



STAFF GUIDE · GRADESPACE CHURCH

Running your church's website: a guide for your team

Everything your team needs to run the website day to day, in plain words.

Gradespace Church
for WordPress, version 0.6.2

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This guide shows you how to run the church's website day to day: visitors, prayer requests, sermons, events and stories. You don't need any technical knowledge.

Features marked **(Pro)** need a Pro or Agency licence.

1. Signing in

- Go to your website's address followed by **/wp-admin** (for example `yourchurch.org/wp-admin`). The sign-in page shows your logo on one side and the form on the other.
- Sign in with your own username and password. Please **don't share accounts**: the website records who did what, and each person should only see what their role needs.
- After signing in you go straight to **Church → Today**.
- Forgotten your password? Click **Lost your password?** on the sign-in page.
- After 5 wrong passwords, sign-in pauses for 15 minutes. This protects the site. Wait, then try again, or ask your administrator.

Your sign-in page

The sign-in page has two halves: on one side your logo, **Welcome back**, and what your team looks after on the website; on the other, **← Back to website** and the sign-in form. An administrator can make it your own:

- **A photo behind the panel: Church → Settings → Business → Sign-in page → Sign-in page photo**, then **Choose image**. A landscape or square photo at least 1200 pixels wide works best, such as your building or a service. It's darkened with your church's colour so the words stay easy to read; on phones it shows as a short banner. **Remove** goes back to your colour.
- **The line at the bottom**: under the photo, **Line at the bottom of the panel**, for example your full name and area ("Grace Community Church · Newtown & District"). Leave it blank to show your church's name.
- **A "Church app" tab (Pro, if you use MaSym)**: if your church also has a church app, people sometimes come to this page when they meant to sign in to the app. Under **Church → Settings → Church app → Staff sign-in page**, switch on **Show a "Church app" tab on the staff sign-in page**. The page then offers **Website editor** and **Church app** above the form; **Church app** opens the app's own sign-in page. It's on by default once the website shows the app's events and the app's web address is filled in. You can rename the tab and choose where it goes (blank: the app's address followed by `/login`).

The Log in page and the header's Log in button

If your church uses a church app (MaSym, for example), most people who look for "Log in" on the website mean the app, not the website. So the website can have a **Log in** page (at `yourchurch.org/login`) that asks **Where would you like to go?**:

- **Church app** — for members, workers and leaders: their church account (attendance, events and tickets, forms, prayer requests and more). The button opens the app's sign-in page.
- **Website** — for the people who keep the website up to date. The button opens the staff sign-in page.

Below them: "Not sure? Most people want the church app. Ask your church office if you need access." (On a site with several congregations it says "your branch office" or whatever you call them.)

A small **Log in** button sits in the website's header beside **Plan a visit** (on phones, inside the menu). It opens the Log in page while the church app's tab is on, and the staff sign-in page otherwise.

An administrator sets it up under **Church → Settings**:

- **Business → Log in button: Create the Log in page** makes the page (only offered once the church app's tab is on). Then **Edit the Log in page** opens it like any other page; **Use the kit's layout again** puts the original layout back (the old version stays in the page's revisions). **Show a Log in button in the header** switches the header button on or off: it's on by default while the church app's tab is on, and off for churches without an app (switch it on and it opens the staff sign-in page).
- **Church app → Staff sign-in page:** the app's name on the tab and the page ("Church app"), where its button goes (blank: the app's address followed by /login) and **The app's name (optional)**, e.g. *MaSym*, which adds "— in MaSym." to the church app's card.

The words on the page come from these settings, so editing them in the page editor isn't needed (the grey, linked words in the editor show what visitors will see). You can still change the headings, labels and layout like any other page. The staff sign-in page itself stays at `yourchurch.org/wp-login.php` (and `/wp-admin`).

2. Your weekly start: Church → Today

Today shows what needs attention:

- **New visit requests:** people planning to come along, and which church they chose.
- **Prayer requests** (if you take them, and only for people allowed to read them).
- **Coming up this week:** services and events.
- **Latest sermons**, straight from YouTube.

The numbers in red circles on the left-hand menu show how many things are waiting, for example two new visit requests.

3. Visitors: Church → Visits

When someone fills in **Plan a visit** on the website, they choose a church and a date. The request is emailed to that church's own email address (and anyone on the "Copy visit requests to" list in **Church → Settings → Email**), and the visitor gets a friendly confirmation.

1. Open **Church → Visits** to see the request: name, contact details, church, date and any message.
2. Get in touch if you'd like to, and make sure someone is ready to welcome them.
3. After the visit, click **Mark as welcomed**.

