

*A Communication
Plan for*

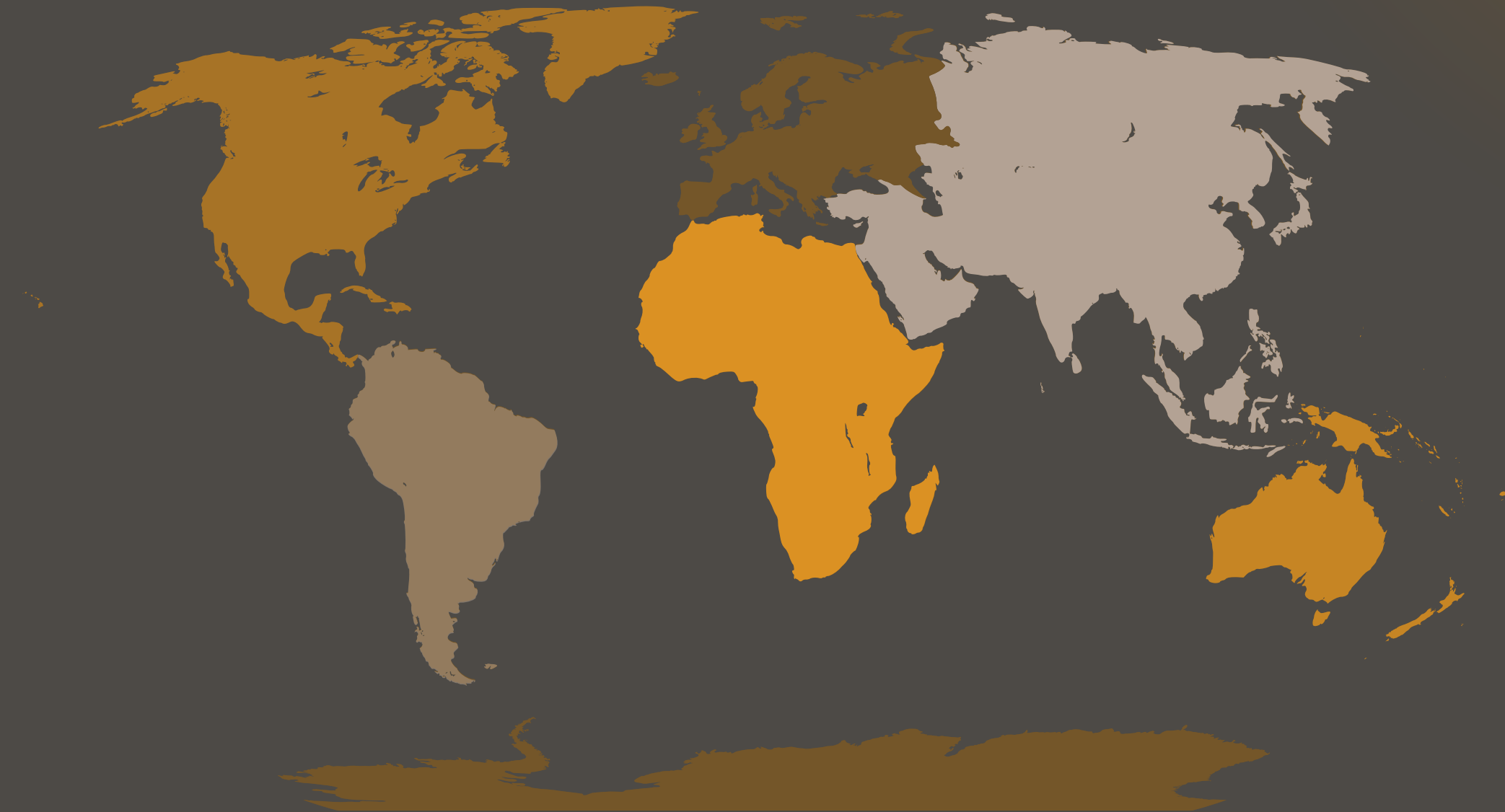
The United Methodist Church

JANUARY 2025



A worldwide church

RICH WITH GEOGRAPHICAL, CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC & GEOPOLITICAL DIVERSITY



Overview

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A background image showing three business professionals (two men and one woman) sitting around a table, smiling and looking at documents. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The text is centered over the image.

