12 EMAILS
YOU CAN SEND TO YOUR CHURCH
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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

12 EMAILS YOU CAN SEND TO YOUR CHURCH
I subscribe to several church email lists. That means I get a ton of announcements. Pretty graphics describing a new series. Dates of special events. And lots of information. But rarely do I get something that helps me grow in my faith.

Fancy newsletters and information blasts rarely connect with people. They become inbox noise to people who are already busy. But email isn’t just for making announcements or sharing information….you can pastor your people via email.

You can use email to authentically connect with your congregation – to let them in on parts of your life. You can use email to share helpful resources to help people grow on their own. You can use email to challenge people to get more involved.

An email from the pastor is a powerful tool to help lead the church. Instead of blasting information, you can send authentic notes and helpful content. And I’ve done a lot of the work for you.

Here are twelve cut-and-paste emails written from a pastoral point of view. Some encourage people to take a step – maybe to serve somewhere or make a donation. But others are written to help them take a step of faith. To offer encouragement. To provide helpful resources. To pastor people.

Make a few adjustments and send them to your congregation. Wherever you see a sample church’s name, replace it with your own. Where you see reference to a link or download, supply your own material. Personalize them to fit your own church’s culture...and then send!

If you want more help on how to communicate effectively with your church, come join the Church Fuel community. We’ve got insanely practical resources, lots of coaching, and a community of pastors who know what’s like to communicate an important message.

Michael Lukaszewski
Founder and CEO of Church Fuel
HERE’S WHAT GOD DID
JANUARY: HERE’S WHAT GOD DID

**PURPOSE:**
Communicate wins to your church and inspire people to stay involved

**CALL TO ACTION:**
Download last year’s annual report

James,

It’s nearly 2017. Can you believe it?

I suppose this time of year puts people in a reflective mood. Last week I spent a little bit of time looking back on the last twelve months. There were some tough times, but there were a lot of good times. Here are just a few of my personal memories.

- Misty got her driver’s license – stay off the sidewalks!
- James played on a U9 baseball team and they made it to the league finals. Our family spent a week at Myrtle Beach in South Carolina – sitting by the pool and eating watermelon. I even got to play a little golf.

2016 was also an important year for our church. When I came to BridgeWater Church three years ago, I prayed God would use our church to reach people. Here are a few things God did this past year.

- We baptized 62 people – from age 7 to age 72. It’s always amazing to see life change pictured right before our eyes.
- By numbers standards, this was our best year ever for small groups. 64% of adults and students participated in a small group.
- We gave $23,324 to missionaries we support around the world. The Smiths in the Philippines and Haiti World Mission in Haiti received some of that support.

There is much to do, but before we charge into the new year, I wanted to take some time to reflect on the last year. God has been faithful to our
church. He is opening doors every day. People are being impacted by your involvement and generosity.

Our media team put together a PDF that tells even more stories. It’s our 2016 annual report. You can read and get a full report on the finances, attendance, involvement, and more.

PDF: 2016 Annual Report

Pastor Chris

P.S. I’d love to hear from you. What did God do in your life this year? Please hit reply and let me know.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:
THREE WAYS YOU CAN MEET PEOPLE AT CHURCH
FEBRUARY: THREE WAYS YOU CAN MEET PEOPLE AT CHURCH

PURPOSE:
Facilitate relationships

CALL TO ACTION:
Take a step toward getting connected

James,

One of the criticisms I hear about a big church is it’s too hard to get to know people. How can the pastor know if you’ve got something going on in your life if there are thousands of people there?

But here’s what I’ve experienced. A church of ANY size seems too big if you don’t know anyone. Here are three ways you can get to know people at Bridgewater Church.

#1 - Linger in the lobby.

When the service is over, don’t rush to the parking lot. Take your time. Grab a cup of coffee in the lobby and introduce yourself to someone. Stop by the Information Center and meet one of our hosts. If you have children in KidZone, talk to the other parents and the volunteers. They aren’t too busy to talk with you.

