



Microsites

PROJECT

Connecting Congregations and Presbyteries to a network that exists within the Synod website structure



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

Microsites

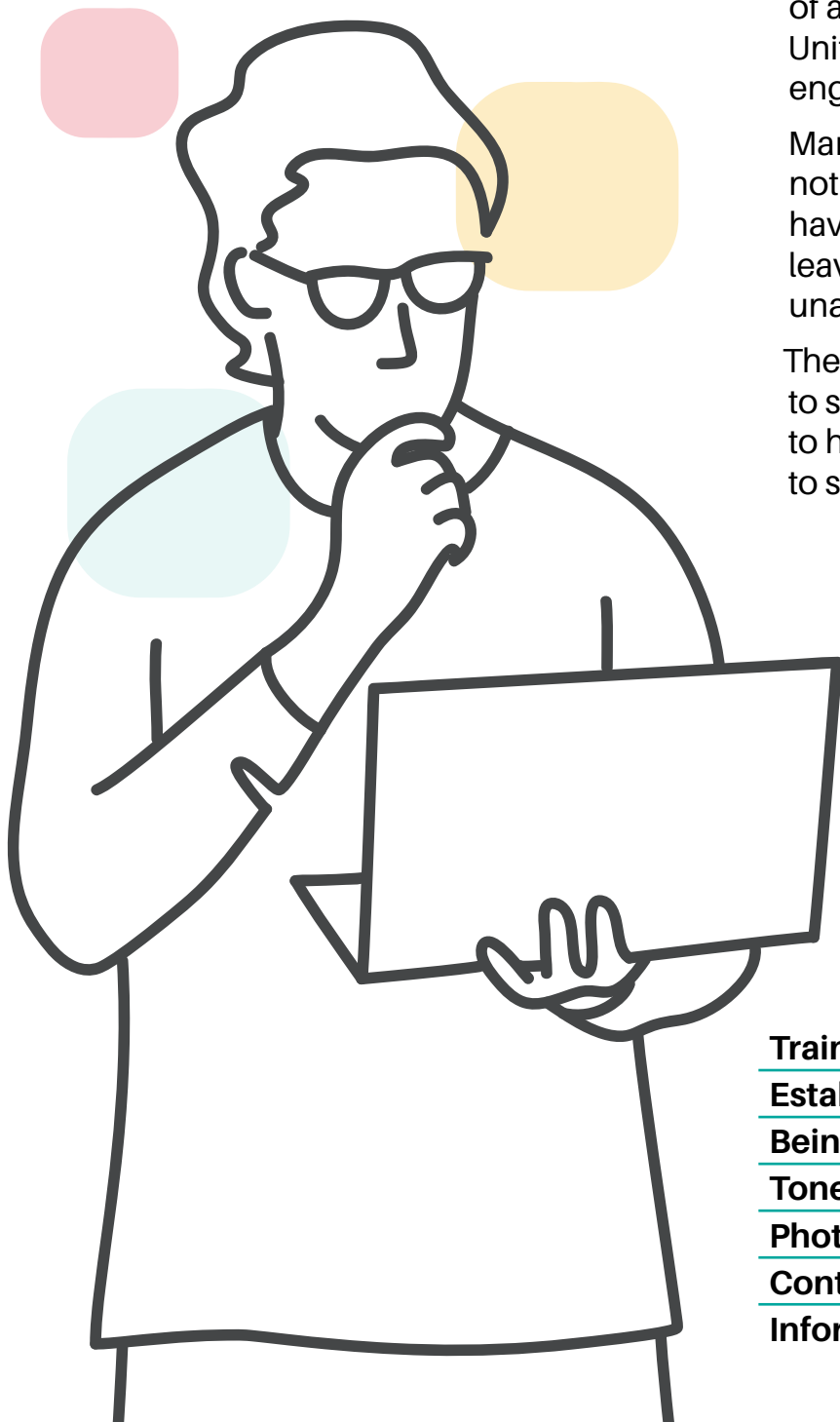
PROJECT

The Microsite Project is a Synod-wide communications project that connects Congregations and Presbyteries to a network that exists within the Synod website structure. The project was launched in 2016.

Congregations involved in the project gain access and training to set up an easy-to-use website which becomes part of a wider network of sites, making local Uniting Churches more visible on search engines.

Many Churches have websites they have not been able to maintain or volunteers have moved on from their Congregations leaving them with a website that they are unable, or don't have the skills to maintain.

