

# **A Simplified Guide to Church Websites**

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Purpose, Planning, and Presentation

by Brian Jaeger

# Why Does Our Church Need a Website?

75% of people are more likely to return to a site if it works well on a mobile phone.

61% quickly leave a site that is not mobile-friendly.

Young, vibrant people with children and short attention spans want you to have a website that is modern and mobile-friendly.

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>

The mega-church down the road has one.

The school district in town has one.

The chain child care facility across town has one.

75%

# Will a Website Make Our Church Grow?

The website **will not** grow the church on its own.

Some salesmen will try to convince you it will.

The CONTENT on the website and how it relates to your church CAN help grow your church.

Look at the factors that are associated with church growth and imagine how those factors can be used on a website:

# **Factors in Church Growth**

**Good leadership**

**A clear mission and purpose**

**Willingness to self-reflect, to change and adapt according to context**

**Involvement of lay members**

**Being intentional in prioritising growth**

**Being intentional in chosen style of worship**

**Being intentional in nurturing disciples**

# **Dying Churches**

**From the book *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, a few of the chapter titles about reasons for churches dying include:**

**The Past is the Hero**

**The Church Refused to Look Like the Community**

**The Great Commission Becomes the Great Omission**

**The Church Rarely Prayed Together**

**The Church Had No Clear Purpose**

**Can a website help?**

# **But Nobody Has Complained**

The reason nobody mentions the website is because it's not impressive.

If the awe-inspiring cathedrals in Europe were designed like office buildings, would we tour them?

People who are virtually touring your church for the first time or checking in to see what's going on want to see more than framed boxes.

They want to see your vibrant church at its best. And on a mobile device.

# But Our Website Looks Fine



# What Kind of Website Works Best?

CMS or Content Management System

Free or Monthly Fee Sites (also a CMS)

Volunteer - Usually a CMS

Clunky - Old or Facebook



# CMS

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_content\\_management\\_systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_content_management_systems)

