

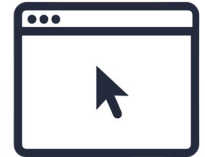


GCI CHURCH HACKS

HYBRID AVENUES:



The Importance of Online Engagement



Providing both in-person and digital church services—hybrid services—has become the new norm. Healthy Church happens not just on Sunday, but throughout the week as well. Consequently, to have a thriving church community we need to create spaces in-person and digitally.

This month's GCI Church Hack outlines digital engagement practices for each of the Avenues. When our churches intentionally meet people where they are instead of asking them to come to us, our potential to shine the light and share the love of Christ expands. Developing spaces for relationship building, whether in-person or digitally, creates greater opportunity for our neighbors to connect more deeply with our churches, each other, and Jesus.



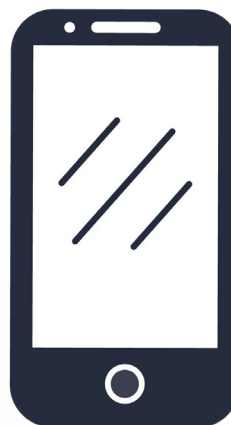
HYBRID HOPE AVENUE BEST PRACTICES:

- Whether you livestream your services or open a Zoom room, provide your online guests and members with a next step toward connection. This will lead to deeper relationship and discipleship. A few ideas for next steps:
 - » Host **Zoom or a livestream Q & A** on Facebook to develop personal connections. This can be a very informal time of fellowship or something more focused.
 - » Provide a [digital connection card](#), and follow up with guests.
- Follow up the sermon with **an email** sharing the sources used to develop the message. Send additional resources that reflect on the central theme. It will give people a window into what's informing the pastor's theology and an opportunity to dig deeper. Make sure to keep the email brief so people are more likely to read all of it. Include links to the resources so that it's easier for your members to access them.



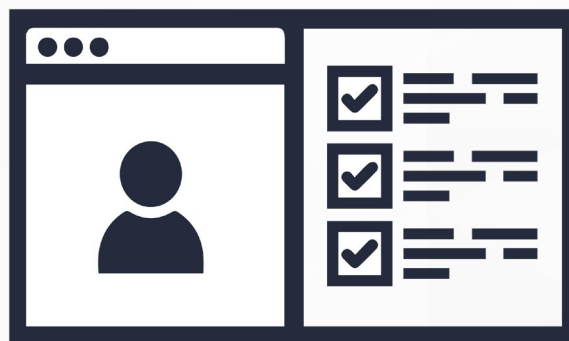
HYBRID FAITH AVENUE BEST PRACTICES:

- Provide **digital connect groups** via Zoom or another conferencing platform.
- Utilize **text messaging**. Most people read text messages within three minutes, and texts have a 99% open rate.
 - » You can create a **texting system** for your church to connect with members. Read more about it in our [GCI Church Hack on setting up a church communication plan](#).
 - » You can also encourage connect group leaders to create **group texts** for their groups, to share prayer requests, testimonies, etc.



HYBRID LOVE AVENUE BEST PRACTICES:

- Facebook provides both pages and groups as options for building connections and creating community.
 - » A **Facebook page** is a great strategy for your congregation. On your page, you can share insights into the happenings of your congregation, including sermon quotes, videos, neighborhood engagement events, etc.
 - » **Facebook groups** provide opportunities to connect with your neighbors through common interests and gain insight into the needs of your neighbors. You can join neighborhood groups and participate in their events or connect with your neighbors through comments on posts.



These suggestions are merely a starting point. There are copious opportunities created by online platforms. Our new hybrid world of in-person and digital engagement is here to stay. As physical beings, there are benefits of gathering in person that we do not want to lose. However, we do not want to miss the opportunity to live and share the gospel in digital spaces, as well. It is important that we have a digital ministry, where many of our neighbors spend hours daily. If this is where the attention of our neighbors is focused, then let's find ways to draw their attention to Christ and his love for them.