



*broken sheep llc*  
helping churches embody 1 > 99

# Church Websites 101

Eric Seiberling

This webinar is produced by PRC – Practical Resources for Churches



[www.prcli.org](http://www.prcli.org)

## About PRC

PRC is a non-profit denominational resource center offering consultants, workshops, webinars, and resources to congregations.

## Our webinar program is supported by :

Central Atlantic UCC Conference  
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North Carolina Synod, ELCA  
Northeastern Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
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# Why are websites so hard?







*broken sheep llc*

helping churches embody 1 > 99



Kim's a successful pastor for 18 years.  
Eric is a Fortune 500 marketing exec.

Together, we combine the best of the secular corporate world and church practice to deliver the newest skills and trends with a sound theological understanding to create positive change.



# Four Steps to Create Your Website

1



Who are you trying to reach?  
(people)

2



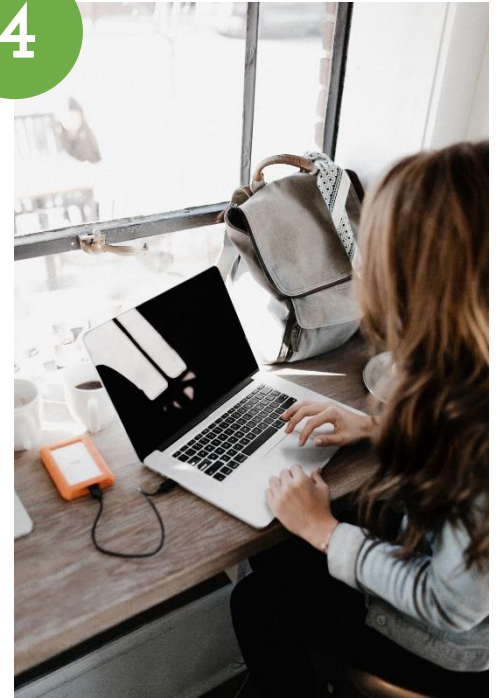
What do they need to know?  
(content)

3



What platform will you use?  
(technology)

4



What is the best way to build?  
(layout & writing)



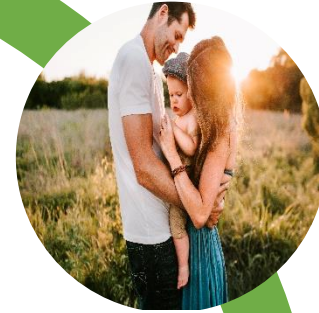
# #1 Who are you trying to reach?





What questions  
are people  
looking to  
answer?

IT DEPENDS!



“New  
Person”



“Regular  
Attender”



“Active  
Member”



# What do people need to know?



## New Person - "Is this the right place for me?"

- What is Worship Like? (times, styles, sermon)
- Will this church meet my needs? (life stage, issues, gaps)
- Will I fit in? (theologically, demographics, psychographics)



## Regular Attender - "What is going on this week?"

- What is going on? (activities and happenings)
- How do I get involved? (ways to volunteer)
- How do I stay connected? (ways to make friends)



## Active Member - "What do I need to do?"

- How do I keep up with what I need to do? (coordination)
- Why and how should I give? (giving and stewardship)



# How do I know what people want? ASK THEM

- **New people** - Why did they start attending your church?
- **Regular attenders** - How can we help you stay connected and involved?
- **Active members** - What can we do to make it easier for you to grow deeper in your faith and this faith community?





