

A DIY Messaging Calendar for Small Churches

A pastor's guide to
strategic
communications

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You're doing everything, and communication is falling through the cracks

If you're a pastor of a small church, you know the reality: you're preaching, counseling, visiting the hospital, planning events, managing volunteers, and somehow also supposed to keep everyone informed about what's happening.

You're probably experiencing some of these frustrations:

- You announce something three times and people still say they "didn't know" about it
- You're scrambling to figure out what to post on social media (or you've given up entirely)
- You're promoting multiple things at once and nothing is getting traction
- Communication feels like one more thing on your never-ending to-do list
- You're not sure what to say beyond "Come to this event" or "Here's what we're doing Sunday"
- You feel like you're just reacting week-to-week instead of being strategic

Here's the truth: Even if you don't have a communications staff person, you can still communicate strategically. You just need a simple system—and that's what a messaging calendar gives you.

What is a Messaging Calendar and Why Do You Need One?

A messaging calendar is a simple plan that tells you what to communicate and when. It's not complicated. It's literally just deciding ahead of time:

- What's the ONE main message I want my church to hear this month?
- How will I communicate it across different channels (email, social, announcements)?
- How do I connect everything back to what I'm teaching from the Word?

Here's What a Messaging Calendar Does for You:

1. Prevents Communication Chaos

Instead of scrambling each week to figure out what to say, you have a plan. You know the ONE main message you're communicating all month long. When it's time to write an email, create a social post, or make an announcement, you're not starting from scratch—you already know what you're saying. Everything you communicate reinforces the same core idea instead of pulling people in different directions.

2. Helps People Actually Remember What You're Teaching

When you communicate ONE clear message all month long (especially if it's tied to your sermon series), people actually hear it and remember it. If you're teaching about being "sent" on Sundays, and then your midweek email talks about "living sent," and your social posts highlight stories of people living "sent," your congregation will get it.

3. Saves You Time

Yes, you'll spend 1-2 hours planning your messaging calendar up front. But then you'll save hours every week because you're not starting from scratch trying to figure out what to say. You already know what you're saying. You just need to say it.

4. Makes Communication Feel Strategic Instead of Random

Right now, your communication probably feels reactive. Someone asks you to promote their thing, so you do. A last-minute announcement comes up, so you scramble to get it out there. A messaging calendar gives you a framework so communication feels intentional, not chaotic.

How to Build Your DIY Messaging Calendar

Step 1: Start with Your Sermon Calendar

You can't build a messaging calendar without knowing what you're preaching. So first, map out your sermon series for the next 3-12 months. If you haven't done this yet, block a few hours on your calendar and do it now. Ask yourself:

- What does my church need to hear from God's Word right now?
- What sermon series am I planning?
- What major events or seasons are coming up? (Christmas, Easter, summer, back-to-school, etc.)
- What are my goals for the church this year? (Example: Help people grow in discipleship, increase serving, reach more families, etc.)

Once you have this, you're ready to build your messaging calendar.

Step 2: Block 1-2 Hours to Build Your Messaging Calendar

You need uninterrupted time to think through this. Don't try to squeeze it in between hospital visits. Put it on your calendar like you would a counseling appointment.

What you'll need:

- Your sermon calendar
- A list of upcoming events (even small ones—cookouts, Bible studies, service projects, etc.)
- Your church's mission/vision (if you have it written down)
- The template below

Step 3: Fill Out the Template

For each month, you're going to decide:

1. Sermon Focus – What series or topic are you teaching?

2. Messaging Emphasis – What's the ONE main thing you want to communicate this month? (This should tie directly to your sermon series or a key church value/goal)
3. Events – What's happening this month that you need to promote?
4. Communication Ideas – How will you communicate your messaging emphasis across different channels?

Here's the key: You're not trying to say something different every week. You're trying to say the SAME thing in different ways all month long.

Step 4: Use Your Messaging Calendar Every Week

Once you've built your messaging calendar, refer to it every week as you:

- Write your email/newsletter
- Create social media posts
- Plan stage announcements
- Update your website

Everything you communicate should tie back to your messaging emphasis for the month. This doesn't mean you copy-paste the same message everywhere—it means you're creatively reinforcing the same core idea.

