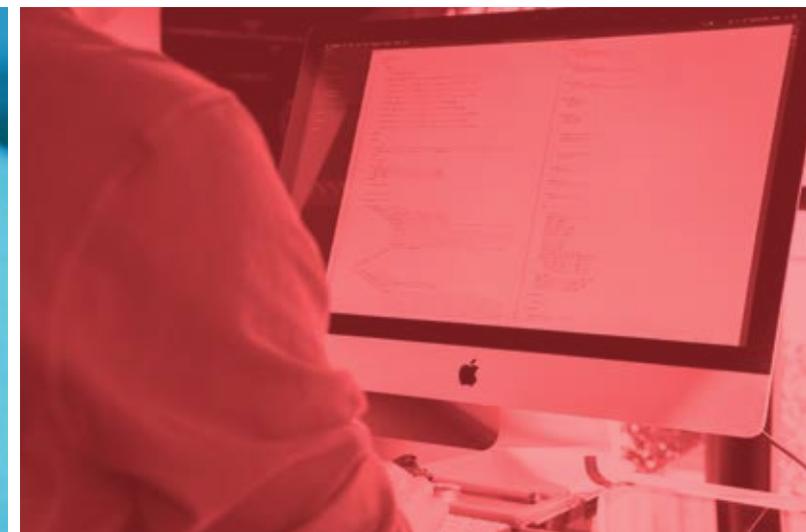
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WE'RE HERE TO **HELP**

CONTACT LIST

LOCAL CHURCH SERVICES
1.888.346.3862
LocalChurchServices@UMCom.org

CONNECTIONAL GIVING
615.312.3573
UMCgiving@UMCom.org

TRAINING
Training@UMCom.org

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS
615.742.5400
UMCom@UMCom.org

