THE COMMUNICATION SECRETARIES STARTER GUIDE 2024-2026

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Introduction

Welcome to a ministry that has amazing potential for sharing the message of Jesus and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The communication secretary, role includes, sharing news and information with three primary groups of people: members of your church, your conference communication department, and your local community.

Church Members

Church members need to know what's happening at your church. This group includes people who attend every week, people who attend occasionally, people who attend rarely, shut-ins, and inactive members. If your church broadcasts its services online, don't forget virtual members—those who may never cross your threshold but consider themselves part of the congregation because of their online participation.

Conference Communication Department

You are part of a global network of Adventist communicators, helping the Seventh-day Adventist Church stay connected. By sending articles and photos to your conference communication director, you are sharing news with members around the world and recording the church's history. You are also sharing ministry ideas and inspiration with others who may be searching for new ways to share Jesus.

Community

This group includes people whose experience with the Adventist Church ranges from positive to negative and whose knowledge ranges from extensive to nonexistent. You should be looking for ways to raise awareness of the Adventist Church and its message of hope with those outside the church. Events such as Vacation Bible School, cooking classes, marriage enrichment events, evangelistic programs, or financial planning seminars are prime opportunities to build relationships with those who may not be interested in coming to a church service.

Communication Committee

If your communication team consists of several people, the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual suggests forming a communication committee. The communication secretary would serve as chair and the committee could include a webmaster, social media coordinator, audio/ visual director, newsletter editor, photographer, and members who are media or technology professionals. This committee will work together to plan the church's overall communication strategy.

CHURCH STRUCTURE

To get a better idea of how your local church fits into the Seventh-day Adventist Church's structure, here is an overview:

1. The local church is made up of individual believers.

2. The local conference, or local field or mission, is made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory.

3. The union conference, or union field or mission, is made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country).

4. The General Conference, the outer ring of the organization, is made up of all unions and entities in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility for geographical areas.

News and Information

Church Bulletin Announcements and Inserts

Printed church bulletins and special flyers are ideal for communicating with members who attend church every week. You may also wish to send weekly emails with announcements and post some announcements on the church website and social media channels.

Carefully examine the bulletin. Is the information current, and correct? Is the picture on the cover appropriate? Is it easy to find the information you need? If the bulletin does not meet these criteria, it may be time for a redesign.

Tips:

- If the bulletin contains errors, enlist the help of a proofreader.
- Reevaluate the bulletin's look from time to time. Find a member with design skills to help keep the design updated so your bulletin looks current and professional. There are many excellent templates available online.
- Avoid Adventist-specific jargon to make sure visitors aren't confused. For example, "the spirit of prophecy" means nothing to someone who isn't Adventist.
- Keep the number of fonts to a minimum.
- Create bulletin inserts to draw attention to special events or announcements.
- Consider posting all the same information on a bulletin board in the foyer or another gathering space.

Church Information Packets

Consider assembling gift bags to give to visitors. Include a brochure such as *Who are Seventh-day Adventists?* a copy of *Steps to Christ*, flyers highlighting upcoming events, information about Bible study courses, and a greeting from the pastor. You could also include a notepad, pen, or a card with the church's contact information. Include a comment card and ask for the visitor's name, address,

email, and how they heard about your church. This will be helpful for follow-up calls and visits. Once the packets are assembled, let the greeters know how to use them.

Church Newsletter

A newsletter is a great way to connect with a church family. Newsletters keep members aware of events, programs, and church news. They also provide a way to reach members who haven't been to church for a while. Don't forget to include your conference and union communication directors on your mailing or email list.

The communication committee must choose an editor. The editor does not necessarily have to be the communication secretary, though they will work closely with this person. Talk with your pastor about the need for a newsletter. What is its purpose? How often should it be printed or emailed?

Choose modern and easily readable fonts and keep the number of fonts to a minimum. Remember to include your church's name, address, phone number, email address, website, and social media channels in every issue so people know who it's from and where to learn more.

Include stories about people—mission trip experiences, new members, community service participation, and profiles. Let readers know what's coming up at your church and whether there's anything interesting happening at other churches in the area. Highlight different departments and ministries.

You can send email newsletters more frequently than print newsletters, so you don't have to pack in quite so much information, and it's easier to keep your information timely and relevant. This makes the email newsletter more approachable. You will also save money because design, printing, and postage are not required.

