

# **Get the Word Out!**

North Creek Presbyterian Church  
Communications Resource Guide

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# About This Guide

## *Purpose*

The purpose of this Communications Resource Guide is to help North Creek staff and ministries plan and execute cost-efficient and effective communications, as needed within and outside the church congregation.

## *Using the Guide*

Start with “[Getting Started](#).” After you have the necessary approvals for your event or effort (such as facility request and fund raiser approval), review the questions under “[Targeting Your Audience](#)” to begin planning your publicity. Then you can decide which communication tools make the most sense for your event, your timeline, your budget, and your volunteer resources.

# Getting Started

## *Church-wide Coordination*

This guide is dedicated to assisting you in planning and using various forms of communication as part of your work for Christ in the programs and missions of North Creek Presbyterian Church. This section outlines the requirements and controls that exist to prevent schedule overloads and conflicts.

### **Approvals that are required prior to publicizing an event:**

All events, functions, and the corresponding communications must be approved by the Chairperson responsible for the program or ministry.

Advertising (communicating about) a North Creek event(s) that uses North Creek facilities must be preceded by approval of Facility Use (FURF form).

Advertising (communicating about) a North Creek event(s) that is a fund raiser must be preceded by approval of the Finance Ministry Team (Fundraiser form).

All new (or modified) publications and communications must be approved by the Office Manager, who has access to the office staff, the pastors, and the church calendar.

**Some factors that are important for approval:**

- No timing or facility conflicts
- No budget constraints
- Well-designed documents
- Well-designed verbal communications
- Appropriate supplies and materials available
- Presents/advertises an event or function that is a central part of North Creek; not a community or personal event
- Represents the goals and emphases of North Creek
- Represents the reformed theology of the Presbyterian Church USA

## ***Targeting Your Audience***

Before you dive into publicizing an event, thinking through a few basic questions can focus your energy and maximize your resources:

**1. What are you planning?**

Is this a one-time event? A series of events? An effort to create interest in a mission or ministry?

**2. What is the purpose of this event or effort?**

To enrich the life of North Creek Presbyterian Church? Increase community awareness of the church? Collect donations for a mission?

**3. Who will be interested in this event or effort?**

Are you trying to serve a specific part of the church body? Draw the entire congregation? Reach non-believers? Attract people from the surrounding community—or is it an event with even broader regional interest? To which age groups and/or special-interest groups would the event appeal?

**4. How do you reach this audience?**

Are internal North Creek communications enough? If external, is there a medium that targets the community of interest (such as a regional newspaper, a rock radio station for youth, a newsletter for a special-interest population)?

**5. What is your budget?**

How much money can you spend on publicity? What kind of expertise and time can your volunteers share?

**6. What is the best method?**

Given these blessings and constraints, which communication tools are imperative, and which will you use *if* time and money allow? The pages that follow can help you evaluate the options and make a plan.

## ***Preparing Your Message***

Before sending out your information, consider the best medium(s) to reach the audience you're after, and tailor your message to fit the requirements of each. It's a good idea to follow up a press release with a phone call or e-mail, to make sure it reaches the right person and to find out if, when, and where it will be used.

Details you should nail down first:

- Know the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your event or effort
- What are the key messages you want a person to know?
- Can you boil down the key message(s) in a single statement?
- How can people get more information?
- Who will be the media contact?

If you are submitting information for internal North Creek communications, see the requirements for each in the [Internal North Creek communications](#) section.

If you are submitting a press release to a local media outlet:

- Include contact information at the top of the page for reporters' questions
- Lead with the news: something unique, timely, community-focused
- Make sure all "5 W's" are in the first paragraph. Additional details may follow in subsequent paragraphs, including contact information that may be published, and how to attend or get involved.

If you are submitting calendar items to Web sites, newspapers, or broadcast media online, boil down your basics to a catchy tagline, quickly followed by the basic facts and how to attend, get involved, or get more information. Be prepared with contact information that can be published, as well as a contact for verification. Be sure to have the office proof all potential publications before they are share with media outlets.

## ***Reaching Your Target Audience***

There are two types of communication to consider: internal within North Creek, and external to the community. The church sign, Web site, and banners on church property do double duty, but they're listed under internal communications here.

Internal communications: Just about everything happening in the life of North Creek should be publicized to some extent within the church, and most of these communication avenues are free and easy to do. For best results, use a combination of communication tools to reach the broadest possible audience.

