

Church Website Checklist

MissionSync Lab · Free · No sign-up

A free, practical checklist to help your church see what its website does well and what it might need. No scores and no sign-up. Just honest questions with a one-line reason for each.

How to use it: Open your church's website on your phone, as if you'd never been to your church. Go section by section and check off what's already true. Anything left unchecked is a candidate for your to-do list. You don't have to fix everything at once. Start with the first section, because that's what visitors notice first.

Related reading: What a First-Time Visitor Looks for on Your Church Website. <https://missionsynclab.com/blog/what-a-first-time-visitor-looks-for-on-your-church-website/>

1. First-visitor essentials

- ☐ **Service times are on the homepage, near the top.**
It's the first thing most visitors look for, so they shouldn't have to hunt.
- ☐ **Your full street address is listed, with a map or directions link.**
Visitors can tap once and get directions instead of copying and pasting.
- ☐ **Parking and which entrance to use are explained.**
Not knowing where to go is one of the most stressful parts of a first visit.
- ☐ **There's a "What to Expect" or "Plan Your Visit" page.**
Describing service length, worship style, and dress removes the guesswork that keeps people home.
- ☐ **Kids' and nursery information is easy to find.**
Parents often decide whether to visit based on whether their kids will be welcome and safe.
- ☐ **Check-in and child safety are explained.**
Knowing how children are cared for reassures parents before they arrive.
- ☐ **Building accessibility is mentioned (ramps, elevators, accessible seating, hearing assistance).**
Everyone should know ahead of time that they can get in and take part.
- ☐ **Photos show your real people and your real building.**
They help visitors picture themselves there in a way stock photos can't.
- ☐ **There's one clear next step, such as "Plan a Visit" or "Say Hello."**
It gives interested people an easy way to raise their hand.

2. Mobile and speed

- ☐ **Text is readable on a phone without zooming.**
Many visitors will find you on a phone, often while on the go.
- ☐ **The phone number is tap-to-call and the address is tap-to-map.**
It saves people from typing on a small screen.
- ☐ **The menu is short and easy to open on a phone.**
A long or clumsy menu hides the things visitors came for.

- ☐ **Pages load quickly, even on a cellular connection.**
People tend to give up on slow pages. Google's free PageSpeed Insights tool can show you where you stand.
- ☐ **Photos are resized and compressed before uploading.**
Oversized images are one of the most common reasons a site feels slow.
- ☐ **No pop-ups cover the page on mobile.**
They're hard to close on a small screen and get in the way of what visitors need.

3. Accessibility

- ☐ **Text has strong contrast with its background.**
Light gray on white is hard to read for many people, especially outdoors or with aging eyes.
- ☐ **Body text is a comfortable size.**
Small text quietly shuts out people who have trouble reading it.
- ☐ **Meaningful images have alt text (a short description).**
Screen readers read it aloud to visitors who are blind or have low vision.
- ☐ **Headings are used in order (main heading, then subheadings).**
They help screen-reader users and skimmers find their way around a page.
- ☐ **Links say where they go ("Plan your visit," not "Click here").**
Clear link text helps everyone, especially people using screen readers.
- ☐ **Videos have captions.**
Captions serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and anyone watching with the sound off.
- ☐ **The site can be used with a keyboard alone.**
Some visitors can't use a mouse or touch screen.
- ☐ **Important information isn't only inside images or PDF flyers.**
Screen readers and search engines often can't read text inside a picture.

4. Giving

- ☐ **A "Give" link is easy to find in the main menu.**
Generous people shouldn't have to search for a way to give.
- ☐ **Giving works smoothly on a phone in a few taps.**
Many people give from their phones, and every extra step is a chance to give up.
- ☐ **Ways to give are explained (online, recurring, in person, by mail).**
People have different preferences, and clear options remove friction.
- ☐ **Giving runs through a secure, trusted platform.**
It protects your donors' information and builds their confidence.
- ☐ **A sentence or two explains what giving supports.**
It connects generosity to your mission, not just your budget.
- ☐ **Giving statements or tax receipts are explained.**
Donors appreciate knowing what to expect at tax time.

5. Sermons and media

- ☐ **The latest sermon is easy to find from the homepage.**
Many visitors want to listen to a message before they come.
- ☐ **Each sermon lists the title, speaker, date, and Scripture passage.**
This makes messages easier to find, search, and share.
- ☐ **Video and audio are hosted on a platform like YouTube, Vimeo, or a podcast service and embedded on your site.**
It keeps your site fast and helps more people find your messages.
- ☐ **Live-stream times and links are clearly labeled.**
Homebound members, travelers, and the curious can join you from anywhere.
- ☐ **The archive is current.**
A sermon list that stopped months ago can make the whole church look inactive.

