Email

Southside Church should always be presented in the best possible light and this includes our e-mails. We reach the majority of our attenders through these e-mail communications provide the greatest share of information as well as requests important action by our attenders. These e-mail guidelines will allow us to create emails with excellence.

To whom are you writing?

Ask "who is our audience?" and tailor all content to our audience, parents, students, visitors, etc. not a vague "them." E-mails should include: **subject line**, **salutation**, **body text/call-to-action**, and **closing signature** of intended sender.

Grab the reader with a strong subject line

- Creates a sense of desire and urgency to read
- Contains no more than 40 characters for quick reference
- Be clear first - catchy second (Example: "Uh-oh, your prescription is expiring" / "I got Botox—& THIS is what it looked like")
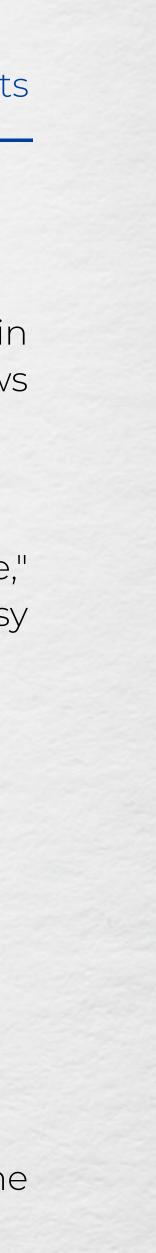
Establish relevancy

- The introduction / beginning of the email should explain how we know each other; don't assume the reader knows us because their email address is on our list
- Verify you are closing with the correct "sender" name
- Verify the "reply to" address is accurate
- Use actionable language by incorporating a verb ("take," "download," "reserve," "ask," "buy," etc.) to establish an easy and correct course of action for the reader

5 Ws & an H

- Who - be specific and make it personal
- What - the foundation on which our information is built
- Why - the emotion that engages
- When - is it happening; is there urgency?
- Where - the place the action is occurring
- How - how will the reader accomplish the goal

Call To Action (CTA)

Include a CTA (preferably using graphic buttons) to drive the reader to take action - sign-up, pay, learn, register, read, etc.

Email continued

Formatting Email Text

- When creating content do not use "need" or "needed" (these words come across as desperate)

- Avoid using the color red within the body text (it can be perceived as harsh)

- E-mail hyperlinks should always be Southside Church Blue (S&B Guide, pg. 15)

- ALL CAPS in the body text may come across as shouting

- Don't use multiple exclamation points (unless we're trying to sound like a cliche'd used car salesperson!!!!!!!!)

- When using an email client (like Constant Contact) use only the colors included in the Southside Church Brand & Style Guide (S&B Guide, pg. 15)

- For e-mail page backgrounds only use the approved colors; don't use the "free / fancy" background designs provided by email clients

Images As Text

Don't create an image as the text of an email (see example at right). Some email clients do not display images and some users have email images turned off by default. If our email content is only delivered as an image with the text embedded, then some of our target audience will completely miss our message.

Any text appearing in an image must be repeated in the email body as text only.

Formatting of Email Signatures:

- Contact the Communication Director for current guides for formatting email signatures

Parents' Night Out

November 30 6:00-9:00 pm

Parents! Drop off your infant through 5th grade
children for 3 hours and do something fun!
Maybe go Christmas shopping
or have a date night?
Know a neighbor that needs a night out?
Invite them to bring their children too!
Please Click Here to register and pay.

Need a break? Let us help!

- Pizza
- Movie
- Games
- Kid friendly environment
- Loving care givers

Cost is $10 per child with a family max of $20.
All proceeds help send a student to winter retreat.
Enjoy a night out!

Register and make payment by
November 25

For more information contact smallgroups@southsidechurchva.org

Email continued

Talk about Benefits more than Features.

This one's huge. To understand which is which, ask the question "so what?"

"We offer three services on Sundays." So what? "Our multiple service times make life more convenient and less stressful for your family."

- A Benefit is what something does. It is helpful or advantageous - something that contributes to or increases well being
- A Feature is what something is. It is a distinction or noticeable quality - something offered as a special attraction

Be brief

People scan when they read email (think about how often you read every word of an email).

- Get right to the point after the brief intro

Use our logo on all e-mail communications

- Yes, this seems obvious
- If the email is from Southside Church, use our branded logo
- If the email is directed to/from our Ministry Partners (XZone, GCA, Footsteps) - if our name is in the email, include our logo

Keywords

Use the Southside Church Brand & Style Guide list of keywords in the body of the email as often as fitting (S&B Guide, pg. 15).

Images Alt Tags

If images are included in the email body, include text about the image in the Alt tag.

Used proper grammer and double chek speling

Nothing screams "we're incompetent" as loudly as poor grammar and spelling (you spotted it right away, didn't you?)