

**Best Practices for Methodist churches** 

## **Design and Branding**

A practical guide and suggestions

Basic Guidance and Training written and collated by Elliot Crippen Digital Enabler for Yorkshire North and East Methodist District

www.yorkshirenemethodist.org/digital-resources





## Why does design and branding matter?



Every church has a brand. This is because a "brand" is the way in which the wider community perceives something: it's not just having a church logo or website. A church brand is not what you think about your church, but how everyone on the outside sees it.

Some feel unsure of branding due to the association with marketing in the business world. But it is not just for swaying people into buying something. Branding is simply telling your church's story in a way that demonstrates who you are and what your vision is.

Research shows someone must see a brand SEVEN times before they act. Branding that's consistent and eye-catching will help potential visitors recognise your church and be more willing to check it out.

If you want to advertise your church event, whether it's a service, toddler group, course, or concert, it's important that promotional materials are eye catching and engaging.

If you don't have the budget for a professional graphic designer or have an experienced member of the congregation, you're often left with a volunteer designing in software not meant for design, such as Microsoft Word. Generally, this means that the potential of what you can create will be limited. But there are some tips that will help.

Good graphic design can help form a positive first impression that draws people in. It can also have an ongoing impact on how people relate to your church. It gives us credibility and adds to our reputation. It can impact the quality of our worship, how many people turn up to our events, and whether younger generations see the church as relevant to their lives.

Our churches, leaders and volunteers are stretched thinly, either having too much to do, or not having the right skills for the job. This can, in some cases, lead to poor standards in the publicity we produce – whether we're aware of it or not.

Publicity is usually produced with the best intentions, and we don't want to downplay this. But if we're able to improve our output with some easily implemented steps, we should be seeking to do so!

The following tips in this document are written to give you some helpful design pointers for those tasked with creating your church flyers, banners, slideshows, notice sheets, newsletters, webpages, social media content, and other digital assets.



## RECOMMENDED METHODIST COLOURS



#### **Methodist Guidance**

Methodist Red, the traditional colour of Pentecost, may be taken to symbolise the Methodist conviction that through the power of the Holy Spirit, all humanity may be saved. For this reason, The Methodist Red should appear on every piece of communication wherever possible. The secondary palette provides colours that give creative flexibility and work well with Methodist red. Read more on the Methodist Website here

#### Why should you use these colours?

As said in the intro, consistency is key in branding – people become familiar with your look and positively associate it with your church. This is most easily achieved using colours. If each poster, graphic, PowerPoint has a different colour palette it can be jarring and confusing. So, even if you don't use these specific colours, it's important to consistently use your own colours.

These colours, however, are already associated with the Methodist brand nationally, and so by using them you will more easily identify as a Methodist Church to those outside. Limiting your choice of colours also often helps non-professionals create better designs.

District Red	New Methodist Red	Old Methodist Red
R219 G00 B46	R206 G14 B45	R181 G33 B41
Hex #db002e	Hex #ce0e2d	Hex #b52129

#### Some additional colours used by the Connexional Team

R34 G28 B53	R142 G21 B56	R235 G91 B93
Hex #221c35	Hex #8e1538	Hex #eb5b5d
R238 G118 B35	R246 G161 B23	R254 G209 B109
Hex #ee7623	Hex #f6a117	Hex #fed16d
R125 G134 B140 Hex #7d868c	R200 G200 B200 Hex #c8c8c8	White
Black	You don't need to use all of these – in fact it's best to stick to just 2 or 3 colours total (a red and one secondary colour, plus black & white, can go a long way!)	



### **EXAMPLE**



Examples used in this document are not meant to be seen as "good" and "bad", or to name and shame, but are provided as a learning opportunity. The "more effective" examples should not be considered "perfect" – and we must remember art is subjective!

#### LESS EFFECTIVE



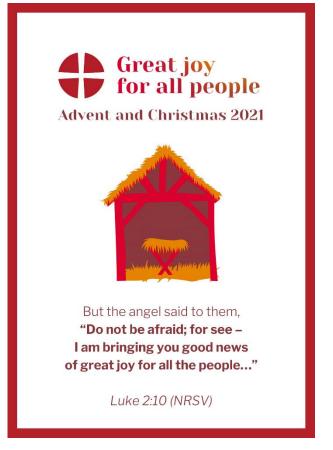
Over 10 different colours are used in this design which limits the visual appeal

Over 5 different fonts are used. Simplifying the colours and fonts would improve the cohesiveness and effectiveness of this design

The dense use of text and lack of space makes this poster hard to read and not very accessible **MORE EFFECTIVE** 

Designs using only the Methodist colour palette can still look exciting, professional, and creative.