Name	Platform	Supported databases	Latest stable release	License	Last release date	Web Content Management	Single Web Content Management	Enterprise Content Management
Atraveo Enterprise & Community Edition	Java	Oracle, MS, Server, MySQL, PostgreSQL, DBE	4.3.2 Enterprise, 4.3.2 Community	Open Source	2010-06-2010-15	No	Yes	Yes
Atlassian Confluence	ADF .NET	SQL Server	2010-07-14	Proprietary software	2010-7-14	Yes	Yes	Yes
CloudBees Jenkins	Java	MySQL, (5.6, 5.5, 5.1) SQL Server (2014, 2012) Oracle (11g, 10g)	1.14.1	Proprietary software	2010-05-16	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contentstack	Java	Oracle, MS, Server	0.7	Proprietary software	2014	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corepress	ADF .NET	SQL Server	4.0.0	Proprietary software	2010-11-7	Yes	Yes	No
CoreMedia WCM	Java	JDBC compliant database	8	Proprietary software	2010-05-16	Yes	No	No
DotNetNuke	ADF .NET	SQL Server	7.3	Proprietary software	2010-11-27	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drupal	PHP	MySQL	8.4	Proprietary software	2014-01-01	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drupal CMS	ADF .NET	SQL Server	0.7	Proprietary software	2012-08-30	Yes	Yes	Yes
EMC Documentum ECM	Java	Oracle, MS, Server, DBE	8.0	Proprietary software	2011-02-15	Yes	Yes	Yes
EnterpriseEngine	PHP	MySQL	7.2	Proprietary software	2010-02-10	No	No	Yes
Hybrid OnBase ECM	.NET	SQL Server, Oracle	2.0.0	Proprietary software	2014-07-16	Yes	Yes	Yes
IBM Enterprise Content Management	Java	Oracle, DBE	6.4.0	Proprietary software	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes
Autonomy Information Services CMS	PHP, Java	Oracle, MS, Server, DBE, MySQL	7.4.1	Proprietary software	2013	Yes	Yes	Yes
ehp	.NET	SQL Server	1-10 (OneStep)	Proprietary software	2013	Yes	Yes	No
ehp Enterprise Edition	Java	MySQL, Oracle, PostgreSQL, Microsoft SQL Server	0.2.2.3	Proprietary software	2013-12-01	Yes	Yes	Yes
Veniva CMS	ADF .NET	SQL Server	0.1	Proprietary software	2014-06-22	Yes	Yes	Yes
Libris	Java	SQL Server	4.0	Proprietary software - Free and Enterprise versions	2015-02-16	No	No	Yes
Microsoft Type	PHP	MySQL, Oracle, SQL Server	0.2.1	Proprietary	2013-11-10 <sup>14</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes
HubSpot	PHP, JavaScript, SQL, AJAX, jQuery and CSS3	MySQL	4th Q, currently the central system is in beta	Open Source	2014-2	Yes	Yes	Yes
OpenText (Real Server)	PHP	Oracle	4.9.9	Proprietary software	2010-04	No	No	Yes
OpenText ECM Suite	.NET, Java	SQL Server (2008, 2005) or IBM DBE, Oracle	2010	Proprietary software	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes
OpenText Real Experience Management (formerly Vigorite Content Management)	.NET, Java	Oracle, MS, Server, DBE	0.0	Proprietary software		Yes	No	No
OpenText Real Eng Management (formerly AuditG)	ADF .NET, Java	Oracle, MS, Server	7.1	Proprietary software		Yes	Yes	No
Oracle WebCenter Content (formerly Unifaceted Content Management)	Java	Oracle	7g	Proprietary software		Yes	Yes	Yes
U-Campus	Java	MySQL, Microsoft SQL Server, SAP Sybase ASE	10.2.4	Proprietary software	2010-08-24	Yes	Yes	Yes
PageSense	PHP	MySQL	4.4	Proprietary software		Yes	Yes	Yes
Peterson Software CR System	Java	Oracle, MS, Server	7.2	Proprietary software	2010-09-21	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peterson Software Peterson CMS	Java	MySQL, Derby	0.3	Proprietary software	2010-10-28	Yes	Yes	No
Pulse CMS	PHP	MySQL database	0.1.1	Proprietary software		Yes	No	No
SharePoint	ADF .NET	SQL Server (2008, 2008 R2, 2012), SQL Express	0.0 (16.0.4891.1000)	Proprietary, Open API	2014-04-22	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sitecore	ADF .NET (WebForms or MVC)	SQL Server (2008, 2008 R2), Oracle	8	Proprietary software	2014-11-16	Yes	Yes	Yes
Site5 CMS	ADF .NET	SQL Server	0.6	Proprietary software	2010-02-01	Yes	Yes	No
Solstice	PHP	MySQL, MS, Server	0.0	Proprietary, Open API	2010-09-16	Yes	Yes	Yes

# Free or Monthly Fee

Templates - You figure it out

Learning Curve - Tutorials and videos

Upsell - Want fries with that? Or a favicon or embedded video?

Helpdesk - English as a second language

Upgrades are Optional - Only if it makes business sense to  
THEM

# Volunteer

Could be any of the other kinds of sites, but you rely on a volunteer

Volunteers do not make good employees

Hard feelings and broken promises

Focus on content, art, photography, and other tasks

You WANT volunteers, just maybe not as web designers

# **Clunky - Old or Facebook**

**Dreamweaver and Frontpage - Yes, they are still hanging around**

**ASP.NET - Confusing and expensive, but many IT folks push it**

**Google+ - Everyone should have one; never as the main website**

**Facebook - Everyone should have one; never as the main website**

**Youtube**

**Twitter**

**So on and so forth**

# Why Websites Don't Work

Time Commitment

Difficulty (Maintenance)

