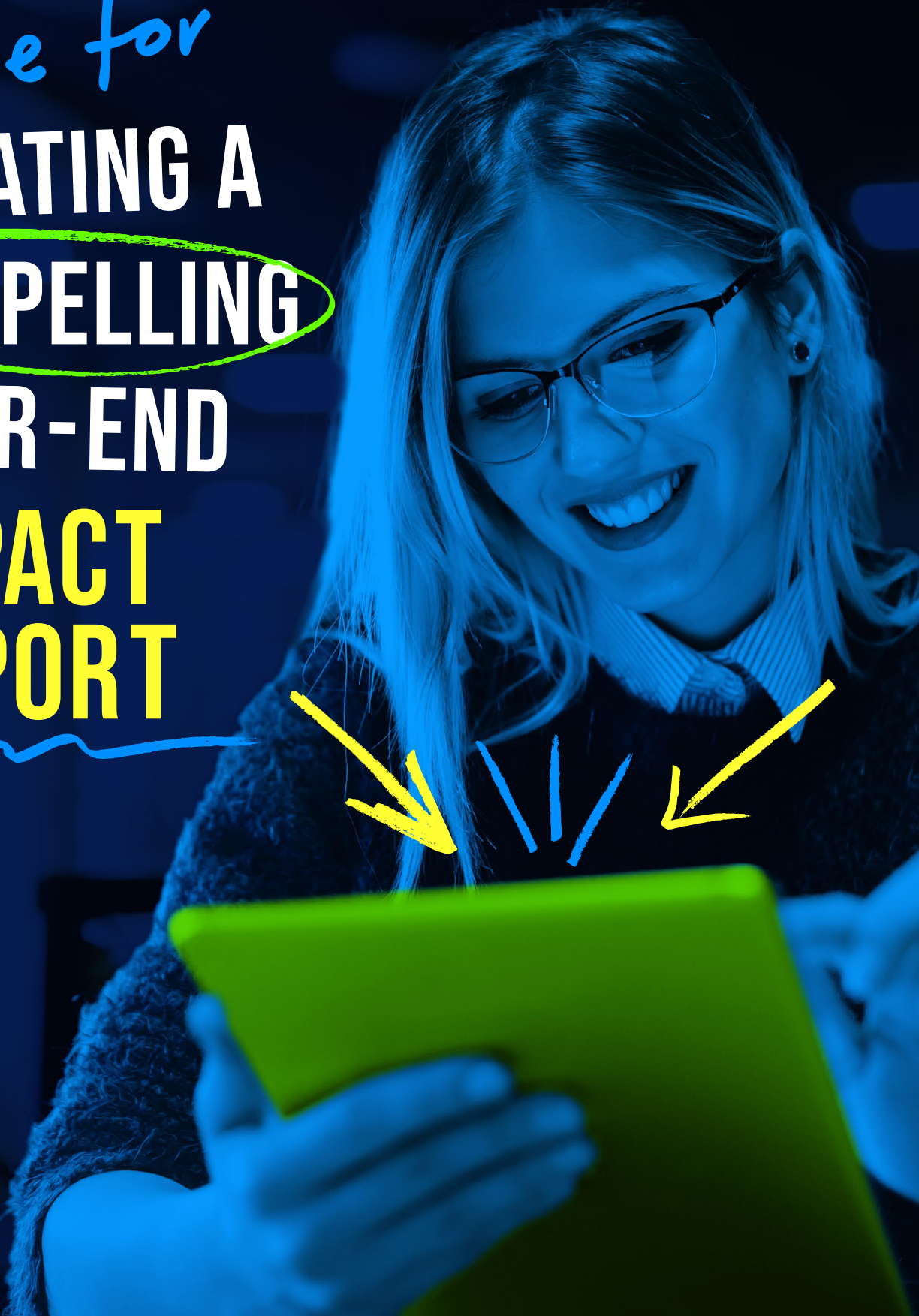


The **Ultimate**
Guide for
CREATING A
COMPELLING
YEAR-END
IMPACT
REPORT





Your church

has a story to tell.

Every ministry, outreach, and moment of worship reflects what God has done in your midst over the past year. It's a story of transformed lives, a changed community, and a vision realized.

But for too many churches, it's a story no one is telling.

That's why a year-end impact report is so important for churches to tell their story.

By creating a year-end impact report, your church can effectively communicate its story, encouraging congregants, community members, and donors to support your work with their time, talents, and treasures. When your church community sees your impact, they will want to be a part of what you're doing.