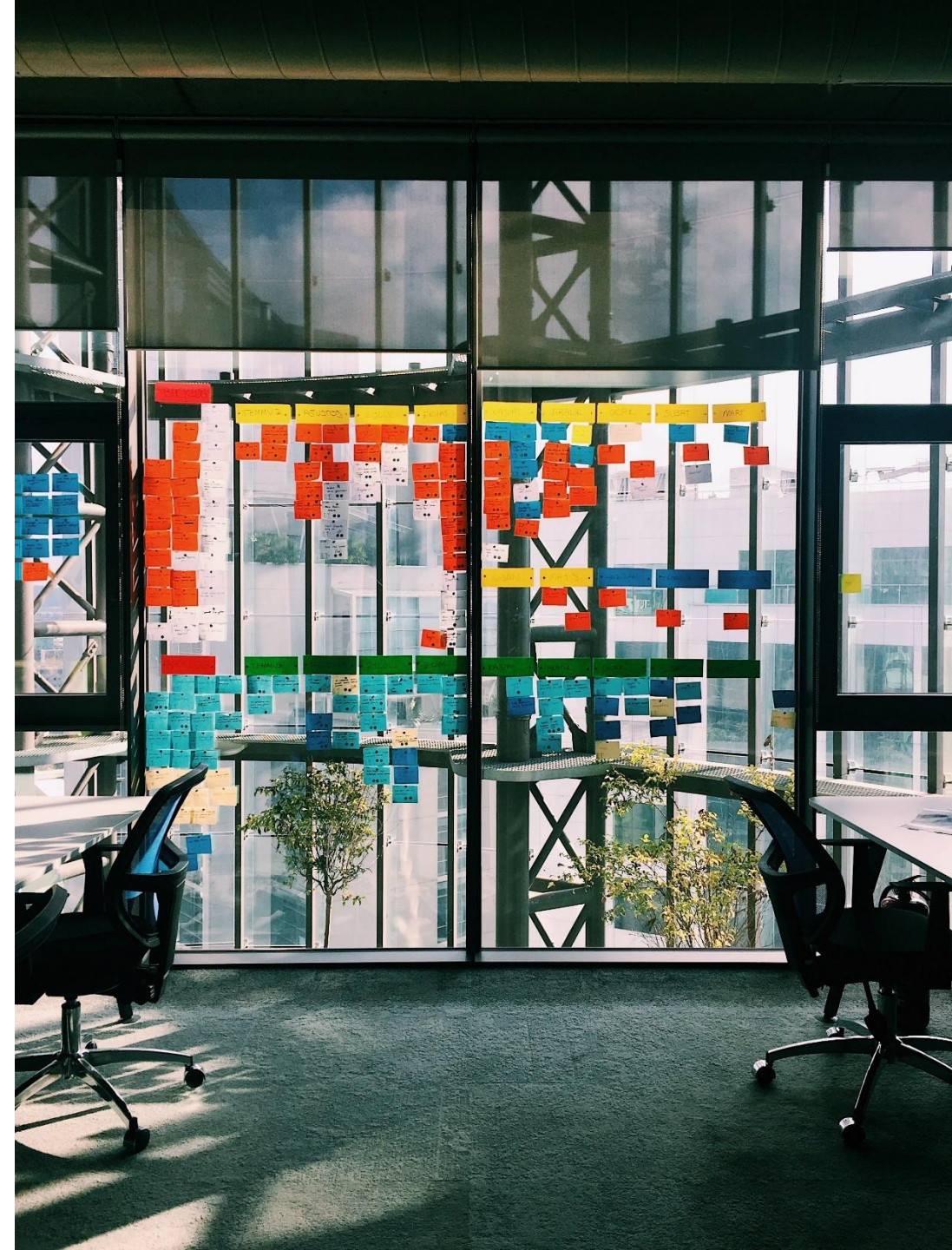


*#2 What content do we need?*



# Building a content map (from scratch)

- Take the answers from your interviews and brainstorm the name of a “content chunk” for each one. PUT IT ON A POST-IT NOTE.
- As a team, silently move post-it notes into groups. Keep going until everyone silently agrees or cannot agree.
- Let each person describe their “organizing principle” for 2 minutes each.
- Work as a team to name each “group”
- Agree as a group on where “disagreements go.”
- Take the key questions by group. Are the answers easy to find?

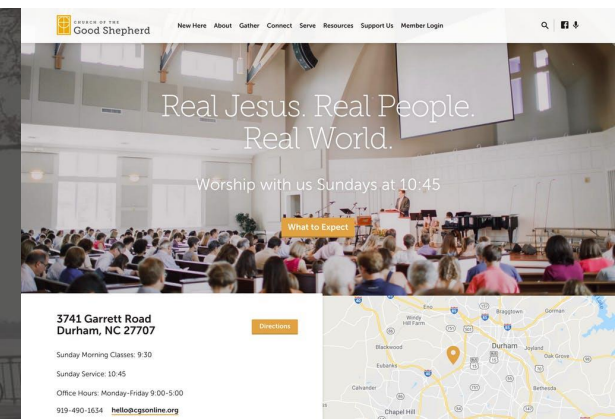
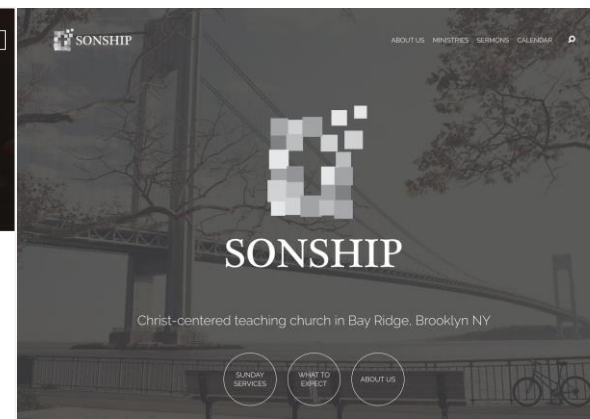
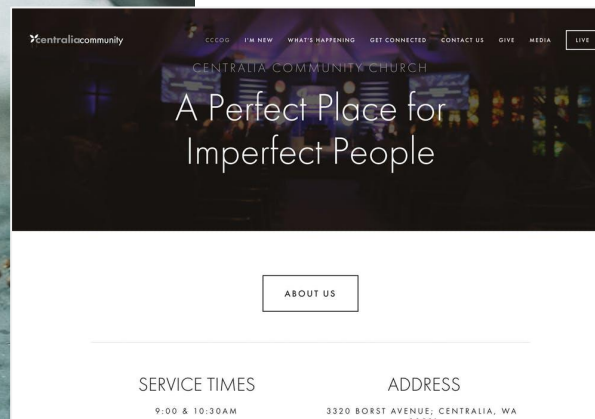




# Building a content map (steal with pride)

- Compile a list of church website that your team likes and finds easy to navigate.
- Review them as a team and ask what would work for your church.
- Build the content map of pages.

<https://www.sitebuilderreport.com/inspiration/church-websites>





CENTRALIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

# A Perfect Place for Imperfect People

ABOUT US

## SERVICE TIMES

9:00 & 10:30AM

## ADDRESS

3320 BORST AVENUE; CENTRALIA, WA  
99521

Built with  
with [Squarespace](#)  
using the  
[Anya](#) template.





# SONSHIP

Christ-centered teaching church in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn NY

SUNDAY  
SERVICES

WHAT TO  
EXPECT

ABOUT US

Built with [Wordpress](#) using the [Maranatha](#) template.



Real Jesus. Real People.  
Real World.

Worship with us Sundays at 10:45

What to Expect

**3741 Garrett Road  
Durham, NC 27707**

Directions

Sunday Morning Classes: 9:30

Sunday Service: 10:45

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00-5:00

919-490-1634 [hello@cgsonline.org](mailto:hello@cgsonline.org)



Built with  
[Wordpress](#) using  
the [Saved](#) template.





