



40+ PARISH OUTREACH IDEAS

Produced by the Communications Department of the Ukrainian
Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton
Visit us at www.eepararchy.com





EPARCHIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The teachings of Jesus Christ are the world's *most empowering message*, it should be displayed in *every* aspect of our lives and taught beyond the lock and keyed parish doors. If you wish to help share the good news more than ever in 2021, make sure to contact our communications department if you require any assistance. You can reach us at;

Communications@eeparchy.com

Note: This service is *only* available for parishes in the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton a part of our Eparchial Evangelize 2021 campaign.



Ben Windsor
Communications
Specialist

10 FREE OUTREACH TOOLS FOR YOUR PARISH

1. Make posters, brochures, and social media posts with www.Canva.com
2. Send out E-Mail newsletters to parishioners with [Mailchimp](https://mailchimp.com) and allow them to sign up to the mailing list on your website.
3. Copyright-free photos to use in any of your materials using www.unsplash.com and <https://pixabay.com/>
4. Use copyright-free videos for your parish with www.pexels.com
5. Convert your PDF posters and documents to a JPEG (photo version) with <https://pdf2jpg.net/>
6. Create surveys for your parishioners to answer using Google Forms or Survey Monkey.
7. Upload your podcast to <https://www.anchor.fm/>
8. Upload church choir music to <https://soundcloud.com/>
9. Automatically add English captions to your parish videos using <https://make.headliner.app>
10. [Streamlabs](https://streamlabs.com) for live streaming from mobile devices to YouTube accounts.

5 SIMPLE WAYS TO WELCOME NEW PARISHIONERS

1. Create a "welcome" postcard to hand out to new parishioners that includes your Divine Liturgy times, church leaders, and what makes your church unique.
2. Leave an email sign-up at the front of the church with a "new parishioner" check box. Email the new parishioners welcoming them to your parish.
3. Have a "Welcome Back to Church" event in September when kids go to school. Encourage everyone to bring their friends and family and create anticipation for this event.
4. Give out welcome postcards with an opportunity for the church to donate \$5 to one of two local charities. If they come back to church next Sunday to hand in their welcome card, make a donation to their selected charity.
5. Have a brochure about your church ready and hand it out to new parishioners. Encourage current parishioners to give out brochures.



10 FREE CONTENT IDEAS FOR YOUR PARISH

1. Run an occasional blog on your website where you write about common Catholic questions parishioners ask.
2. Start a podcast talking about our faith.
3. Run an online Bible study/class on Zoom.
4. Write personal thank-you letters to parishioners who volunteer often.
5. Make an easy crossword puzzle for your bulletin with <https://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/crossword/>
6. Have a parishioner record homilies and post homilies for everyone to watch them.
7. Write a book review of a Catholic book and post it on your social media.
8. Create an instructional guide on how to do confession or how to fast for the first time.
9. Create a free e-book about life in your parish on your website using first-hand stories from parishioners.
10. Livestream a question and answer session with parish pastor.

10 WEBSITE TIPS FOR YOUR PARISH

1. Include a web page on how people can join your church with commonly asked questions.
2. Use a donations platform like *Tithely* or *Canada Helps* for online donations, new generations don't carry cash anymore!
3. Include a place to sign up for your mailing list so you can stay in contact with all new and current parishioners.
4. Include photos of your church and leaders of the church so new congregants can see what it's like to attend your parish.
5. Include Divine Liturgy times and some ways parishioners can volunteer and get involved in your parish.
6. Include a video of a Divine Liturgy so new parishioners know what to expect.
7. Keep your website simple, use photos and videos. Keep text to a minimum and website tabs to a minimum. Have more photos of people than of structures.
8. Include links to all your social media.
9. Post all bulletins/have a calendar.
10. Have a two-minute "Welcome to Our Parish" video for new parishioners.