Not a Destination

Does Not Work on All Devices

# **Website Advice - Top to Bottom**

Homepage

Other Pages and Add-Ons

Categories

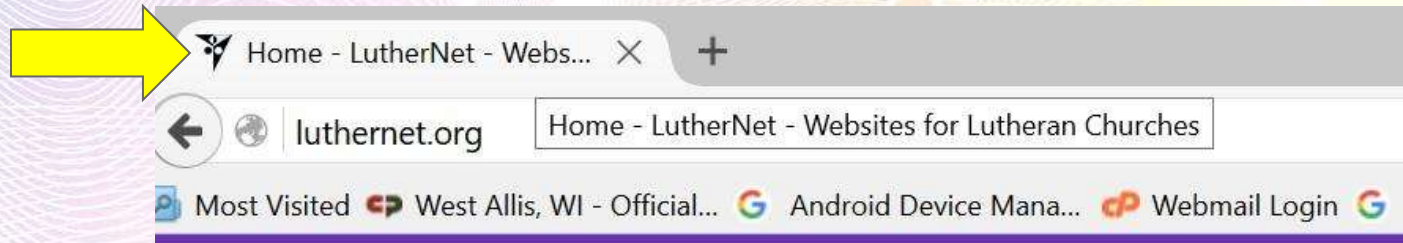
# Favicon

**Importance 4/10**

**Difficulty 7/10 on older sites; 3/10 on many newer sites**

**Small image, favicon.ico, in your template folder**

**Unique identifier / bookmark / marketing**



**HOME**

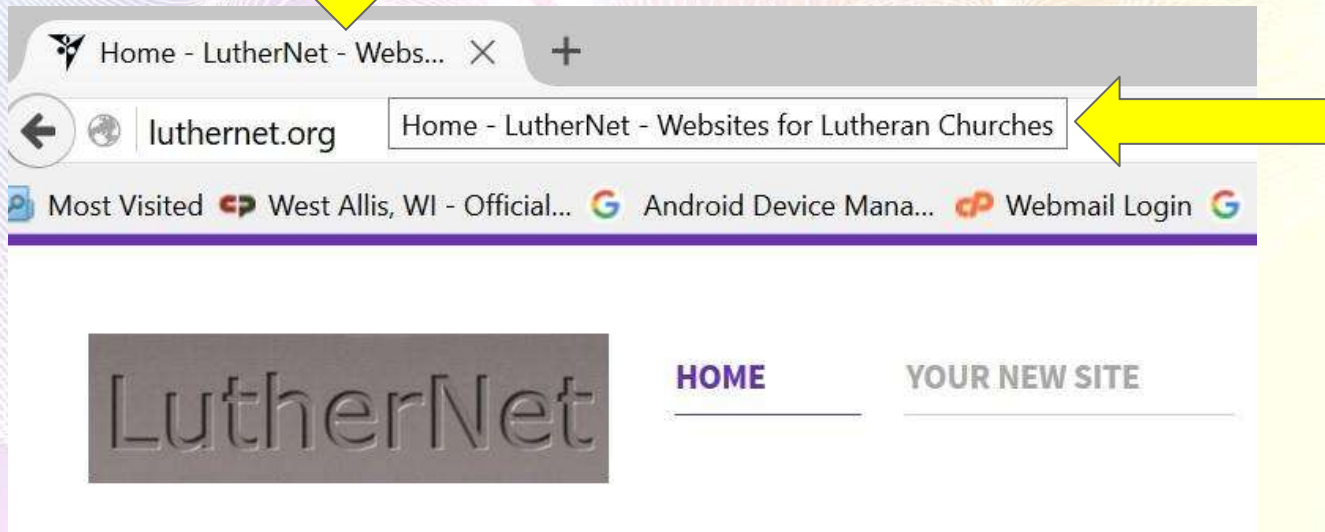
**YOUR NEW SITE**

# Page Title

Importance 5/10

Difficulty 5/10

Most important on main page and if you're hoping to get search hits





# Site Name and Url

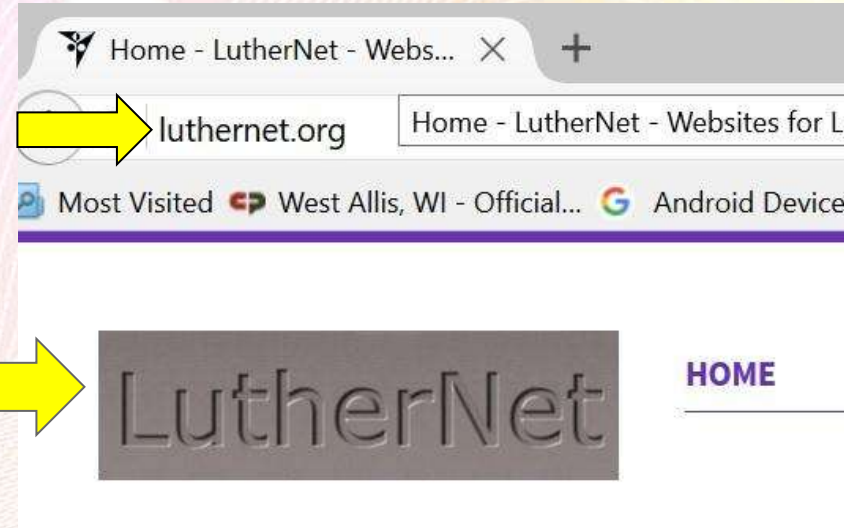
Importance 6/10

Difficulty 3/10

Shorter is better for url

.org or .com, generally

Site Name is Independent of url



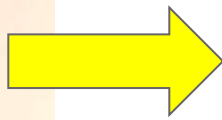
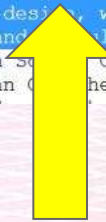
# Meta Tags and Meta Description