Built with [Weebly.](#)





# Build Your Site Map

Welcome Home	Meet First Church	Worship	Grow	Serve	My First Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly welcome</li> <li>• What to expect</li> <li>• Prayer Request</li> <li>• Sermon example or church walkthrough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hi Neighbor</li> <li>• Our Story</li> <li>• Why We Are Here</li> <li>• What We Believe</li> <li>• Meet Our Community /Family (FUTURE – VIDEO)</li> <li>• Join Us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:15 Traditional</li> <li>• 10:30 Traditional</li> <li>• 10:45am Contemporary</li> <li>• Sermons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, VBS, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Youth               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, Confirmation, Youth Group, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adult               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portfolio of all activities for adults (Sunday School, Weekly Studies and Small Groups, Women’s Groups, Men’s Groups, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get Involved (Inside the church)</li> <li>• Caring for our Community</li> <li>• Serving our World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calendar of events</li> <li>• help wanted / volunteer boards</li> <li>• newsletter</li> <li>• Blog</li> </ul>

first  
LIFE'S BEST IS HERE

WELCOME HOME | MEET FIRST CHURCH | WORSHIP YOUR WAY | GROW IN FAITH | SERVE OTHERS | MY FIRST CHURCH

**Be Part of Something BIG!**  
Serve others and make a difference in our world.

**No matter where you are in life, you are welcome here.**

Visiting a church for the first time can be a little scary. People tend to worry about what to wear, what to say and even when to stand or sit down. Don't worry. We are a friendly bunch that is just happy to meet you!





*#3 Which technology should we use?*

# Analyze needs using your site map

Welcome Home	Meet First Church	Worship	Grow	Serve	My First Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly welcome</li> <li>• What to expect</li> <li>• Prayer Request</li> <li>• Sermon example or church walkthrough video</li> <li>• Service Time &amp; Directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hi Neighbor</li> <li>• Our Story</li> <li>• Why We Are Here</li> <li>• What We Believe</li> <li>• Meet Our Community /Family (FUTURE – VIDEO)</li> <li>• Join Us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:15 Traditional</li> <li>• 10:30 Traditional</li> <li>• 10:45am Contemporary</li> <li>• Sermons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, VBS, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Youth               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, Confirmation, Youth Group, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adult               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portfolio of all activities for adults (Sunday School, Weekly Studies and Small Groups, Women’s Groups, Men’s Groups, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get Involved (Inside the church)</li> <li>• Caring for our Community</li> <li>• Serving our World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calendar of events</li> <li>• help wanted / volunteer boards</li> <li>• newsletter</li> <li>• Blog</li> </ul>



# Define Requirements

Welcome Home	Meet First Church	Worship	Grow	Serve	My First Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friendly welcome</li> <li>What to expect</li> <li>Prayer Request</li> <li>Sermon example or church walkthrough video</li> <li>Service Time &amp; Directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hi Neighbor</li> <li>Our Story</li> <li>Why We Are Here</li> <li>What We Believe</li> <li>Meet Our Community /Family (FUTURE – VIDEO)</li> <li>Join Us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 Traditional</li> <li>10:30 Traditional</li> <li>10:45am Contemporary</li> <li>Sermons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, VBS, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Youth               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, Confirmation, Youth Group, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Adult               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portfolio of all activities for adults (Sunday School, Weekly Studies and Small Groups, Women's Groups, Men's Groups, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get Involved (Inside the church)</li> <li>Caring for our Community</li> <li>Serving our World</li> </ul> <p>Easy to Update Calendar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>calendar of events</li> <li>help wanted / volunteer boards</li> <li>newsletter</li> <li>Blog</li> </ul> <p>Blog</p>

Members only section?

My First Church

Portfolio of all activities (Sunday School, VBS, etc.)

calendar of events  
help wanted / volunteer boards  
newsletter  
Blog

Friendly welcome  
Prayer Request  
Sermon example or church walkthrough video  
Service Time & Directions

Connection to Google Maps?

Host Videos (and maybe internal sermon library?)

Contact Forms

Slider Functionality?

Photo portfolio with descriptions?

Newsletter/Email capability?

Blog

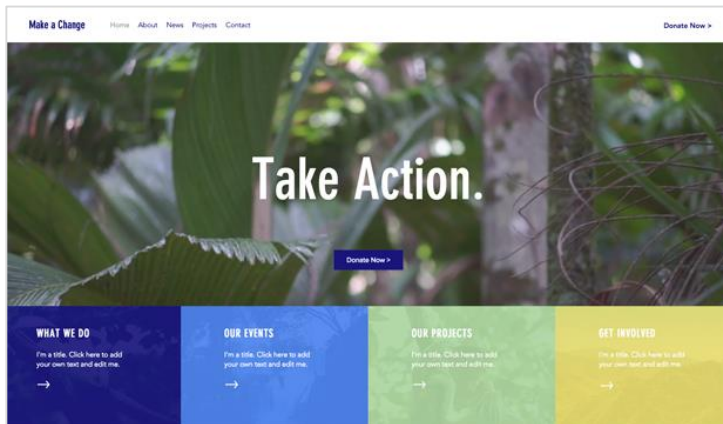
A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a person's hands writing on a document. The person is using a pen and a wooden ruler. The document is on a dark wooden desk. In the background, another person's hands are visible, also writing on a document. The overall scene suggests a professional or academic setting.

*If you want full control & options, use Wordpress.  
If not, try using a template-based web provider first.*

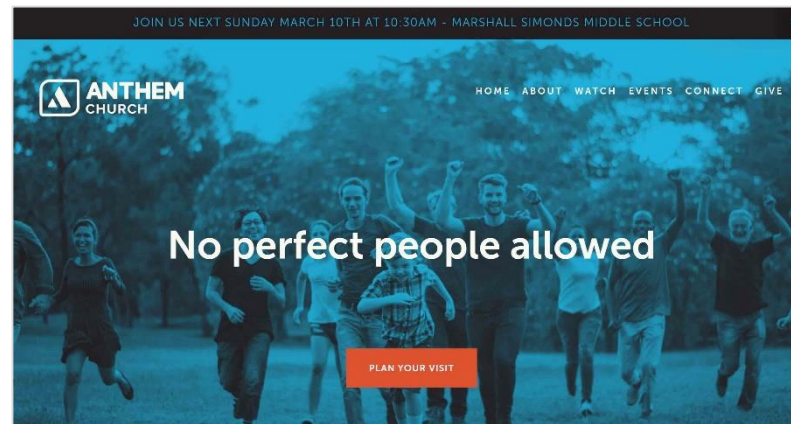


# Templated Website

- 3 Major Providers but there are others including ones specifically designed for churches.



