

# A love letter to newsletters

By Meagan Ewton, Editor of Publications

I love church newsletters. I always have. That friendly little folded paper makes me feel valued and remembered by the church community, especially if I've been away from my home church for a while. It might be just a sheet or two of paper, but I can feel the heart of the church beating with every line.

Digital newsletters are no different. Even though I can't hold it in my hand, I can see the church's energy shining through every picture and prayer request. I may be just another address on the mailing list, but I always enjoy seeing what's happening in the life of the church.

I've seen a lot of newsletters over the years, and while both print and digital versions have many similar components, I have never seen two that are exactly the same. They're almost like fingerprints. Some are informal, some are tightly structured, but all are committed to connecting the members with the life of the church.

To be clear, churches that do not have a newsletter are not missing out on a critical component of church

identity, nor are they in any way inferior to churches that have one. Each ministry context is different, and churches that have found other methods more effective are in no way inferior to churches that share newsletters.

This may be a love letter to newsletters, but there's just as much love in this editor's heart for sharing announcements on Sundays, sending out text messages, hosting a bulletin board, posting on social media, updating online calendars and exploring new ways to connect with the community. Each communication style is valid and just as much of a church's identity as any newsletter could be.

As much as I love newsletters, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that there's always room for improvement when it comes to design and structure. While every printed and digital newsletter has its own personality, there are some elements of design that can help both digital and printed newsletters stand out. Does that mean I think every church newsletter needs a redesign? Definitely not. But sometimes, a small adjustment can help a church's personality shine all the brighter.

## White space

White space, sometimes known as negative space, is a design term used to describe unused space on a page. Margins, room between pictures and space between paragraphs are all examples of white space.

White space is used to create a visual sense of balance, give emphasis to chosen elements and improve reading comprehension. Too little white

space can make a newsletter look cluttered, while too much white space can make it hard to emphasize important information.

Adjust your newsletter's white space by changing the margins, setting a consistent amount of space around photos, examining paragraph line spacing, or switching to a different font (more on this below).

*An example of layout for a printed newsletter. In the second section, lines in each column are used to represent how space between lines in a paragraph can affect the appearance of white space on the page as a whole.*

**UNDERSTANDING THE LAYOUT**  
*Thick lines: Headings or emphasized text*  
*Thin lines: Story text*  
*Gray squares: Spaces for images*



# Good News Church Newsletter

321 Anywhere Rd. | Hometown, OK 543321 | (555) 555-5555 | email@churchwebsite.com



Placeholder for text content, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.

Placeholder for a large text block, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.



Placeholder for text content, consisting of three horizontal lines.

Placeholder for text content, consisting of three horizontal lines.

Placeholder for text content, consisting of three horizontal lines.

Placeholder for text content, consisting of three horizontal lines.

Placeholder for a large text block at the bottom, consisting of four thick horizontal lines.



### Photo resolution

Photos are an important staple of every newsletter. The easiest way to get the best out of your photos is to make sure they're the correct resolution for your newsletter's medium.

Resolution does not refer to an image's quality; it refers to the number of pixels per square inch (ppi) a photo contains. Use a high resolution (300 ppi) for printed newsletters and a low resolution (72 ppi) for digital newsletters.

You can change a photo's resolution without changing the photo's size in most photo editors by making sure the option labeled "Resample image" is not selected.

### Layout

Layout refers to the way images, shapes and text are placed on the page. Some people feel more comfortable using a template for their newsletter, while others prefer to manually add text boxes and images. Both options can result in great newsletters.

In general, digital newsletters are taller and printed newsletters are wider. What works in print may look crowded in a digital format, and what works in digital may appear lackluster when in print. For example, having three columns in print can be a great way to make stories easy to read, but doing the same in a digital email can make information look crowded.

In the end, the layout that works best is the one that keeps your church informed. Don't be afraid to experiment, and most of all, have fun telling your church's story! I know I'll enjoy reading it.

### Fonts

Sometimes all it takes to spruce up a design is choosing a new font. There are two basic kinds of fonts: serif and sans serif. Serifs are little lines and strokes on letters that give them a particular shape. Sans serif fonts do not have these lines and strokes. Each font style has its merits, and both can be used together to create contrast and emphasis, such as in this magazine's logo.

Font choice can affect white space and readability. Too much thick or bold text can make text difficult to read, and too much thin or italic text can make important information go unnoticed. Using just one or two fonts in a limited amount of sizes and styles will keep text looking clean and easy to read.

There is no "right" choice when it comes to font, but using too many fonts at once can create a disjointed reading experience. That doesn't mean a newsletter has to be limited in the kinds of fonts it uses; rather, it means that all fonts should be chosen with readability in mind.

### Share your ministry's newsletter with us!

Let the Oklahoma Conference know how your church is serving your community. Send your church newsletter to the Communications Ministry! We would love to read them.

#### Print newsletters:

OKUMC Communications Ministry  
1501 N.W. 24th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

#### Email newsletters:

editor@okumc.org

*An example of layout for a digital newsletter. Sections are separated by emphasized text, horizontal lines and photo size. Another great way to separate sections is by using background colors.*

#### UNDERSTANDING THE LAYOUT

*Thick lines: Headings or emphasized text*

*Thin lines: Story text*

*Gray squares: Spaces for images*

*Gray circles: Social media icons*