8 TRADITIONAL METHODS

Many parishes continue to use traditional outreach methods as they have seen past successes and have plenty of experience. It's important to incorporate these traditional methods into your overall annual communication plan. Here are a few to think about;

1. Parish Bulletins

Did you know the average cost of printing a bulletin is \$0.25, which means your monthly bulletin fees can be as high as \$100 for a church of 100 people with weekly printouts! We all love our parish bulletins, however, here are a few new ideas you can try to something new;

- *Volunteer Opportunities Section:* 6.4% of parish members make 80% of the volunteer hours, include a section geared towards getting parishioners more active!
- *Welcome Message:* Your front page should include a welcome message for all new attendees and the next step they can take to become a part of your parish community.
- *Tell a Story:* Showcase a faith testimonial or a story from a parish organization. This will ensure your bulletin is a community-first document.

2. Word-Of-Mouth

"I tell my friends" is a conversation, not an outreach strategy. Word-Of-Mouth continues to be an extremely effective strategy but must result in fostering faith journeys and parish growth. Here are a few ways you can help your word-of-mouth outreach:

- *Bring a Friend Day:* 92% of people trust recommendations from friends and family. Once a year, make an event where you encourage everyone in your parish to bring all their friends and family as a welcome event.
- *Remember People's Names:* I understand the struggle parish priests have in meeting tons of people. Use a notebook to write down people's names, a fun fact about them, and their contact information. That way, when an event pops up that might interest them, you can remember whom to contact!
- *Leaflets:* If you have an event like a Bible study, give your attendees leaflets describing the event and encourage them to give a leaflet to their friends and family that may be interested.

3. Phone Calls

It's easy to keep in touch with the most active parishioners, however, sometimes we forget about our not-so-active parishioners. Here are a few ways to use the phone for successful outreach:

- *Reach Out To People Living Alone:* For some people, the church is their only social group. An elder living alone or a student living in a bachelor pad would appreciate an occasional friendly call from your parish pastor.
- *Thank your volunteers:* Phoning parishioners who contribute a lot to parish life deserve to be recognized and thanked.
- *Phone Occasional Attendees:* Have a friendly conversation with individuals who occasionally attend to let them know you care and value them!

4. Posters and Brochures

Posters and brochures have been used in our churches and transferred to digital copies for years. Here are some tips to make sure your brochures and posters are relevant in 2021:

- *Don't Use Microsoft Word:* Use the free design website, www.Canva.com to design sleek and modern posters, Microsoft Word posters look dated.
- *New Attendee Brochure:* Specifically design a brochure that welcomes people to your church community including the next step new attendees should take. Encourage parishioners to take copies to give out to friends.
- *Lower the Word Count:* Posters are meant to be glanced upon, not read like a book. Keep the word count to an absolute minimum.



8 TRADITIONAL METHODS CONTINUED

5. Welcome Cards

Parishes should have a welcome team that knows their church membership. Read our article *16 Ways To Welcome New Parishioners to Church* to learn more about welcome committees. One of their tasks would be to hand out welcome postcards to any new attendees.

- *Welcome Postcard:* Should include photos of your church leadership, Divine Liturgy times, and what makes your church special.
- *Welcome Return Cards:* You also could sponsor two local charities, the welcome card has a check box for the parish to donate \$5 on behalf of the new attendee. If the new attendee returns next Sunday, they can hand back their card and a donation can be made to show how our parishes impact our local communities.
- *Thank-You Cards:* This is not for new parishioners, however, make sure to write thank-you cards for parishioners that make your parish vibrant. You can also nominate a parish hero in our eparchy for the Bishop's Thank-You Campaign.

6. Annual Appeal Letters

We also need to consider the financial needs to support a vibrant parish life in our communities. Annual appeal letters have always shown great success, ensure you have one annual appeal letter campaign a year.

- *Be concise:* View our Catholic Outreach 2021 E-Book for an example in being concise. Less is more and label a clear purpose and call-to-action.
- *Use typography and spaces:* Make sure to bold important call-to-actions, italicize important information, and underline dates to make information stand out. Do not just use plain text that occupies every corner of the page, it will look clunky, boring, and overwhelming.
- *Have a clear reason:* Really consider why should your parishioners consider financially supporting your parish this year, how their support is extremely valuable, and what their support will achieve for your parish life.