Wix



Weebly



SquareSpace

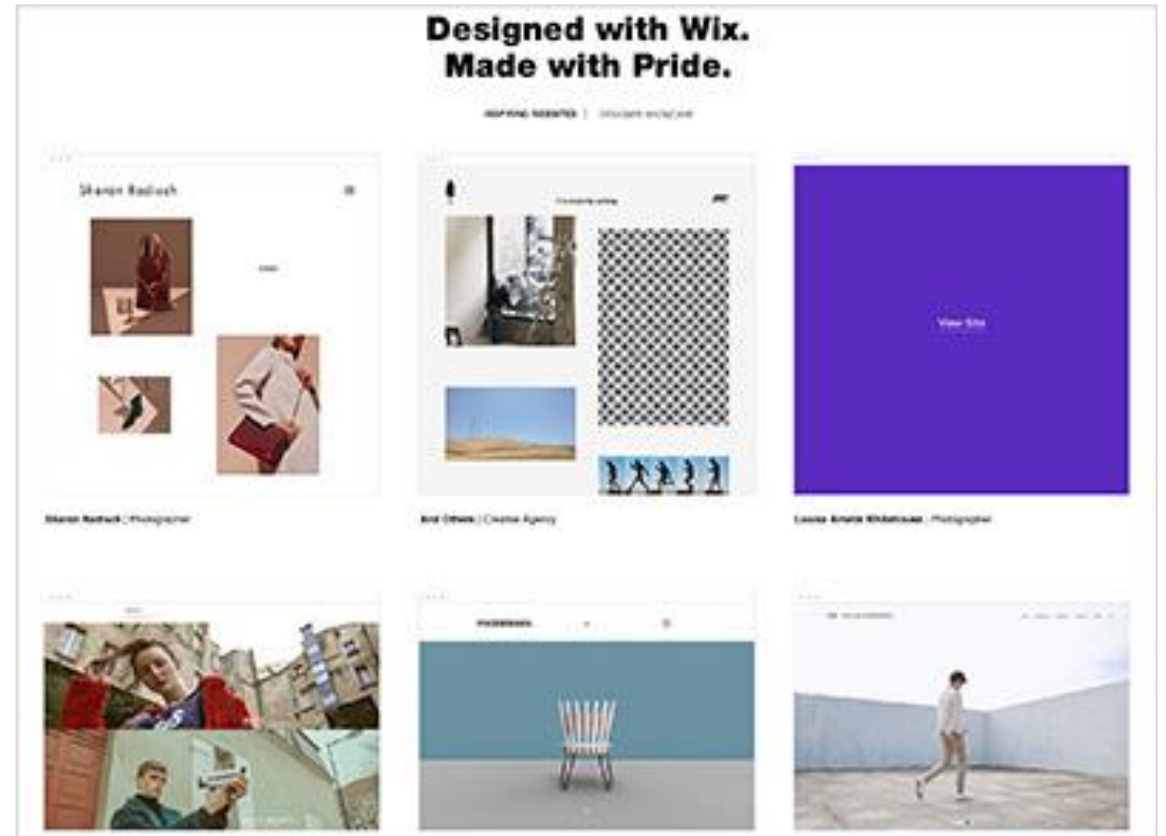
# Wix = POPULAR

- PROS

- A simple drag/drop editor with 500+ design options (including video backgrounds)
- Very user friendly
- Comprehensive support tools and how-to videos
- Wix's patented Artificial Design Intelligence (ADI), which prompts users through a series of questions.

- CONS

- Does not allow users to change a template once the site is published.
- Only two-level navigation.



	BEST VALUE		
VIP First Priority Support	Pro Complete Online Branding	Unlimited Entrepreneurs & Freelancers	Combo For Personal Use
\$ <b>39</b> /month	\$ <b>22</b> /month	\$ <b>17</b> /month	\$ <b>13</b> /month