Lots of 'blank space' improves the design.
Only include
key information –
less is more!



## **RECOMMENDED METHODIST FONTS**



#### **Methodist Guidance**

The Methodist Church font is currently the Franklin Gothic family (possibly changing). It is used across the whole brand – from display size to body copy. It is a common font available in most packages by default. Read more on the Methodist Website here

#### Why should you use these fonts?

Part of being consistent in your branding is using set fonts. If each poster, graphic, PowerPoint has different fonts it can be jarring and confusing. So, even if you don't use these specific fonts, it's important to consistently use a selected font family.

These fonts, however, are already associated with the Methodist brand. Limiting your choice of fonts also often helps non-professionals create better designs.

Fonts can really make or break a design – creative use of complimentary fonts can be good, but if you're not sure, it's best to stick with these recommendations.

To look professional, try to avoid these dated fonts that are common in less effective designs: Comic Sans, Papyrus, Arial, Times New Roman, Helvetica, Impact, Courier New, Trajan, Kristen ITC, Bradley Hand.

Franklin Gothic Demi
Franklin Gothic Demi Bold
Franklin Gothic Demi Italic
Franklin Gothic Demi Expanded

Franklin Gothic Book
Franklin Gothic Book Bold
Franklin Gothic Book Italic
Franklin Gothic Book Expanded

**Libre Franklin Bold**Libre Franklin Light

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#### **LESS EFFECTIVE**



## **CHURCH SERVICE**

## **SUNDAY 7th AUGUST**

10.00 am - at Example Methodist Church
(entrance to the field for cars and pedestrians
will be directed through the main Abbey car park)

Preacher: Example Person

Followed by Refreshments - you're invited to bring a picnic to share together.

Everyone Welcome - come and join us!

This service is arranged by EXAMPLE METHODIST CHURCH (wet weather plan will be to move inside the church)



Unless printing at home, it's best to have a background (a colour, photo, or graphic) to aid visual appeal

Over 5 different fonts are used.
Simplifying the fonts would improve the cohesiveness and effectiveness of this design

This design only uses 1 font, but utilises **bold**, UPPERCASE and expanded typefaces to add variety without being distracting

It's more effective to integrate images into your design than have them stand alone

#### **MORE EFFECTIVE**



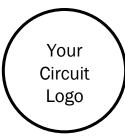
Avoid underlining text or including overused fonts like Comic Sans or Papyrus

## **USING METHODIST LOGOS**









Your Church Logo

## The **Methodist** Church





#### **Methodist Guidance**

The Methodist Church logo is an integral part of the brand, and therefore our identity. It is made up of our name and the Orb and Cross. It is used on all materials as part of the body of work of the Methodist Church in Britain. It can appear as red on a white background or the reverse. The logo should not be recreated, distorted, or appear in other colours. Read more on the Methodist Website here

#### **General Advice**

Logos are a great brand tool as they are quickly identifiable and we'd encourage every church to have a logo, even if it's just the church name in a certain font. Place your logo, and the Methodist logo or orb (if it's not part of your own logo), on all your communication and publicity. District and Circuit logos can be used where appropriate.

Whilst the Methodist logo should be used on a white background where possible, it's best to use a transparent logo on other backgrounds – don't do this:





## TIP #1 USE THE RIGHT SOFTWARE



To start designing, you'll need a design tool/program.

Unless you're creating something to be quickly printed at home, it's unlikely that Microsoft Word or other word processing applications are going to be suitable. They will limit the effectiveness of what can be produced, and are less able to create graphics, content for sharing online, or content for professional printing.

For those with a budget and someone with existing skills (or willing to learn), then the best option is **Adobe Creative Cloud**. This gives access to professional software like Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator. Adobe provides a non-profit discount, so if your church is a registered charity, you may be able to apply.

However, there are many great free options, included the highly recommend <u>Canva</u> which is great for beginners and experts alike. It offers free templates and simple to use interfaces all through the online editor. Just add your text to a free template and upload to your website or social media. You can design posters, documents, PowerPoints, and much more. Canva offers its premium version free to registered charities.











Canva is a free online simplified graphic-design tool, founded in 2012. It uses a drag-and-drop format and provides access to photographs, vector images, graphics, and fonts. It is used by non-designers as well as professionals. The tools can be used for both web and print media design and graphics.



## **TIP #2 LEAVE SPACE**



"Perfection is Achieved Not When There Is Nothing More to Add, But When There Is Nothing Left to Take Away"

**Antoine de Saint-Exupery** 

#### LESS EFFECTIVE



#### **MORE EFFECTIVE**



Let your design breathe...