If you opt for an email newsletter, use a service such as Mail Chimp (**MailChimp.com**) or Constant Contact (**ConstantContact.com**). These services are easy to use and offer a broad range of templates. An email newsletter service makes it easy to manage your list and create a newsletter that automatically adjusts for computer and mobile screens.

When creating an email newsletter, remember that people read differently on screen, and more than half of your recipients will be reading the newsletter on a phone. Keep email paragraphs and sentences short and include headers over each section. If you would like to provide more details on a certain topic, include a link to more information.

Make sure your email newsletter features the church's name so readers can easily identify the source and include an option for readers to opt out at any time. Most email newsletter services automatically include subscription management links in the footer.

Submitting News to Your Local Conference

Your conference communication director is always looking for stories to share with the larger church community. Stories about community service projects, evangelistic meetings, community recognition, and outstanding members are examples of the types of news conference communication directors seek. They especially appreciate stories that are unusual. Depending on the story, it may be used in a print or digital publication or featured on conferences or union website or social media. Your local conference communication director will supply you with a list of instructions for submitting stories,

photos, or suggestions. Remember that magazines are produced weeks, sometimes months, in advance of their publication date, so your submission may not appear in print right after you submit it.

Below is the basic structure you can follow for news stories:

1. Headline (subject, action verb, descriptor)

2. Creative/informative summary intro (who, what, when, where)

3. Quick background or context (why this story matters to readers)

4. Quote from leader

5. Ministry/event details (how)

6. Quotes from participants/volunteers

7. Non-opinion wrap-up or call to action.

Rules for Good Writing

- The simple word is the best word.
- Keep headlines short and present tense. Study newspapers for examples.
- Avoid excessive "to be" verbs is, are, was, were, have, has, and had.
- Simple sentences are better than complicated sentences.
- Vary your sentence and paragraph length.
- Cut needless words, sentences, and paragraphs.
- Don't begin a sentence with a date. The date is less interesting than the event that happened on that date.
- Don't editorialize. Never include your opinion, such as: "A good time was had by all." Instead, get a quote from someone explaining why they enjoyed the event.
- Get lots of quotes, and identify each speaker with first and last name. Include their position or title only if it's relevant to the story. Do not submit stories without at least two direct, attributed quotes.
- Be culturally sensitive. Instead of using "crusade," use "evangelistic series" or "prophecy seminar."
- Revise and rewrite.
- Never quote yourself in an article for which you are listed as the author. Get quotes from others. If that's not possible, remove your name from the byline.
- Reread your work, have others critique it, or find a good copy editor.

Watch for Jargon

Adventism has its own language. Terms such as CJC and Central Jamaica Conference won't make sense to the community. Instead, say "the Adventist Church in Central Jamaica Conference. Remember that visitors have probably never gone ingathering or gone to vespers. However, they will

understand fundraisers and Friday evening services. You'll also need to watch for religious clichés, such as "season of prayer," "high Sabbath," and "traveling mercies."

Church Name Usage

Correct:	**Incorrect**:
Seventh-day Adventist (first reference)	Seventh Day Adventist
Adventist (subsequent references)	Seventh-Day Adventist
SDA	Seventh day Adventist

Symbol in Lockup		
✔ Entity Identifier	✘ Entity Identifier	✘ Entity Identifier

Symbol in Sabbath Column		
✔		
✘		

Symbol in Isolation		
✔	❗	❗

Church Brand and Logo Guidelines

The Adventist Church maintains a brand identity guideline system for print, digital, and physical use so that churches and official institutions are easily identifiable. Everything from newsletters and websites to outdoor signage and business cards are included.

The Meaning of the Logo

The logo reflects the core values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its foundation is the Bible, the Word of God, shown open because its message should be read and put into practice. Central to that biblical message is the cross, which is also a central feature of the logo. Above the cross and the open Bible is a burning flame that represents the Holy Spirit, the messenger of truth.

The Second Coming

The lines at the top of the design suggest upward momentum symbolizing the resurrection and ascension to heaven at Christ's second coming, the ultimate focus of our faith.

The Flame

This is the shape formed by three lines encircling an implied sphere. The lines represent the three angels of Revelation 14 circling the globe and our commission to take the gospel to the entire world. The overall shape forms a flame symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

The Cross

The symbol of the cross, representing the gospel of salvation, is positioned in the center of the design to emphasize Christ's sacrifice, which is the central theme of the Adventist faith.