Example: How This Works in Practice

Let's say you're preaching a series from Acts in July called "You Are Sent" about living on mission in everyday life.

Your messaging emphasis for July is: "To whom are you sent?"

Now, here's how you communicate that ONE message across different channels:

Sunday Announcement:

"We're kicking off a new series called "You Are Sent" this Sunday. Here's the question I want you to wrestle with: Who has God placed in your path? Who are the people in your workplace, your neighborhood, your kids' school that God has sent you to love and serve?"

Midweek Email:

"This Sunday we talked about being 'sent.' This week, I want to challenge you: invite someone to our church cookout on July 20. Who's one person in your life that God has placed in your path? Invite them. Let's live out what it means to be sent."

Social Media Post:

Share a photo of a church member with their story: "Meet Sarah. She's a teacher at Lincoln Elementary, and every day she sees her classroom as her mission field. She's living out what it means to be sent. Where has God sent you?"

Event Promotion:

When you're promoting the church cookout, say: "Who are the people in your life that God has sent you to? Invite them to our cookout on July 20. Let's show them what the love of Christ looks like."

See how it all connects? You're not saying something different every day. You're saying the same thing in fresh, creative ways that reinforce your teaching.

The DIY Messaging Calendar Template

How to Use This Template

Step 1: Make a copy of this and save it somewhere you'll actually use it (Google Docs, Word, a notebook—whatever works for you).

Step 2: Start with your sermon series. Fill in "Sermon Focus" for each month.

Step 3: Decide on your "Messaging Emphasis"—the ONE main thing you're saying this month. Tie it to your sermon series or a key church value.

Step 4: List your events for the month.

Step 5: Brainstorm a few simple ideas for how to communicate your messaging emphasis. Don't overthink this—just jot down ideas.

Step 6: Refer back to this every week as you create content.

Template: Messaging Calendar for [Your Church Name]

January

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

February

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

March**Sermon Focus:**

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

April**Sermon Focus:**

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

May

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

June

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

July

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

August

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

September

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

October

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

November

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)
- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

December

Sermon Focus:

[What series or topic are you teaching?]

Messaging Emphasis:

[The ONE main thing you're saying this month. Should tie to your sermon series or a key church goal/value.]

Events:

- [Event name] (Date)

- [Event name] (Date)

Communication Ideas:

- Email: [How will you communicate your messaging emphasis in your weekly email?]
- Social: [What could you post on social media that ties to your messaging emphasis?]
- Stage: [How will you connect announcements back to your messaging emphasis?]

What if I need help with communications?

If you're at the point where you realize you can't do it all yourself, that's a good thing. Here are your options:

1. Recruit a Communications Volunteer

You don't need a paid staff person to have good communication. You need someone who's organized, a good writer, and understands your church's heart. [Download this Church Communications Volunteer Job Description](#) to see what to look for.

2. Simplify Your Channels

You don't have to be on every platform. Pick 1-2 channels you can do well (maybe email + Facebook, or email + Instagram) and focus there. It's better to do a few things well than everything poorly.

3. Batch Your Content

Once you have your messaging calendar, block a few hours once a month to create all your content for that month. Write your emails, create your social posts, plan your announcements. Then you're just scheduling and posting throughout the month instead of creating from scratch every week.

Final Encouragement

You're already doing so much as a small church pastor. Communication doesn't have to be one more overwhelming thing. With a simple messaging calendar, you can communicate clearly and strategically without adding hours to your week.

Your people want to hear from you. They want to know what God is teaching you, where your church is heading, and how they can be part of it. A messaging calendar helps you tell them that—over and over, in ways they'll actually remember.

You've got this.

Ready for More Support?

Building a messaging calendar is a great first step—but what about when plans change, or you need fresh content ideas, or you're wondering if you're even doing this right?

The **Church Comms Club** offers a full year of group coaching, proven frameworks, and a community of church leaders who get it. Whether you're doing comms solo or with a volunteer team, you'll get the guidance you need without adding another staff salary. [Learn more.](#)