External communications: There are simple and free means to get the word out to the community, too, through schedules in newspapers and Web sites, even news coverage if your item is newsworthy. If you have a budget for paid advertising, the commercial media will be happy to help you spend it.

# Internal North Creek Communications

Quite often, the simple and free communications tools within North Creek are sufficient. More elaborate and expensive tools don't always bring better results.

Evaluate:

- What is the cost? Do you have the budget without seeking additional funds?
- How many people will the effort reach?
- How many do you expect to respond? Is that an acceptable return on investment? Can you handle the influx if more people respond?

## Who's who

In this guide, you'll find references to the following media:

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### In this section:

["News & Notes"](#)  
[Sunday Morning Announcements](#)  
[Fellowship Hall Table](#)  
[Information Desk](#)  
[Info Desk](#)  
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[Northcreekpres.org Web Site](#)  
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[CURRENT Newsletter](#)  
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## ***“News & Notes”***

This well-read section of the Sunday morning bulletin is an excellent way to get your news into the hands of people attending church. Submit a brief announcement of your event, by 10am Wednesday before the Sunday you want it published. **The blurb cannot be more than 60 words.**

Needed: A brief announcement with one sentence that is informational and one that is motivational, then the facts including time, date, place, a contact name and one phone number. Submit in an e-mail or a Word document along with the dates you want your announcement to run—an announcement may be requested to run for two consecutive weeks. Also, provide the church office with a sign-up sheet and all available information about the event.

Deadline: 10am Wednesday

Submit to: Office (office@northcreekpres.org)

Who you'll reach: People who attend church that Sunday

Benefits: It's simple, free, well-read, and effective

Drawbacks: It reaches only those who attended worship that day

Cost: Free

### **Requesting a separate insert in the Sunday bulletin:**

North Creek tries to minimize the number of bulletin inserts, so as not to detract from worship. If you want to request a separate insert for the Sunday bulletin, refer first to the Church-wide Coordination and Controls section for the necessary approvals of a new or modified publication.

Once approved, request your insert from the church office by Monday prior to the Sunday the insert is wanted. E-mail the request to the Office with the following information: name of the ministry, contact person with phone number, the date the insert is requested to appear, and color ideas.

The insert information should pertain to the whole congregation not target specific groups or ministries. The insert information should be attached as a Word document and be easily formatted for the office to edit as needed. If the insert is approved, the requesting ministry team should provide a volunteer to print and cut it.

## ***Sunday Morning Announcements***

Pastors typically make these announcements, and word of mouth is always effective. The time these announcements are made during the church service may vary, and the pastors will make the final decision on what information is presented, based on:

1. Time available in each worship service
2. Pertinence to the whole congregation
3. Proximity to the event date
4. Relevance to the mission of North Creek

NOTE: Information must be in “News & Notes” in order to be highlighted with a *brief* pastor’s announcement.

Needed: A brief announcement referring people to a source of additional information, such as a person, meeting, or table in the Fellowship Hall. The announcement request and copy should be submitted via e-mail along with a complementing “News & Notes” entry.

Example:

*“See the information regarding Alpha in this Issue of “News & Notes,” and be sure to stop by the sign-up in the Fellowship Hall today and next week.”*

Deadline: 10am Wednesday

Submit to: Office Manager ([trinity@northcreekpres.org](mailto:trinity@northcreekpres.org))

Who you’ll reach: People who attend church that Sunday

Benefits: It’s simple, free, and effective—people listen to the pastor!

Drawbacks: It reaches only those who attended worship that day

Cost: Free

## ***Fellowship Hall Table***

The Fellowship Hall is a common meeting place where the congregation is accustomed to finding information and registration tables after worship services. There needs to be an announcement in “News & Notes” telling people about your table in the Fellowship Hall. The ministry must staff the table after service.

Standing signs are available to help identify your table and cause. These signs must be requested through the office and design choices are subject to approval. The sign must display your groups name and minimal information. This sign is on standard 8.5 x 11 in paper. Remember: the sign is to label your table, not detail the entire cause.

Needed: Someone to staff the table after both services, as well as any materials such as flyers, a sign-up sheet, perhaps a display, etc.