While every end-of-year impact report will be a little different, your report will share the figures, stories, and images that showcase what God has done through your congregation over the past year.

KEY BENEFITS OF A YEAR-END IMPACT REPORT



Your church's end-of-year report isn't an exercise in vanity. It's not something you do just to say you've done it. It's an incredibly valuable tool for your church's ministry as you communicate your story to your church family and the wider community. Here are three reasons why.



1. An impact report builds trust.

Your church builds trust when your community sees how you use your funds to further your stated mission. In years past, most people trusted institutions, including churches, to steward their resources toward a shared vision. But public scandals in nearly every sector of society (inside the church as well) have ruined this. Your church isn't guaranteed trust. You'll need to earn it.

When you're transparent about what your church is doing with the funds it's been given (a big part of any end-of-year impact report), you remind your church family and community that you can be trusted. That's often a prerequisite for people giving more.



2. An impact report inspires greater participation.

A well-crafted report helps your congregants see the exciting work they can be a part of through your church. For people already involved, that'll inspire them to get even more involved—whether through giving, volunteering, or taking on a new role in the church. And for those sitting on the sidelines, it'll inspire them to get in the game.

Your report makes your church's cooperative mission tangible. It's not just something people hear about. When they read your report, they'll see the results through the big-picture metrics and the narratives of life change.

Plus, it'll give them a sense of ownership. An effective report reminds the congregation of what happens when everyone seizes the mission together, which will draw people toward further involvement!



3. It'll reinforce your church's vision.

You can't share your vision enough. The moment you think you've shared your church vision too much is probably when you need to share it again. If you create your report around your vision and how your church is achieving it, your report helps to put skin on it by showing people how your congregation is living it out.

Creating an end-of-year impact report is easier than you think. This guide will walk you through creating a report to draw in your congregation and community and mobilize them for greater involvement with your ministry.

In this guide, you'll discover how to ...

- Find the right metrics to share.
- Tell stories that resonate with readers.
- Design your report in a way that aids engagement.
- Distribute your report in the most effective ways possible.

So don't worry... you can do this!
We'll show you how.




GATHERING DATA AND METRICS

A strong end-of-year impact report should include compelling stories about your congregation's community activities, but it's the metrics that truly matter. Numbers are tangible evidence of your church's influence, transforming broad goals into specific, measurable outcomes.

For instance, while a narrative about a church member helping the homeless through a feeding ministry can be inspiring, knowing the actual number of people your church has fed gives a clearer picture of the ministry's reach and effectiveness.

You'll pique curiosity with your stories and inspire action with your metrics.

Metrics serve as the skeletal structure of your report. Everything else related to the previous year illustrates these crucial metrics.



THE METRICS OF YOUR VISION

Your church's mission statement and vision should be the core of your work. That's also where you start when determining the metrics you'll include.

The numbers that relate to your church's core mission should be the figures you prioritize in your report.


For example, if your vision is "Love God, Love Others, & Transform the Community," start with metrics that flow from the three parts of that vision statement.



Love God



(Spiritual Growth & Discipleship)

- **Baptisms & New Members** —
Reflects how many people have committed to Christ and become a part of your church family.
 - **Bible Study Attendance** —
Highlights the number of people actively participating in a disciple-making group.
 - **Bible Reading Plan Participation** —
Indicates engagement levels among members committed to regular Bible reading.
 - **New Leaders** —
Represents those who have stepped into leadership roles within the church.
- 



Love Others

(Community Building & Service)

- **Member Care Initiatives –**
Captures the extent of support provided through the caring ministries of the church (e.g., counseling, benevolence funds).
- **Volunteer Hours Logged –**
Demonstrates the dedication of your congregation to serving others by tracking volunteer contributions.
- **Percentage of Guests Assimilated –**
Reveals how effectively the church connects new attendees to small groups or ministry teams.

Transform the Community

(Outreach & Impact)



- **Number of Impacted Families –**
Measures how many families have been touched through the church's outreach programs.
- **Funds Invested in Missions or Local Causes –**
Illustrates the financial commitment to impacting the local community and beyond.
- **Mission Trip Participation Growth –**
Tracks the year-over-year increase in members joining mission trips, reflecting the growing passion for serving beyond the church walls.

Not only will these metrics be the cornerstone of your report, but they'll also point to what you want to illustrate through narratives and images.