Visit records are private. **Visits → Due for review** lists records older than the months set in **Church → Settings → Visits**; an administrator ticks the ones there's no reason to keep and chooses **Delete selected**. Nothing is deleted automatically.

4. Prayer requests: Church → Prayer

Prayer requests are optional. An administrator switches them on in **Church → Settings → Prayer** and adds the prayer request form to a page.

- Requests are private: only people whose role allows it can read them, and the prayer team is emailed.
- When you've prayed for someone, click **Mark as prayed for**.
- **Prayer → Due for review** works the same way as visits.

5. Sermons: Church → Sermons

Sermons arrive by themselves. Once your YouTube channel is set (in the setup wizard or **Church → Settings → Sermons**), new videos become sermons every hour, with the speaker, a summary and the video's picture.

- Open a sermon to add a **series**, the **Bible passage** or notes. Series, speakers and types have their own lists under Sermons.
- **Church → YouTube import** shows when the channel was last checked. Use it (or **Import now** on Settings → Sermons) if you've just uploaded something and don't want to wait.
- To leave a video out, add a word from its title to "Skip videos whose title contains" in Settings → Sermons. A sermon you delete won't come back.
- Visitors only load YouTube when they press play, after agreeing to its cookies.
- **A congregation with its own channel:** put the channel in that congregation's details (Church → Churches → open it → *YouTube channel*). Its new videos arrive too and belong to that congregation: they show first in its page's sermons, and its **Watch live** button goes to its own channel. Settings → Sermons lists these channels and when each was last checked.
- **Calling them something else:** under Settings → Sermons → *Address and name* you can change the address (e.g. `watch` for `yourwebsite/watch/`) and the name (e.g. *Watch*, *one Video*, links saying *Watch more*). Old addresses keep working: people are sent on to the new ones.

- **Types:** Settings → Sermons → *Types* lists the groups (Sermon, Full service, Worship and music) and lets you name your own. Each line is `address | Name | kind`, where the kind (sermon, service or worship) tells the import which videos go there; you can also send videos with no named speaker to a type such as *Music*.

6. Events: Church → Events

- **Add an event:** a title, date and time, place, and a picture if you have one. Events can repeat weekly, fortnightly or monthly (by date or by weekday, such as "first Sunday").
- Each event has an **Add to calendar** button for visitors.
- **Calendar feed (Pro):** if you already keep events in Google Calendar, Outlook, ChurchSuite or similar, paste the calendar's address in **Church → Settings → Events** and those events appear on the website too.
- **Church app (Pro):** if your church runs its events in a church app such as MaSym, the website can show them too (see below). Those events are added and changed **in the app**, not here: they don't appear in the Church → Events list, and a note at the top of that list says how many there are.

Connecting your church app (MaSym)

An administrator does this once. Ask whoever looks after your app for its web address, its Firebase project ID and its app ID (they're in the app's Firebase settings; none of them is a password).

1. Go to **Church → Settings → Church app**.
2. Fill in **The app's web address** (for example `https://yourchurch.web.app`) and the **Firestore project ID** (usually the first part of that address). Add the **App ID** so the website can read the app's list of churches. Leave the **Web API key** empty unless reading the app fails without it.
3. Click **Save changes**. The status line should say **Connected** and how many events, churches and special programmes it read.
4. Under **Congregations**, check each congregation is matched to the right church in the app. They're matched by name until you choose; choose **Not in the app** for any that aren't. Each congregation's page then shows its own events and those for every church.
5. Under **Which events show**, untick anything that shouldn't be on the public website, such as planning meetings, and save.
6. Go to the **Events** tab, set **Also show events from** to **The church app (MaSym)**, and save. The app's events now appear on the website.

Good to know:

- The website checks the app every 10 minutes (you can change this). After adding an event in the app, click **Refresh now** at the bottom of the Church app tab to see it straight away.

- **Register** buttons open the event's page in the app, so registrations, tickets and emails stay in the app.
- **Special programmes** (conventions, retreats...) from the app show above the events while they're on and for 30 days before. **Join on Zoom** gets the Zoom details from the app when someone clicks, from an hour before each session. The details are never saved on the website.
- If the app can't be reached, the website keeps showing the last events it read, and a red number on **Events** tells you. Try **Refresh now** later, or check the address and project ID.
- To stop showing the app's events, set **Also show events from** back to **Nowhere else**. Your connection settings are kept.