UNITED METHODIST NEWS
NewsDesk@UMNews.org

IMPORTANT LINKS

CHURCH MARKETING PLAN TOOL
UMCom.org/marketing-plan

COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES
UMCom.org

CONNECTIONAL GIVING
UMCgiving.org

FIND-A-CHURCH
Find-A-Church.org

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES:
UMCom.org/MyCom

MEMBER INSPIRATION
UMC.org

OUTREACH RESOURCES
Outreach.com/UMC

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
UMC.org/contact

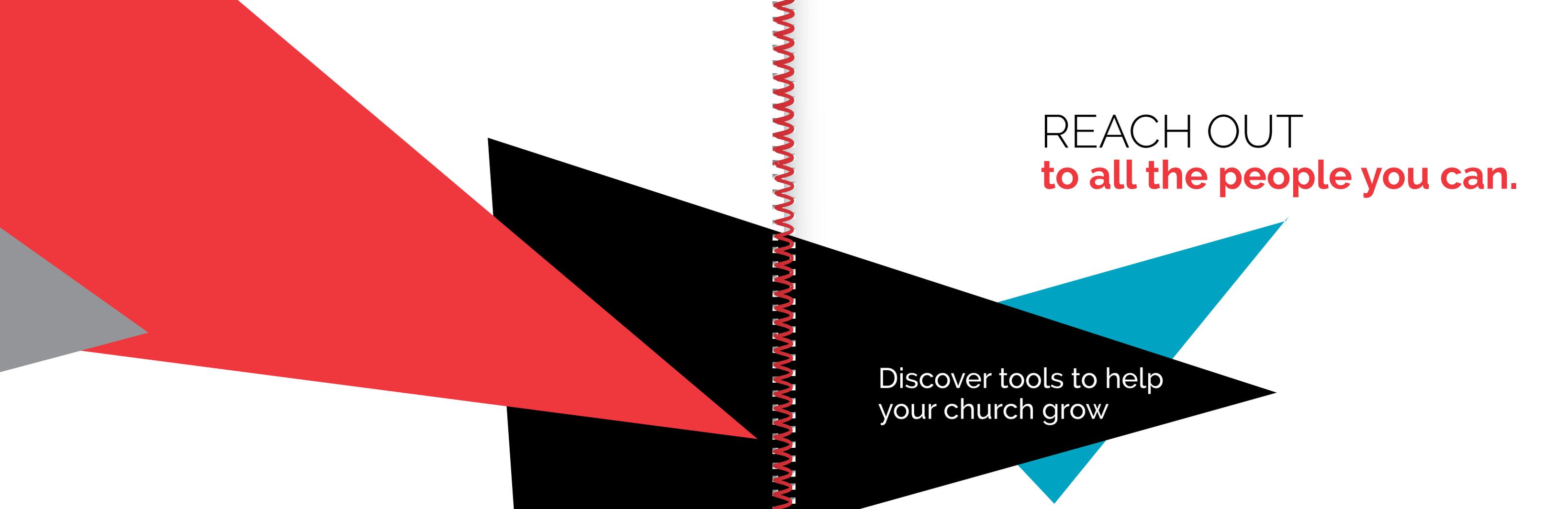
TRAINING
UMCtraining.org

UMCOM SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS
Facebook.com/UMCom
Instagram & Twitter: [@UMCommunication](https://twitter.com/UMCommunication)

UNITED METHODIST HANDBOOK
UMCgiving.org/HandbookLanguages

UNITED METHODIST NEWS
UMNews.org

WEBSITE BUILDING
UMCchurches.org



REACH OUT
to all the people you can.

Discover tools to help
your church grow

PLAN FOR **EFFECTIVE OUTREACH**

If your congregation needs guidance about how to reach out to your community effectively, turn to the **Church Marketing Plan Tool** at [UMCom.org/marketing-plan](https://umcom.org/marketing-plan).

This resource will lead church marketing or outreach teams through two phases:

- ▶ **Research and vision**
Who are we as a church? Who are the spiritual seekers in our community?
- ▶ **Strategy and implementation**
How do we connect with the community in a meaningful way?

Tips, tools and action items are available to support you throughout the process.

When you've completed all of the suggested steps, you'll have a customized, realistic and ready-to-implement marketing plan for your church!

LEARN TO **MARKET YOUR CHURCH**

Training experiences are available to help you deepen your knowledge of church marketing.

The **Church Marketing** online training course leads you and your team through examining, dreaming and planning techniques. Along with the help of the **Church Marketing Plan Tool**, the course will guide you on your journey to prepare an effective church marketing plan.

If you prefer an immersive experience, an in-person training opportunity might be what you are seeking. A **Face-to-Face training** will steer your team and other church leaders as you build a strategic marketing plan to assist as you reach out and connect with the community.

Does your church need extra marketing support?

We can provide marketing services that will help your church reach new people in new ways! Learn more at [UMCom.org/grants](https://umcom.org/grants).

GET STARTED AT
[UMctraining.org](https://umctraining.org)

INSPIRE THE CONGREGATION TO **REACH OUT**

Encourage your congregation to participate in outreach efforts!

- ▶ Ask them to help hang posters on community bulletin boards
- ▶ Invite them to bake cookies or treats, place them into small bags, attach an invitation card and give them to neighbors, friends, coworkers, acquaintances and family members
- ▶ Distribute yard signs to families who live in neighborhoods near the church
- ▶ Remind them to share your social media posts on their personal pages and in homeowner association, special interest or community groups to which they belong

EXPLORE **OUTREACH RESOURCES**

Empowering your congregation to reach out to people in the community is key in connecting your church with surrounding neighborhoods, families and individuals.

Customizable resources are available at Outreach.com/UMC to support your church as you extend warm invitations. The branded tools are designed to offer year-round, seasonal opportunities to spread a message of hope.

- ▶ Black History Month
- ▶ Lent/Easter
- ▶ Back to School
- ▶ Hispanic Heritage Month
- ▶ Advent/Christmas

You can order print resources, such as postcards, invitation cards, banners, yard signs and posters, and download coordinating free digital tools. The suite of resources presents a thoughtful, holistic message of welcome to all who seek opportunities for community connections and deeper meaning in life.