Our Mission:

***Engaging
The United Methodist Church
through Christ-centered
communications.***

To establish a clear, consistent, and engaging communication strategy that strengthens connections with church members, empowers leaders and enhances public awareness through news and media outreach on a global scale.



**And he said to them,
“Go into all the
world and proclaim
the good news to the
whole creation.”**

Mark 16:15 NRSVUE

Guiding Values

LEAD

Thoughtfully and prayerfully, we will lead The UMC in communications

ALIGN

We will align our messages throughout the denomination in collaboration with partners at all levels

We will listen deeply to all of our audiences globally and communicate in a culturally and linguistically relevant manner

GLOBAL

We will embrace the diversity of perspectives within local churches

EMBRACE

AUDIENCE: MEMBERS

Individuals who regularly attend worship and participate in church activities across different countries and cultures

*Subsets that may require targeted communication:
Seekers, donors*

Members of The United Methodist Church are a diverse group who have endured significant challenges in recent years. The cultural conversation around the church has largely focused on division, and many members have faced this reality in their local churches and conferences.

In this context, our members need encouragement and inspiration, particularly stories about how The United Methodist Church continues to embody its mission of sharing God's love through outreach to their communities. Ultimately, all member-focused content aims to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ as we engage them with content on the mission, ministry and history of The UMC.

These messages are best shared through:

- UMC.org
 - *UM Now* newsletter
 - *Get Your Spirit in Shape* podcast
 - UMC Facebook page
-





AUDIENCE: LEADERS

Clergy, ministry coordinators, bishops, denominational leaders, local church leaders and volunteers, annual conferences, central conferencea, delegates, caucus groups and the Connectional Table

United Methodist leaders play a vital role in the health and vitality of The UMC. In recent years, they have faced increasing challenges in leading their congregations amid cultural change, theological debates and the ongoing need to adapt to new ways of worship and ministry.

These leaders need practical, actionable resources to support their ministries, guidance in navigating denominational changes and encouragement in their roles. Our content should equip them with tools and insights that foster effective leadership and help them sustain and grow their ministries in the local church, their communities and across the globe.

The best channels to serve local church leaders where they can find timely updates, leadership resources and curated content to meet their specific needs are:

- ResourceUMC.org
- *The Source* eNewsletter
- *MyCom* podcast and eNewsletter
- *The ResourceUMC* Facebook page
- *United Methodist Videos* YouTube channel

AUDIENCE: UNITED METHODISTS AROUND THE WORLD



United Methodists around the world bring unique cultural perspectives, experiences and languages to the denomination. As the church continues to grow in regions where French, Portuguese, Spanish and Korean are spoken, our content strategy must reflect and respect the diversity of these communities.

Global audiences need content that is not only translated but also culturally adapted to resonate with their context. This includes theological reflections, stories of mission and ministry and denominational updates that speak directly to their realities. Building trust and engagement with these audiences requires consistent, high-quality, multilingual content delivered in ways that are accessible to them.

The key channels for reaching global audiences include the French and Portuguese versions of UMC.org and ResourceUMC.org, along with region-specific newsletters and social media channels tailored to language and cultural contexts that we will develop in 2025.



AUDIENCE: MEDIA & PUBLIC

Journalists, international media, and the general public

Strategic media placement plays a crucial role in shaping brand perception by influencing how, where, and when audiences encounter a brand's message. Securing media placement in the right channels within the right context ensures that the brand reaches its ideal audience while reinforcing relevance, and placement in high-quality, trusted media outlets that enhance brand authority and trustworthiness.

We plan to continue using this "free-placement" strategy in lieu of paid advertising to manage brand perception.