<https://www.wix.com/website/templates/?criteria=church>



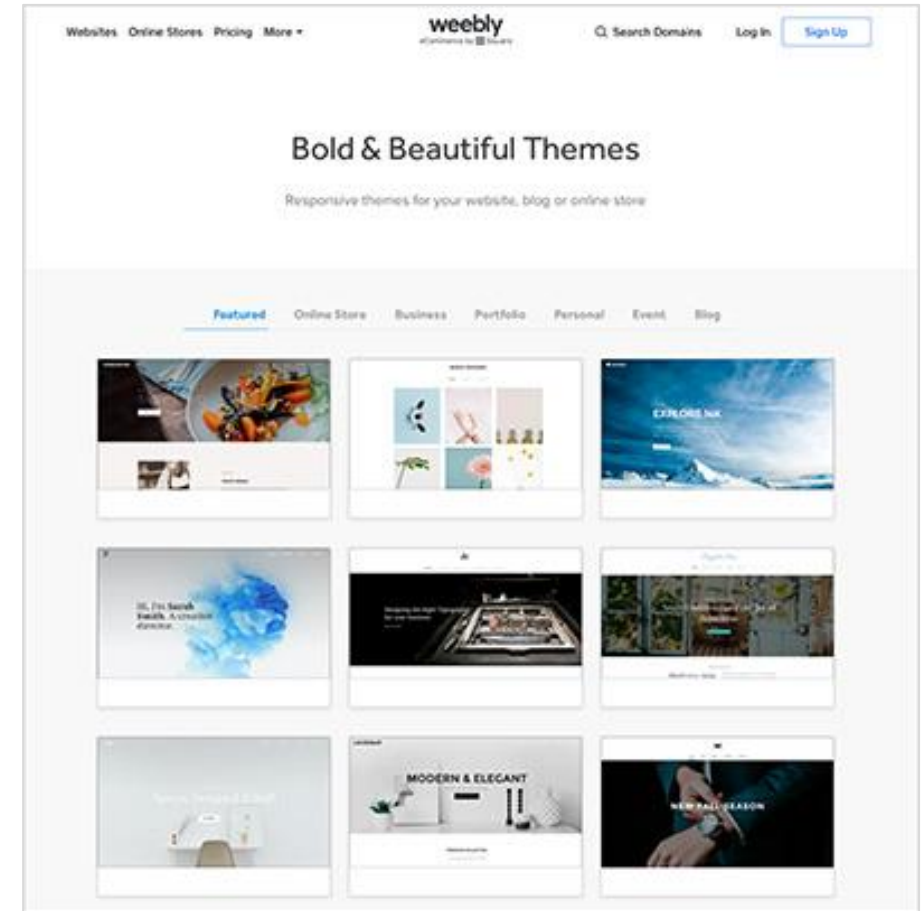
# Weebly = SIMPLE

## • PROS

- Simple templated drag/drop builder.
- Many stylish design themes.
- More navigational flexibility to support a deeper, larger site.
- Provides guides to help churches with Search Engine Optimization.
- Can easily add a members-only area to their site.
- Blogging and marketing tools (social sharing, RSS, email campaigns) are more enhanced than Wix's.

## • CONS

- Lacks the cool guided AI design of Wix.
- If a Weebly site crashes during an update, restoring it to the last live backup requires contacting their support department.



Free	Personal	Professional	Performance
Basic use	Connect to a custom domain	Build a professional, branded website for your business	Manage and grow your business with integrated eCommerce tools
\$0 /mo	\$6.00 /mo billed annually or \$9.00 month-to-month	\$12.00 /mo billed annually or \$16.00 month-to-month	\$26.00 /mo billed annually or \$29.00 month-to-month
SELECT	SELECT	SELECT	SELECT

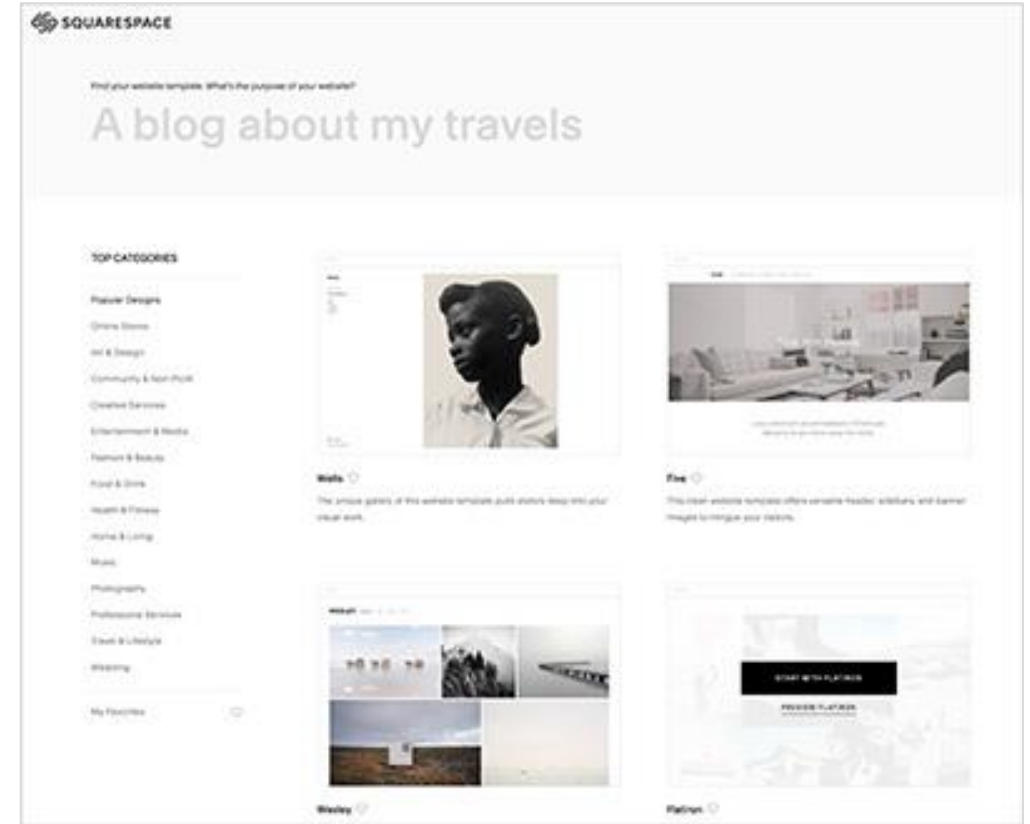
# SquareSpace = PRETTY

- PROS

- Best for stunning image-heavy online portfolio or brochure websites.
- Best suited for churches using an experienced web designer.