Choose Quality Over Quantity

While numbers are important, don't go overboard. You're better off sharing a few key statistics that tell your church's story than overwhelming your audience with random metrics.

There's no magic number as to how many metrics to include, but in most areas of your church (children's ministry, volunteer engagement, attendance, etc.), you won't need more than three metrics at the most.



Include a Benchmark When Possible

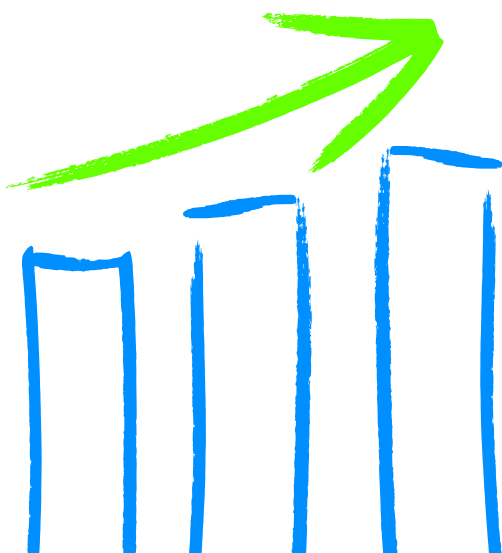
One of the biggest mistakes churches make when communicating congregational metrics is sharing a statistic without context. When possible, try to show comparisons of data over time. If you report that 80 percent of your congregation is connected in a small group, most people don't know whether that's good or not. Instead, it's more helpful to tell them that small group participation grew by 20 percent this year. This communicates momentum!

Visualize Your Metrics

We'll delve into visuals later, but it's essential to begin planning how to represent metrics. Consider using bar graphs and pie charts for clarity and digital tools like Canva and Piktochart to create them effortlessly.

You want your readers to understand your metrics as quickly as possible. Your metrics will draw their attention to the stories you're trying to tell.

Make sure to incorporate contrasting colors or icons to highlight your key metrics. Focus on data that showcases strategic growth and unexpected accomplishments—these will capture your audience's attention and make your impact report compelling.





CRAFTING THE NARRATIVE

Your church's end-of-year report can't simply be a collection of facts and figures. No one would read it. Nor would it have the impact you're hoping to solicit.

Instead, it should be a powerful story of God at work in and through your congregation. Data, on its own, is informative, but when combined with compelling stories and scriptural truths, it becomes a transformative tool that inspires others to join in the mission.

In the last section of this guide, we established that metrics are the backbone of your year-end report. They ground your report in reality and provide tangible proof of what your church is doing in the community. If metrics are the skeletal structure of your report, narratives are its heart—pumping life throughout the report.

Transforming Metrics into Narratives

The key to crafting a compelling narrative for your report lies in balancing the macro and micro aspects of your ministry. Start with the big picture. What were your church's main goals this year? Then, it's time to let the data tell the story of how those goals were met.

There are two parts to this. First, explain the context. For example, if you baptized an additional 30 people this year, describe any circumstances that may have led to this. Did a new outreach program help you engage more people? Did a mentoring emphasis lead more people to take this spiritual step? That context helps people understand not just what happened but why it happened. Of course, not all of your metrics will have a backstory. That's okay, but when you can provide context, do it.

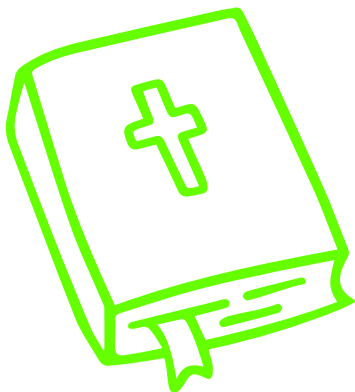
The key is to pair as many important metrics as possible with stories of real people impacted by your church. This helps you bring those statistics to life. These don't need to be long. In fact, they're often more effective if they remain short — a well-placed quote, a brief paragraph, or even a snapshot of a life changed—is usually enough to put a name and a face to your data.

Look for stories where you can communicate a before and after snapshot in as few words as possible. For example, a story of a life changed by your food pantry might be as simple as this:

“Before connecting with our food pantry, John was struggling to provide for his family after losing his job. Now, not only are his family’s needs met, but he’s also volunteering each week to help others in the same situation he was in just a few months ago. ‘This place gave me hope,’ he shared. ‘Now I want to give back.’”