#2 - Join a small group.

One of the best ways to “do life” with people is to join a small group. At Bridgewater, we call them community groups, because we want community to develop there. Whether it’s 50, 500 or 5,000 people in a church service, it’s tough to talk about life on Sunday morning. So these community groups meet in homes throughout the week. You can give one a try, and if it’s not right, you can try another one.

For a full list of community groups, click here.
#3 - Join a volunteer team.

This is one of the best ways to get to know people. No matter your stage in life, there’s a certain camaraderie from working together. For example, the 25 or so adults who work in Fuse (our Junior High program on Wednesday nights), have become like family. Same goes for our 9am parking lot workers – they have been known to tailgate before their “shift.” Serving at Bridgewater isn’t complicated.

Just [click here](#) to learn about each of the teams and contact the leader.

Those are just three ways you can meet people and make church feel a whole lot smaller!

Pastor Chris
RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GROW AS A CHRISTIAN
MARCH: RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GROW AS A CHRISTIAN

PURPOSE:
Promote spiritual growth

CALL TO ACTION:
Take one of the five steps

James,

It’s my honor to be your pastor.

But I have a confession to make. If you’re depending on me to meet all of your spiritual needs, you’re going to be disappointed. I’m not the guru or expert. I don’t have a corner on the market.

Back in the 1500s, a guy named Martin Luther started a reformation helping people understand they could have direct access to God.

Luther was right – YOU have direct access to God. You can pray on your own, worship on your own, and serve on your own. The church is a huge part of faith, but you can grow in your faith all week long, not just on Sunday.

I wanted to send you some links and resources to help.

Bible

• YouVersion is a great website (and they have a fantastic app, too) for reading the Bible. You can choose a reading plan, share notes and questions with others, and keep track of your progress.
• The ESV Study Bible is a great Bible to keep at home. There are lots of footnotes and articles to help you understand context and meaning. I use this Bible when I’m working on sermons.
Books

Here are a few of the books I’ve read that have helped me grow in my faith.

• Basic Christianity
• The Reason for God
• Knowledge of the Holy
• What’s So Amazing About Grace?
• Mere Christianity

Podcasts

I listen to lots of sermons – here are some of my favorites.

• Andy Stanley
• Tim Keller
• John Ortberg
• Matt Chandler
• Rick Warren

I hope this list helps you grow in your faith. Pick one of the resources and try it out for a week or two. And be sure to let me know what you find helpful.

Pastor Chris

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:

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THREE REASONS YOU SHOULD BE IN A SMALL GROUP
APRIL: THREE REASONS YOU SHOULD BE IN A SMALL GROUP

PURPOSE:
Encourage people to consider joining a small group

CALL TO ACTION:
Check availability of small groups

James,

I know joining a small group is a big jump.

There are a lot of reasons you shouldn’t do it. Heck, I’ve made some of these same excuses and I’m the pastor! Here’s my list of excuses.

**Excuse #1: There are weird people.**

You’re thinking something like this, aren’t you?

If I join a small group, there will be weird people in there. They will probably have cats and want to talk about the book of Revelation the whole time. They are either going to make their own bread and homeschool their kids, collect action figures, or have a carpet recycling website. I don’t know if I can handle that level of weirdness.

Let me go ahead and confirm your fears. Chances are, there WILL be a strange person in your group. But if it’s any consolation, you’re the person everyone else is afraid of.

**Excuse #2: I’m too busy.**

On any given week, you work about 50 hours, drive about 10 hours, go to the grocery store, mow the grass, watch SportsCenter, grill burgers, drive the kids to soccer practice, and call your mom. Every time you check one thing off the list, another thing is there to take its place.
The pace is brutal, and you need all the hours you can. So the thought of taking a night in the middle of the week to go hang out with people and talk about the Bible isn’t really all that appealing. “This season of my life is just busy,” you tell yourself.