6. Events

- ☐ **Each upcoming event shows the date, time, place, and cost (if any).**
Complete details save everyone a round of back-and-forth emails.
- ☐ **Past events are removed or archived.**
Old events make the whole site feel out of date.
- ☐ **Events that need sign-up have a clear registration link.**
If signing up is easy, more people will do it.
- ☐ **Events come from one source (for example, your church management calendar).**
One place to update means fewer mismatched dates.
- ☐ **Ongoing ministries (small groups, youth, outreach) explain how to get involved.**
Newcomers often look for a place to belong after their first visit.

7. Contact and prayer

- ☐ **A contact form or email address and a phone number are easy to find.**
Some people want to ask a question before they visit.
- ☐ **There's a prayer request form, with a note about who will see requests.**
People share more freely when they know how their request will be handled.
- ☐ **Someone checks messages and replies promptly.**
An unanswered message can quietly close a door.
- ☐ **Forms have spam protection.**
It keeps your inbox usable so real messages don't get lost.
- ☐ **Social media links work and point to active accounts.**
Broken or abandoned links make visitors wonder whether the church is still active.

8. Staff and beliefs

- ☐ **Pastors and key leaders are listed with names, photos, and roles.**
Seeing a face builds trust before the first handshake.

- ☐ **What you believe is summarized in plain, everyday language.**
Visitors want to understand your beliefs without decoding church vocabulary.
- ☐ **A fuller statement of faith is available for those who want it.**
It serves people who are comparing churches carefully.
- ☐ **Your denomination or affiliation (if any) is stated.**
It helps people understand where you fit.
- ☐ **Your church's story and mission are shared in a few sentences.**
It tells visitors who you are and what you care about.

9. Basic SEO and Google Business Profile

- ☐ **Each page has its own clear title (for example, "Sunday Worship in [Your Town] | [Church Name]").**
Page titles are what people see in search results.
- ☐ **Your town or neighborhood is named on the homepage.**
People often search for "church in [town]" or "church near me."
- ☐ **Key pages have a short meta description.**
It's the summary that appears under your link in search results.
- ☐ **Your Google Business Profile is claimed and verified.**
It lets you control what appears on Google Search and Maps.
- ☐ **Service times, address, phone, and website on your Google profile match your site.**
Mismatched information confuses visitors and search engines alike.
- ☐ **Your Google profile has current photos, and reviews get gracious replies.**
It's often the very first impression someone has of your church.
- ☐ **Your site is connected to Google Search Console, with a sitemap submitted.**
It helps Google find and understand all of your pages.
- ☐ **Links to your site show a good preview image when shared in texts or social media.**
A clear preview makes people more likely to tap.

10. Security, updates, and ownership

- ☐ **Every page loads with HTTPS (the padlock).**
Browsers warn visitors away from sites that aren't secure.
- ☐ **The church owns its domain name, registered in a church account.**
If a former volunteer or vendor holds it, you could lose your web address when they move on.
- ☐ **Domain auto-renew is on and renewal emails go to a monitored address.**
An expired domain takes your site and sometimes your email offline.
- ☐ **At least two trusted people can log in to the domain, hosting, website, and Google profile.**
No single person should be the only way in.
- ☐ **Logins are kept in a shared password manager, not one person's inbox or memory.**
It keeps access safe and makes transitions painless.

- ☐ **Website software, themes, and plugins are kept up to date.**
Outdated software is a common way sites get hacked.
- ☐ **The site is backed up regularly, and someone knows how to restore it.**
A mistake or hack becomes an inconvenience instead of a disaster.
- ☐ **You have permission to use your photos, music, fonts, and Bible translation text.**
It avoids takedown notices and honors other people's work.
- ☐ **There's a simple privacy policy if you collect names, emails, or prayer requests.**
People deserve to know how their information is used.
- ☐ **One named person is responsible for keeping the site current, with a quick review each season.**
When updates are everyone's job, they tend to become no one's.

What to do next

1. Count your unchecked items in Section 1. Those matter most to first-time visitors, so start there.
2. Pick three quick fixes you can make this month, such as updating service times or adding a parking note.
3. Write down the bigger items (speed, accessibility, ownership) and decide who will own each one.
4. Come back to this list every few months. Websites drift out of date quietly.

Want a hand? MissionSync Lab builds websites for churches and nonprofits. Basic sites are a monthly subscription with no upfront cost. If you'd like to talk through your checklist results, book a call or email contact@missionsynclab.com. No pressure, just a friendly conversation.

Book a call: <https://cal.com/missionsynclab>

Email: contact@missionsynclab.com

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