



NEW LIFE

COMMUNITY CHURCH

2023 EASTER PLANNING GUIDE



EASTER PLANNING OVERVIEW

The greatest day in history, that split time in half, and rescued us from death to life - it's Resurrection Sunday! Jesus' resurrection changed the world and has been changing lives ever since. This Easter, we want to invite people into the story, to remember what Jesus has done for them, and to experience it for themselves.

- How can we transform our Sunday experience for the Easter season? How can we invite people into the story and make it come to life?
- How can we best reach, serve, and demonstrate the love of Jesus to our community this Easter season?
- How can we encourage people to pray, give, and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus this Easter?

10 IDEAS FOR EASTER OUTREACH

1. Live drama, skit, spoken word, or dramatic readings
2. Baptism on Easter Sunday
3. Mail a postcard and equip people with invites
4. Recruit new volunteers for your ministry teams
5. Start new services or add times
6. Plan a Good Friday worship or prayer service
7. Launch new small groups
8. Palm Sunday parade or special music
9. Host an Easter egg hunt for kids
10. Cross walk down the street

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Brainstorm more ideas with your team and find ways to get everyone involved in the planning!



EASTER PLANNING MEETING

Email your key leaders and volunteers to an Easter planning meeting. Include worship, tech, children's, welcome, hospitality, creative, and anyone else you think could help make this Easter impactful!

ACTION STEPS

- Schedule your kickoff planning meeting date, time, and location
- Identify your Easter team coordinators
- Invite your key leaders and volunteers

ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

NAME

Easter Champion

Deliver the weekly announcements, updates, and celebrations.

Communications Coordinator

Keep track of the weekly action steps and planning ahead.

Social Media Coordinator

Share weekly posts and engage with people online.

EXAMPLE EMAIL (FEBRUARY 3)

Subject: Will you help us make an impact this Easter?

Easter is our biggest season of the year when we invite people far and wide to experience the powerful, life changing, message of Jesus Christ. More than anything else, Easter is a celebration of Jesus' resurrection and the new life we can have through Him.

At New Life, our Easter planning begins now, and we need your help! Will you be a part of our planning team and help us reach our community this Easter? I want to invite you to join us for an Easter planning meeting.

[Date]

[Time]

[Location]

Please let me know if you will attend and bring any ideas you have to make this our biggest and best Easter season ever. Looking forward to it!



EASTER OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

CLARIFY YOUR VISION

IDENTIFY YOUR TOP 3 OUTREACH INITIATIVES

1.

2.

3.

DESCRIBE THE WIN ON EASTER SUNDAY



EASTER INVITATIONS

Easter is a great time of year to invite people to church. Many people are looking for a church to attend and are often more open to receiving an invitation from family and friends. There are several great ways to get the word out, equip your congregation, and reach the community!

ACTION STEPS

- Outline your Easter service times and special events
- Determine your Easter invites and budget
- Order your invites and materials at newlifeadmin.org

PLAN YOUR INVITES & BUDGET

(Pricing is subject to change and does not include shipping costs)

MATERIALS	QUANTITIES & ESTIMATED PRICING				BUDGET
<input type="checkbox"/> Mailers	1000 = \$614	2500 = \$922.50	5000 = \$1,375	10,000 = \$2,640	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3x3 Invites	100 = \$20	250 = \$32	500 = \$42	1000 = \$51	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4x8 Banners	1 = \$50	2 = \$100	3 = \$150	4 = \$200	
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Ads	Minimum of \$100 budget (e.g. \$10 x 10 days)				
ALL ORDERS ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 28!				TOTAL	

COMMUNICATIONS TIPS & REMINDERS

- Keep your communication clear and simple - dates, service times, address, website. Don't miss the basics!
- Make sure your website is up to date. People will visit your website before they visit the church. Current information and photos will make a great first impression.
- Postcards are an effective way to invite thousands of people to church. Postcards have a long shelf life, so be sure to get them out early.
- Facebook ads are an inexpensive way to promote your services. Choose a great photo of your people, write a short, friendly invite, and link to your website for more information.
- Assign someone to take photos and/or video of your service. Not only can you share the photos and videos online to celebrate, but it also gives you updated pictures for your website and invites next year!
- Remember to update your website after Easter. Change service times back to regular times, remove outdated graphics/events, and add a new homepage photo! (Email updates to website@newlifechicago.org)