But deep down you know this season of your life isn’t any busier than the last season of your life and is just as busy as the next season of your life. They are all busy seasons.

You don’t need a lecture to prioritize what’s truly important, so I’ll spare you. But I do want to give you permission. Permission to let something go undone. Permission to tell your kids they can’t do that activity because mom needs a night. Permission to eat out instead of make that healthy dinner.

**Excuse #3: I’m an introvert.**

I’m pretty sure 60% of the people in the world are introverts. It seems like less, but that’s just because the extroverts are loud and everywhere.

I’m an introvert - I am renewed and relaxed by being alone. Whether that’s in a coffee shop with a good book or in a movie on Friday afternoon - I like doing things by myself. Large groups of people drain me. Conversations wear me out.

Like a strong blue cheese, it’s good in small amounts, but too much isn’t good for me.

If you’re an introvert like me, the thought of hanging out with people talking about life sounds miserable. But once you break the ice and get through some of the silly stuff, it will be worth it. If you want people to come to your funeral, you’re going to have to get to know some people while you’re alive.

Those are three of the reasons I’ve given myself for not jumping into a small group with others.
So, what are yours?

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you’re ready to jump in, we’ll make it as easy as possible. Here is a link to some of the groups meeting right now. Each of them has space for new people. All you have to do is contact the leader.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:
MAKING THE MOST OF WORK
James,

When you read the Bible, you’ll meet a lot of people God used who didn’t have “Christian” jobs.

Nehemiah was a city planner and Esther was a powerful woman in a political world. God used them both.

I wanted to share some thoughts with you about work. After all, we spend way more time at work than we do at church. But so many of us are miserable in our jobs. We view them as a means to an end. It’s something we get through so we can get what we want (the weekend or retirement).

I’ll start at the beginning.

In the beginning, God worked.

The Bible begins talking about work as soon as it begins talking about anything - that is how important and basic it is. Work was not an evil that came into the picture. God’s plan for humans always involved them working, living in the constant cycle of work and rest.

God made the world to need work.

While God created other forms of life, only humans are explicitly given a job. We are called to stand in for God here in the world, exercising stewardship over the rest of creation. The Bible sees all work as...
distinguishing human beings from animals and elevating them to a place of dignity.

In Genesis, God is a gardener. In the New Testament, he is a carpenter. God made it our job to develop and build this society. We’re not just here to take up space – we are here to cultivate the garden.

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul counsels readers that when they become Christians it is unnecessary to change what they are currently doing in life in order to live lives that please God. In other words, you don’t have to quit your job and become a missionary to make a difference. You can be a missionary at your job.

So how should we connect work to worship?

How we view work and how we do our work matters more than you might imagine.

Jesus spend the majority of his life as a carpenter, not a rabbi. He spent more time making tables than walking on water. Jesus knew what it was like to get up and go to work everyday. Working with his hands was not beneath him.

Check out this quote from Dorothy Sayers.

“The Church’s approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to moral instruction and church attendance. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables.”

The Apostle Paul said it this way: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”
- Colossians 3:23-24
Work is not about economic exchange, making money or getting the dream, it’s about God-honoring human creativity and contribution.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said this: “If it falls to your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep the streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, like Shakespeare wrote poetry, like Beethoven composed music; sweep streets so well that all the host of Heaven and earth will have to pause and say, “here lived a great street sweeper, who swept his job well.”

I’m blessed to be the pastor of Bridgewater Church. But don’t you ever think your job isn’t important. Don’t you ever think what I’m doing is more impacting than what you’re doing. Don’t ever think you can’t make a difference at work.

On Monday, go to work with God in mind. Go with a divine perspective. Understand that God has you there for a reason and that wherever you are, you are a minister of the Gospel.

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you want to read more on this subject, check out the book, Every Good Endeavor, by Tim Keller.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:

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GREAT THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

JUNE
JUNE: GREAT THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

PURPOSE:
Encourage families to enjoy life this summer

CALL TO ACTION:
Schedule one of the family activities this summer

Hey, it’s Pastor Chris.