- CONS

- Building a site here is more technical and less intuitive than the drag/drop builds of Wix and Weebly.
- Squarespace is so customizable that the options may be overwhelming to some



	MOST POPULAR		
Personal	Business	BASIC Commerce	ADVANCED Commerce
\$12	\$18	\$26	\$40
per month	per month	per month	per month
Save \$48 annually	Save \$96 annually	Save \$48 annually	Save \$72 annually





*The best technology is the  
one you can maintain!*



# #4 Building Your Site



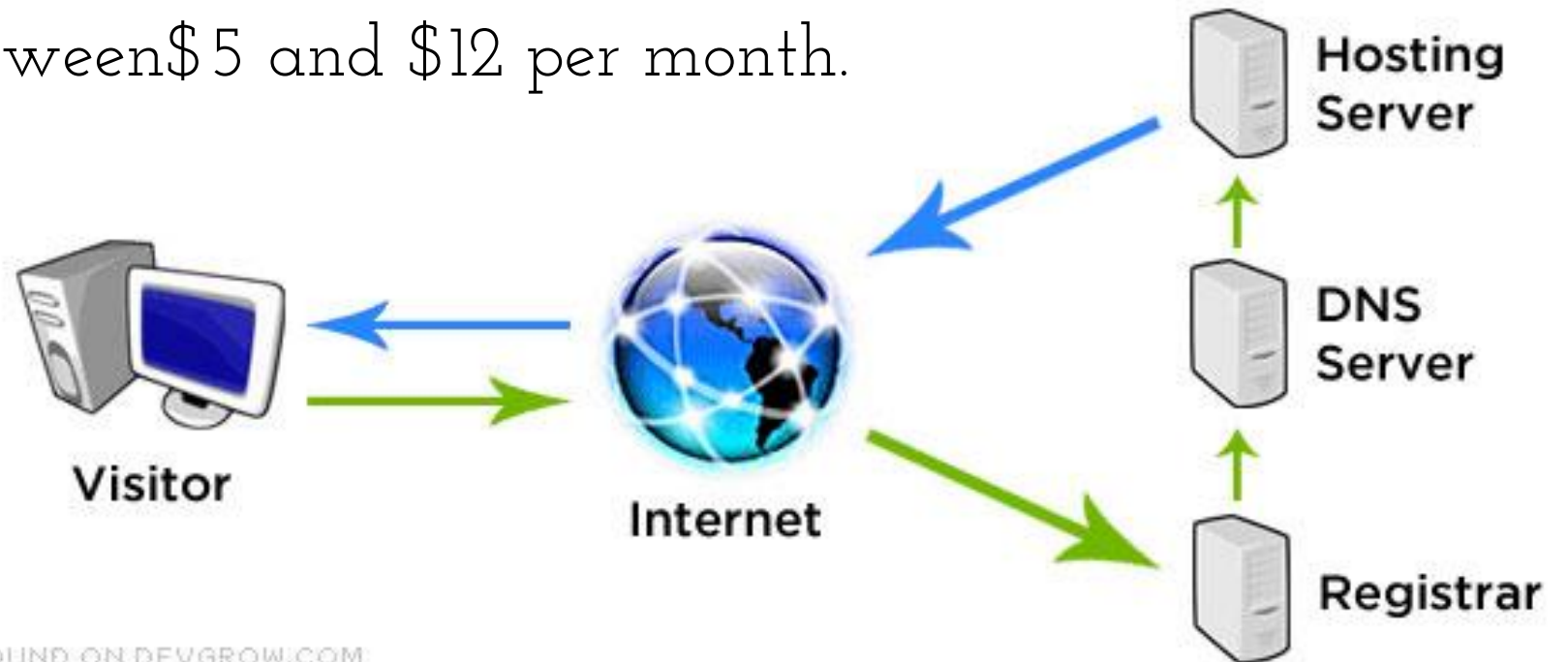


# Select and Register Your Domain

- Create a short domain that is easy to remember.
  - wapakfirst,.org vs. wapakonetafirstumc.org
  - hopecity.org vs. hopecitycommunitychurch.org
- Avoid abbreviations if possible
  - wfumc.org may be shorter but it can be harder for new people to remember.
- Try to own the .com, the .org and the .church domains
- Keep it to two or three words.

# Setup Hosting for the Website (Wordpress)

- If you choose Wordpress, you will need to find a hosting service like Bluehost or GoDaddy to host your site. They can also register your URL.
- This may cost between \$5 and \$12 per month.