7. Annual Social Responsibility

Your church is required to be enacting Christ's teachings in its day-to-day life. Have one social responsibility for a year and base events and fundraisers around it. Perhaps your annual focus is around poverty alleviation? Or around mental health awareness? Here are some ideas to enact your parish social responsibility:

- *Parish and Community Volunteer Events:* Organize a parish social mission committee and volunteer at a homeless shelter twice a year as a parish-wide event, and make sure to invite members from outside your parish community to take part!
- *Food Bank Drive:* All parishes must ensure they have a place to donate food at the front of their parish to ensure we are serving the vulnerable in our communities.
- *Partner with our Eparchial Social Mission:* Run an awareness campaign for important issues with a partnership with our eparchial social mission who has presentations on a large variety of topics.

8. Community bridge events

Consider your community bridging events where the entire community comes back together to the church. Use these events to meet people and introduce them to your parish!

- *Perogy Dinners:* How many new faces do you see enter your church from events like perogy dinners? This is a great opportunity for your pastor to introduce themselves, give a pamphlet introducing your church, and maybe even ask if they'd like to sign up for your parish mailing list to know about future parish events!
- *Social Mission Events:* Your parish social mission should be an initiative the entire community can support. Invite members of the general community to support your social mission volunteer days to demonstrate how your parish directly has a positive impact on your community.
- *Social events:* demonstrate how social your parish is by hosting occasional fun events everyone can enjoy. You can invite everyone in your community to an annual Christmas movie night at your parish!



8 MODERN METHODS

With the invention of the printing press, the way we communicate ideas has forever been changed. Whether people support the printing press or not, it was the new reality that has provided countless benefits to humanity. Today, we're facing the largest shift in the way we communicate with the invention of the internet. Here are a few ways you can help spread the good news in the modern world;

1. Websites

Websites continue to be the most effective outreach method for your parish, with a whopping 97% of individuals searching for local organizations online, 87% of individuals searching for local organizations once a week, and 58% searching daily. Feel free to contact me for help developing your most effective outreach tool. Here are some ideas your website needs to have today;

- *A tool for Evangelization:* The main purpose of a website should be to welcome new members of the community to your church. Your main call-to-action on your website should be an entire page dedicated to welcoming new parishioners including photos, times, ways to get involved, what makes your church special, and commonly asked questions.
- *A tool for further contact:* The only time people visit your website is when they purposely search for your website. Make sure to have a way for website visitors to leave their name, email, and maybe phone number so you can keep them up to date with all parish news even if they're not on your website or in your pews.
- *A tool for building faith:* Websites in our eparchy get thousands of visitors a month, however, we often don't see thousands of visitors in our churches! Make sure your website has resources for fostering faith journeys to help lead more people to Christ.

2. E-Mail

Always keep an email sign-up form available at the front of your parish, have email signups on your website, and encourage email sign-ups at all your events. Although email communication was the most effective direct communication method, it still remains relevant today. Here are some tips to improve your email outreach:

- *Don't Spam:* Limit your emails to once or at most twice a week. Use an email service provider like MailChimp for free. You must receive permission from the individual to send mass emails and your email must include an unsubscribe option. Sending out mass unsolicited emails using Gmail or Outlook is illegal for organizations in Canada.
- *Build faith journeys using email:* Don't just send out your bulletin! Make sure to write occasional emails to help inspire faith journeys. As an example, if you subscribe to the Bishop's Mailing list at www.eeparchy.com, you will be sent Bishop David's Three Ways to Help Share the Good News!
- *Personalize your email:* Never write your email as being from "St. Mary Parish"! Make your email personalized by writing sent from "Fr. Joe" so people know a real human is behind writing these emails. The number of people opening your email will sky-rocket by this simple switch!



8 MODERN METHODS CONTINUED

3. Social Media

Social ministry is what the church does and social media is where the church can do it. With the average person spending 2 hours a day on social media and over 35% of the world active on social media, we can use this channel to inspire more people to Christ as the average person is on Facebook more than in our churches!