Objectives:

MEMBERS

Strengthening faith, fostering a worldwide community and providing spiritual resources

LEADERS

Supporting leadership for ministry through denominational resources, sharing best practices across cultural contexts and encouraging collaboration

MEDIA/PUBLIC

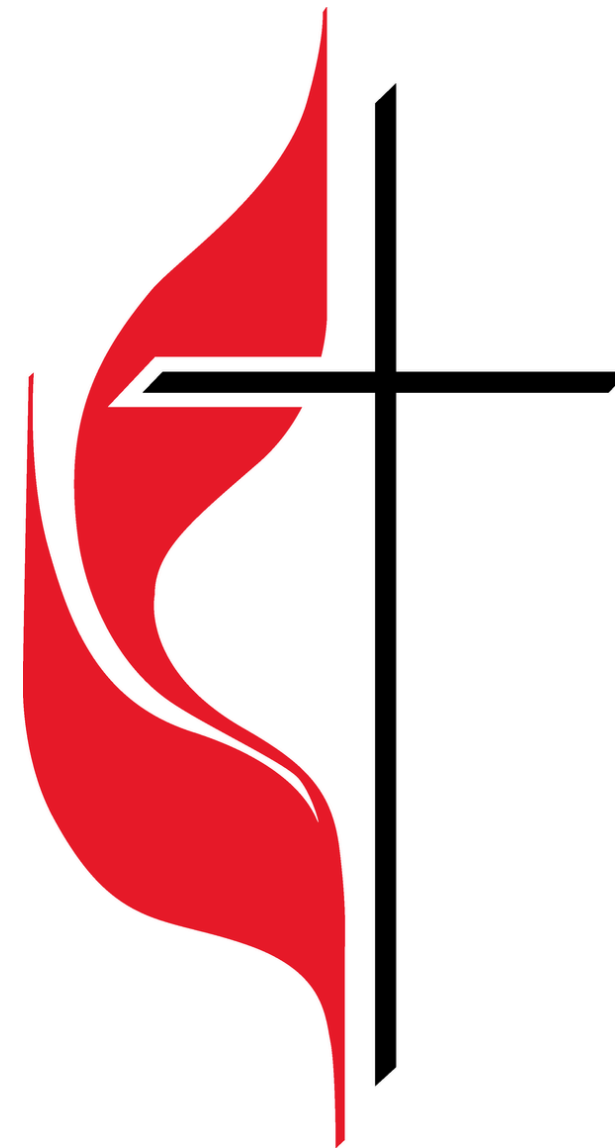
Showcasing The UMC's global impact, values and history



Accomplish these objectives while...

Creating a strong positioning for The United Methodist Church brand

Through the #BeUMC campaign, we continue to highlight what The UMC is and celebrate its mission and ministry, while overcoming voices of opposition





*A new quad has new challenges,
priorities and needs*

Accomplish these objectives while...

Aligning with Denominational Priorities

- Supporting ratification of Regionalization and other amendments
 - Creating awareness, understanding and adoption of the new vision for the denomination
 - Promotion of stewardship and giving
-

Accomplish these objectives while...

A photograph of a loaf of rustic, golden-brown bread with a thick crust, sliced into several pieces on a wooden cutting board. The bread has a porous, airy interior. The background is a neutral, light-colored surface.

Creating cultural and linguistic relevance

One faith, many expressions!

We are a diverse Church with different perspectives, cultures, languages, experiences and challenges.

While we share a common Gospel, how we interpret and live it may differ.

Therefore, we must adapt how we communicate.