The Open Bible

The Bible forms the base of the design and represents the biblical foundation of our beliefs. It is portrayed in a fully open position suggesting a full acceptance of God's word.

Identity No-Nos

Do not create your own Adventist logo or use the official logo in unauthorized ways. Church members may not employ the logo for personal use or to suggest that a program or ministry not sponsored by the church is endorsed by the church. The church strives to protect its trademarks and identity, and using it incorrectly risks incurring legal problems.

The Creation Grid

The most important element in the design system is what we are calling the "Creation Grid." This is a seven-column layout structure to be used in most design situations to communicate our conviction that all time leads to a beautiful end.

The first six columns are yours to fill with text, images, illustrations, patterns, logos or anything else, and in those six columns you should do all your work of communicating information. But the seventh-column, the Sabbath column, is to be set apart—to be special and different from the other six columns, as a reminder and visual celebration of the last day.
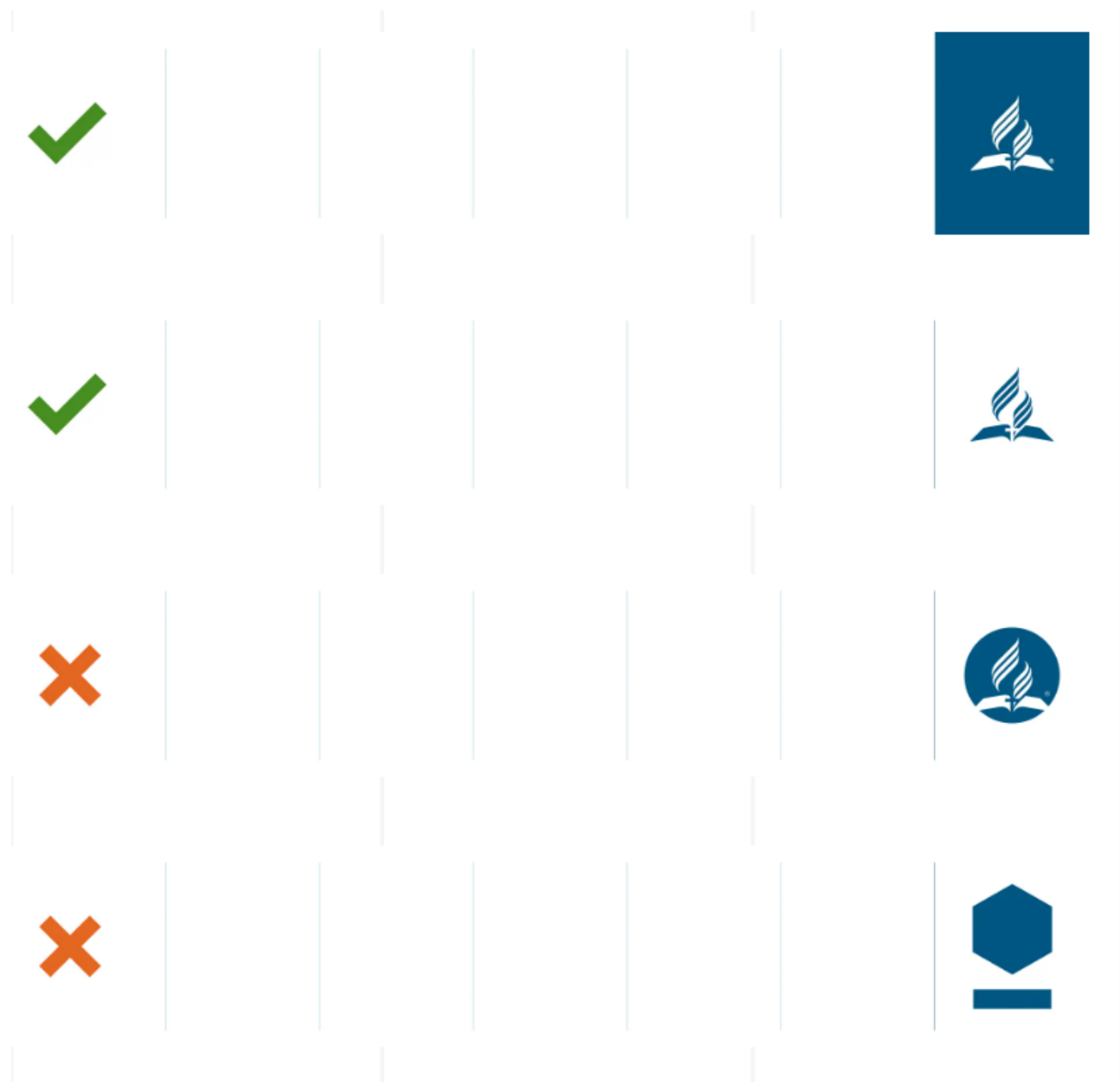
Photography