*“A lot of
people ask
about the church.*

*They visit our Facebook
page and go to our church.*

*That’s awesome because we are
reaching more people. Thank you!”*

- THE REV. MAIKEL ROJAS

*Pastor of Tabernáculo de Avivamiento in Louisville, Kentucky,
and New Church Start Grant recipient*

EXPAND AWARENESS OF A **NEW CHURCH**

If your church is less than five years old, a **New Church Start Grant** might be just what you need to build awareness and excitement for your worship and ministry opportunities.

Grants, tailored to each church, may include products and services such as:

- ▶ Marketing strategy consultation
- ▶ Graphics, logo and branding support
- ▶ Social media guidance
- ▶ Website hosting and training
- ▶ Email communication coaching
- ▶ Promotional items

LEARN MORE AND APPLY AT
UMCom.org/grants



PROCLAIM THE
GOOD NEWS
in all the places you can.

Become a digital
messenger of love

CONNECT WITH **VIRTUAL VISITORS**

Many people will visit your church on the web to help them decide if they should visit in person. When people in your community search for nearby United Methodist churches on [Find-A-Church.org](https://www.find-a-church.org), what do they see when they click on your profile?

If you haven't updated your church's profile recently, do it today! You have the opportunity to include contact details, worship times, a map, visitor information, links to your website and social media channels, and more.

Get started!

1. Visit [Find-A-Church.org](https://www.find-a-church.org) and search for your church
2. Click on your church's profile, scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click on the red button titled, "Update church information"
3. Make necessary updates, add information that visitors will need to know and share some details about your congregation

Your efforts to keep your profile updated and welcoming will ensure visitors can connect with your congregation online before they attend an event or worship service!

LEARN ABOUT **WEB MINISTRY**

An important step in creating an engaging and meaningful online presence is ensuring your church has a website that both informs members and welcomes visitors.

Learn more about digital ministry through the **Launching Your Church Website** online training course. The course introduces the tools you need to plan, build and launch an online strategy that will help people connect with your church in a new way.

After you complete the course, you will be able to:

- ▶ **Begin navigating and building a website on the WordPress platform**
- ▶ **Identify your website's target audience**
- ▶ **Establish the goal of your website and your overall message**
- ▶ **Create and design content, menus and proper page structure**

GET STARTED AT
[UMctraining.org](https://www.umctraining.org)

"When first asked to develop a new website for our church, I was quite reluctant as I knew absolutely nothing about designing a website, much less how to upload YouTube videos. However, after having received a grant from [United Methodist Communications (UMCom)], I knew I couldn't say 'no.' ... As I sat in front of a blank screen with no idea where to go from there, I was terrified.

"My panic was soon lessened when I contacted UMCom and asked for help. What a wonderful group of folks who are only an email away. If your church is on the fence about developing a website, have no fear; the UMCom Website Support Team is ready, willing and able to assist you.

"You, too, can become a website developer AND learn all about YouTube to promote your church."

- PATTY SHREVE
 Communications Committee leader at
 Hopewell United Methodist Church
 in Eatonton, Georgia, and Web
 Development Grant recipient

BUILD A **NEW WEBSITE**

If your church does not have a website, or needs to build a new one, you can begin crafting a website at [UMCchurches.org](https://umchurches.org). The affordable website-building service, which begins at just \$5 per month, includes everything you need to create an established online presence:

- ▶ Mobile-ready, secure and modern websites
- ▶ UMC-branded WordPress themes
- ▶ Web hosting
- ▶ Google apps and plug-ins
- ▶ Digital storage and email accounts
- ▶ Support ticket and phone tech support

A **Website Development Grant** opportunity is offered periodically to local churches that need a website. The grants provide all of the above services, as well as training and domain registration for one year. All you need to get started is a volunteer with basic computer skills who can coordinate your project. Learn more and apply at [UMCom.org/grants](https://umcom.org/grants).

GET STARTED AT
UMCchurches.org

CREATE **ENGAGING CONTENT**

After your church has created a website, you'll need to fill the pages with information and inspiring content.