- *Social media is Social:* Many churches sometimes forget the first concept of social media is being social. Ensure you are interacting with people who are interacting with you! Thank people for sharing your posts, try to respond to all comments, and certainly respond to all messages! Leave the cold outdated corporate jargon words out of social media, feel free to use emojis, and talk using a light-hearted conversational tone of voice.
- *Social media is media:* The purpose of social media is to share media. People follow "St. Mary Parish" page because they want to know about your parish, so don't just share everyone else's posts. Post pictures of your parish, share events, post homily videos, share stories around your parish community.
- *Bring Religious Education to Social Media:* If the average person spends 2 hours a day on social media and 0 hours in your pew, use this opportunity to share religious education online. Bring Catholic teaching where people are at and post bible studies, scripture readings, and motivational moments to help spark more faith journeys!

4. Video/Livestreams

We all have heard of the extreme success our parishes have experience when they encourage the sharing of the gospel in the domestic church by simply bringing the church home. Some people are physically not able to attend church, their car won't start, or they are too far from any local parish. Instead of judging and excluding these people from hearing the message of Christ, let's encourage them to continue attending Divine Liturgies! Here are a few ways you can do live streams differently;

- *Live question and answer sessions with pastor priest:* Host a Facebook Livestream and ask people to submit questions about their faith and have your pastor answer them in real-time!
- *Stream Bible Studies:* Some small parishes may not be able to hold a Bible study, if you're able to, stream your bible study so everyone in the community can learn.
- *Zoom Call with your parish community:* Try having a community-building event where you have Zoom calls with your parishioners to have an enjoyable time. Perhaps watch a fun movie with youth and get together to talk about the movie? Maybe talk about favourite Christmas memories with your parish community?

5. Blogging

Blogs are great ways to write information online and get the information out to large audiences. Here are a few ideas with examples;

- *Answer Your Parishioner's Practical Questions:* spark faith journeys by answering faith questions! Our Ask a Priest blog gets thousands of viewers wanting to learn more about the practical elements of their faith.
- *Write About Skills Your Parishioners Need:* Instead of having to constantly train choir members why not simply write an introductory blog on joining your parish choir?
- *Answer Faith and Tradition Questions:* View our amazing Liturgical Resources blog and make sure to use these blog posts with your parishioners.



8 MODERN METHODS CONTINUED

6. Text-Outreach

Today, text outreach has the largest open rate and usage of any type of communication method. You can sign up for text programs with different companies that can text your parishioners for as low as \$70 a month. This fantastic new outreach method has shown massive success in churches when it comes to communicating events, fundraising, and advancing your parish mission. Here are a few ways you can use a church text method;

- *Text-based giving:* In the not-for-profit sector, online giving by mobile devices has gone up 205% in 2017 and has continued to increase. Setting up text can allow people to donate from their phones.
- *Increase event attendance:* Use text to give your main parish events a shout-out and ensure people remember to attend with a text the day before.
- *Volunteer requests:* Request assistance to certain volunteer initiatives in your parish to increase participation in your parish.

7. Podcasting

Podcasting is the modern version of radios. If you have a phone and computer, you can very easily make a podcast for free. View our cast, *Between the Pews* for some examples, recording video is not required!

- *Share Stories For Children:* Share fun stories for children to listen to and keep occupied and a good idea for parents to play something other than the radio!
- *Youth Issues Podcast:* Talk about issues directly related to students. Discuss morals of cheating on homework, dating for the first time, stress, anxiety, bullying, and other issues youth face every day.
- *Tell the story of your community:* Interview parishioners and ask what draws them to Christ. Talk about times where faith was required in your community's life. Talk about how your church started and where it's going. People love listening to stories!

8. [Www.Eeparchy.com](http://www.Eeparchy.com)

As one of North America's most popular Ukrainian Catholic websites, of course, we're going to give ourselves a shoutout! We have tons of new projects coming in 2021, but here are some ways to use [eeparchy.com](http://www.Eeparchy.com) for your parish;

- Learn about the Saints
- Resources for your parish's social mission
- Resources For Children
- Liturgical Propers
- Faith Questions Answered By Our Clergy
- Our Podcast On Ukrainian Catholicism
- Resources on the Ukrainian Catholic Faith
- Viewable Catholic E-Books
- Our Instagram, Our Facebook, Our Twitter, Our YouTube