Photos are crucial for making your publications interesting. Members love to see pictures of themselves, families, friends, and especially children. High-quality photos will also tell visitors a story about your church, who attends, how to dress for events, and what they should expect. Your photos may appear on your church media (website, social media, and newsletter), in the conference or union magazines, or even in your local news outlets.

Tips for Great Photos

1. **Get close.** Photographers can't hide in the background and expect to get great images. Zoom out and walk your camera forward to fill the frame with the subject. This creates a much stronger, clearer image than zooming in from far away.

2. **Be aware of the background.** No one wants to see a tree sprouting from the subject's head or someone in the background chewing with their mouth open.

3. **Consider lighting.** Indoors, flash can create harsh shadows in the background. Turn it off and use the manual settings on your camera that can handle low light. Using a tripod can help prevent blur in low-light situations. Outdoors, flash can help eliminate shadows created by bright sun, so consider using it there. Also, your built-in flash will not light a subject if you are more than 10–15 feet away.

4. **Learn the rule of thirds.** Have you ever asked someone to take a family photo for you, only to find out they captured mostly sky and cut off all your feet? Proper framing is critical for good photography. Do an internet search for "the rule of thirds" in photography and implement those principles.

5. **Take some vertical shots, too.** Many times, publication designers need vertical images (for a magazine cover, for instance). When you cover an event, take both horizontal and vertical images. For video, stick to horizontal (hint: the same orientation as your computer screen or TV).

6. **Be creative.** Posed line-ups of smiling faces are the least interesting setup for a photo. Capture action shots and candids instead.

Captions

Each photo you submit for publication must have a detailed caption. Captions should be one or two sentences describing the contents and context of the photo. Include the photographer's full name, too. Photos can draw people into an article, and some people only look at photos.

Submitting Photos

When sending photos to your conference or any other publication, send original, high resolution digital files. Your conference communication director can give you instructions for submitting photos.

Photo Permissions

As you take pictures to document events and record your church's news, exercise caution when photographing children—especially children from the community. There are no legal restrictions on news photos in public places, yet some parents do not appreciate strangers taking their children's picture without permission. It is best to get permission from parents before photographing children from any of your church's events, such as VBS or Adventurer Club activities. Remember that just because you have permission to use a photo for news purposes does not give you legal permission to use that same photo for commercial purposes (such as on church brochures or fundraising flyers).

Problems can be avoided by simply asking all parents and guardians to sign a talent release form. Download form from resource @centralja.org.

Online Communication

Church Websites

A church website provides many opportunities for communicating with members and reaching the community. A church without a website simply does not exist to many people. Visitors want to know how to find your church, what time services start, what activities are available for their children, and what to expect, and members want to know the latest news and events.

Home Page

The first design task for your church's website, is the Home Page. This is the first page that most visitors to your website will see. The important thing is to keep the home page simple, but clear and containing relevant information that you want your visitors to see about your church. Information that could be included on your Home Page are as follows:

- Complete name (should include Seventh-day Adventist) and address of your church

- A tagline for your church. A theme or vision statement

- A short description of your church or a mission statement

- Service times

- Welcome from the Church Pastor

- Upcoming events

- Recent News.

Evaluating Your Website

1. **Is the site mobile-friendly?** Does it automatically detect what kind of device it is being loaded on and respond/adjust accordingly?

2. **Does the home page load quickly?** Less than 10 seconds is excellent. If it takes too long, visitors won't wait.

3. **Is the home page understandable?** Are the features easy to find and well presented? Are there broken links, missing sections, or spelling errors?

4. **Are the navigation options logical?** Do all pages include well-designed navigation, with little scrolling required? Are the navigation links adequate?

5. **Does the website contain information about your church?** Does it include ministries, events, and the pastor's bio? How much information does it offer potential visitors?