Deadline: 3 weeks before intended Sunday

Submit to: Office Manager

Who you'll reach: People who go into the Fellowship Hall after worship

Benefits: People tend to look at the tables and at least consider what's there

Drawbacks: This reaches only those who go into the Fellowship Hall

Cost: Free

## ***Information Desk***

This desk space in the Narthex can display a variety of posters, flyers, brochures, and notices. *All* postings must be submitted for approval by the Office Manager in the church office. Any postings without approval will be removed.

Any North Creek ministry may display promotional material using the plastic brochure/information holders.

1. Use only one holder for your brochure.
2. Don't remove or cover another brochure with yours.
3. Make sure your material is up to date with class or schedule times.
4. Check with the office if there are no available holders.

Deadline: Two Weeks before Scheduled Event

Submit to: Office Staff (office@northcreekpres.org)

Who you'll reach: All Visitors to the church

Benefits: People who take information are interested

Drawbacks: No personal contact from a knowledgeable person

Cost: Poster, flyer, or brochure materials

Please leave information on your event or effort at the information desk in the Narthex and in the office, so helpers in those locations can provide information about upcoming events.

Volunteers staff the information desk on Sundays to assist visitors with information about regular events or special services. Please leave them a note on your event or effort, a few brochures, and information on where people can find additional information.

The office receives calls during the week about various church activities, so if you want the information about your event to reach all inquiring parties, provide the staff with all information and materials ASAP.

## ***Slideshows – Info Desk TV & Sanctuary***

The announcements that cycle through the slide show on the Info Desk TV in the Narthex catch interest from early birds and foot traffic. These Microsoft PowerPoint or “jpg” slides flash for only a short time, so the design should be simple and the copy large, clear, and brief for quick scanning.

Needed: If your slide already is prepared, save it with a file name that has the following information in this order: last name of creator of slide, ministry name, event, start date, and end date. (For example: Wagner-children-sbc-Nov1-Dec8)

If you need assistance creating a slide, please contact the Office Manager and provide brief and basic information, an idea of the look you want (bold, colorful, clip art, etc.) and the information requested above for the title.

Deadline: Noon Monday before the start date (the next Sunday)

Submit to: Office Staff ([office@northcreekpres.org](mailto:office@northcreekpres.org))

Who you'll reach: People who are early to church or look at the Info Desk

Benefits: Color, graphics, electronic media get noticed

Drawbacks: This reaches only those who are early to church or watch the Narthex TV

Cost: Free

## ***Northcreekpres.org Web Site***

North Creek's new Web site is sophisticated, organized, and has a place for information on church events, missions, and ministries. This is a great way to reach both an internal and an external audience.

**Needed:** Proofed and final, ready-to-post content (see note below) in a Microsoft Word document. Submit this with the name of the ministry, the name and e-mail address of the contact person, the ministry the information belongs to, whether there needs to be a registration page online, a release and expiration date, and navigation to the information (for example, the navigation button "Ministries," subcategory "Alaska").

NOTE: Content must be spell-checked, edited, and formatted with only standard fonts before it is submitted for approval. Graphics may be submitted but are subject to the approval of the office staff. The Webmaster reserves the right to make any changes to the content to ensure it will fit within our current Web theme. All pages submitted must be associated with an existing navigation button on the site.

If there is a registration form on the Webpage:

- The content owner needs to submit the fields of data that need to be filled in on the form (such as, first name, last name, phone number, e-mail address, etc.).
- Make a note if any of the fields are required information. Also, provide instructions on what is to happen when the person registering clicks the "Submit" button.
- Provide the names and e-mail addresses of everyone who is to receive the completed registration form information.

**Deadline:** 14 business days before the date it is to be "live" on the Web

**Submit to:** Office (office@northcreekpres.org)

**Who you'll reach:** "Wired" church patrons and Web site visitors

**Benefits:** Showing Web site visitors how active our church is while getting your word out

**Drawbacks:** It may take other media to draw attention to your Web page

**Cost:** Free

## ***Brochures***

Ongoing missions and ministries with the same basic information and contacts month after month may find brochures to be a good investment. It takes time to develop the right messaging, content, and design, but photocopied brochures are easy to reproduce to replenish supplies over time. A tri-fold brochure creates concise, attractive organizational spaces for information.

NOTE: Missions and Ministries have the option to craft their own trifold brochure or to submit content to the office for final design and publication creation. If the office does not approve a self-made brochure, the submitting party will need to submit the appropriate information to the office for editing.

When you print the brochures, start with a small number, and print more as needed. This will save resources if the brochure needs to be updated before supplies are diminished. Do not copy color print material for distribution – always print from in church computer or digital media, ask Office Manager for assistance when needed.

