
SIMPLE WAYS

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THEIR BULLETIN DESIGN





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Looking for simple tweaks that can make a big difference in your bulletin design and layout? Evan Vogel, Graphic Design Supervisor for LPi, was kind enough to chat about some ways that most parishes can easily improve the graphic design in their bulletin.

Evan has been practicing graphic design since high school, and professionally serving as a designer since graduating with his BFA. He has designed and rebranded bulletins for hundreds of parishes across the United States. Here is what he recommends adjusting for a more professionally designed parish bulletin layout.

First of all, why is good design and layout important for bulletins?

Evan reminds us that, “Outside of Mass, bulletins are the #1 communication tool for most churches.” Think of it: parishioners and visitors alike reach for the bulletin as they exit your church.

With that kind of importance, a good bulletin should look professional and help your parish communicate with the entire community what is important to your church.

What should a well-designed bulletin communicate?

Evan recommends thinking of your bulletin like a newsletter. It’s not just a folded paper that tells who is on staff and gives your official mailing address, it should also communicate that there’s activity and life in the parish. The bulletin should engage and inform your parishioners about what faith looks like in your community.

What simple design tweaks can almost instantly freshen up a bulletin?

Stay consistent in your bulletin design.

For instance: pick three fonts to use throughout your bulletin and stick to those three. Imagine a newspaper — there’s the fancy font calling out the title at the top of the paper, the bold, colorful letters of the titles, and the smaller print of the paper itself. The practice of consistency can make your messaging feel more cohesive.

Lean into art.

Take a liturgical season like Advent — instead of changing everything in your bulletin to purple (remember, you want to stay consistent in colors, too!), add some liturgical graphics that help your parishioners recall the season they’re experiencing.

Featuring Evan Vogel
Graphic Design Supervisor
for LPi

Consider removing the staff names and titles from the front page of the bulletin.

You can print the staff info elsewhere, which opens the front page for more important informational content or beautiful, liturgical artwork.

Try a three-column layout.

Want to try something that's a little more visually appealing? Try a three-column format instead of a two-column format in your layout. This might look like a narrow column on the left of a page, and a wider column that takes up 2/3 of the page on the right. The "Rule of Thirds" is popular in design for its ability to bring a sense of balance into a layout.

Colored text boxes > outlined text boxes.

Evan sees a fair number of churches using text boxes with a black line or "stroke" or "border" outlining the text box. He recommends removing the border and setting the background color of the text box to something with a light color. This will add a pop of color to your design while continuing to separate pieces of text from other parts of the page.

What are common mistakes made by churches in their bulletins?

Using outdated line art or clip art.

Old clip art ages your bulletin and feels stale. Consider swapping a few of your older clip art pieces for cleaner, fresher images. A good rule of thumb: if it's been a part of your bulletin for over 5 years ... there is most likely an updated graphic for you! Updated options for clip art are available in places like **WeCreate**, a library for Catholic art from LPi.

Using decorative or hard-to-read fonts throughout the bulletin.

Decorative fonts serve best when used in moderation, think headings or other places with short phrases. In this case, a decorative heading font can help you differentiate content or sections. For the rest of the bulletin, where there are larger sections of text, use fonts that are easy-to-read, and stick with one font for your entire publication.

Prioritizing the information of little value to your audience.

A well-designed bulletin should communicate that your parish is proud of its members. It should be focused on stories, impact, and invitation — not just a megaphone for events and announcements.

It should help parishioners feel connected to the bigger mission and story of the community.

Going overboard on fonts and colors.

"In a lot of cases — less can be more," Evan says. Again, standardized fonts and colors can make something look professional. "Let new imagery and articles be the thing that is exciting," Evan directs, "don't think you're going to do that by adding a new font."



PRO-TIP

The bulletin should engage and inform your parishioners about what faith looks like in your community.

Even small steps can make a big difference

In closing, Evan offers these words of encouragement to parish staff thinking about bulletin changes: "Don't be afraid to try new concepts, if you've been doing the bulletin the same way for a while, it'll be a lot to overhaul everything. Maybe you do a page or a spread a week. Within a few weeks, you'll have an updated bulletin!"

Your updated design communicates more than information to your community, it also says: "We're professional, friendly, and responsive!" Don't miss this secondary opportunity to tell guests and parishioners about your vibrant parish.

Evan manages a team of professional designers, dedicated to helping parishes make beautiful bulletins.

To learn more about LPi's bulletin services, including printing, and redesign, visit www.4lpi.com/solutions/church-bulletins

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