Helps search engines find your site

Should be done for homepage at least

```
1 <!DOCTYPE html>
2 <html lang="en-gb" dir="ltr">
3
4
5 <head>
6     <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">
7     <meta http-equiv="X-UA-Compatible" content="IE=edge" />
8
9
10    <base href="http://luthernet.org/" />
11    <meta http-equiv="content-type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
12    <meta name="keywords" content="church websites, lutheran church websites, lcms web design, we
13    church web design, web developer, milwaukee web design, wisconsin web design, wauwatosa web des
14    <meta name="description" content="Web Design and Consulting for Lutheran Church, School, and
15    <meta name="generator" content="Joomla! - Open Source Content Management" />
16    <title>Home - LutherNet - Websites for Lutheran Churches</title>
```

in page  
source



# Logo

Importance 5/10

Difficulty 5/10

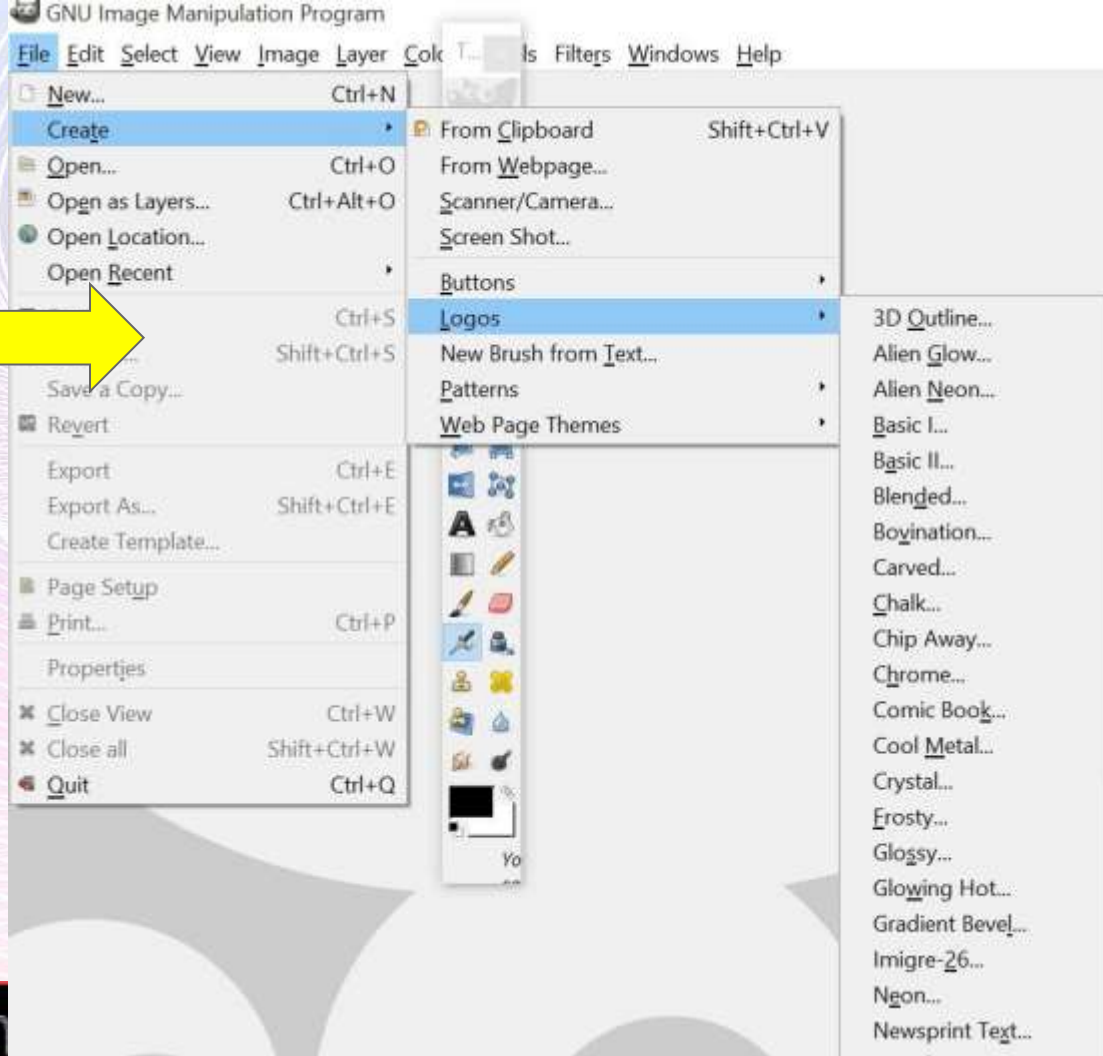
GIMP - fun project

Interchange  
I n f e r c h a n g e

Passive Ninja

McNewsy

Sitcom Life Lesson



# Menu and Mobile Menu

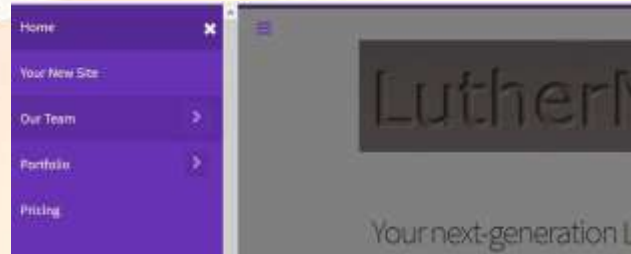
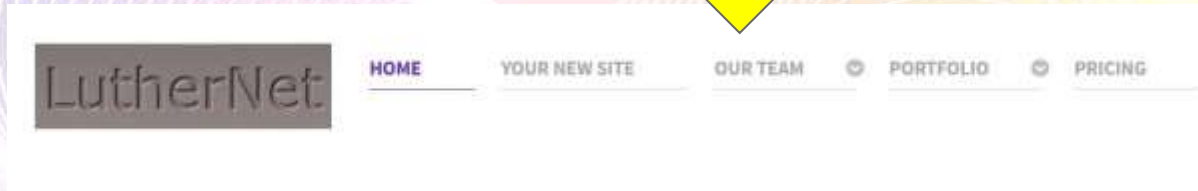
Importance 10/10

Difficulty 8/10

In order for site visitors to get to all those pages you want to create, you will need a menu.

It is also imperative to have a separate mobile menu, but not a separate mobile site.

mobile



# Modern Design

Changes every few years

Rotating image with text

Large, stationary image

Smaller, stationary images with animations

Next? (Side menu=old is new)



# Main Images

Importance 8/10

Difficulty 7/10

At least one image on your homepage

Must be proper size (hopefully under 100kb)

People, places, or metaphors



# Main Article (Welcome)

Importance 7/10

Difficulty 2/10

Welcome message