Be sure to leave at least one brochure at the office so the staff and volunteers have information at hand in case someone calls with questions. Provide contact information and a note with it, indicating whether the information is for the office staff FYI or whether you are asking the office for some kind of help.

Needed: Proofed and ready-to-print original. If your ministry requires a certain color or weight of paper, you will need to provide it. Also, provide a volunteer from your ministry to perform copying, cutting, and folding as necessary.

NOTE: Ministry teams have been assigned a code (attached to the top of the machine) to start up the copier. If someone doesn't find a code for their team, they can use the general office code or request their own from the Office Manager.

Deadline: (Determined by event schedule, staff/volunteer availability)

Submit to: Make arrangements with the Office Manager to determine best time to use office equipment and check on supplies

Who you'll reach: Anyone seeking more information who finds your brochure

Benefits: Small size, yet it can hold a lot of detailed information

Drawbacks: Development time, waste of resources if updates are needed while there are still supplies of the brochure

Cost: Materials

## ***Flyers***

Flyers are a good way to provide details to people who are interested. Even if you target the entire congregation, only a limited number is likely to respond.

To avoid wasting resources with overprinted, unused flyers, copies should be printed in small quantities and replenished with more copies if needed. For example, if your target audience is the whole congregation and your distribution plan is to leave copies at the Info Desk for people to pick up, print only 25 at first. You can always add more later, but that number may be sufficient.

An alternative to full-page flyers is half-page flyers, or even postcards. All publications should be simple and succinct, so postcards often can carry the full message while saving paper. Microsoft Publisher or another pagination program can format postcards to fit four on a sheet with the right spacing to cut the page.

Bulletin inserts are used only for church-wide and congregational events, as so deemed by the office staff. Inserts must be approved by the office staff, and they are subject to any and all design choices by the staff.

Leave a flyer at the office so the staff and volunteers have information at hand if someone calls with questions. Provide contact information and note whether the flyer is for office information or whether you are requesting some kind of help.

Needed: Content and desired included graphics. If your ministry requires a certain color or weight of paper, you will need to provide it. Also, provide a volunteer from your ministry to perform copying, cutting, and folding as necessary.

NOTE: Ministry teams have been assigned a code (attached to the top of the copy machine) to start up the copier. If someone doesn't find a code for their team, they can use the general office code or request their own from the Office.

Deadline: 2 weeks before an event (if event flyer), 3 weeks for insert request

Submit to: Make arrangements with the Office Manager to determine best time to use office equipment and check on supplies

Who you'll reach: Anyone seeking more information who finds your flyer

Benefits: Flyers can provide details in print for future reference

Drawbacks: If overprinted and not targeted, low return on investment

Cost: Materials, staff time if used

## ***Mailers***

Mailers can be effective, but also can be expensive. These should be considered if there is no other way to include everyone *and* either 1) there is an important church-wide campaign or 2) there is a targeted audience. As with flyers, consider printing postcards to save material and postage costs.

Needed: A proofed, final version of the mailer and a list of people to receive it

Deadline: (Determined by event schedule, staff/volunteer availability)

Submit to: Make arrangements with the Office Manager to determine best time to use office equipment and check on supplies.

Who you'll reach: All recipients

Benefits: Church mailers are well-read

Drawbacks: Cost

Cost: Materials, postage

## ***E-mail***

An announcement can go into the Connections email to spread the word as well. Submit a brief announcement of your event, by 10 am Wednesday before the Thursday you want it published. **The blurb cannot be more than 60 words.**

Needed: A brief announcement with one sentence that is informational and one that is motivational, then the facts including time, date, place, a contact name and one phone number. Submit in an e-mail or a Word document along with the dates you want your announcement to run—an email may be requested to run for two consecutive weeks. If a web sign up is needed, follow the website publications stated previously.

Deadline: 10 am Wednesday

Submit to: Office (office@northcreekpres.org)

Who you'll reach: People who subscribe to the Connections email

Benefits: It's simple, free, well-read, and effective

Drawbacks: It reaches only those who have subscribed

Cost: Free

## ***CURRENT Newsletter***

An announcement or feature can go into the CURRENT newsletter to spread the word as well. All submissions for the CURRENT are due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month. Blurb submissions must be 80 words or less. Article submissions must 200-250 words and should include a photo.

