

New Church Launch Starter Pack

This file contains some useful resources to getting started. Some of the items here may be out of date when you read them. This document is a living document and will be updated from time to time. If you have something to add to it, please let your Presiding Elder know!

Computer for slides

Being portable and having to haul everything, some decide to go for a mini-pc or a laptop. You do not need fancy here. I would suggest 16gb of memory. But for most new churches, you do not necessarily need a lot of computing power. If you have the funds, get 32gb of memory, 1TB SSD or HDD, and an i5 or i7. But if you don't have the money, get what you can afford, but with at least 16gb of memory.

Slide software

Many use PowerPoint or Keynote because it came with their computer. These are okay, but not as versatile as worship software. You will save hours of time every month by using worship software. There are many options, but if you are looking for an extremely low-cost, but versatile package, you may want to look at Presenter by Worship Tools (not to be confused with the much more expensive ProPresenter.) Presenter by Worship Tools has a free option for a limited amount of slides and can be scaled up as your needs increase. For a small church with little funds, this could be a great option.

<https://www.worshiptools.com/en-us/presenter>

Projector / TV

Depending on the venue, if it already has a large enough TV, you can plug directly into it from your presentation computer. This can be done wirelessly but a cable will provide a stable signal. Another option (if you don't want the cable) is go wireless from your presentation computer to the TV. This SmartSee has been found to be very reliable for wireless computer to TV broadcast: <https://www.amazon.com/SmartSee-Wireless-Display-Transmitter-Receiver/dp/B0CGZM5FXV>

Some people like to use a projector, but for portable churches, it can be hard to find the right one. Two different startups have recommended the Nebula by Anker Mars 3, although expensive, and stated the brightness, portability, and battery backup was good.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0C1S95YZQ/>

Screen

A good screen is almost more important than the projector. Depending on your budget, you can get a budget screen (this will work well enough if you can control the lighting above the screen.)

However, if you can pay out about \$100 more, this screen from Elite screen will make your display so much brighter and you will be much happier in the long-term. It does require a few extra minutes to setup, but it is made to be portable as well.:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00V8TGR8G/?th=1>

Sound System

Don't underestimate a good sound system!

But, if you are just starting out and especially mobile, you need what works at a low price. If your room is small (300 square feet), this might be a good option:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FB89PWQB/> It is inexpensive, and has a battery as well if there are no outlets close to where you need to plug this in.

If you have a larger venue (2000 square feet), this might be an option:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQMQ53X/dp/B01MQMQ53X/?th=1>

The 15" speaker and amp are being used in one of our new churches and it has really good sound for a portable set. It does take up a lot of room in a car and has some weight to it, but if you have a solid setup crew, it should be no problem. This will work well in a school cafeteria.

If you have the funds and the volunteers and the technical know-how, a sound board or, possibly better, a stage box with a tablet for your faders is a great option. One local church recently got the Behringer X18 Air and loves it:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00UD3IWB8?>

Microphones

If you are on a tight budget, the sound system above comes with two "okay" microphones. You may want to replace their cables. You will want XLR cables.

However, if you have some extra money, a Shure microphone may be exactly what you need. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0000AQRSU> Again, XLR cables are what you will need.

Wireless: If you want to go wireless with your microphones, there are a lot of inexpensive wireless microphones out there that will plug into any sound board or either amp mentioned above. However their quality varies greatly. One option is using the microphones above with a wireless XLR device like this:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DCZHBY4T/>

One of our churches uses two sets of these every single week and speaks highly of it. Just remember to charge it weekly and teach your people to not cover the transmitter while holding the microphone.

Instruments

Most instruments will plug in via ¼ inch plugs and may need DI boxes depending on the board you use, but you may also need to go wireless. One new church highly recommended: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01N4DSQBR/> for wireless instruments with no loss reported after a year of using it.

Customer Relationship Management Software

(You need software that tracks your membership and giving. Some can do a whole lot more.)

Some churches are using spreadsheets (like Excel) to do this, however you may find software like: <http://www.Planning.Center> to be a great option. It is free to use until you have too much giving (is that a bad thing?) then it scales up in price depending on how many donations you have a month. So it is a great option for a church just starting out. Several of our new churches and even established churches use Planning Center.

Online Giving / Credit Card Clearing

Built into Planning Center is online giving with credit card clearing through Stripe. Most report the credit card fees to be minimal. This is a very easy and integrated way to accept online donations. Every donation made online automatically goes into the giver's profile so no manual entry needed with online giving.

Background Checks

We have a couple of options here. The GMC has contracted with MinistrySafe for reduced cost background checks, but several churches are using Checkr which is integrated into Planning Center to make life easier for you – all for about the same cost per background check as MinistrySafe. The choice is yours.

Email Management Software

MailChimp.com is integrated into Planning Center which can be setup to automatically update your mailing list with new people added to your church, all without extra data entry. Many find this a good option. MailChimp has a free version until your database gets too big.

Another option is Constant Contact. They also have a free version.

Church Copyright License

(You do not need this if you use hymns that are in the public domain. However, if you use hymns or praise songs that are under copyright, you will be required to get this.) CCLI has an in-house and a streaming license available. If you live stream copyrighted songs, you need both licenses. This is critical as a church.

Financial Accounting Software

You can use whatever accounting software you like. Many churches like to use QuickBooks or similar products. It is critical you keep solid financial records as it is required by law and the Global Methodist Church.

Other things to note

Bank Account and EIN

You must have a bank account in the church's name (not the name of any individual). You will need an EIN (Employer Identification Number) to get this. Most people report you do not need to be incorporated to get an EIN. Read up on it and apply directly through the IRS website: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number>

Insurance

When just starting out, the sponsoring church (if you have one) needs to make sure you are covered under their policy. If you do not have a sponsoring church and are approved to start a church by the Western Pacific Conference, you will fall under their insurance until the time you are incorporated. Please keep the Conference updated on your worship location.

Chartering

When you are first starting out, you may not need to be incorporated. The Western Pacific Conference typically consider you a ministry of theirs until you are ready to be chartered. This means you don't incorporate nor would you necessarily need liability or property insurance. Most new faith communities either fall under the Conference or a sponsoring church.

Non-Chartered Churches are considered by the GMC to be more ministry/mission than actual church although your congregation will feel and act like an actual church. You will be allowed voice but no vote at Annual Conference until chartered. Most house churches will remain unchartered.

To become chartered you will need at a minimum:

- To be incorporated in the state you reside and this corporation must remain active.
- A bank account in the churches incorporated name.
- An EIN in the incorporated name.
- Liability and property insurance which covers Board of Directors and abuse. Furthermore, the Western States Conference must be listed as an additional insured.
- You must take up regular offerings.
- The sacraments must be celebrated on a regular basis.
- Connectional Giving must be current with both the GMC and the WSCGMC.
- There must be a mission focus.
- If there is a pastor appointed, they must be receiving a monthly stipend or regular paycheck.

When you feel you are getting close to chartering, please reach out to your Presiding Elder or the chair of New Faith Communities.