Make sure you leave negative space – this is the area of the layout that is left empty. Not only around the objects you place in the layout, but also between and inside them. Negative space creates a kind of breathing room for all the objects on the page or screen. You don't need to fill the design with text, images, and objects. Having a clean design can help get your message across.

Proper use of white space not only frees up the design from being overcrowded and cluttered, but also serves to draw the eye to the details that are most important.

Don't include every detail you can think of on your publicity! The more details you include, the more space this will take up or the more elements there will be to distract your audience from the message you want them to take away and act on.



## **TIP #3 INCLUDE HIGH QUALITY PHOTOS**



Visual storytelling is incredibly important as people process images 60,000 times faster than words.

Therefore, it's crucial to take the best photos you can – but photos taken on a phone will often be more than good enough. If you have amateur, or even professional photographers in your midst, use them! But don't let a lack of these be an excuse.

Good photos are easy to come by in the age of camera phones: it's more a case of ensuring we remember to capture the right things. Keep your phone close and build up a church photo library for your publicity.

It is always great to take photos of your community yourself, but sometimes it may not be possible. So **Unsplash**, **Pexels** and **Pixabay** can come in handy as they offer royalty-free photos. However, stock photography will rarely, if ever, portray an accurate, honest and helpful picture of your church.

#### Find more advice here:

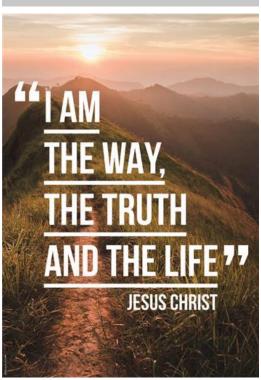
<u>Tips for taking photos at church events (blog)</u>
<u>Taking great church photos (Church of England)</u>
Safeguarding Advice and Consent Forms

Using one large high-quality image is often more effective than using lots of small images

#### **LESS EFFECTIVE**



## MORE EFFECTIVE



### **GENERAL TIPS**



#### Save time with social media templates

There is no better way to save time, and improve quality, than to use pre-designed templates.

#### **Consider the visual hierarchy**

Visual hierarchy is all about giving importance to some elements over others. It's how headers are larger than subheadings, and these in turn are larger than a box of text. The same applies to images, graphics, icons and even colours. When you use visual hierarchy rules, you bring attention to a focal point in the design. This creates a visual balance that then starts a visual flow of information for the viewer.

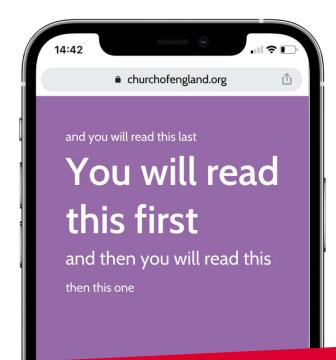
#### **Use cohesive design elements**

When you add design element, they must have a cohesive style between them. This applies to all graphic elements: borders, boxes, lines, shapes, pictures, fonts, colours.

#### **Optimize readability**

Always make your text easy to read, being aware of contrast between text and backgrounds. Your text needs to be easy to read over a background image or texture. Do everything in your power to make the context of your design easy to understand.





#### Things to avoid:

- Too many fonts
- Too many colours
- Too much text
- Pixelated graphics or images
- Going too near the edge of the page or graphic
- Clipart or wordart
- Taking a picture of a physical poster for use online
- White background on social media
- To keep designs looking modern, we'd suggest avoiding text shadows, underlining text, curved text, or text borders



## **DESIGNING A CHURCH POSTER**



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#### How to make a poster

Get started on Canva

Open up Canva and search for "Poster" to start designing.

Choose a template

Find a poster for an open house, a business launch party, fundraiser, upcoming event, workshop or conference, art auction, grand opening, program announcement and more. Click on the template to start customizing.

Personalize your poster design

Begin with a template then play around with the design. Adjust the layout by rearranging the elements on the page, choosing a new color scheme or background, and experimenting with different fonts and color combinations.

This could be for your website, your church notice board, or outdoor display. But as with all graphic design, if you're a beginner then the best and quickest way to create a church poster is to use a template. Canva has lots of free options and customisation options.

However, if you're keen to start from scratch, then it's often good to establish a background image, graphic, texture, or colour first. Then start laying up elements and text.

Otherwise, it's a case of following the guidance on the previous pages of this document to create an attractive, accessible, and effective poster.