- Promote a post-disaffiliation message of unity and a bold new era for United Methodists to live into the new vision being developed by the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table
 - Create message cohesion, harmony and hierarchy between the new vision statement, #BeUMC and OHOMOD
- Support communications for the ratification of constitutional amendments
- Increase collaboration with other boards and agencies to strengthen and amplify their communication efforts
- Provide resources that promote good stewardship in local churches, emphasizing continued support for apportionments
- Highlight social justice ministries as a priority of The UMC, with a special focus on immigration and global migration



Messaging focus

Primary Outreach Channels

See Appendix for detailed
channel reach

MEMBERS



10.1M PAGEVIEWS

Denominational website for members and those seeking spirituality and a community of faith

+Social +eNewsletter +Podcast

LEADERS



4.8 M PAGEVIEWS

Denominational website for leaders delivering content from across the denomination

+Social +eNewsletter +Messaging
+Podcast

NEWS



3.4M PAGEVIEWS

UM News stories and features

+Social +eNewsletter

PUBLIC



Public Relations: Raising awareness of the mission and ministries of The UMC through media placements

+Press conferences +Media
+Crisis communications
+PR consultation

- Jan: Faithful people of God with an emphasis on our shared baptism
- Feb: Justice-seeking people of God with an emphasis on civil rights and social justice
- Mar: Grace-filled people of God, emphasizing the grace of God available to all.
- Apr: Resilient people of God talking about tenets of resurrection and renewal
- May: Deeply-rooted people of God exploring our shared heritage
- Jun: Spirit-filled people of God highlighting our call to serve God and neighbor
- Jul: Connected people of God emphasizing what it means to be a connectional church
- Aug: Disciple-making people of God and our lifelong journey of spiritual growth
- Sep: Diverse people of God to highlight all the people who make up our church
- Oct: World-changing people of God celebrating the global impact of The UMC
- Nov: Generous people of God, remembering those who have gone before and our call to generosity
- Dec: Welcoming people of God. As we welcome Christ into our lives, we welcome one another

2025 CONTENT THEMES



Content Plan

Faithful people of God

Considerations:

- Epiphany
- Baptism of the Lord
- Prayer for Christian Unity
- Human Relations Sunday
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Ecumenical Sunday

Grace-filled

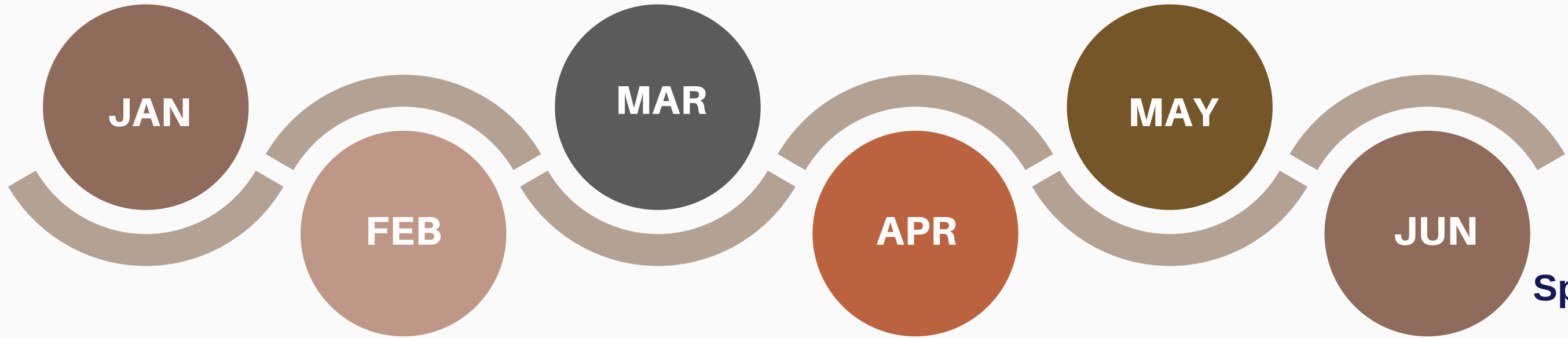
Considerations

- Women's History Month
- Transfiguration Sunday
- Ash Wednesday
- Lent
- UMCOR Sunday
- World Day of Prayer

Deeply-rooted

Considerations:

- Mother's Day
- Heritage Sunday
- Aldersgate Day
- Native American Ministries Sunday
- Asian Pacific Heritage Month
- Memorial Day
- United Methodist Student Day



Justice-seeking

Considerations:

- Black History Month
- Scouting Ministries Sunday
- Constitutional Amendment ballot

Resilient

Considerations

- Easter
- Holy Week
- Palm/Passion Sunday
- Earth Day
- World Malaria Day

Spirit-filled

Considerations

- Pentecost
- Father's Day
- Ascension Sunday
- Peace with Justice Sunday
- Juneteenth
- John Wesley's birthday
- Trinity Sunday

Content Plan

Connected

Considerations:

- Summer church activities

JUL

AUG

Diverse

Considerations:

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Labor Day

SEP

OCT

Generous

Considerations:

- Native American Heritage
- All Saints Sunday
- Organ/Tissue Donor Sunday
- Veterans' Day
- International Bible Week
- Reign of Christ Sunday
- Thanksgiving

NOV

DEC

Disciple-making

Considerations:

- Back-to-School
- Back-to-Church

World-changing

Considerations:

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- World Communion Sunday
- Laity Sunday
- Children's Sabbath
- Reformation Sunday
- Pastor Appreciation Month

Welcoming

Considerations:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Watchnight
- World AIDS Day
- Charles Wesley's b'day
- Kwanzaa

Content Calendar



CONTENT CALENDAR

<https://umcom.notion.site/content-calendar-2025>

#BeUMC

To be continued in 2025

As The United Methodist Church moves beyond disaffiliations into a season of renewed ministry and mission, the #BeUMC campaign is getting a fresh look in 2025 with updated, full color images. #BeUMC continues to speak to the heart of what it means to be United Methodist while encouraging members to celebrate our core shared values.

**UNITED IN
IMPACT**

To be launched in 2025

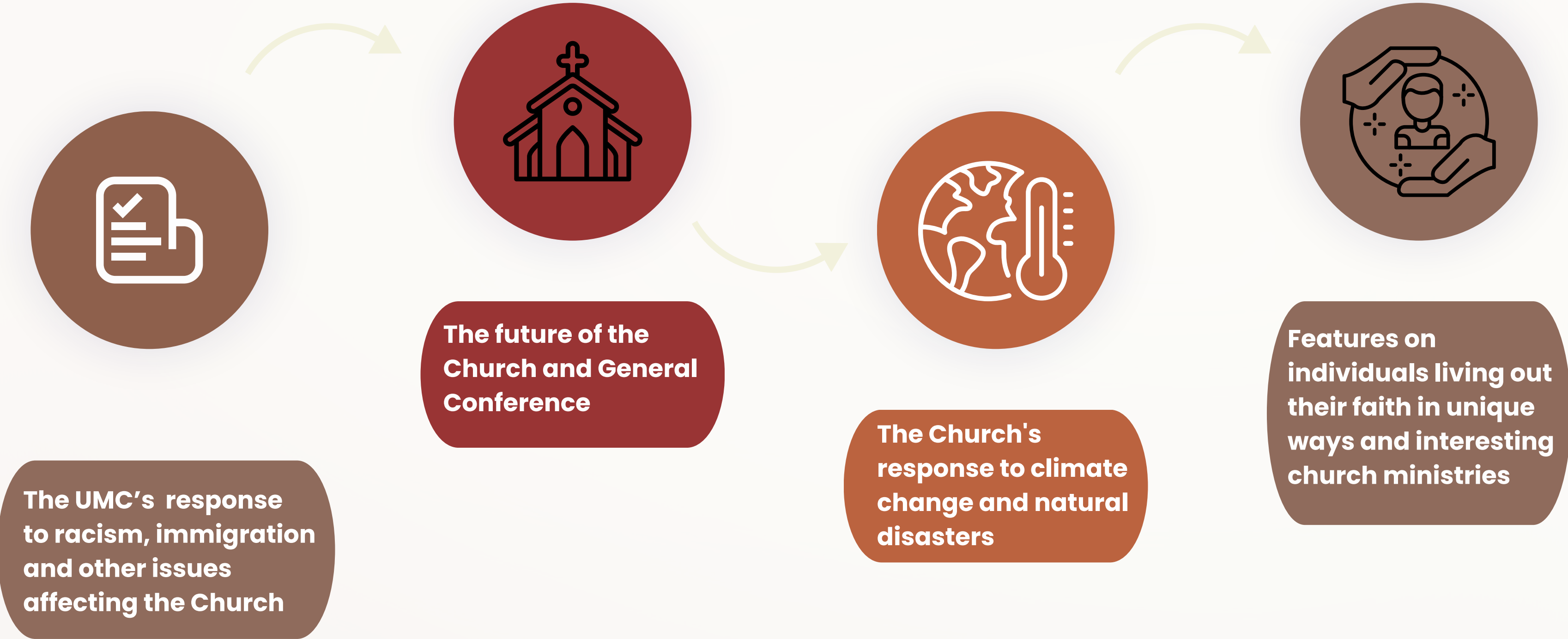
United in Impact builds off of the *Did You Know?* campaign from the previous quad and aims to evoke a sense of unity, purpose and global community. It emphasizes the significant changes achievable when United Methodists band together to support apportionment funds. It celebrates how as United Methodists, we are connected by a shared covenant that is based on a common mission and mutual relationships.