The screenshot displays the website for Christ the Life Lutheran Church. At the top, the church's name is accompanied by a cross icon and the tagline "Growing, Showing, Sharing, Caring". A navigation menu includes links for Home, Our Mission, Church, Early Childhood, and Login. The main content area features a quote from John 11:2: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. — John 11:2." To the right of the quote is a photograph of a church interior with a large wooden cross and two stained-glass windows depicting fish. Below this, a section titled "Christ The Life Evangelical Lutheran Church - LCMS" contains a welcome message and social media icons. On the right side of the page, there is an "EVENTS" section with a "Church Calendar" showing dates for Monday, November 9, Tuesday, November 10, and Wednesday, November 11, with specific times for worship.

CHRIST THE LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Growing, Showing, Sharing, Caring

Home · Our Mission · Church · Early Childhood · Login

I am the resurrection and the life.  
He who believes in me will live,  
even though he dies. — John 11:2

Christ The Life Evangelical Lutheran Church - LCMS

Welcome in the blessed Name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! In this age of uncertain "religious-ness", church shopping, lukewarm spirituality, and post-modern relativism, it can be hard for someone to hold their spiritual compass on the Truth...in fact, it's downright impossible! That's why it is so necessary to hold ourselves close to God's means of grace...His holy Word and Sacraments. At Christ the Life we have one thing for sinners, and that is the forgiveness of the cross, won by our Lord and Savior. We believe in Grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone as the way God has chosen to save mankind, and this is what we want to proclaim to all! We invite you to come and share this blessed message of the Gospel, and to drawn near to Christ, as He draws near to you!