6. **Is the content up-to-date?** Are future events announced? Is the news new, or is it months or even years old?

7. **Is contact information available?** Can visitors find the address, phone number, email address, social media channels, and map link? If they can't find this on your website, they won't be able to find your church.

8. **Are meeting and worship times clearly posted?** Are they easy to find? Are special events listed?

9. **Do the colors and overall design complement each other?** Are the colors and design pleasant? Do they look professional and give a positive impression of your church?

10. **Does the site include an evangelism component?** Is it warm and inviting, with Bible study information? Does it encourage people to become Sabbath morning visitors?

11. **Is the content easy to read?** How is the grammar, spelling, and punctuation? Poorly written content is hard to follow and will not make people want to revisit your site.

12. **Does the site help eliminate confusion about Adventists?** Does it present mainstream, official Adventist theology? Does it avoid using jargon that would confuse visitors? eveloping a website for your church is no more a privilege, it is now a must if you are going to do effective ministry in the 21st Century. While there are many options for doing web ministry, including social media accounts, having a church website provides a more stable, professional and organize way of presenting your content on the web.

Sample Website Content Outline About Us
- Our Beliefs
- Meet our Pastor.
- Mission and Vision Statements
- Our History
- Our Team (Board/Committees)

Visitors
- Submit Prayer Request
- Links
- Calendar

Ministries
- List Departments
- Ministries that are unique to your church (e.g. Evening School, Community Outreach, Bible School etc)

Bible Study
- Links to Bible Studies online (Discover, It is Written, Amazing Facts etc)
- Bible School (Conference, Union, or Local)
- Sabbath School Bible Study Guides
- Request a Bible Study Form

Media
- Live Streaming
- Photo Gallery
- Videos
- Sermons (Audio) or Podcast

Resources
- Preaching Roster
- Other Important Documents for download
- Links to other entities Contact Us

Marketing your website

Setting up your website is only the first step in successful web ministry. It is important that you get the word out to increase traffic to your website.

Here are some tips for properly marketing your website:

- Make sure to optimize your website for being picked up by search engines by adding your domain to Google's search engine. (www.google.com/addurl).
- Add links to your church's website on other websites, such as:
- Adventist Directory (http://www.adventistdirectory.org/)
- Local Conference Website (www.centralja.org)
- Church's Facebook Page and other social media sites
- Local Community Websites

Choosing your Content Management System

In the early days, websites were built purely by creating static HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) pages, using HTML tags and files. However, this approach was time consuming, difficult to maintain and only persons who knew HTML or JAVA SCRIPT could build websites.

Today, you can build a website without any knowledge of HTML or JAVA, thanks to modern Content Management Systems (CMS), such as Wordpress, Joomla and Drupal.

What is a CMS? "A content management system, or CMS, is a web application designed to make it easy for non-technical users to add, edit and manage a website. Not only do content management systems help website users with content editing, they also take care of a lot of "behind the scenes" work such as:

- Automatically generate navigation elements
- Making content searchable and indexable
- Keeping track of users, their permissions and security settings
- And much, much more." – Plone.org
- For your Church Website, there are three CMS options that we make available to you in CJC:
- netAdventist (https://www.netadventist.org/)
- Wordpress or Drupal theme (hosted by CJC or self-hosted)
- Umbraco (hosted by CJC)

Livestreams

Today, many churches livestream their Sabbath services online. This is an excellent way to reach those who cannot or will not physically attend church. Members also appreciate being able to review sermons or watch when they're out of town. Don't forget the power of social sharing, too; great sermons, when archived on your church website, are likely to be shared.

YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, and many other video hosting platforms allow livestreams. Compare their features and decide which best suits your church's needs. Livestreams can be as simple as a smartphone on a tripod posting "Live" video to Facebook, or as complex as an HD, multi-camera satellite broadcast. Do the best you can with what your budget allows.

Livestream Licensing

Be careful about licensing for music. Be sure your church holds a current CCLI license, and the correct kind(s), if it uses and/or broadcasts copyrighted music.

Blogs

Does your pastor have a great blog or vlog? If so, consider embedding it in the church website. Blogs are a great way to show people what's going on in your church. They also make the pastor more accessible and give visitors an insider's view of your church.

Basic Understanding of Microphone Usage

We live in a technologically changing society and to some degree some churches have not yet caught on to the fact that success of your programme depends on quality sound to a great degree.