The Microsite Project is designed to cater to smaller Congregations that would like to have a website, but do not know where to start.



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TRAINING

Training is done in one full day, bootcamp-style with participants bringing their own device and leaving the training with a fully-functioning website.

Training also includes access to information about social media and how to use it effectively in conjunction with congregations website presence.

There is nothing worse than going to a website and finding that the information is not up to date

ESTABLISHING YOUR WEBSITE

The basic elements of your website should contain a page welcoming newcomers to the site, a page about all the things you offer, such as youth groups, home groups, special interest groups and other activities. We would suggest if you have little capacity to keep your website updated at the very least you have the following pages set up and ready for Google search engines:

- **Welcome** page with a warm and inviting image
- **About Us** page with some detailed information about what you offer - there is a sample here;
- **Contact Us** page with information like your address and a feedback form linked to at least two email addresses so you can get back to people inquire about your services quickly and easily (this function is demonstrated during training).

MAKE SURE YOUR WEBSITE IS RELEVANT AND UP TO DATE... ALWAYS!

There is nothing worse than going to a website and realising all the information is not up to date. Worse still, people searching for your website and turning up when you may have moved service times, or you are meeting at a different location.

On the training days we will assist you to set up a basic framework for your website which includes a home page, about page and contact us page. We will also assist you with other pages you can set up if you are feeling adventurous like a calendar, news and podcast page.

We suggest while your website is being surfaced on Google via search engines that you make sure any information you have copied and pasted from templates is up to date with your church information.



Is your website newcomer ready?

Who is your audience and how do you communicate with them?

Your primary target audience are people who live or work in your surrounding region and who are looking for a community of faith for themselves or their family.

- Does your community have a range of cultural and ethnic groups in your area?
- Do you have a large proportion of 25 - 34 year olds that live in your area?

Your target audience needs to include both Christians and nonChristians who do not currently have a church home. We want to welcome them into our church - regardless of age, ethnicity or family status.

With the understanding that the church gathering on a Sunday is for believers in the body of Christ, we still need to be outward looking and on mission to reach people with the message of the gospel. Therefore, anyone who doesn't know Jesus is who this website is for.

Think of your website as an engaging advertisement for your community and its many activities. It is outward focussed and everything from the tone of voice to engaging photos help people understand who you are and what you do.

*Anyone who
doesn't know
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What tone of voice should we use?

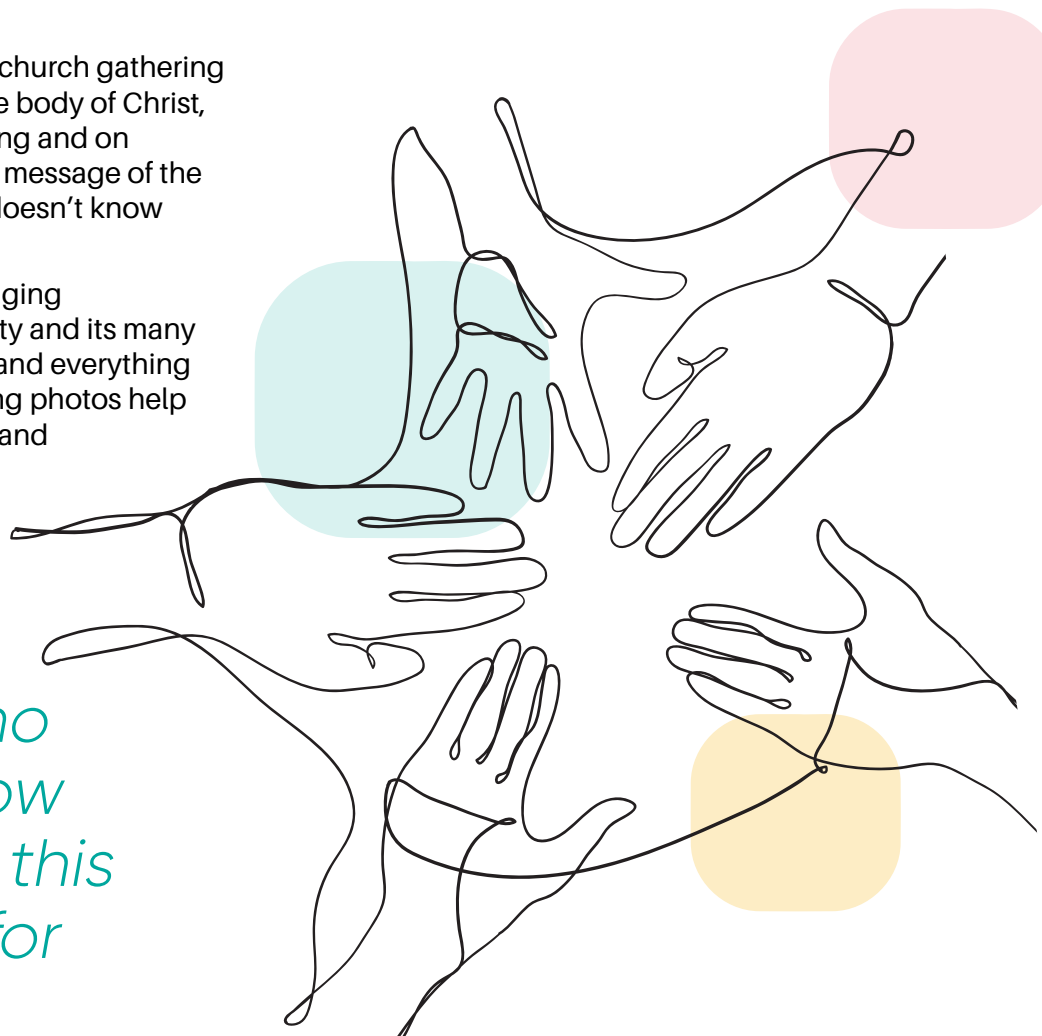
What voice do we communicate with?