This type of story pairs perfectly with your data, adding a human element to the numbers and showing how your ministry makes a lasting difference.

Also, notice that this story has before, during, and after components, even though it’s short. That’s the backbone of any story. You want to show how the church helped solve problems – either in a volunteer’s life or someone served. To do that, you need all three components.



Incorporate Scripture to Enrich Your Story

Scripture helps you connect your church’s work from the last year to God’s greater mission in the world. It grounds your narrative in the timeless truths of God’s Word.

Choose scriptures that tie into your church’s vision and your shared stories. For example, if you highlight baptisms, including the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), your readers will see that each baptism represents another step in fulfilling Jesus’ call to make disciples.

The goal of your end-of-year impact report isn’t just to inform; it’s to inspire. Through the narrative elements in your report, you’re creating a story that moves minds and hearts. Once your congregation sees the story behind the numbers, they’ll understand why it’s important and how they can join in.

DESIGNING THE REPORT

Communicating your church's story in an end-of-year impact report requires picking the right metrics and sharing narratives that effectively flesh out those numbers.

But designing your report will determine whether anyone will read, digest, and act upon it. Effective design isn't just about "making it pretty." It's about effective communication strategies.

Research shows we process visuals

60,000 times faster

than text! One Massachusetts Institute of Technology study noted that 90 percent of the information transmitted to our brain is visual.

You simply can't communicate without considering your report's design.



Laying Out the Report

Above all else, your layout needs to be functional and visually appealing. Functionally, it needs to allow the reader to understand what's most important about your church story. Your layout tells your readers what to focus their attention on. The worst layout decision you can make is to make everything appear of equal value—because it's not!

But it's also important to be visually appealing. First impressions make a difference. If someone opens up your report and isn't intrigued by what they see, they may never return.

Keep this in mind as you consider your layout.



- **Be consistent with your formatting.**

Consistent fonts, colors, and text sizes establish a coherent look and feel and help readers understand your report.

- **Use text hierarchies to clarify what matters.**

When text sizes differ, it needs to be for a reason. Creating consistent sizes for standard text, headlines, subheads, etc., ensures people understand what you're trying to draw attention to.

- **Use white space liberally.**

Don't fill every empty spot in your report. White space helps your reader avoid being overwhelmed by your text.

- **Prioritize readability.**

Your report won't do your church any good if people can't read it.

Don't get so creative that you make reading your report difficult.

You may think you have patient congregants who will read your report regardless, but you're likely overestimating your readers' attention spans.

Ultimately, a well-thought-out report layout enhances the aesthetics of your report and guides your readers through the narrative.



Illustrating Data

You've already read about the importance of using engaging visuals to illustrate data. But why? *Visually communicating data transforms complex information into easily digestible formats.* This makes your data more accessible and memorable so more people can understand and respond. Here are a few tips to get you started.



- **Define your purpose.**

Your purpose will determine how you go about displaying metrics. For example, say you want to show a growth in small group attendance. If your primary objective is to inform your congregation of this growth, use a line graph that shows growth over the past couple of years and a simple copy that gives more insight into what happens. But if your goal is to inspire, you might combine the data with a callout that describes some benefits of small group participation or — better yet— a story of a life changed.

It's important to note that you can't effectively persuade with every metric you include in your report. It'll overload your readers. Prioritize the most important ones.

- **Understand your audience.**

Tailor the complexity and presentation style of your metrics to the interests and aptitudes of your readers. Understanding who will consume your report helps you present your data in a way that makes sense to them.

- **Make sure your charts fit your metrics.**


Generally, you want to use bar graphs for comparisons, line charts for trends, pie charts to show parts of a whole, and infographics for storytelling.

- **Use color wisely.**

Color can be a great tool for making data more understandable, but you must be careful. To help people in your audience with color-processing deficiencies, you'll want to use as many contrasting shades as possible.

- **Add context.**

Your numbers won't stand alone. You need brief descriptions or annotations that explain why the metrics matter.



Using Images Wisely

Photos will help your end-of-year report come to life—mainly if they include people. The more you can integrate images into your report, the better. But keep these ideas in mind as you do:

- **Make sure the images match the message.**

You've heard that a photo is worth a thousand words. That may be an understatement. No matter what you're trying to communicate with your words and numbers, your message won't come through if your images say something different. It's always good to run your pictures by someone else to see what they communicate to others.