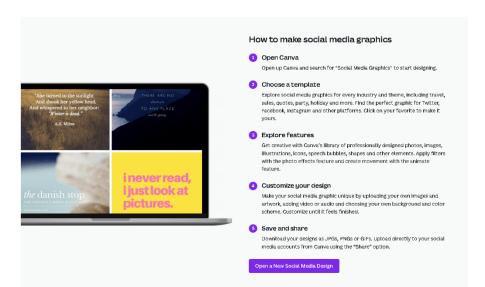




## **DESIGNING SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS**



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To all intents and purposes, designing social media graphics is the same process as designing a church poster – see page above.

The main differences with social media are **purpose** (you should be looking to engage rather than promote events), **simplicity** (designs should be bold and with limited text to grab people's attention in the cluttered online space), and the final difference is the ideal **sizes and dimensions** for social media:

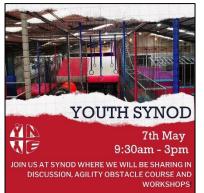
Facebook: landscape, portrait, or square

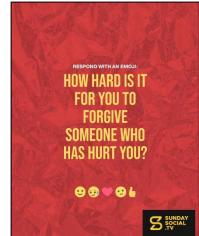
Instagram: square or portrait (1080 x 1350 pixels)

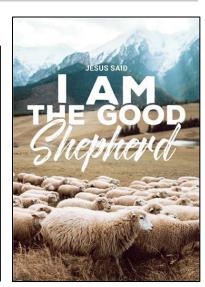
Twitter: landscape (1600 x 900 pixels)













## **DESIGNING A WORD DOCUMENT**



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If it's the front cover of a document or pdf, you may find it easier to design this as a separate image, follow the guidance for posters, and then just insert the image at the start of your document. It can be challenging to design a good front cover within Microsoft Word itself, as it is not meant for graphic design.

If you are looking to format text of a document to be more appealing, here are some tips: add space, break up blocks of text, choose fonts carefully, align the text, add some colour, use headings to draw the eye, insert some images or shapes, add a background.











## **DESIGNING A WORSHIP POWERPOINT**



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Here are some tips for creating PowerPoints for hymn lyrics in church:

- · Choose a lyric font that's easy to read
- Choose a text size that is legible from every spot in your church
- Split hymns into separate lines of lyrics (ideally 2 lines per slide, not a whole verse)
- Avoid some lines of text being significantly larger than others. While still maintaining musical phrasing, keep the shape of your lines similar
- Lyrics do not require full stops like traditional writing. Allow line breaks to substitute for punctuation
- Remove unnecessary Ad Lib musical references and interjections (Oh, Whoa, etc.)
- Leave space around the edge of your slide
- Add a drop shadow to your text for increased visibility
- Use motion backgrounds to create a dynamic visual experience

Find more advice here: Church Motion Graphics

Amazing grace
how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
but now am found
Was blind, but now I see
'Twas grace that taught

Amazing grace how sweet the sound



To God be the glory, great things he has done!

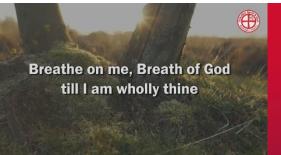
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son.

Who yielded his life in atonement for sin,

And opened the life gates that all may go in.

StF 94 To God be the glory Verse 1 of 3

To God be the glory, great things he has done So loved he the world that he gave us his Son Who yielded his life in atonement for sin And opened the life gates that all may go in



Thankyou for joining us today

Now join us for a refreshing drink of tea or coffee

More information at: https://starbeckmethodistchurch.org.uk





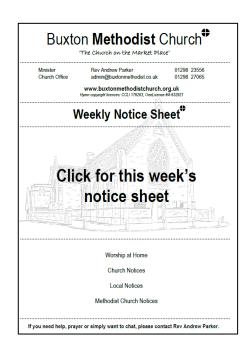
## **DESIGNING CHURCH NOTICE SHEETS**



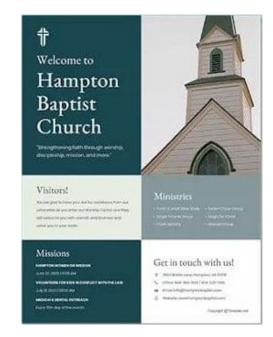
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Simple designs can be more effective than fussy, complicated layouts. Make sure that things are grouped together under larger headings to make things easier to find. Keep all font sizes to 12 point or above, with a larger size for headings. Stick to one standard font. Avoid clip art or wordart. Not having adequate contrast can make it difficult for people with limited vision to read. If you want to highlight a section of text, create a box around it or use a different colour background. Avoid underlining, as this can be confusing. Instead, use bold or slightly larger text. Maybe include some colour or images? Follow the other guidance provided in this document.











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