We want our tone to be warm and welcoming in the way that we communicate. When we speak as a church to seekers we want to be approachable and willing to engage.

The tone of voice should be active, not passive and disengaged. People want a community they can engage with, whether it be on a Sunday or activities offered through the week.

To personify it, think of your church like a friend who is informative, helpful, and provides direction in a warm and welcoming and hospitalble manner.

Our tone is loving, informative, fun, and energetic.



You have the text, now how about images for your website?

It's important that the photography we use communicates who we are as a church.

Behind every church is a story of God at work.

Every image that we use should tell a story, and have one behind it. Our imagery choices need to communicate to people what we value and who we are as a church.

Our photography should show diversity of age, gender, and ethnicity. It should engage the viewer as a participant, not an observer. It should depict real people living real moments.

Every image that we use should tell a story, and have one behind it

Above all, get creative with the photography on your website to attract people to your church and put your unique stamp on this template. Some of the flavour of your community and the people within it are what will bring people to your church.

HANDY HINTS

- Shoot in natural light wherever possible
- Create depth of field through foreground-middle-background relationship.
- Capture a wide variety of angles, both vertically and horizontally.
- Capture scope, but also draw attention to details (depth of field is helpful here)
- Include shots containing empty or negative space for text
- Compose in thirds - remember the rule of thirds.
- Get in close. Don't worry about what people think of you - get in and get the shot.
- Particularly in church - make sure you have asked permission.
- Shape with light - don't shoot with the sun (or light source) directly behind you - allow the light to create a more interesting photo of your subjects.

The photographs should be clear, uncluttered, tightly cropped and instantly represent the subject matter. The photographs should not have major white space areas - allowing both clarity, as well as freeing up the ability to use this photography for future collateral use.



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Things to look out for:



Contrast

is there an appropriate amount of contrast?



Lighting

is it too dark or too bright?
Are the important parts of the photo well-exposed?



Composition

Does it have a strong, compelling composition? Is there a good sense of depth, or does it feel flat?