These pointers are given with a view of helping you better understand your P.A. system.

What is a microphone?

The microphone is the first link in the audio chain and is very important in sound reinforcement or sound recording. It is therefore very important that the correct microphone be chosen for the appropriate application. A microphone converts acoustical energy into electrical energy via its transducer (a device that transforms one form of energy into another). This is also found in a speaker.

Let's look at two of the most common types of microphone.

- Dynamic – Is often used by almost every user of microphone. This microphone carries a diaphragm/voice/coil magnet which when struck by sound waves vibrates. Eg. SM58.
- Condenser – Is an electrically charged diaphragm usually by way of phantom power (9-48 volts) which is sent to the backplate capacitor which can store voltage and that capacitor along with the diaphragm converts the acoustical energy into electrical energy eg. Choir mikes and pressure zone mikes (PZM).

Both dynamic and condenser microphones can have different polar patterns. We will look at the two most common polar patterns.

- Omni-directional – This pattern means that sound can be picked up anywhere on the microphone.
- Uni-directional – Means that sound is picked mainly from the front and the side.

Tips on Microphone Use and Placement

- Never put a microphone under your arm or cover it with your hand, as this will cause your microphone to become omni-directional and cause feedback.
- Speak in an audible tone in the microphone (Not shout).
- Keep the microphone as close as possible to your mouth, usually 3-6 inches.
- Keep P.A. speakers as far as possible from microphones.
- Mute all unused microphones, this will minimize the risk of feedback.
- Never turn up a microphone beyond the sound pressure threshold the room can handle.
- Use directional microphones.
- Never beat, kick, or drop a microphone as it can damage the diaphragm and other parts of it.
- Avoid the use of microphone near a lot of reflective surfaces eg. Glass, ceramic, tiles this can cause a lot of reflection thus degrading the quality of the sound.
- If you are using a phantom-powered microphone (condensers) make sure to plug it on to the microphone cable before engaging the phantom power as this could lead to severe damage to the microphone.
- Use the highest quality mike cables and connectors.
- Musical instruments such as keyboards, guitars should be plugged into the line section of the mixing board, however, should you be using more than 30 feet of cable a direct box should be used.
- During the programme, never miss a mike cue. In other words, make sure all mikes when needed, works.
- Early arrival at your church is a must. This is the time you need to make final checks on your P.A. system.
- Speakers should be pointing in one direction and not multiple.
- A wireless mike carries a receiver. It is recommended for optimum performance that the receiver should not be more than 10 feet away from N.B. Some may still work.
- Keep antennas at 45-degree angle for best performance.
- Keep antennas sway from metal objects.
- The aim of mixing is to amplify the source (s) in their natural tone, yet balanced.
- Do not mix ambience, sound for a congregation into the P.A. system use it only for recording and be moderate.
- Use windscreens on your microphones and wash them regularly in light soap or disinfectant.

Social Media

Ever wondered how it's possible that God's message will "go into all the earth"? This is it. Social media is a key tool for spreading God's message today. Maintaining a profile for your church on popular social networking channels, such as Facebook and Instagram, gives your church and community more options for staying in touch and receiving information. Find popular sites and create profiles for your church. Be sure to claim your church's page on Google, too. Keep your profiles updated and active.

The types of posts you can create for social media are endless—stories, recipes, event announcements, classified ads and job announcements, Bible verses, links to great books or interesting articles, funny memes, photo albums, and so much more.

You can also promote your social media posts to reach more readers for a very small budget. Even $5 can gain hundreds of extra views on a post. Be sure to target the correct audience for your content. For example, if you're hosting a vegan cooking class, Facebook will allow you to advertise that event listing to everyone within a certain number of miles of your church who has expressed an interest in vegan cooking. If you're not sure how to do it, find a member with social media savvy and ask for help.

Facebook

Facebook is currently the largest social networking site in the world. More than a quarter of all people on earth access it at least once a month; 1.5 billion of those check in daily. Facebook leans a little heavy on highly educated, female users, and a bit older on average than other platforms. This audience is key for Christian church-goers, and having a profile for your church on Facebook is necessary. This platform also offers ways for your members to connect privately, through Facebook groups, and personally, via friendships.