I hope you’re exited about a great summer and maybe have a weekend getaway or family vacation planned.

I love summer vacations – but you don’t have to do an elaborate trip to enjoy some time with your family and friends. I was searching for things to do with my family this summer and came across a ton of great articles and ideas.

Here are five of my favorite ideas:

1. **Family Game night.** Each person picks a classic board game and play as a family. You can print up funny certificates for the winners.

2. **Around the World theme weeks.** Each week, pick a country and learn a little about it. Put the flag on your fridge. Cook a meal that comes from that part of the world. Pray for a missionary there.

3. **Disposable Camera project.** In a world of iPhones and Instagram, you might be surprised they still sell these film cameras. But they do. Give one to each family member and give them an assignment. Develop in an hour and let everyone share during dinner on Sunday night.

4. **Visit the library.** Yep, the library. In addition to books and films, you might also enjoy story time or some of their special activities.

5. **Summer Movies.** The Cinemark Theater on Roosevelt shows family movies on Tuesday for $1 each.
Our children’s ministry also has some big activities planned for you and your family this summer. Check out those details below:

1. **VBS is July 12-14.** Last year, more than 200 children attended. Here’s the link to pre-register.

2. **Small Group Bowling.** All the KidZone small groups are going bowling on June 17 at 6pm. Check with your child’s small group leader for information.

3. **KidZone is every Sunday morning at 10am.** Kids are learning about heroes of the Bible during their large group and small group time. You won’t find a better activity!

Pastor Chris

P.S. If we can serve you or your family at all this summer, please let us know.

**IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:**

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- 24 -
21 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AT BRIDGEWATER CHURCH
JULY: 21 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AT BRIDGEWATER CHURCH

PURPOSE:
Invite people to volunteer

CALL TO ACTION:
Fill out an interest form

James,

Are you looking for some ways to get more involved at Bridgewater? Well, here’s a list of some out of the ordinary things you could do but that would make a big difference.

1. Help in the office during the week.
2. Be a part of our Social Media Team.
3. Escort first time parents and kids to their classrooms.
4. Be a part of a small group that helps our pastor with sermon prep.
5. Lead a small group of teenagers. Questions and pizza provided.
6. Hand out bulletins as people enter the auditorium
7. Wear a neon vest and help park cars.
8. Review handouts and newsletters for typos. (See what I did there?)
9. Work from home to prepare craft projects for children.
10. Troubleshoot the computerized kid’s check in on Sunday mornings.
11. Wear a security shirt and an ear piece and patrol the parking lot.
12. Create announcement videos.
13. Help curate audio and video content on the web.
14. Go through some tech training and work on the tech team.
15. Take pictures at special events.
16. Provide snacks and drinks for other volunteers.
17. Pray for the church service during the church service.
18. Join the web team and help keep our website current.
19. Help us keep track of data and spreadsheets.
20. Rock babies during the church service so parents can go to church.
21. Write stories and recaps of events and activities
Are you uniquely skilled or passionate about any of those things? Do any of these things sound interesting to you?

If you want to jump in, just hit reply and let me know. I’ll connect you to the right person and you can take it from there.

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you want to know what it’s like to BE a volunteer at Bridgewater, watch this short video from Bethany, one of our KidZone volunteers.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:

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THREE REASONS
WE READ THE BIBLE
(AND WHERE TO START)
PURPOSE:
Promote spiritual growth

CALL TO ACTION:
Seven-day Bible Reading Plan

James,

My powers of persuasion rarely work on my kids. But I’m hoping for better results today. I’ll be straight with you – I want to talk you into doing something.

I’m hoping to convince you to read the Bible every day this week. Seven days in a row. Here are three reasons I think you should:

1. There’s interesting stuff in the Bible. Don’t ever let someone tell you the Bible is boring. If someone says that, they aren’t reading it right. Noah’s Ark, David and Goliath, Samson and Delilah, wars and conquest, love and marriage, Peter cutting off a soldiers ear, a dead man coming back to life…I could go on and on. There are some incredible stories in the Bible.

