

Website

Domain name registration: Starts at \$10/year and goes up. Just don't pick a super-expensive one! Have several alternates in mind before sitting down to do so.

<https://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/registerdomain.shtml>

Website hosts:

There many out there. SiteGround and their customer service come highly recommended.

[https://www.siteground.com/web-](https://www.siteground.com/web-hosting.htm?afcode=0c2c3fae99f0af0efdb859019c8611a2&campaign=HostingAffiliate)

[hosting.htm?afcode=0c2c3fae99f0af0efdb859019c8611a2&campaign=HostingAffiliate](https://www.siteground.com/web-hosting.htm?afcode=0c2c3fae99f0af0efdb859019c8611a2&campaign=HostingAffiliate)
The Grow big plan (20 GB up to 25,000 visitors/mo, plenty of support) is \$5.95/month Go Geek \$11.95/mo—currently. Regular Price: Grow Big \$20, Go Geek—35 (30 GB storage, up to 100,000 visitors/mo)

Methods of building:

Wordpress.org—I like Wordpress, but it isn't perfect:

Aproximate cost: \$10.95/month (including Akismet). Plus or minus an added \$99/year for higher security (see more below).

Pros:

Premade templates

A lot of customizability—the most of the three options I'm listing. There are very few times you'll bump into just not being able to do something.

Chances of actually trashing the site extremely low.

A lot of good free plugins, including some good security plugins (Wordfence free is excellent)

Includes a blog!

Neutral:

Most added functions require choosing a plugin rather than coming pre-built.

You can only have one blog per site.

Podcasting will require a plugin and/or off-site storage.

Cons:

Has a steep initial learning curve.

Requires the site manager to continue to keep plugins up to date (generally this is easy. Really easy).

If the site goes down, you have to call the host to find out why. You may have to do something on your end to fix things (I haven't had to call Siteground yet. I have spent hours and hours with hostgator and don't recommend them).

Runs the slight risk of conflicting plugins messing up the site. Fixable, but it'll be the site manager's job to do so.

Security: Wordfence pro is \$99 a year. That said, I've worked on running 2 different sites on the free version for going on 6 years now and there has never been a problem.

You should pay a 5/month fee for the use of Akismet, an extremely efficient spam blocker.

Storage is not unlimited at the lower end of pricing.

Plugins are a potential security risk: Pay attention to those star ratings & reviews. Also, stick to the ones that have the most downloads.

Squarespace: \$18/month

<https://www.squarespace.com/pricing>

Pros

They promise to be a good fit for first-time builders, and they live up to that.

Plenty of prebuilt templates

They handle the security

If the site crashes, it's their problem.

They have built in capacity for transactions (3% fee)

Unlimited Storage

Blog included—in fact, you can have more than one blog if you want.

Neutral:

If you want to podcast your sermons (and you probably do), you need to use a blog with audio segments *not* their pre-prepared Sermons page.

Cons

There are going to be times when you want to do something and can't. There are no plugins to extend anything.

A domain-linked email will cost extra for each user (\$5-10/month depending on plan)

Some of their functions take multiple steps to use. Keep opening tabs to find out (or watch the videos they provide)

Cloversites: \$1,000 one time fee, \$29/month thereafter.

Pros

Really, really good customer service. Almost no wait time when phoning, the people on the other end of the line know exactly what they are doing.

Prebuilt templates

They handle the security

If the site crashes, it's their problem.

Unlimited storage, traffic, pages and media

Podcasting an easy option.

Cons

There are going to be times when you want to do something and can't—spacing between sections, for example, is not flexible, so you'll be stuck with some odd gaps in your build.

No provision for domain-linked emails.

No blog. No really. They built a site without a blog.

Wordpress.com

Pros:

Highly customizable

Free OR \$4 for ad-free.

You don't *have* to register a domain name.

The security and stability are both very good.

Keeping the site running is their problem.

Cons:

Your visitors will see ads. You will have no control over what they see, which means you can't screen for potentially offensive content.

A wordpress.com address says "We're doing this as cheaply as we can"

It will cost if you ever want to move up to an .org site or transfer it.

The customizability is limited.