- ▶ Include worship information and details visitors need to know
- ▶ Incorporate news, upcoming events, discipleship opportunities and updates for which members will be searching
- ▶ Outline your church's vision, mission and beliefs
- ▶ List contact information, links to your social media channels, a map and directions
- ▶ Feature photos that illustrate the life of your congregation
- ▶ If needed, incorporate beautiful stock photography from a creative commons library, such as TheStocks.im

EXPLORE MORE IDEAS AT
UMCom.org/WebTips



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LEARN ABOUT **SOCIAL MEDIA**

As you build a digital presence, you'll want to establish engaging social media profiles. Recruiting tech-savvy volunteers is a helpful way to ensure your pages stay active. Consider looking to members who already use social media regularly and who might have great ideas for content and online outreach.

You and your team can also enroll in the **Social Media for Churches** online training course. The learning experience will equip you to:

- ▶ Understand the largest social media platforms
- ▶ Develop a social media presence
- ▶ Engage with the members of your congregation using social media
- ▶ Reach out to new people in your community on platforms they already use
- ▶ Create a more dynamic and engaging ministry on the web

GET STARTED AT
UMCtraining.org

ENGAGE ON **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media allows your church to share positive messages, extend invitations, inspire faith and engage with the community. Here is a brief overview of available social media platforms you might consider incorporating into your church communications:

- ▶ **Instagram**, a photo-sharing platform especially popular with younger audiences, allows you to tell the story of your church visually.
- ▶ **YouTube**, a video-sharing platform, can house all of your video content for easy sharing across other social media platforms and your website.
- ▶ **Twitter** is best used for online conversations, and while it does require a bit more time and maintenance, it can open doors for deeper connections with your followers.

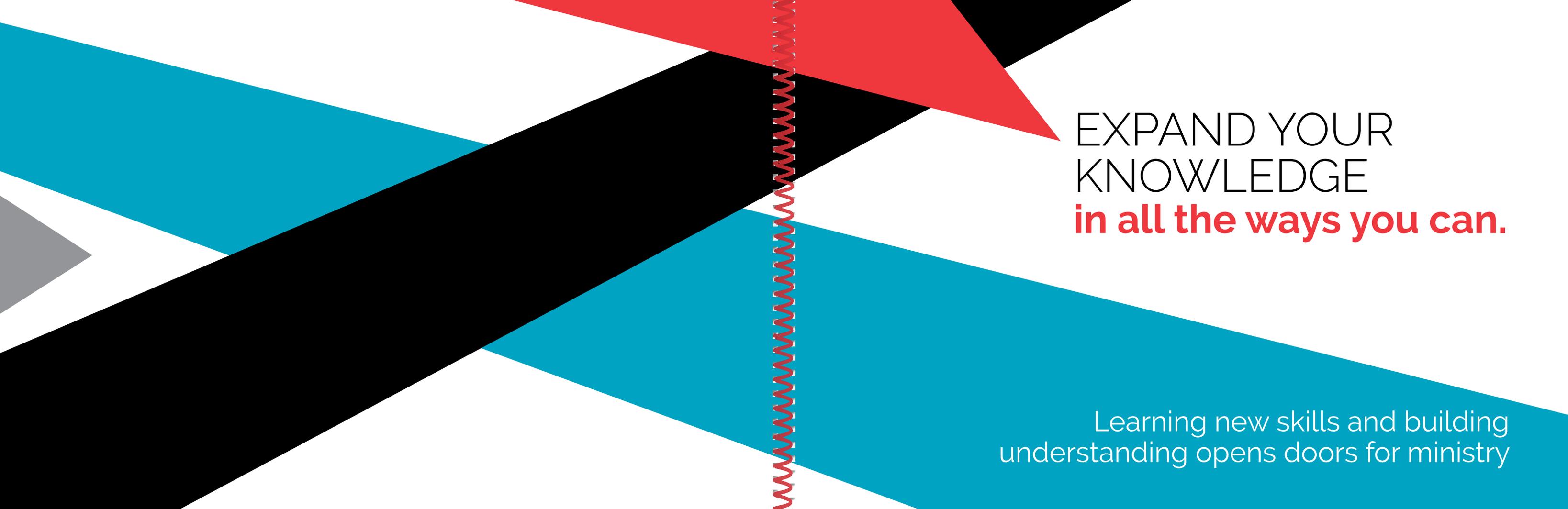
LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS
BY WATCHING FREE, ON-DEMAND WEBINARS AT
UMCom.org/webinars

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- ▶ **Facebook** is easy to use and reaches a diverse group of people. It allows a variety of written and visual posts, event pages, easily sharable content, affordable advertising and more. A Facebook Live feature enables you to livestream worship services and events so you can instantly connect with an online audience.