7. Stories and churches

- **Church → Stories:** community and outreach stories, with categories. What people said can be gathered into the "Voices" section on the website.
- **Church → Churches:** each congregation's page, address, phone, pastor, colour, meeting times, photos and (if it has one) its own YouTube channel.
 - **Meeting times** (in the sidebar when you open a congregation): click **Add a meeting** for each service or regular meeting: its name, the day, how often (every week, or the first, second, third, fourth or last of the month), when it starts and ends, whether it's in person, online or both (with the online link), and a short note (e.g. "Children's groups during the service"). Tick **Offer it in Plan a visit** for the meetings visitors can choose; with none ticked, the first one is offered. The website works out "next service", Today's list and the Plan a visit dates from these. Congregations set up before keep their old one-per-line times until you change them here; the panel starts from them.
 - **Photos:** click **Choose photos** in the sidebar and pick or upload them. The *Congregation photos* section on its page shows them (nothing shows until there are some). To add the section to an older page, insert the *Congregation photos* block or pattern.
 - **Events for one congregation:** open the event and choose the congregation in its *Church* panel. A congregation's page shows its own events and those for every congregation; events from the church app follow the app's church (Settings → Church app → Congregations).
- **A header for each congregation:** with two or more congregations, switch on Settings → Business → *Congregation pages* → **Use the congregation header on their pages**. Their pages, and pages that belong to one, then show a strip back to the whole church ("< name · All our churches"; set the name there), the congregation's name beside the logo, and Watch live and Plan a visit in its colour. For a new page that belongs to a congregation, choose it in the page's *Church* panel, and pick the template *Congregation sub-page* to give it that header and a title.

8. Settings (administrators)

Church → **Settings** has tabs. Each tab has its own **Save changes** button.

Tab	What's there
Business	Church name, logo, tagline, the sign-in page's photo and bottom line, charity details, social media links, Pages (which page is About, Contact, Plan a visit, Give, News, Questions and the list of churches, so the website's buttons and footer go there) and Congregation pages (their own header)
Contact	Phone numbers, WhatsApp, email, address, map link
Email	Who gets which emails (including "Copy visit requests to" and the prayer team), the sender name and address, which emails visitors get, Send a test email , and the email log (Pro)
Privacy	The cookie banner and the details used in your privacy and cookie pages
Sermons	Your YouTube channel, hourly checks, whether new sermons publish straight away, videos to skip, the sermons' address and name (e.g. /watch/, "Watch") and their types
Events	How far ahead events show, and where else events come from: a calendar feed or your church app (Pro)
Church app	Connecting your church app (MaSym): its address, which congregation is which, which events show, Refresh now, and the "Church app" tab on the sign-in page (Pro)
Visits	What visitors can expect, and when visit records are reviewed
Giving	Links to your giving page(s) and bank details. No payments are taken on the website itself
Prayer	Taking prayer requests on the website on or off, and when requests are reviewed
Licence	Your licence key (also under Settings → Gradespace licence)

Run setup again on the Settings screen reopens the setup wizard.

Church → Staff access: to add someone, click **Add staff member**, then choose their role:

- **Pastor or church leader:** sermons, events, stories, visits, prayer and churches;
- **Media team:** sermons, events and stories;
- **Welcome team:** visits and events.

With a Pro licence you can also tick exactly what each role can do. Give **Administrator** only to one or two trusted people.

Site Settings → Design & colours: choose the website's look (Gathering, Sanctuary or Heritage, and seven colour palettes). You can preview privately before saving.

9. Editing the website's pages

- **Pages** (Home, About, Plan a visit, Our churches, Give, Contact): open a page and click any text or picture to change it. Click **Save**.
- **News: Posts → Add New Post.** Add a title, text and a featured image, then **Publish**.
- **Service times, phone numbers and addresses** on the website come from each church's page under **Church → Churches** and from **Church → Settings**. Change them there once and every page and email updates.
- Replace the sample pictures with your own photos when you can.

10. Good habits

- **Reply to visit requests within a day or two** and mark them welcomed.
- **Check Church → Today** at the start of each week.
- **Never** type passwords, bank card numbers or sensitive pastoral notes into the website.
- If an email doesn't seem to arrive, look at **Church → Settings → Email → Email log** (Pro). It shows whether each email was sent and, if not, why.
- If something looks wrong, take a screenshot and send it to whoever looks after your website.

Help

Your website runs on **Gradespace Church**. Step-by-step install and licence help:

thegradespace.com/wordpress-kits/getting-started. Questions: support@thegradespace.com. Tell us what you were doing, what you expected, and send a screenshot.