EVENTS

Church Calendar

Today Monday, November 9

7:00pm Worship

Tuesday, November 10

10:00am 10am Tues

Wednesday, November 11

# Sidebar

Importance 5/10

Difficulty 6/10

Calendar

Any modules



**Evan Paydon** Musician. Bassist. Teacher. Student.

Home Music Calendar Blog Lessons & Booking Discography Bio

← →

Followed by **4** friends

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Today

- Wednesday, November 11  
7:00pm Bassist event
- Friday, November 20  
Alex Wilson Band at TDD
- Saturday, November 21

Welcome, my friend

A yellow arrow points to the right sidebar area of the website screenshot.



# Footer

Importance 7/10

Difficulty 4/10

Bottom of page

Copyright

Location

Rising Health Chiropractic Wellness  
James Hauke DC  
262-695-9698

601 Ryan Street Suite F  
Pewaukee, WI 53072  
in Lake Country Square Shopping Center



Copyright 2015 Rising Health Chiropractic Wellness  
Designed by [Passive Ninja](#)

# Editing

Importance 9/10

Difficulty 2/10

Read what you write

Develop a process

Allow others to make changes / send messages

# Other Pages and Add-Ons

Functionality

Organization

Purpose for users to visit

# Content is KING

Write

Write

Write

SEO and other ways to avoid writing

# Login

Frontend login makes edits and adding of content simple



The screenshot shows a web page for Christ the Life Lutheran Church. At the top, there is a logo with a cross and the text "CHRIST THE LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH" and the tagline "Growing, Showing, Sharing, Caring". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Our Mission", "Church", "Early Childhood", and "Tags". The main content area contains a login form with fields for "Username" and "Password", a "Remember me" checkbox, and a "Log in" button. Below the form are two links: "Forgot your password?" and "Forgot your username?". The footer contains contact information: "301 Summit Avenue, Waukegan, WI 53188", "Church Phone: 762-547-3817", "Copyright 2015 Christ the Life Lutheran Church", and "Designed by Lutheran". A "Back to Top" link is also present in the footer.

**CHRIST THE LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Growing, Showing, Sharing, Caring

[Home](#) [Our Mission](#) [Church](#) [Early Childhood](#) [Tags](#)

Username \*

Password \*

Remember me

Log in

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Forgot your username?](#)

301 Summit Avenue, Waukegan, WI 53188  
Church Phone: 762-547-3817

Copyright 2015 Christ the Life Lutheran Church  
Designed by Lutheran

[Back to Top](#)

# Calendar

Sidebar and its own page

Public, private, church, school, etc.

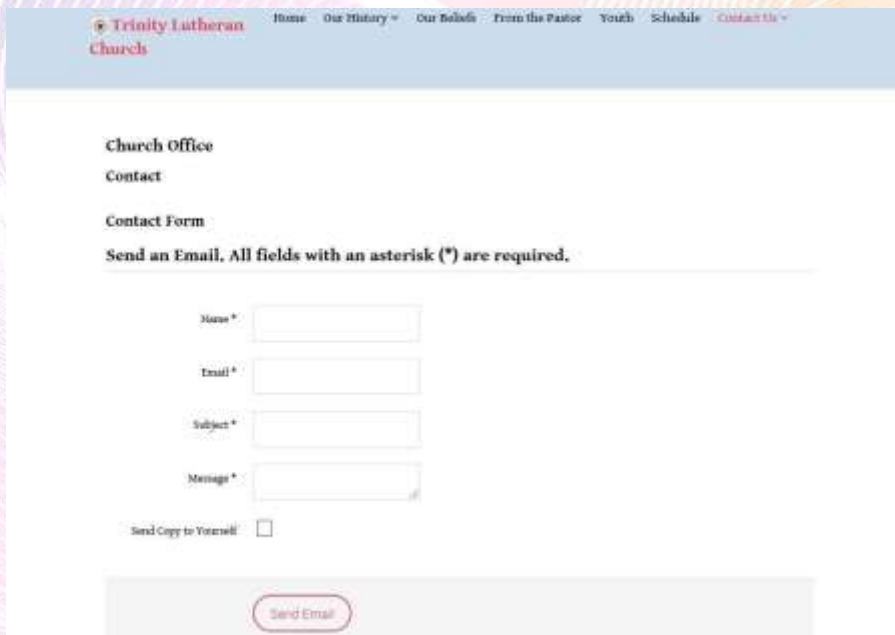
The screenshot shows a website for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church - Oshkosh. The navigation menu includes Home, Worship, Bible Studies, News, Calendars (active), Sermons, and Contact. The page title is "Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church - Oshkosh". The calendar is for November 2015, showing events for the 1st and 8th. The calendar interface includes a "Print" button and view options for "Week", "Month", and "Agenda".

