

Increase Your Volunteer Participation with Free Google Tools

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Introduction

- Would you like to increase the number of volunteers at your church?
- Would you like to help more members to use their God-given abilities to serve him in thanks?
- Would you like to find a cost effective (free) way to do this?
- Would you like to find a simple way to do this—a way so simple that anyone can do it?

Benefits of Online Sign-Up Sheets

- You have access anywhere you have an internet connection, so you know who's signed up for when.
- Your members have access at home (near their calendar), so they're more likely to sign up.
- You can encourage members to sign up throughout the week, via an email, not just with verbal announcements from the pulpit, not just once a week. You can hold the need before them regularly.
- With Google tools, no log in is needed to sign-up. Anyone can do it from any device with the internet.
- With Google tools, it's easy to tweak a list and use again.
- Bottom line: You may likely have more saints serving their Savior in thanksgiving.

Law/Gospel Warning

Obviously, online sign-ups are not the single solution to all of your volunteer challenges, nor are they meant to be. The only way to increase Gospel-motivated service at your congregation is to have solid law/gospel preaching and teaching that show your members where they would be without Jesus and where they are with him. This alone will move hearts to thankful living for him in the church and in all the other vocations. Nothing else will do it. No external tool can motivate. But... When your members are motivated to serve their Savior, why make them jump through hoops to do it?

Synchronizing Paper and Online Versions

- Smart Phone with Camera
 - Set a reminder on your phone to take a photo of the paper copies on Sunday after church.
 - Take a photo of the paper copy before you leave church on Sunday.
 - Set a reminder on your phone to update the digital version on Sunday night or Monday morning.
 - Type in the names of those who signed up on the paper copy on the bulletin board into the digital version.
 - Now your digital copies and paper copies are identical.
 - This is important so no one accidentally fills the same slot where someone else already signed up.
- (Encourage Mid-Week)
 - Encourage members to sign up for service online during the week.
 - Send them an email. Tweet them. Text a link. Gently nudge and encourage.
 - As they sign up online, your paper copy will no longer be up to date. So...
- Printer
 - Set a reminder on your phone to print a new copy of the digital version on Saturday night.
 - Take the new print version of the sign-up sheet and put it on the bulletin board at church.
 - Repeat step one.
- Volunteer
 - Or, better still, enlist one of the saints to do this small task for their Savior so you don't have to.
 - Give them this piece of paper and explain the process. Ask them to help. This is their act of service.
 - Now the system is totally automated (assuming that volunteer is trustworthy) and will sync weekly.

Walkthrough

- If you haven't already, create a free Google account.
- Go to [drive.Google.com](https://drive.google.com), log in, and click "NEW" in the upper left-hand corner.
- You have two options with different advantages: 1) Google Docs, 2) Google Sheets
 - Advantages of Docs: Easier to get printing right.
 - Advantages of Sheets: Easier to import data to other sheets. Notifications.
 - Let's go with Docs for the sake of this presentation...
- Create your sign-up sheet.
 - Create a title on the sign up and sheet and (optional) explanation.
 - Title your Google Doc (automatically the first line in the document).
 - Create a table with however many columns you need.
 - Insert> Table
 - Label the columns.
 - Format your sign up sheet to look nice...
 - File > Page Setup > Page Color to change background color.
 - Highlight cells then: Table Properties > Cell background color
 - Add graphics: Insert> Image> Search
- Share your sign-up sheet.
 - Click the "locked" "Share" icon in the upper right-hand corner.
 - Click "Advanced" in the lower right-hand corner of the pop-up.
 - Change "Private – Only you can access" to "On – Anyone with the link" and...
 - Change "Can view" to "Can edit." (Obviously, this is an important step if you want people to sign up.)
 - Click "Save" at the top.
 - Copy the "Link to share."
 - Email the link to your members.
 - Hint: Don't just copy and paste the link. Make it look nicer. Type the title of the doc in your email, then highlight it and make it a hyperlink (the "chain" icon or Ctrl+K), then paste the long url into the email. It will just look more professional.
 - Hint: Create a friendly URL to your link with FinalWeb, bit.ly, or your web host. Then your volunteers can remember where to find the sheet and won't need to find your email to sign up.
 - Hint: Make one site where you host all of the opportunities to serve. Share it with new members when they join. Share it with all members quarterly. Cf. www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/Serve.
 - Hint: Don't forget Gospel motivation when enlisting support. Don't forget that your members may be serving God in lots of other ways unseen by you, so don't guilt or shame them, please.
- Print your sign-up sheet.
 - File> Print
 - Take to church next time you go and pin it to bulletin board.
- Sync your sign-up sheet
 - Cf. Side 1 (or, better still, get a volunteer to cf. Side 1)

Examples

- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/Mowing
- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/Cleaners
- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/Keyboardists
- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/Ushers
- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/EasterBrunch
- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/Thanksgiving
- www.GraceLutheranKenai.com/PromotionalVideo