



Making your Congregational Website Accessible to Newcomers and Young Adults

A Basic Checklist for your Congregational Website

Adapted from the Unitarian Universalist Association's "Information to Include on a Congregational Website"

- Congregation name and complete meeting address (and mailing address, if different)
- The name of the building in which you meet, if different from your congregation name
- Sunday service meeting times
 - Indicate if service is weekly/monthly and if it runs in the summer
 - Highlight your next Sunday service time clearly (ideally on a static header, footer or side-bar that remains on every page)
- Directions to your building:
 - Text instructions, if needed
 - Embedded map: [Google Maps](#).
 - Campus map, if needed (clearly mark entrances for visitors)
 - Accessibility instructions (which door to use for the elevator/lift)
 - Public transit/bike directions and tips
- Telephone number and office hours
- Congregation email address for general inquiries and/or Contact Us form
- Meeting times and schedule of multi-generational programs
 - Upcoming sermon topics and dates
 - Religious exploration topics, ideally
 - Youth group meeting times and locations
 - Young adult programs and events
 - Link to lifespan learning page, calendar of events, etc. - preferable to list events directly on the website and in a calendar, instead of linking to your newsletter
- Links to social media - embed a static "Share" or "Like" button at the bottom of all pages
- Accessibility information:
 - Is your meeting place wheelchair accessible?
 - Is there accessible parking?
 - Are there large-print hymnals?
 - Headphones in the sanctuary?
- Information for parents and families:
 - Is there a nursery room where parents of infants can watch the service?
 - Are infants and children welcome in the service?



- Are there activities or toys available in the service?
- What aspects of the service are multi-gen (time for all ages, etc)
- Is there childcare available for small children?
- Is there a religious exploration program? Where do families go for religious exploration? Link to RE page, with religious educator name and picture
- A listing of your minister(s) and professional staff, including contact information, bios and photos if possible. Indicate full/part time if possible.
 - Minister's email, or contact form
 - Ministerial intern
 - Religious educator - with contact info if appropriate
 - Administrator and office staff
 - Support staff - if applicable
- If you have no minister or staff, a listing of your congregation's officers and their contact information.
- What to wear:
 - Talk about the range of what people wear to Sunday service
 - Wear what you feel comfortable with (dressed up or dressed down)
 - What children should wear for RE - especially if there is an outdoor activity but important info for the comfort of all first-time visitors
- Clear and inviting information and images about who you are and what you stand for. Write your own or link to (or adapt) content from UUA.org, or CUC.ca including:
 - [Unitarian Universalist \(UU\) Beliefs and Principles](#)
 - [Who We Are](#)
 - [What We Believe](#)
 - [What We Do](#)
 - Canadian UU Vision statement
 - "Voices of a Liberal Faith" video introduction on [YouTube](#) and on [UUA.org](#)
- Short description of the CUC - highlight that there are churches across Canada that are diverse but have a common vision. Include a link to CUC.ca
- A Newcomer FAQ is helpful and can include much of the information above. Knowing what to expect helps newcomers feel more comfortable before they even get in the door. Consider including a page with answers to "What Newcomers Want to Know Before Their First Visit". [UUA.org has an example.](#)
- Information about pastoral care:
 - What does the minister or lay team provide?
 - How can people contact them?
 - What is pastoral care and who can access it?
 - Who else in the congregation provides pastoral care (are there lay people that also participate in pastoral care?)



