



A Publication of
Homestead Presbytery

The Homesteader

January 10, 2012 Issue

Empowered
Ministries

The Art of Revitalization

A new year resolution many congregations should be considering is developing a website or updating an existing website.

Did you know that more people ages 50 and under use websites and search engines to look for a church than newspapers or phone books? A website gives prospective attendees (and future members) a glimpse into the life of the congregation. This is the first place folks go to find out about worship and education times, special events and ministry outreach.

Keeping your website current and fresh is a must! Congregations with pastors who blog, statistically grow at a faster pace than those pastors that don't blog. There are many free blog sites, and a link can be set up from your website to the blog. What's a blog? It is simply is a personal journal published on the [World Wide Web](#). A blog provides commentary on a particular subject—scripture or sermon. Most good quality blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other.

There are simple steps to take in the development. Here's a place to start:

Decisions the session would need to make first:

- Set your budget for website maintenance.
- A webmaster needs to be

appointed or hired -

- Appoint a task force to check into the options - one where the pastor is not making the decisions :)
- Determine check points - when things should be accomplished

Task Force duties:

- Check out the sites of other churches and determine what you like and dislike
- Determine what you want in your site - what info, who will be using the site - members, visitors, both, recorded sermons? (mp3 or wma files take up space on a server so you need to know that ahead of time) or videotape and put on YouTube each week with links in your site; staff contacts, session page/minutes, etc. – maybe take a poll/survey of what info the congregation wants or how they will use the site
- Develop a "map" of the site desired - a plan. This may evolve as you go, but you need a place to start
- Research templates and options or meet with the hired site developer based on the criteria of the plan
- Present findings/suggestions back to session according to the determined check points
- Gather photos for the site during the process – worship, Sunday school, mentor program, youth program, fellowship groups, PW, Bible studies, etc
- Publish/promote to the congregation during the process

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[Walking the Way of the Cross With Paul](#) is the newest Lenten study from *the Thoughtful Christian*.

- A press release to the local newspaper once the site is live is a great way to raise awareness of your congregation in the community!
- Make sure you notify the presbytery office so we can set up a link from our site and the PCUSA site.
- Reprint business cards and change signs to include the website address.

Not sure your congregation is ready for it's own website? Homestead Presbytery is developing/redeveloping a website to link folks to churches in Nebraska. We are hoping to have the site completely functioning by the end of March (if not sooner). The site will provide links to current websites, and will also provide a place for churches without websites to post worship and education times, special upcoming events, and the church's picture.

Contact Kris if you need to update your web address, want to participate in the new website or have any other questions.

The Homesteader is a weekly publication. Articles and photos from your congregation are always wanted & welcome!

Please send them to krisp@homesteadpres.org or mail to 1135 Eastridge Road, Lincoln, NE 68510

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Lent is, among other things, a journey on the way of the cross--a journey of learning how to appropriate Christ's teaching about "taking up the cross" (Mark 8:34-35) for ourselves. This six-session study will look at how one early Christian missionary, teacher, and theologian sought to do just that in his work and in his life. Participants will examine a number of passages in Paul's letters in order to reflect on the place of the cross in Christian lives today. They will consider Paul's statements about the cross and its implications not only in themselves but in relation to his practice--including areas where he seems to us to have had difficulty living up to his own ideals. The aim is to invite you into Lenten reflection and practice centered on the cross of Christ, guided by Paul's own incorporation of the cross into his spirituality. Leaders and participants will have an opportunity to reflect on their own practices of Christian spirituality and ethics in the light of the experience, teaching, and faith of the apostle Paul.