Instagram

Facebook owns Instagram, a photo sharing app. Instagram trends much younger than Facebook and is great for reaching teens and young adults. Fun, personal photos and videos with short captions draw a billion active monthly users, and half of those visit at least daily. When posting on Instagram, be sure to use hashtags (three or more per post), which are basically like a topical index for users to easily find content related to their interests. A hashtag is a word or phrase without spaces preceded by a # character. For example, this section may be tagged: #instagram. #churchcommunicationdirector #howdoidothis #telltheworld

Twitter

Twitter is used largely for sharing news and current event updates. For example, your local conference may use Twitter to share quotes and votes in real time from a constituency session that is not being broadcast live. It also uses hashtags, but generally only one or two per post just to group a topic. Twitter users a primarily educated, urban, young adults, and most of its users are based outside the U.S.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a virtual bulletin board dominated by female, suburban users. Users create "boards" and "pin" links on those boards from around the internet (or upload your own). It's an excellent place for

your church to have boards for healthy cooking resources, Bible study options, family life materials, and so on.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a great way for pastors and youth leaders to connect with teens and young adults. It's a visual chat app featuring fun photo filters. Users can send the disappearing messages to one or more friends or post them in "stories" with more longevity.

Other Platforms

Other social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Reddit, Tiktok, Tumblr, etc. may not hold as much value for a church but are worth exploring if your church has some exceptional features that may lend themselves to those outlets.

Media Relations

The best way to get your church into the local news is to build relationships with the newspaper's religion reporters and editors. Call and ask if you can take them out for coffee or lunch to get ideas on how to best share your church's news. Be patient, friendly, and professional.

Community Newspapers

There are several ways your church can be featured in newspapers: a reporter can write a feature story, you can be listed on the community calendar, and you can pay for ad space.

Feature Stories

Study your community's paper to see what types of events are covered and start sending press releases to the appropriate editor. Editors are looking for your press release to convey timeliness, proximity, and impact. Your story must be current, it must be in the locale covered by the newspaper, and it must have a concrete impact on the community.

Don't be discouraged if your press releases seem to go unnoticed. With limited space, newspapers may have more urgent news that takes precedence. As you continue to send press releases, remember that repetition creates recognition.

Story Ideas for Community Media

- Pastor is leaving; new pastor to arrive.
- Adventist Community Services responds to a disaster, starts new program.
- Church/organization anniversary, ground breaking, or mortgage burning
- Awards given to or received from community
- Mission or service trip, local or abroad
- Camp meeting, General Conference session, or other major event
- Local perspective on national stories
- Church provides unique needs-based program (i.e. cooking class, health fair, financial seminar, concert, famous guest speaker, etc.)

Community Calendar

Many newspapers, news information sites, and radio stations feature community calendars that feature upcoming events. Contact the outlet's offices to learn how your church's events can be listed or featured.

Press Release Template

For immediate release

Date

Contact

Telephone number

Email

Headline contains subject and action verb

1st paragraph: Who, what, when, where, why, how

2nd paragraph: Why your news is important

3rd paragraph: Quotes from key figures

4th paragraph: Registration, contact information, and sources for more information

5th paragraph: Background information on your organization

Advertising

Check with your community newspaper's ad manager to learn the cost of advertising. Find out how much it costs to purchase ads in different sizes. Smaller ads can work as well as larger ones, and you can have more money left over to run more ads. People remember through repetition, so run ads for a few weeks.

Radio and TV Announcements

Some radio and TV stations will air ads from a nonprofit or government agency for free that would be of interest to the public. These public service announcements (PSAs) generally highlight something for the greater good. Quality announcements can cost a lot to produce, so you should check with local stations to see what in-house recording options are available.

PSAs are aired most often on public access channels of cable television stations. Call your cable company and ask if they sponsor a public access channel. Larger companies will have a coordinator who can send you information about available channels and time slots.

Public Relations

Below is a starting point for evaluating public relations at your church:

Signage

Is your church sign in good condition and modern with the current Adventist branding? Is it lit at night? Does it contain the Adventist logo, service times, and a phone number? Is it time for a new sign?

Literature Rack

Establish and Examine your church's literature rack. Is it neat? Does it feature information that makes the church seem relevant and relatable or intimidating and eccentric? Is the literature current? Outdated literature will not make a favorable impression. Instead of ordering a lifetime supply of brochures, order enough to get by for a year or two. By the time you need to order more, the church will have produced brochures with new designs.