- Information about rites of passage and building rentals
 - Types of rites of passage that are available
 - Examples of rites of passage and who would be involved (minister, lay chaplain, etc.)
 - Description of spaces that could be rented - with details as appropriate

Notes for making your website friendly to young adults:

- Link to your congregation's social media presence:
 - Embed "Like" and "Share" buttons in the static footer of your website
 - List your congregation's Facebook page, groups, anything that you want visitors to follow or join so they can get connected
 - "Share" buttons for interesting content (sermons, articles, upcoming events, etc)
 - Embed Instagram posts, if applicable
 - *Note: don't over-extend yourself on social media just to seem more tech-savvy. Focus on quality over quantity and limit social media presence to what you can reliably update and manage.*
- Include photos of diverse people and groups:
 - Photos show newcomers what kind of people are part of your UU community - include photos of children, youth, young adults, etc.
 - If you have a young adult group, include photos of them
 - If possible, show people of all ages in leadership and at the pulpit to indicate that you strive for inclusive leadership practises.
 - *Note: Be genuine with photos - don't use stock photos to show diversity or tokenize your own members who are not white and middle-aged just so you can update your website. Try to get candid shots of diverse groups participating in congregational activities.*
- Activities and programs for young adults:
 - Congregational or regional young adult groups:
 - Description
 - Meeting times (if regular)
 - Contact information for organizer or host
 - Facebook group for local young adults, if applicable
 - Age range for local young adult activities (is it 18-35, "20s the 30s", self defined, or other?)
 - Activities specifically for young adults, including:
 - Soulful Sundown, or young adult worship service



- Social meet ups, pub nights, popcorn theology
- Minister's dinner for young adults
- Activities/programs that are especially welcoming of, and appealing to young adults, including:
 - Small group ministry / journey groups / covenant groups
 - Book clubs, or book discussion groups
 - Social justice activities
 - Working to support a refugee family
 - Supporting others in the congregation
- Opportunities for engagement, service and leadership:
 - Describe what aspects of leadership might appeal to young adults, and what roles might best suit young adults.
 - List contact information for church staff or leaders who can connect young adults with leadership opportunities.
- Link to young adult connections outside of the congregation:
 - [Canadian Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Facebook group](#)
 - [Youth and Young Adult Ministry Facebook page](#)
 - Regional young adult Facebook groups, if applicable:
 - [Toronto UU Young Adults](#)
 - [UU Young Adults in Vancouver](#)
 - Link to the [CUC's young adult page](#) and [calendar of upcoming events](#)
 - Short description of regional and national young adult events, including:
 - Young adults at the Western Region Gathering (2nd weekend of October)
 - Unicamp young adult retreat - Ontario (3rd weekend of September)
 - Chorus: national young adult conference - locations vary (annual on the May long weekend)

Other things to consider when building your website:

Posting Personal Information

Ask permission before posting personal information about your members (phone numbers, addresses, personal joys or sorrows). Sometimes this information is included in congregations' newsletters. However, as always, be mindful that newcomers may be getting your newsletter.



Posting Images and Video

Only post images and videos with the permission of the subjects and/or copyright holders. Do not use stock photos without permission (or at all, if it can be avoided), as the copyright holder can sue the congregation for payment.

- [Copyright issues and worship](#)
- [Copyright issues for UUA publications](#)
- [Sample photo and video permission form for congregations](#)

Balancing Inward/outward Focus

Your website will be visited by a range of people: those that have never heard of you and want to know what you're about, those that are planning to visit, newish people who want to know more about you and how to get involved, and congregants that are already involved.

In considering content and format, be mindful that your website is your public face as well as a resource to congregants. Make sure that internal affairs and "dirty laundry" are not front and centre - always consider how a newcomer will view the content you put up. That consideration should also be given to your newsletter and email list content, as newcomers may join the e-list soon after visiting.

Some good thoughts about this can be found in the article "[Your website is your front door](#)".

Taking Donations and Pledges

It should be clear on the website how people can donate and contribute to the stewardship campaign. However, the donation button should not be front and centre for visitors who are looking into you for the first time. Be mindful of how budget-related content will appear to website visitors who are not involved yet.

Make sure there is information about pledging on the website - what it means to pledge, how much money needs to be raised, what an average pledge is, who to contact, what the money is used for, etc. Ideally, a congregant should be able to pledge from the congregational website (this is especially helpful for young adults who are used to making payments online).

- [Recommendations for Accepting Online Donations or Pledge Payments](#)