- **Choose quality over quantity.**

Use high-resolution images that look professional. Blurry or pixelated images will detract from your message. Too many images tend to overcrowd pages. A couple of great pictures are way better than a bunch of bad ones.

- **Include people as much as possible.**

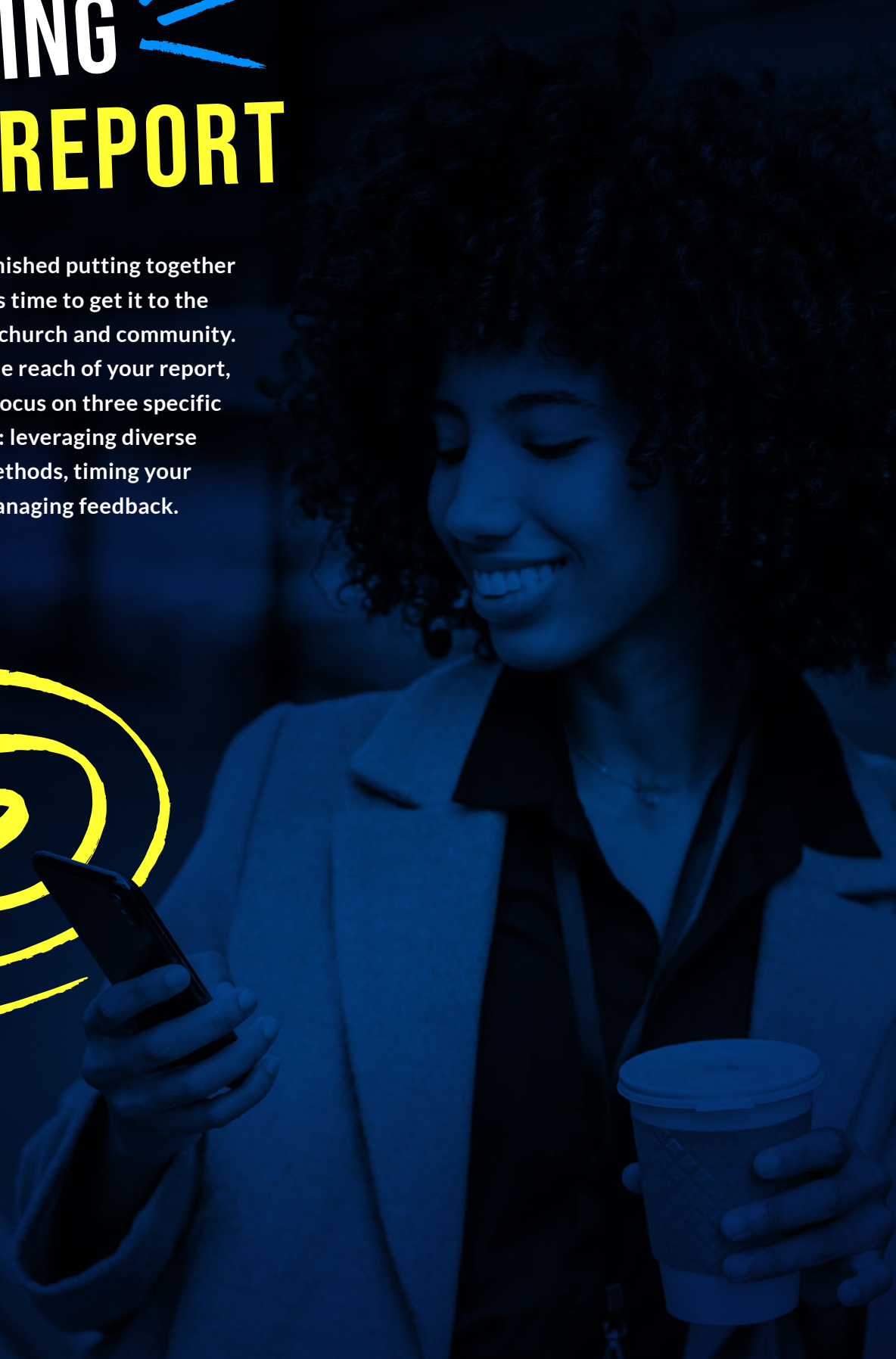
People love seeing people—especially those they know. Do what you can to include photos of people in your church in the report. Don't overdo it, and don't resort to low-quality images. Show a small group in action when illustrating growth in small groups. When you're celebrating missions giving, show ministry that was done through that sacrificial giving.