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8am Worship Service 9-11am Bible Class & Sa 10:30am Praise Worship	4:30pm Trinity TV	8am Bible Study 7pm Lutheranism 101	9:30am Catechism 8pm Trinity TV 8:20pm Choir	8:30am Men's Bible Stu 1pm Bible Study 7pm Worship Service 7:15pm Prison Bible Stu		2pm Trinity TV
8am Worship Service 9-11am Bible Class & Sa 10:30am Praise Worship	1pm Prayer Show! Kristi 4:30pm Trinity TV	8am Bible Study 1pm Sociables 6pm Board of Lay Lead 7pm Lutheranism 101	9:30am Catechism 8pm Trinity TV 8:30am YFC Middle Sc 8:30am Choir	8:30am Men's Bible Stu 1pm Bible Study 7pm Worship Service 7:15pm Prison Bible Stu		3pm Trinity TV

# Contact

Limit Spam

Get emails



The screenshot shows a contact form on a website for Trinity Lutheran Church. The header includes the church name and navigation links: Home, Our History, Our Beliefs, From the Pastor, Youth, Schedule, and Contact Us. The form is titled 'Church Office Contact' and 'Contact Form'. It includes a note that all fields with an asterisk are required. The form fields are: Name\*, Email\*, Subject\*, and Message\*. There is also a checkbox for 'Send Copy to Yourself'. A 'Send Email' button is located at the bottom of the form.

Trinity Lutheran Church

Home Our History Our Beliefs From the Pastor Youth Schedule Contact Us

**Church Office Contact**

**Contact Form**

Send an Email, All fields with an asterisk (\*) are required.

Name\*

Email\*

Subject\*

Message\*

Send Copy to Yourself

Send Email

# Map

Embedded  
Interactive



## Location

Our street address is N8092 County Road AY, Mayville, WI.

We are located at the intersection of County Road AY with Allen Road at the edge of the Rock River.





# Image Gallery

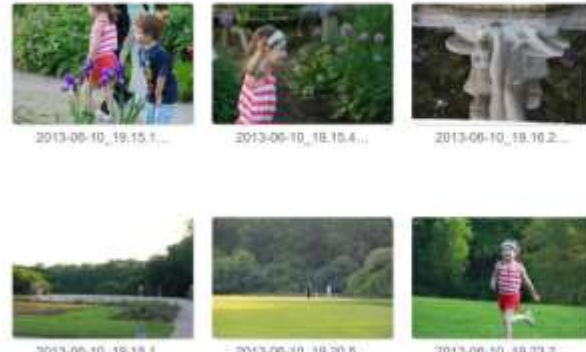
Site-hosted or remotely-hosted

Pictures are worth 1000 words

Google Drive or Flickr = FREE organization and storage of photos



Embedded Google Photo Folder! Almost as good as an image gallery at a fraction of the time needed. Also Documents!



# Document Sharing

Google Drive or One Drive

Update of document updates on website!



## Letters of Recommendation:



Carol University



University of Wisconsin



Wauwatosa West



Letters of Recommendation

## References:



# Videos

Get as much of the video as you can onto YouTube as quickly as you can.

Embed on your website

[Home](#) ▾ [Reviews](#) ▾ [Recipes](#) ▾ [Resumes](#) ▾ [Recreation](#) ▾ [Relaxation](#) ▾ [Rules](#) ▾ [Resources](#) ▾ [Relationships](#) ▾

harassing kids twice her size on defence and outrunning winded opponents to the ball. Not knowing soccer, I told her to just keep running. I told her she was great at wearing the other kids out, and she'd eventually get a shot. She was dedicated. She listened to coaches. She kept trying, even after those long stretches of nothing. And then she got her chance when the other team was tired of chasing her around. And she missed. Maybe she won't next time, and she'll get plenty of next times, but this time she did. Anyone who has tried to start a business can learn from this one scene. She could have walked off the field in tears and given up, but she kept trying, still never scoring all season. Maybe next year. She'll be there trying, anyhow, and so will I.