Needed: All wording desired for the feature, including date, time, place (if applicable); information on the mission/ministry/etc. feature and photo submission

Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month (ex. For July CURRENT, due June 20)

Submit to: Office (office@northcreekpres.org)

Who you'll reach: People who read the newsletter online or in person

Benefits: It's simple, free, and well read; allows for more detail or showcasing of work done.

Drawbacks: It reaches only those who seek out the newsletter

Cost: Free

## ***Banners***

Large, temporary banners on 164<sup>th</sup> herald the coming of major special events that may be of interest to the church and its greater community. If you have the budget and the right type of event, a banner can really call out your cause.

Be sure to check with the Office to ensure the banner space is available.

Needed: A simple design and memorable message with name of event. Consider a separate piece with the time and date if the banner can be used again.

Deadline: Prepare the content and design at least two months in advance for the review and approval process, as well as manufacture. The banner may be hung two weeks before the event. It must be taken down the day after the event.

Submit to: Make arrangements with the Office Manager

Who you'll reach: Potentially anyone and everyone who passes by

Benefits: Eye-catching medium, many banners already exist for reuse

Drawbacks: Cost for a new banner, exterior banner is not lighted at night

Cost: New exterior banners can be \$100 or more, depending on the amount of color used. Get competitive bids from at least two vendors. North Creek has regularly used ***Alderwood Signs*** and ***Vectors Plus*** (Gary Harrod, discounted rates).

## ***Cross-Event Announcements***

If people attending one function are a key target for your future event or effort, consider making arrangements to announce your event at the function that precedes it.

Needed: A short announcement with basic information and a contact, as well as permission to give the announcement—or have it made—at an event with a similar audience.

Deadline: (Determined by event schedule—the announcement preferably would be made at least 10 days before the coming event)

Submit to: The preceding function's organizer and/or emcee

Who you'll reach: Those who attend the function

Benefits: Targeted communication with relatively little effort

Drawbacks: Requires knowledge of other church happenings, organizers

Cost: Free

## ***Mass E-mail***

Mass emails to the entire congregation must be submitted by Session or Pastoral Staff and be approved by both to be sent.

Needed: A concise letter or document ready to be sent as is. It must contain each of the following: a title and/or subject line, message, and author(s) information.

Deadline: Minimum 3 business day before the desired send date, **CAN NOT BE SENT ON THURSDAYS**. These emails are to be limited to 1x per month, unless extenuating circumstances indicate otherwise.

Submit to: Office (office@northcreekpres.org)

Who you'll reach: People who subscribe to NCPC emails

Benefits: It's simple, free, well-read, effective, and conveys importance.

Drawbacks: It reaches only those who have subscribed; Subscribers often dismiss one-off emails as opposed to regularly scheduled messages (such as the Connections email and monthly *CURRENT*)

Cost: Free

# ***COVID- 19 Restrictions and Amendments***

## **BULLETIN and EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Due to office@northcreekpres.org by 10:00am PT on Wednesday.
- Must be a brief announcement with both motivational (ex. “Join us”) and informational (ex.: “at the Tuesday Bible study...”) statements.
- Include relevant facts: time, date, place, contact name and number/email.
- Submit in the body of an email or as an attached Word document
- Maximum of 60 words

## **SPECIAL EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Emails CANNOT be sent on Thursdays
- Due to office@northcreekpres.org at least 2 business days prior to desired send date (M-F)
- Include relevant facts: time, date, place, contact name and number/email.
- Submit in the body of an email or as an attached Word document
- Subject to approval by Head of Staff and additional time constraints depending on content

## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER (THE CURRENT):**

- Available for large-scale or high-participation events and notices.
- Content for articles due to office@northcreekpres.org the 20th of prior month to be considered.
- 200-250 words max. More space can be reserved with advance planning (minimum of 1 month prior).
- Pictures, graphics and links are suggested. All graphics and pictures need proof of rights to use.

## **WEBSITE:**

- Submit information to office two weeks prior to desired posting date.
- Include motivational (ex. “Join us”), informational (ex.: “at the Tuesday Bible study...”) statements, and relevant facts: time, date, place, contact name. Note: No personal contact information will be posted online due to phishing scams. If you need to establish a contact, a form must be created for initial inquiries.
- You are responsible for content, required information, and type of posting.
  - All graphics and pictures need proof of rights to use.
- The office staff will make final publication and visual decisions.