**A new vision for The
United Methodist Church
being developed by the
COB and CT**

To be launched in 2025

Messaging to be aligned and integrated with #BeUMC and OHOMOD

UM News 2025 Coverage Priorities



01 February-April

Bishop elections in the central conferences, with stories on each newly elected bishop and live balloting



March-April 06

Fossil-free conference



**UMNews
2025
Coverage
Plans**



02 March

Black Methodists for Church Renewal meeting,



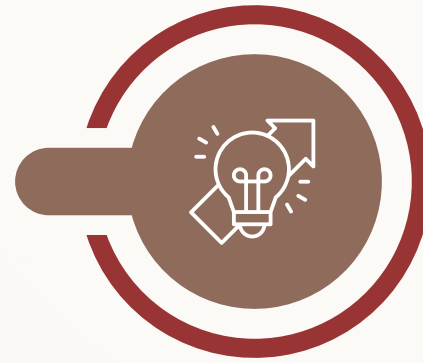
April 07

Wildfire recovery, Judicial Council decisions



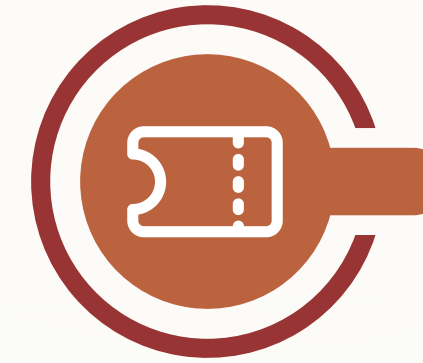
03 March

An update on the church's Asia mission initiatives



May 08

COB spring meeting



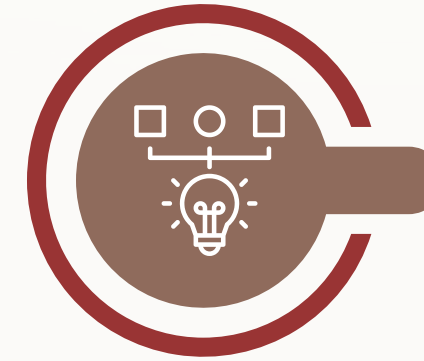
04 March-April

A look at Yambasu Agriculture Initiative projects in Africa



July-August 09

20th anniversary coverage of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita



05 March-April

Global health story on church health clinics in Zimbabwe



October 10

Documenting the United Methodist presence in Tunisia



*See Appendix for detailed UMNews Coverage Plans

PR Strategies

MEMBERS/MEDIA/PUBLIC

Goal: Positive Brand perception

Secure high-profile media placement for positive UM stories of faith in action and share general interest church news with local, regional and national media