Church Voicemail Message

Is your message current? Does it identify your church as Seventh-day Adventist? Does it pick up after a reasonable number of rings? Does it list the pastor's office hours and service times? Who checks the messages and how often? Messages left over the weekend should be returned on the next business day. No messages left on a weekday should go unreturned for more than 24 hours.

Church Email Account

Someone should check the church's main email account daily and promptly answer all inquiries. Make sure the email address is professional; either use the church's own domain, such as info@firstSDAchurch.org, or use a reputable email service (Google's Gmail is best), such as firstSDAchurch@gmail.com.

Community Engagement

Community engagement may seem like a no-brainer for churches, but sometimes we forget that there's a world outside our own doors. This is true especially for commuter churches where most members don't live in the church's neighborhood.

Simply put, community engagement involves getting our hands deep into the community where the church and its members reside, working collaboratively with other agencies and groups, in order to build meaningful, long-term, positive relationships and to bring long-term positive changes where they're needed. We can't sit inside the church and expect people to come to us; we must go out and be the good in our communities.

The purpose of community engagement is not to gain new members for the church, though that sometimes happens. The goal is to be the love of Jesus in flesh, to bring help and hope and healing to our fellow man. It also helps build the church's reputation bank. That way, if someone says, "Oh, aren't they a cult or something?" another may respond, "Oh, no way; I work with those people over at the food bank and they're wonderful Christians!"

The church communication director is likely not solely responsible for directing the initiatives that fall under this umbrella. However, the director certainly might sit on a related committee or initiate conversations with the church board about the need for it.

Know Your Community

Guessing what a community needs rarely leads to successful program outcomes. To really know what's needed, we need to review demographic data, participate in town and city government activities, talk to public officials and residents, and join in service opportunities that are already in place throughout the community.

Ideas for Community Engagement Initiatives

- Sponsor a Relay for Life team or a booth at the county fair.
- Offer classes the community would be interested in, such as vegetarian cooking, scrapbooking, or fitness.
- Host support groups for new parents, divorcees, or people who are grieving.
- Let community groups host meetings in your church facility.
- Become an official polling place for voting season.
- Train your congregation for disaster preparedness and become a designated Red Cross disaster response center or emergency shelter.
- Sponsor block parties where you collect school supplies for kids.
- Host free community concerts, summer camps, and seasonal events.
- Organize small groups that do weekly or monthly service projects in the community.
- Get involved in religious liberty activities.
- Train members to teach ESL classes.
- Join Meals-on-Wheels.
- Host a live, drive- or walk-through nativity at Christmas.

What Not to Do

Community engagement activities are not the time to bring out religious tracts and beast brochures. Those have their time and place, but this isn't it. Serve others without expecting anything in return. Many people who don't associate with churches regularly have been hurt in the past and distrust religious institutions. Break those preconceived notions by participating in the community. These activities will help build relationships and establish the church as a respectable, trustworthy faith center.

GAIN (Global Adventist Internet Network)

The Inter-American Division's communication department hosts an annual workshop for communication volunteers and professionals. The convention offers special media tours, general sessions, targeted workshops, and networking opportunities.

History of Communication

"In 1912, the Adventist Church world headquarters hired Baltimore Sun newspaper reporter Walter Burgan to establish the Bureau of Press Relations, the precursor to today's Communication department. Church administrators realized they needed help in responding to the media's attacks on church doctrines.

Leaders realized the importance of having a specialized professional to respond to media—someone who could speak their language." This is the pre-cursor to today's communication department.

Purpose
To create a favorable image of the church, its mission, life, witness, and related activities by using the most effective means of communication.

Theme
"Building bridges of hope."
Successful church communicators are attuned to the pulse of their church and the culture outside of the church and strategize ways to build bridges from their community to the church.

They are passionate about the church's vision and care about how it translates to people inside and outside of the church. They defend it. They design it. They care about it. It keeps them awake at night and is a reason for them to get out of bed in the morning.

VISION:
Every member transformed and anchored in the body of Christ in readiness for His imminent return.

MISSION:
To proclaim the Everlasting Gospel by impacting communities and preparing people in Central Jamaica Conference for Christ's imminent return.

Conclusion
Thank you for volunteering to serve your church through this important ministry. Through managing your church's communication, you can help ensure that members and the community know what is happening at your church.

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