A well-designed end-of-year report isn't just a collection of images and infographics. It's a powerful tool for telling your church's story in a way that resonates with your congregants. Good design informs and inspires them to get more involved in God's work through your church.



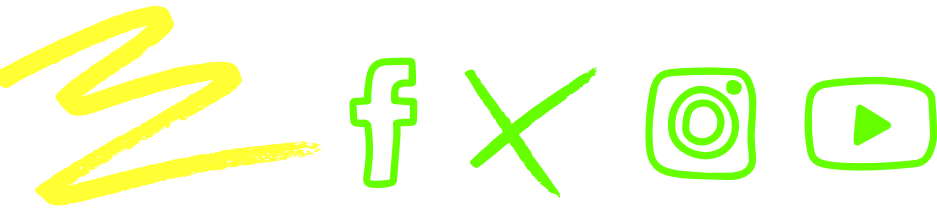
SHARING THE REPORT

Once you've finished putting together your report, it's time to get it to the people in your church and community. To maximize the reach of your report, you'll want to focus on three specific considerations: leveraging diverse distribution methods, timing your release, and managing feedback.



Distribution Methods


Think carefully about how you'll distribute your report to your congregation. Start with digital means like email newsletters, your church website, and downloadable PDFs. For the most part, we're past when you must worry about late adopters missing out on digital content. The problem is the opposite these days. So many people are getting their content online that it's much easier for your report to get lost. That's why pushing your content to your congregants makes the most sense (e-mail, text messages, etc.).



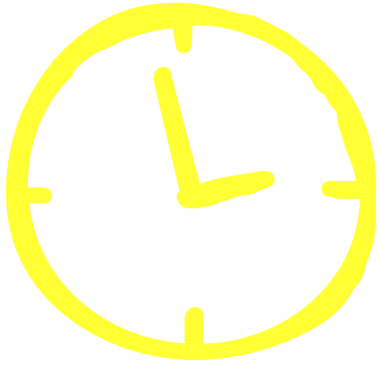
Social media can help, too. Social media can help you get your report out beyond your email list, mainly through targeted ads (if getting the report out beyond your church family is essential in your communications strategy).

As you share the report on social media, consider making bite-sized videos that break down key elements of your report. Video content tends to draw higher engagement, including more shares. You can also share some of these video summaries in your worship services.

Despite how ever-present digital media has become, consider printing copies of your report for congregants who may prefer to have something in their hands. Print high-quality copies of the report and have them available before and after worship services. If you have a notoriously offline group in your church (such as a senior Sunday School class), consider providing copies for them.



A state-of-the-art church management solution (such as [those produced by ACS Technologies](#)) makes getting your report to the right people through email simple. You'll be able to target specific groups and track feedback as well.



Timing the Release

When you release the report, it will significantly affect how many people read and respond to it. For most churches, the time just before or after the new year makes the most sense because people tend to be off work and have some extra time. They're habitually looking back at the past year and looking ahead to the next one.

You may also want to time it to coincide with your church's specific rhythms. For example, if you're planning a start-of-the-year sermon series on fresh starts or a stewardship campaign, that might be an ideal time to release the report. Pairing it with a state-of-the-church sermon can help multiply your impact as well.

Encouraging Feedback and Engagement

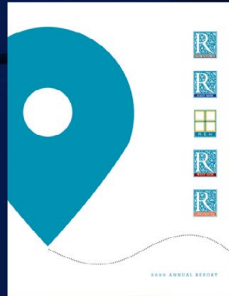
Don't let your end-of-year report be a one-way conversation. Create opportunities for your congregants to discuss and respond to what God is doing in your church. You can do that in several ways, including a simple survey in the digital representations of your report.

Also, consider hosting a Q&A session where congregants can discuss the report and ask questions. You can do this in person or online. Make sure you provide the report a few days ahead of time so your congregants can see it beforehand.

Appendix: Examples of Church End-of-Year Reports

Get ideas for your church's next end-of-year report by seeing how other churches have done it.

Redeemer Church



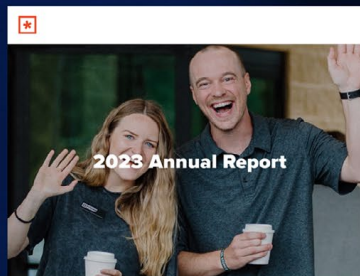
Central Presbyterian Church



Elevation Church



Radiant Church



Woodman Valley Chapel