- Pitch UMC-related stories
- Pitch Annual Conferences, fellow agencies and other official groups' stories to media
- Try to share UM positive stories in the national media of Nigeria and Liberia, and assist with messaging



PR Strategies

LEADERS

Goal: Crisis Aversion

Train and support church leaders at all levels to manage crisis

- Provide trainings to bishops, AC Cabinets and other church leaders as needed on crisis communications, spokespersons skill development and publicity tactics
- Provide messaging and media consultation to manage crisis at all levels of the church



PR Training Opportunities



In-person/Webinars

In-person or webinar presentations will focus on crisis communications and spokesperson training. This will include a mix of crisis guidance, interviewing tips and social media guidance. Content will be personalized should specific needs be identified by the audience groups.



On-the-go, local church training via content and recorded videos

- How to get media coverage for your church event or program
- Manage misinformation with social media monitoring
- Nuts and bolts of a press release
- Planning your press release distribution
- What's a boilerplate?
- Determining your audience
- Event day publicity efforts
- Handling post-event publicity
- Personalizing media outreach for greater impact
- Be a good spokesperson
- How to build media relationships
- What is crisis communications and why do you need it?
- What to wear for an interview
- How to do message mapping
- Manage church reputation in everyday life
- Ten steps for avoiding content pitfalls



Timeframe

April: Annual Conference and agency communicators training; Local churches webinar
May: Commission on the General Conference
November: Council of Bishops
Year-round: Available for consulting, coaching and cabinet/conference-specific trainings

Multilingual & Multicultural Strategy

30 original pieces of content

1 new delivery channel

↑ engagement by 20%

Timely update to all key pages

Expand Multilingual Content

Develop Content Delivery Methods

Collaborate with Language-Specific Content Leads

Ensure Quality and Consistency

Significantly increase the volume and variety of content available in French, Portuguese, Spanish and Korean including original, translated and localized content

Maintain and update dedicated language versions of UMC.org and ResourceUMC.org and explore various delivery channels—such as newsletters, social media and messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp)

Provide cultural insights to guide localized efforts and identify relevant content for translation and original production

Maintain the integrity and quality of translated and localized content to build trust with our global audiences

Partnerships & Collaboration

In 2025, partnerships will be a cornerstone of our communication strategy. We are aligning with the agency-wide goal of fostering partnerships throughout the denomination to create a stronger voice for The UMC. UMCCom is amplifying the reach and impact of our content by collaborating with denominational agencies, regional and central conferences and local churches. We're also building a cohesive and collaborative communication network, ensuring that key messages are shared broadly and consistently across multiple platforms and audiences.



Our content strategy will support this work through a minimum of:

- 12 pieces of agency-driven content
- One agency partner featured each month on the ResourceUMC.org home page
- A minimum of five pieces of partner content on UMC.org per month
- At least one piece of partner content in every UM Now issue
- Lifting up of partners' special initiatives

Along with all the above content and inbound marketing strategies, our outbound strategies include:

Promotion Strategies

- Digital ads on internal and external websites, newsletters, apps and social platforms
- Ad targeting based on constituent demographic, interests and behavior

DIGITAL & SOCIAL

- Paid search engine geo-targeted campaigns
- Language specific geo-targeting in Central Conferences
- Continuous optimization of online content for search

SEO & SEM

- Annual Conferences
- Denomination-wide events
- Caucus group events
- Topical webinars (Regionalization, Immigration)
- Central Conference events & training

EVENTS & WEBINARS

- Quizzes & polls
- eLearning content
- Interest-based content for lead gen (i.e. Cookbooks)
- Downloadable resources

RESOURCES & CONTENT MKTG

*UMCom maintains a separate full marketing plan that is available upon request.

IMPROVED AUDIENCE TARGETING AND USER EXPERIENCE



- Enhance audience targeting across websites and eNewsletters
- User-centric design
- Optimize eNewsletter content to deliver based on interest
- Redesign websites to provide optimal journeys and quick access to resources
- Gather constituent data to improve user experience (myUMC portal)
- Utilize new Salesforce features to get a 360 view of the constituent and apply knowledge toward enhanced targeting

94%

*Seeker awareness of
The United Methodist Church*

RESEARCH

Research provides the grounding for all strategic message planning and ensures relevant content development. It equips us to understand attitudes, behaviors, needs, motivation, media habits, audience segments and more.