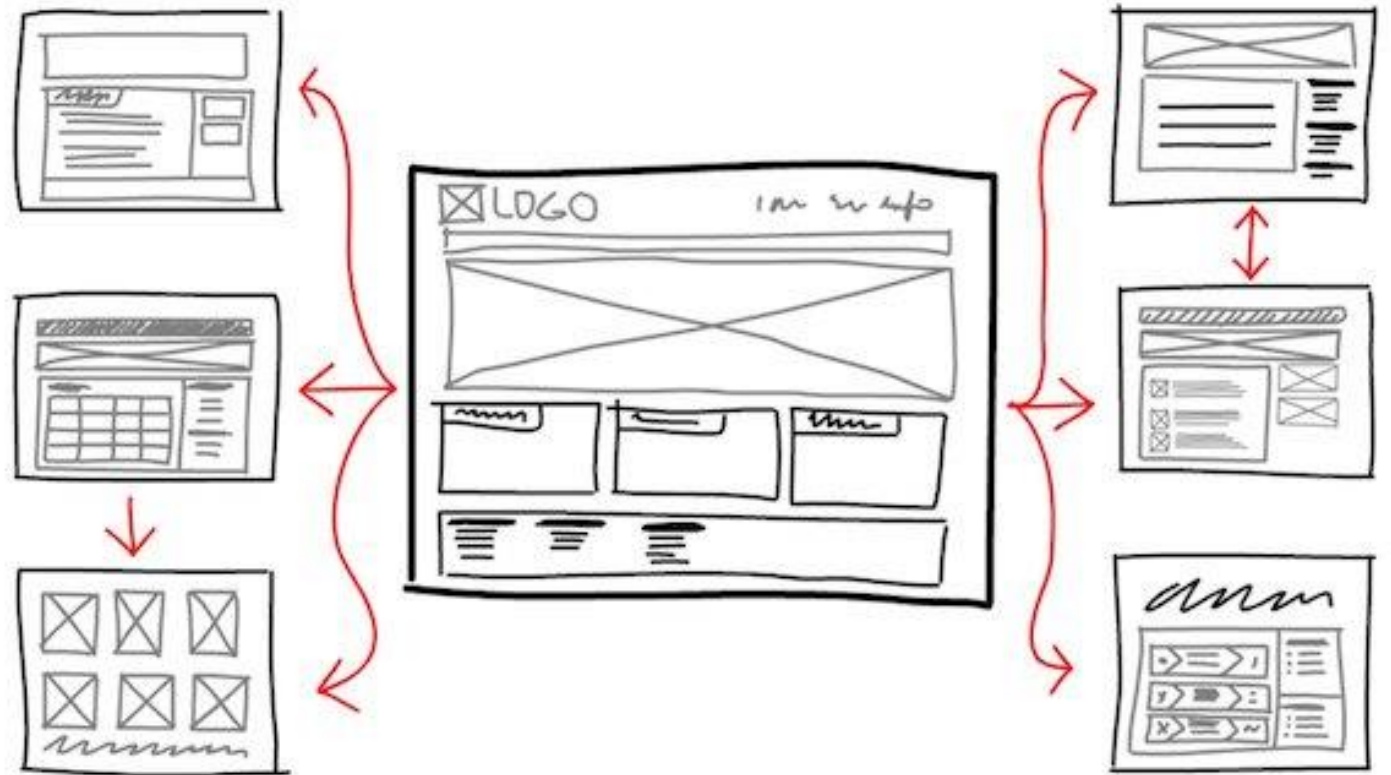


FOUND ON DEVGROW.COM



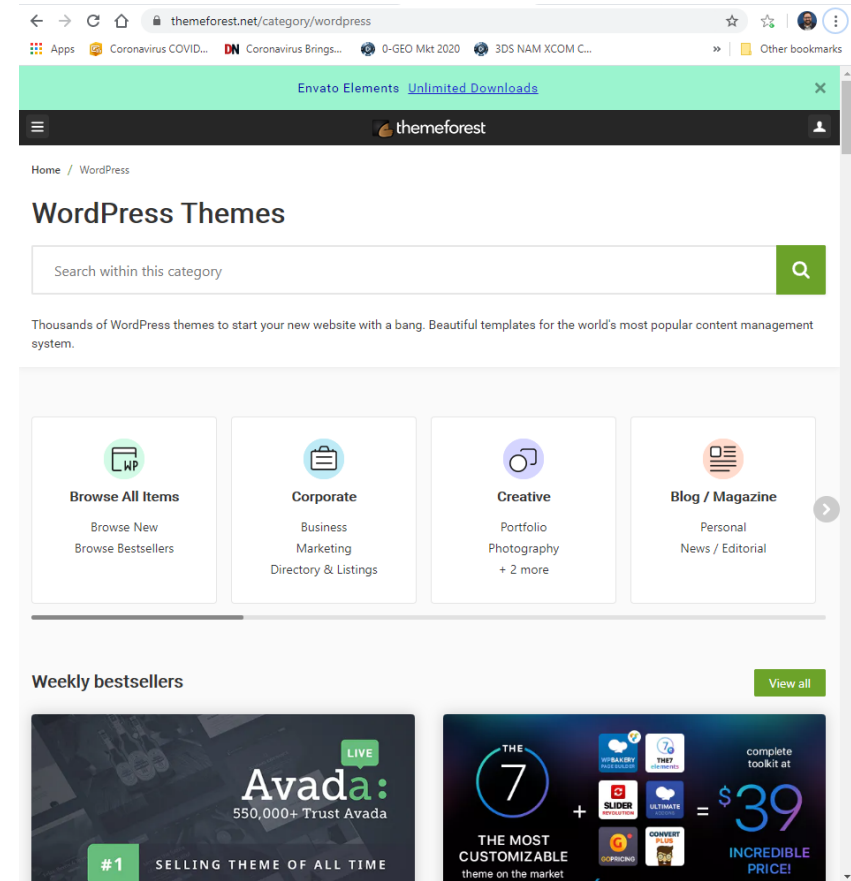
# Create a wireframe of every page

- Create a rough sketch of every page on the website.
- Look at other websites for ideas.
- Keep them simple and post them on a single wall.
- Try asking key questions and then see if you can easily find an answer to it.



# Search for design template & plugins to meet your vision.

- Search for “best 2020 church websites Wix” and find out what templates they used.
- Search for templates with your technology choice that look close to your wireframe or adapt your wireframe to look like it.
- For Wordpress, try looking on design websites like <https://themeforest.net/category/wordpress>





# Building the page content

- Define what is needed for each page (copy, pictures, etc.)
- Assign an owner for each page and ask them for:
  - Title
  - Body Copy (and suggested length)
  - Pictures
- Collect everyone's input and have ONE EDITOR put it in a consistent tone and appropriate length.
- Edit copy to reflect key words of what people will search on.



*Toughest part  
of any website:*

CONTENT  
for ministry  
areas and  
activities.



# Writing Outline for Ministry Leaders

- WHO: Who is this for?
- WHAT: What is the event, activity, etc.?
- WHEN: What is the date and time of the event?
- WHERE: Where will it be located? Be specific. Do not assume they know the location.
- HOW: How do they sign up/participate/engage? Also explain how they need to prepare, purchase, wear, etc. to make sure they feel prepared.
- WHY: Answer the question of WHY people should sign up or engage. Do not assume they know the answer.