2. The Bible is unlike any other book. This might surprise you, but the Bible isn’t really a book at all. It’s a collection of 66 small books or letters. It was written by 40 different authors across a couple of continents and in three languages. It’s been collected. Organized and preserved for us.

3. The Bible has influenced the world like no other book. The Bible has shaped more than preachers—it’s influenced Presidents and Kings.

I know it’s overwhelming, but did you know if you read just 15 minutes a day, you can read the whole Bible in about a year. If you read God’s Word for just 15 minutes a day, I think you will benefit.
SO, WHERE DO I START?

I know this sounds weird, but if you want to start reading the Bible, I don’t recommend starting from the beginning. (I told you the Bible wasn’t like other books…can you imagine starting a novel from the middle?)

If I were you, I would start with the New Testament, specifically the Gospel of John. It’s all about the life of Jesus, and it was written by one of his best friends.

So what do you say? Will you give it a try?

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you want to read online, here’s a great website. You can follow a reading plan or just dive in to the Book of John.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:

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WHY YOU SHOULD
INVITE SOMEONE
TO CHURCH

SEPTEMBER
SEPTEMBER: WHY YOU SHOULD INVITE SOMEONE TO CHURCH

PURPOSE:
Encourage people to invite those they know to church

CALL TO ACTION:
Invite one person to church

James,

When we ask people how they first came to Bridgewater Church do you know what they tell us?

It’s not direct mail or Facebook.
It’s not the yellow pages or our website.
It’s not because of the awesome pastor.

The #1 way people end up a part of Bridgewater Church is because someone invited them. Here are three reasons you should invite someone to Bridgewater:

1. They might make a friend.

Some of my best friends in the world are at Bridgewater. Friendship is one of life’s great treasures, and church is a great place to make friends. How cool would it be if you invited someone to church and they made a lifelong friend?

Do you know anyone that needs a friend? Invite them to church.

2. They might be encouraged.

They say only 20% of an iceberg is visible above the water. The rest is below the surface. I think people’s struggles are like that, too. You never really know what they are going through. They might look happy on the
outside, but they are really in need of hope or encouragement. A simple invitation to church might be a spark of hope for someone.

Do you know anyone that needs encouragement? Invite them to church.

3. They might meet Jesus.

In the book of Acts, you can read about a guy named Andrew who brought his brother to meet Jesus. Andrew’s brother was Peter, who turned out to be a great Apostle (he’s got massive churches named after Him!). By far, the best reason to invite someone to church is they might meet Jesus. Eternity can be altered because of a simple invitation.

So what do you say? Who can you invite to Bridgewater Church this week?

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you bring someone, please introduce them to me. I’d love to say hi.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:
WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED?
POURPOSE:
Encourage people in their everyday lives

CALL TO ACTION:
Take time this month to remember the true meaning of the holiday season.

James,

This is an awesome time of year. But it also drives people crazy.

On one hand you have cooler weather, football season (Go Big Blue!), and colorful leaves. And on the other hand, you’ve got busy school schedules, extra activities, and holiday planning. Halloween to Christmas is one of the busiest times of the year.

The holiday to remind us to be thankful turns into family drama. Celebrating the birth of Jesus is the time we shop for people we don’t really like. House guests, credit card bills, school plays, and needing to be in two places at one time!

(As I’m writing this I’m imaging that piano music from Charlie Brown and people running around in double time.)

So what do you do when you feel overwhelmed? What happens when you’ve got too much going on and you’re not sure how much more you can take?

I confess I don’t have it all figured out. But I do want to offer a few pastoral suggestions if that’s okay. Here it goes…

#1. You don’t have to do it all.

Your children are not going to be scarred for life if they don’t get what the neighbors kids get. You’re not going to get fired if you don’t attend the
office party. And it’s even okay to miss out on a church activity or two. When the new year rolls around, it’s more important to have your sanity than to have attended every single thing.