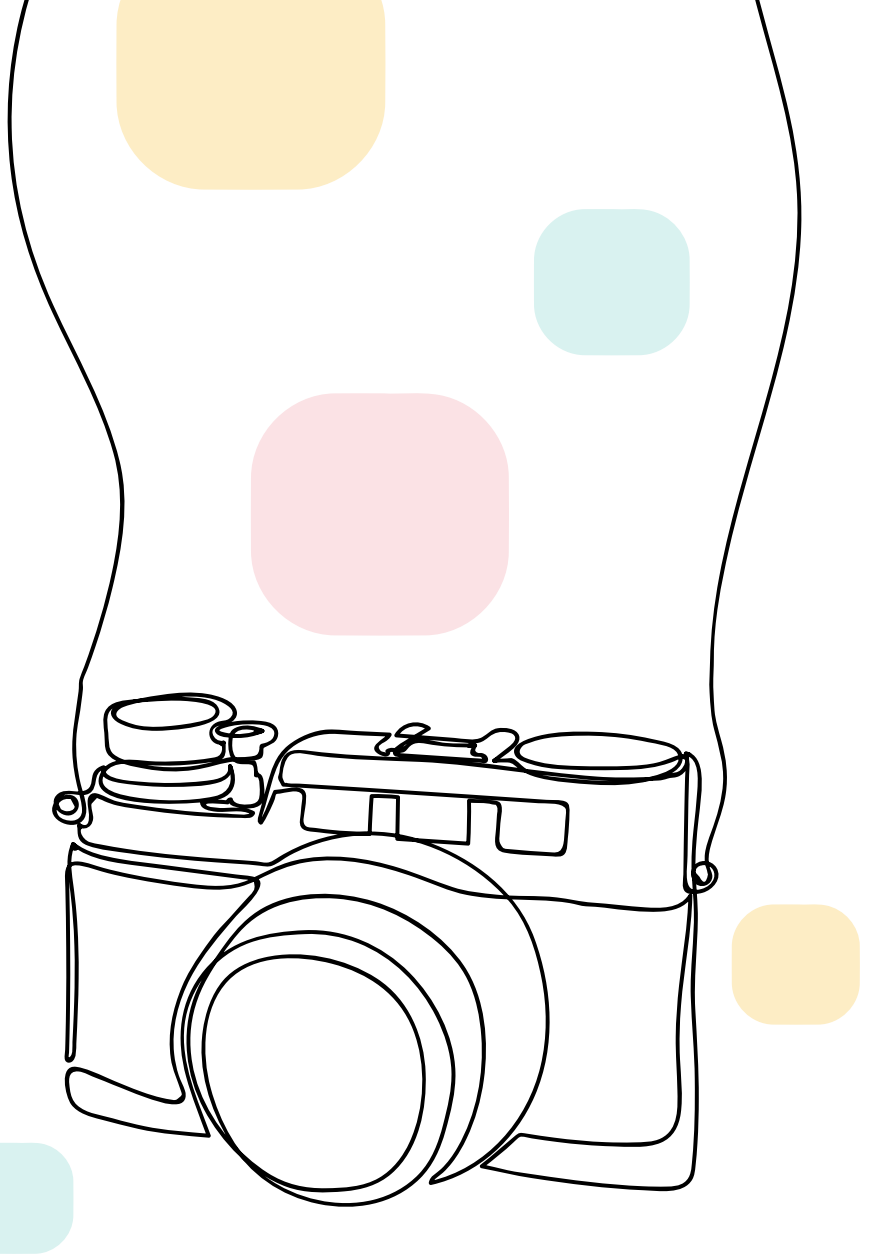
Colours

are the colours appealing and harmonious?



Distractions

Is it free from clutter, or are there distracting elements that seem off when you look closely at them?



FREE PHOTOGRAPHY SITES

Sometimes it isn't possible to get great photos yourself, but there are a wealth of websites that you can download royalty free photography for nothing. Some are better than others and we would suggest where possible you take the photos yourself. There are even courses you can take to use that handy device you carry around with you everyday to take great engaging photos.

Here is a list of websites with free photos you can use if you need to, some you may need to sign up to for free to begin downloading what you need:

- <https://pixabay.com>
- <https://www.pexels.com>
- <https://unsplash.com>
- <https://gratisography.com>
- <https://freerangestock.com>

Having trouble with new content? we also have that covered

As part of the Microsites Project, the Synod of NSW & ACT publishes various content feeds from Insights Magazine which can be used by Congregations and Presbyteries to supplement their regular content authoring activities.

This means that the content on your website is always updated for returning visitors.

The Microsites have the following feeds that you can integrate in your website:

- Latest News,
- Featured Articles,
- Lectionary Reflections,
- General Secretary Columns, and
- Moderator Columns.

To include a feed in your Microsite, please complete the following steps:

1. Create a Blog, or edit an existing Blog,
2. Navigate to the Subscriptions tab,
3. Find any Blog node in the Organisation Tree
4. For Synod feeds, they are under NSWACT Synod > Content Feeds,
5. Select the feeds you want to include, and the Subscription Mode; and
6. Click Save and Publish.

Articles are updated automatically and are ready to be shared which helps keep sites fresh and up-to-date with minimal effort from Congregations and Presbyteries.



MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Support is provided for your Microsite as part of Synod Communications.

You can send requests for help with your site to our website developer Intelligent Developments using the **contactus@nswact.uca.org.au** email and we can pass the requests along to the website team.

For more information visit the demo Microsite at **<https://microsites.uca.org.au>**



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