# One Example: Dartball

- **WHO:** Dartball is open to everyone (inside or outside the church) who want to play dartball
- **WHAT:** Dartball is a game in which darts are thrown at a large wooden board that resembles a baseball field with colored areas which denote bases. Dartball uses baseball-like rules and scoring. First Church is part of a regional church league that plays once a week from October to April with a league championship at the end.
- **WHEN:** Practice on Tuesdays and play games on Thursday against different churches in the area
- **WHERE:** Practices in Fellowship Hall at First United Methodist Church of Wapakoneta, 504 Glynwood Road, Wapakoneta, OH 45895. Games according to schedule
- **HOW:** Please send an email to Jim Bowersock ([j\\_jbowersock@bright.net](mailto:j_jbowersock@bright.net)) or just show up at a practice or game
- **WHY:** Anyone can play and it is a great time to meet and fellowship with one another. We won the league championship the first year (completely by accident) and we have been terrible ever since so ALL ARE WELCOME to play.



# Turn information into a 60 word summary

## Dartball Example:

- All are welcome to join the Dartball team. We practice on Tuesdays and play games on Thursdays against different churches in the area from October until April each year. Get to know people while having a few laughs.
- Please contact Jim Bowersock ([j\\_jbowersock@bright.net](mailto:j_jbowersock@bright.net)) for more information.



All are welcome to join the Dartball team. We practice on Tuesdays and play games on Thursdays against different churches in the area from October until April each year. It is a great way to get to know people while having a few laughs.

Please contact Jim Bowersock ([j\\_jbowersock@bright.net](mailto:j_jbowersock@bright.net)) for more information.

# Create a longer form explanation

- Create a longer form description under 250-300 words to explain the different activities.
- This serves as fodder of a single editors to be able to build the pages.
- Also ask leaders of the activities to provide pictures as appropriate (and that you have signed photo releases for it.)

## Want to play Dartball?

We would like to invite anyone (whether you regularly worship at First Church or not) to join our Dartball team.

Dartball is a game in which darts are thrown at a large wooden board that resembles a baseball field and uses baseball-like rules and scoring.

First Church is part of a regional church league that plays once a week from October to April with a league championship at the end of the season. We practice on Tuesdays at 7pm and play games on Thursdays (starting at 8pm) against different churches in the area.

Anyone can play and it is a great time to meet and fellowship with one another. We won the league championship the first year (completely by accident) and we have been terrible ever since so ALL ARE WELCOME to play.

To join or find out more information, please send an email to Jim Bowersock ([j\\_bowersock@bright.net](mailto:j_bowersock@bright.net)) or JUST SHOW UP a practice or game.

WHEN: Tuesday Practice at 7pm and games on Thursday at 8pm.

WHERE: First Church (for practices & home games) and local churches for away games.

COST: FREE

CONTACT: Jim Bowersock ([j\\_bowersock@bright.net](mailto:j_bowersock@bright.net))



# YouTube is Your Friend

There are tons of videos to show you how to build your site, install a plug-in or configure a widget in Wordpress.

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player with a video titled "How to Start a WordPress Site in Less than 10 Minutes (Step by Step)". The video content displays the WordPress dashboard for a new site. The dashboard includes a sidebar with navigation options like Home, Updates, Jetpack, Posts, Media, Pages, Comments, Marketplace, Appearance, Plugins, Users, Tools, and Settings. The main content area has a "Welcome to WordPress!" message and sections for "Get Started" (with a "Customize Your Site" button), "Next Steps" (with links for writing a blog post, adding an about page, and viewing the site), and "More Actions" (with links for managing widgets, turning comments on/off, and learning more). There is also a "Please Connect Jetpack" notification and a "Quick Draft" form. A red box highlights a line of text at the bottom of the dashboard: "So we're going to do a little bit of clean up now that we have a site lets do a little bit of cleanup here. So the first". The video player interface includes a search bar at the top, a video title, view count (90,524 views), date (Nov 2, 2015), and engagement metrics (422 likes, 37 dislikes). The channel name "WPBeginner - WordPress Tutorials" and a "SUBSCRIBE" button are visible at the bottom. On the right side of the video player, there is an "Up next" section with several video recommendations, including "How To Make a WordPress Website - For Beginners", "JAVA - How To Design Login And Register Form In Java...", "Mix - WPBeginner - WordPress Tutorials", "Coronavirus Cold Open - SNL", "John Mulaney Lays Out His Campaign for Mayor of New...", "After Effects character animation workflow", "The six degrees | Kevin Bacon | TEDxMidwest", and "7 Google Drive Tips & Tricks You're Probably Not Using".

# MAKE SURE TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

- On the front page
  - Service Times (as one of the first things you see)
  - Address of the Church (make it highly visible)
  - Directions or Connection to Google Maps (on front page and on contact us)
  - Phone number to call for questions.
- Easy to find:
  - About Us or some introduction to the church and what you stand for.
  - What to Expect on a Sunday AM
  - What You Believe



# Final thoughts

- Be Brief - you have 5 to 8 seconds to capture someone's attention.
- Keep it simple - you have to maintain this site.
- Must be mobile - 60%+ will use smartphones to find you.
- Keep content current - Nothing is worse than showing up late because it is summer worship hours.
- Cross-link pages - It helps people get around the site.
- Always keep improving - The first design will never work.



Let's Chat!



broken sheep llc

helping churches embody 1 > 99

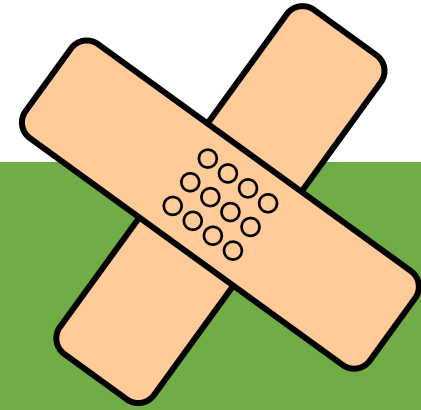
Eric Seiberling  
eric@brokensheep.com







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[www.brokensheep.com](http://www.brokensheep.com)