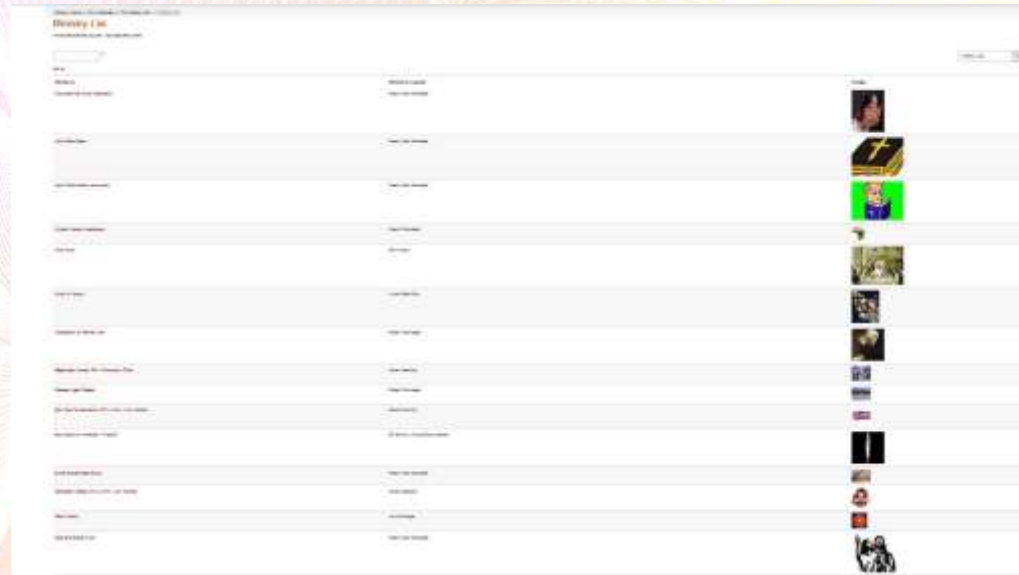
# Community Pages

Your own version of Facebook

Blogs, forums, emails, profiles, and more

A way to handle ministries

Database of members



# Email Newsletters

Can be part of your website



# Reader Interaction

Can be a lot of maintenance

integrated solution. These are not big issues. Not when you have a blu television that plays local TV for free, all of your own media and Youtube content for free, and then streams whatever other providers you order, without having to watch it all on some eye-straining tablet.

It's really that simple. Computer. Television. HDMI. USB. Sit on couch. Save money.

Written by [Brian Jaeger](#), owner of [Satsfamily](#), [McNewsy](#), [PasswHija](#), [Educabona](#), [RealWisconsinNews](#), [ManCrushFanClub](#), [WildWestAbia](#), [SecomLibLessons](#), and [VoucherSchool](#).



2 Comments

Sort by Top



Add a comment...



**Brian Jaeger**

Educational coordinator at Educabona

you should join <http://satsfamilylessons.com/>

Like · Reply · Apr 16, 2015 8:17pm



**Jennifer Harrison**

I think if I sat on my couch to do my office work, I'd end up watching sitcoms and doing my nails.

Like · Reply · Mar 24, 2015 9:11pm

# Embedded Content

Add interest

Add ads




**English Department**

General Writing Reading **Classes and Teachers**

**Classes and Teachers**


- 11 - Super 11
- 11 - Super 11
- 9 - Enter the Conversation**
- Course Outline
- Teacher Information
- Classroom
- Classroom
- The Openness Unit
- The Search for Meaning

**9 - Enter the Conversation**



**Course Outline**


- [The Search for Meaning](#)
- [The Darkness Within](#)
- [Love and Relationships](#)
- [Border Crossing](#)




**Word of the Day**

**Word of the Day**


**Quote of the Day**



**Article of the Day**



**This Day in History**



**Kristallnacht**

# Categories - Static Content

History

Location

Staff

Giving

Church / School / Child Care

Ministries

About / Information



# Categories - Dynamic Content

News (examples of news categories I've seen include News, Articles, Newsletters, Blog, Q and A, Pastor's Thoughts, Updates, and many more)

Media (Photos, Videos)

Testimonials, Resources, and other ideas volunteers may have AND MAINTAIN

See more at <http://luthernet.org>