If your church is not currently active on social media, we recommend getting started by launching a Facebook presence. If you don't already have an account, here's how to begin:

1. Go to Facebook.com/pages/create and log in using your personal account information (you will be the administrator of your church's page)
2. Choose "Business or Brand"
3. Type the name of your church (consider matching this to your website address, i.e., "Smithtown UMC")
4. In the category field, type "Church"
5. Click "Continue" and follow the step-by-step instructions
6. Once your page is created, add a profile and cover photo, contact information, your church's mission statement, worship service times and other helpful details
7. Ask your congregation to follow your account by including a link to your new Facebook page on your website, in emails, on signs around the church building and in a bulletin insert



EXPAND YOUR
KNOWLEDGE
in all the ways you can.

Learning new skills and building
understanding opens doors for ministry

EXPLORE **TRAINING COURSES**

Opportunities for learning abound at [UMCtraining.org](https://umctraining.org). Many courses are highlighted throughout this leader guide, with topics ranging from church marketing and web development to new member information and connectional giving.

Two new courses were added recently to the online training library:

The **Internal Church Communication** course teaches church leaders the tools and techniques needed to create a communication plan tailored to their congregation. This includes consistent messaging, email and newsletter communications, and working with volunteers.

The **Exploring General Conference** course helps participants gain a better understanding of how the church works, its rich history and legislative process, and the basic information necessary to understand the importance and function of General Conference.

LEARN IN **SHORT SESSIONS**

If you have limited time available to enroll in a full training course, consider a **Micro-training**. These free, on-demand learning opportunities offer 20-minute “bursts of knowledge” on communication topics such as Facebook outreach and sharing your church through pictures and videos.

When time is really short, you can watch a **Whiteboard training** video. Through hand-drawn illustrations and narration, these quick, fun lessons will expand your knowledge about topics such as reaching out to spiritual seekers.

GET STARTED AT
[UMCtraining.org](https://umctraining.org)

WATCH A **WEBINAR**

Webinars focus on very specific topics, with experts sharing helpful tips and answering questions from participants.

Offered throughout the year, webinars include timely information perfect for beginners and those more familiar with the subject at hand.

You can view recordings of past webinars at UMCom.org/webinars, including:

- ▶ Social media Q&A
- ▶ How to use Instagram
- ▶ How to use YouTube
- ▶ Facebook event promotion
- ▶ Email marketing
- ▶ Publicity

STAY UPDATED WITH **MYCOM**

In the ever-changing world of technology, communication and marketing, the possibilities for local church ministry are growing every day. Stay informed about all things church marketing by subscribing to **MyCom**, our twice-monthly e-newsletter.

MyCom offers information designed to help you learn skills and strategies that will boost your outreach and communication efforts. An accompanying **MyCom Church Marketing Podcast** provides another opportunity to hear from experts.

You'll find:

- ▶ Easy insider outreach ideas
- ▶ Email best practices
- ▶ Proven giving campaign plans
- ▶ Social media tips
- ▶ New technology updates and tutorials
- ▶ Step-by-step guides

START EXPLORING AND SUBSCRIBE AT
UMCom.org/MyCom

*Find more resources
and helpful information
from across the
denomination – available in
English, Spanish and Korean
– on the recently launched
ResourceUMC.org website,
developed specifically
for church leaders!*