**#2. Take some time for yourself.**

It’s not selfish to take care of yourself. After all, there’s a reason they tell you to put the oxygen mask over your own face first. If you’re out of control, you won’t be in any position to help anyone. So don’t be afraid to take an afternoon, a weekend or a night for yourself. Go ahead and put it on the calendar and don’t apologize for it.

**#3. Remember the point.**

Let Thanksgiving be a time for giving thanks, not for getting the recipe just right. Let Halloween be fun for your kids. And take time to read the Christmas story and reflect on God’s grace at Christmas. When you find yourself stressed because of the schedule, hit the pause button and think about why you’re doing it all in the first place.

Here's a link to the Christmas Story from the book of Luke. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, maybe this will give you a spiritual perspective.

I hope this email encourages you during this busy season.

God bless!

Pastor Chris

**IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:**

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WHY I GIVE TO BRIDGEWATER CHURCH

NOVEMBER
James,

Do you remember an infomercial for the Hair Club for men?

James Whitman looked into the camera and said, “I’m not just the President of the company…I’m a user.”

I’m blessed to be the pastor of Bridgewater church. I really am.

But I’m not just the pastor. Bridgewater is my church.

We’re in a small group. My kids have a Sunday School teacher. And I financially support my church.

I don’t just pastor the church – I support the church by giving at least 10% of my income every month. Here are three reasons Jennie and I do this:

1. **I want to be an example to my kids.** Let’s face it – we’re living in pretty selfish times. We don’t have to teach kids how to be selfish. They just figure that out on their own! So I want to be a counter-cultural example to my children. Generosity is more than an attitude – it’s an action. I want them to know that I don’t just feel generous, but that I actually give.

2. **I believe in our mission.** I believe “reaching people far from God so they can have new life in Christ” is important. Those aren’t just words on a website – they are a rally cry worthy of my attention.
3. I want to make a difference. When I give to Bridgewater, I’m making a dent in eternity. You don’t have to be an insider to know that donations make a different. Read this article or download the annual report to see where the money goes.

Those are just three reasons Jennie and I give to Bridgewater. I’d love to invite you to do the same. In fact, I’d love to encourage you to do what we do – set up an online profile and give automatically.

Here’s a link to our online giving page where you can set it up or make changes.

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you ever have questions about the finances or want more information, just let me know.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:

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SEVEN THINGS TO PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN
DECEMBER: SEVEN THINGS TO PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN

PURPOSE:
Help parents lead their family

CALL TO ACTION:
Pray this week

James,

We talk a lot about prayer at Bridgewater Church. And for those of you who have children or grandchildren, I wanted to send you some specific ideas.

Jon Bloom published an article at DesiringGod.org called *Seven Things to Pray for Your Children*. Here’s the link to the full article, but the seven items are below. I thought these were great.

1. That Jesus will call them and no one will hinder them from coming. (Matthew 19:13-15)
2. That they will respond in faith to Jesus’ faithful, persistent call. (2 Peter 3:9)
3. That they will experience sanctification through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and will increasingly desire to fulfill the greatest commandments. (Matthew 22:37-39)
4. That they will not be unequally yoked in intimate relationships, especially marriage. (2 Corinthians 6:14)
5. That their thoughts will be pure. (Philippians 4:8)
6. That their hearts will be stirred to give generously to the Lord’s work. (Exodus 35:29)
7. That when the time is right, they will GO! (Matthew 28:18-20)

Why don’t you print out this list and pray one of these things each day for the next week?
As a parent, one of the most important things you can do for your children is to pray for them. A praying parent is truly a powerful influence.

Pastor Chris

P.S. If you’d like me to pray for your children, I’d be honored. Just reply and let me know how to pray.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH:
FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON HOW TO SERVE AND LEAD
YOUR CHURCHES, VISIT

CHURCHFUEL.COM