In late 2025 and early 2026, we plan to do a fresh study to:

- Understand the current makeup of our member and leader demographics
- Identify changes in perceptions
- Assess messaging appropriateness
- Know other psychographic values

SUCCESS METRICS

Directional Metrics

- Increased website traffic
- Increased social reach/engagement
- Increased readership of newsletters
- Increased consumption of non-English content

Partner Metrics

- Increased consumption of partner content

Denominational Metrics

- Increased understanding / acceptance of new vision
- Increased giving
- Positive brand awareness

Campaign Metrics

- Increased participation in campaigns
- Increased resource downloads



APPENDIX

UMCom Managed Social Media Channels

Channel	The United Methodist Church	UM News	UMCom	UMCGiving	Rethink Church	Resource UMC	Korean Church	IMU Latina	Recursos Metodistas Unidos	Generación in Between
Audience	Member	Leader & Member	Leader & Member	Leader & Member	Seeker	Leader	Korean Leaders & Members	Hispanic Leaders & Members	Hispanic Leaders & Members	Latinx Seekers & Members
Platform	Facebook Instagram YouTube	Facebook X (formerly Twitter)	Facebook Instagram	Facebook X (formerly Twitter)	Facebook X (formerly Twitter) YouTube	Facebook X (formerly Twitter)	Facebook	Facebook Instagram	Facebook	Facebook Instagram
Metrics	820K Likes 73K Followers (IG) 23.4K Subs (YT)	236K Likes 27.0K Followers (X)	208K Likes 2.8K Followers (IG)	115K Likes 4.0K Followers (X)	109K Likes 13.3K Followers (IG) 17.4K Followers (X) 2.39K Subs (YT)	96K Likes 10.7K Followers (X)	50K Likes	29K Likes 735 Followers (IG)	9.6K Likes	1.3K Likes 340 Followers (IG)

UMCom Managed eNewsletters

Newsletter	UM Now	MyCom	UM News Digest (2x/week)	UM News Friday Digest	The Source	Giving Notes	Duru Allimi	UMCOMtigo
Audience	Member	Leader	Leader & Member	Leader & Member	Leader	Leader & Member	Korean Leader & Member	Hispanic Leader & Member
Subscriptions	102K	30K	49K	36K	14K	6.2K	1.8K	958
Delivered (%)	95.9%	96.7%	96.9%	96.7%	98.8%	97.4%	96.0%	100.0%
Opened (%)	33.3%	45.8%	38.7%	30.5%	64.0%	33.5%	49.5%	40.0%
Click to Open (%)	8.9%	4.3%	8.8%	11.3%	12.5%	6.3%	24.7%	11.4%

UM News Upcoming Stories & Topics Being Covered/Monitored

- The next eight bishop elections in the central conferences, with stories on each newly elected bishop and live balloting
- The Church's response to changes in immigration policies and other government actions that affect church ministries
- How the Church is ministering to displaced people around the world
- The Church's response to climate change, updates on the JENZ net-zero and fossil-free efforts and stories on a water crisis in Alaska
- Disaster relief support updates on the recovery efforts from the Los Angeles wildfires, historic flooding in western North Carolina and typhoons in the Philippines
- 20th anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana
- An update on the church's Asia mission initiatives
- United Methodist presence in Tunisia and other areas of church growth in Africa
- The effects of General Conference decisions in more traditional regions such as Nigeria, Liberia and the Philippines
- Yambasu Agriculture Initiative projects in Africa
- The big-tent church concept and what that looks like moving forward
- Membership numbers and giving trends
- Coverage of church meetings, including the Council of Bishops, Judicial Council, the Connectional Table, general church agencies and ethnic caucuses
- United Methodist history makers