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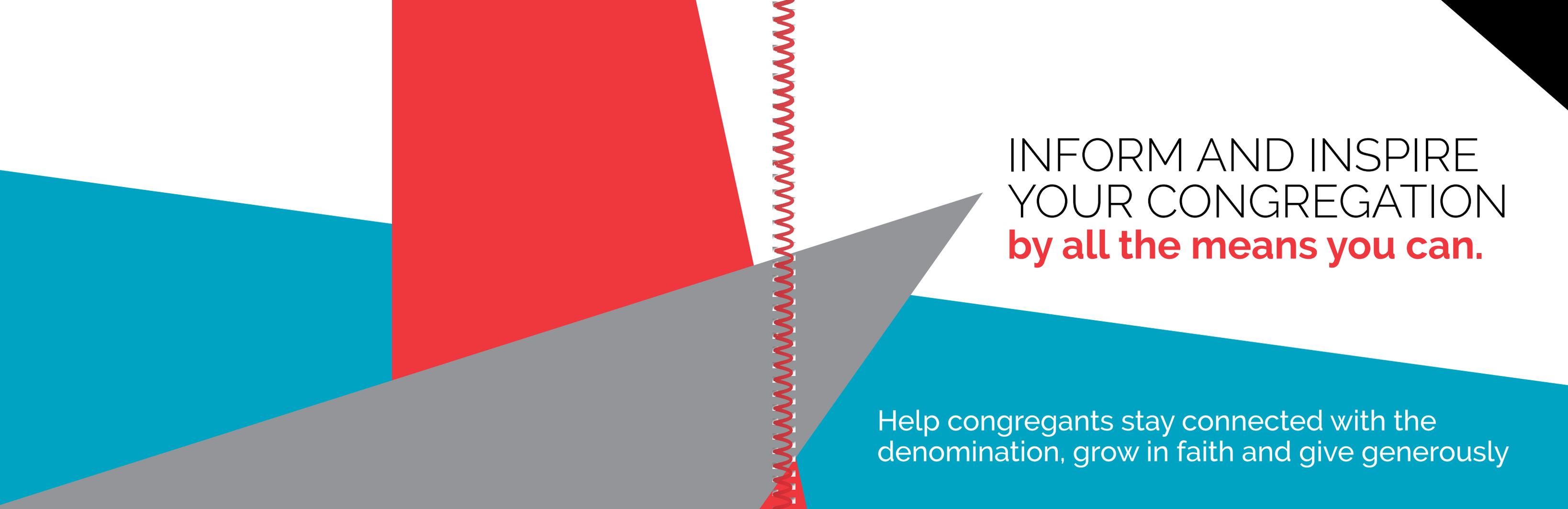
SEARCH OUR **WEBSITE**

UMCom.org is the official website of United Methodist Communications. The site is full of articles, videos, information, resources, ideas and tips about church marketing, outreach, communication, technology and more.

No matter the size of your congregation or your familiarity with church marketing, UMCom.org has content in English, Spanish and Korean that has been created with all church leaders in mind.

VISIT US AT
UMCom.org

EXPAND KNOWLEDGE



INFORM AND INSPIRE
YOUR CONGREGATION
by all the means you can.

Help congregants stay connected with the
denomination, grow in faith and give generously

EQUIP **NEW MEMBERS**

The **United Methodist Handbook** is a free resource filled with comprehensive information about the denomination and the ways we live out our global mission. It's helpful for visitors, members and confirmation classes as they grow in knowledge and understanding of The United Methodist Church.

The booklet is available in English, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Russian and Korean at [UMCgiving.org/HandbookLanguages](https://www.umc.org/giving/handbook-languages).

The **What It Means to Be United Methodist** online training course offers an interactive way to learn about denominational beliefs, history and structure. Get started with the free, one-hour course at [UMCtraining.org](https://www.umc.org/training).

INSPIRE THE **CONGREGATION**

Find everything your members need to know about what it means to be United Methodist at [UMC.org](https://www.UMC.org). The site is a connection point for the global church, including information to keep members aware of who we are, what we believe, how we serve, our daily spiritual journey and more. [UMC.org](https://www.UMC.org) content is offered in English, Spanish, French and Korean.

An accompanying e-newsletter, **United Methodist Now**, delivers timely, inspiring content that will strengthen members' daily walk with Christ, teach them about denominational history and beliefs, and offer a chance to learn about the global work of the church. Ask your members to subscribe at [UMC.org/newsletter](https://www.UMC.org/newsletter).

The **Get Your Spirit in Shape** podcast is a further resource for United Methodists seeking inspiration for faith formation. Listen at [UMC.org/podcasts](https://www.UMC.org/podcasts).

Members can engage with others on social media at [Facebook.com/UnitedMethodistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedMethodistChurch), on [Instagram @UnitedMethodistChurch](https://www.instagram.com/UnitedMethodistChurch) and on [Twitter @UMChurch](https://www.twitter.com/UMChurch).

STAY **PLUGGED IN**

UM News is the official source of comprehensive, global news about The United Methodist Church.

UM News operates with editorial freedom and provides in-depth, trusted and thought-provoking multimedia news coverage in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Korean.

You and your congregation can plug in to denominational news by:

- ▶ **Subscribing to receive email updates via the Daily or Weekly Digest** at [UMC.org/UMNews-subscribe](https://www.UMC.org/UMNews-subscribe)
- ▶ **Engaging in conversation on social media** at [Facebook.com/UMNews](https://www.facebook.com/UMNews) or on [Twitter @UMNS](https://twitter.com/UMNS)

READ THE LATEST ARTICLES
AND FEATURES AT
UMNews.org



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ENCOURAGE **GENEROSITY**

When you are seeking resources and ideas to help grow generosity in your congregation, turn to [UMCgiving.org](https://www.UMCgiving.org).

- ▶ **Pastors and church leaders are invited to use the Together, We Do More resource kit, designed to empower generosity through e-books, social media imagery, offering talks, sermon illustrations and videos.** Download the kit at [UMCgiving.org/TogetherWeDoMore](https://www.UMCgiving.org/TogetherWeDoMore).
- ▶ **Receive timely tips and tools that will help you lead your congregation in authentic, generous living.** Subscribe to **Giving Notes**, a twice-monthly free e-newsletter, at [UMCgiving.org/GivingNotes](https://www.UMCgiving.org/GivingNotes).
- ▶ **Mission Moments and More supports your efforts to inspire giving in gatherings and worship services through compelling stories, offertory prayers and newsletter copy.** Subscribe at [UMCgiving.org/MMM](https://www.UMCgiving.org/MMM).

ENCOURAGE **GENEROSITY**

While you're visiting UMCgiving.org, you can also explore information about:

- ▶ Six annual churchwide **Special Sundays** bring the denomination together through designated giving. Resources to help inspire generosity on these special days include worship tools, offering talks, social media imagery, videos and more. Learn more at UMCgiving.org/SpecialSundays.
- ▶ Connectional Giving and our apportionment system allow each individual giver to make an impact around the world. Learn more in the **God loves. God gives.** booklet at UMCgiving.org/ApportionBook.
- ▶ Members who are called to participate in worldwide mission, above and beyond their local church giving, can respond by supporting hundreds of projects and missionaries through **The Advance**. Encourage members to learn more about available giving opportunities at UMCmission.org/Advance.

BECOME A **MISSIONAL STORYTELLER**

Dig deeper into the importance of inspiring generous living by enrolling in the **Connectional Giving** online training course. The learning experience provides a holistic view of generosity, empowering you to:

- ▶ Explain the biblical and theological basis for giving
- ▶ Understand how The United Methodist Church is connectional
- ▶ Use “missional storytelling” to create a culture of generosity
- ▶ Set a plan “to make the ask” for the giving of gifts, time, talents and prayers in your congregation

THIS FREE COURSE IS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL CHURCH LEADERS. GET STARTED AT UMCtraining.org



DREAM ALL YOU CAN

Keeping your congregation closely tied to the denomination broadens understanding of the missions and ministries accomplished through our unique global connection.

How can you encourage and deepen this connection?

Horizontal lines for writing notes.



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*“God grant that
I may never live
to be useless!”*

– John Wesley

...as long as you ever can.