EASTER COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
FEB 5 Easter Planning	6 Email: Will you help me?	7	8 Pray for God's plans to prevail	9	10	11
12 Share a Story	13	14	15 Thank God for his power	16	17	18
19 Highlight Ministry Teams	20 Email: Engage for Easter	21	22 Pray for your leaders	23	24	25
26 Finalize Easter Plans	27	FEB 28	MAR 1 Pray for the children's ministry All Easter orders due!	2	3	4
5 Preview Your Easter Outreach	6 Email: Are you ready?	7	8 Pray for the invites going out	9	10	11
12 Review Follow Up System	13 Email: Big news!!!	14	15 How can we pray for you?	16	17	18
19 Announce Easter on Social	20 Email: 3 Things to do	21	22 Pray for new people	23	24	25
26 Easter Countdown	27 Email: Easter is almost here	28 Press Release	29 Pray for the community	30	31 Women's Encounter Retreat	1 Women's Encounter Retreat
2 Easter Invite	3 Email: Celebrate Easter!	4	5 Pray for Sunday and fast today	6	7 Good Friday	8
9 Easter Sunday	10	11	12 Thank God for our Savior Jesus	13	14	15
Announce	Email/Text		Pray			



9 WEEKS TIL EASTER

This week is all about getting your core team, leaders, and members excited and engaged for the Easter season. As you meet with your team, gauge their interest, excitement, and encourage them to ask questions for clarity. This will help sharpen the vision and generate more ideas.

ACTION STEPS

- Finish vision planning worksheet (see page 3)
- Meet with your leadership team to share the vision
- Pray together for the Easter season ahead

EMAIL

Subject: Will you help us make an impact this Easter?

Easter is our biggest season of the year when we invite people far and wide to experience the powerful, life changing, message of Jesus Christ. More than anything else, Easter is a celebration of Jesus' resurrection and the new life we can have through Him.

At New Life, our Easter planning begins now, and we need your help! Will you be a part of our planning team and help us reach our community this Easter? I want to invite you to join us for an Easter planning meeting.

[Date]

[Time]

[Location]

Please let me know if you will attend and bring any ideas you have to make this our biggest and best Easter season ever. Looking forward to it!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Mark your calendar for Sunday, April 9 and plan to celebrate Easter at New Life!



8 WEEKS TIL EASTER

This week share a powerful story of a life that has been impacted during this past season. It can be a baptism testimony or someone who connected in a small group, started serving, or mentoring. Find one thing to celebrate what God has done this past season.

ACTION STEPS

- Contact small group leaders for potential stories
- Meet or call the person to hear their story
- Prepare them to share on Sunday or record a video

WEEKLY SCRIPT

It has been an incredible start to the year here at New Life and today we want to share with you a brief story of on person who has been impacted by our church family.

(Share story, interview, video)

Wow! Praise God for this story and life that has been changed. This is what it's all about and we're looking forward to Easter at New Life and hearing more powerful stories just like this.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Take photos on Sunday of your ministry leaders and share a quote about why they enjoy serving.

You could also take short video clips asking people what they love about serving on Sunday.



7 WEEKS TIL EASTER

This week is all about casting vision for why we serve and recruiting people to engage in ministry. Highlight the various ministry teams in the church and volunteer opportunities available.

ACTION STEPS

- Highlight ministry teams and volunteer opportunities
- Plan a ministry open house where people can serve alongside a ministry team for one Sunday and see what it's like.
- Schedule a volunteer training to prepare for Easter (include food)

WEEKLY SCRIPT

One of the steps to becoming a fully devoted, fruitful follower of Christ is to Engage in ministry. Being a part of a team and finding a place to serve is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have at New Life.

And as we get ready for the Easter season, we want to prepare each of our teams to be ready to welcome, serve, and love the people who will be coming through our doors. So today, we're asking you to sign up and get involved with one of our Sunday ministry teams.

(Highlight a few opportunities available and training dates)

EMAIL

Subject: Engage for Easter

Easter is coming and we're preparing for our largest Sunday of the year. That means more people, more children, and more volunteers are needed! Let us know if you are available to serve on one of our Sunday ministry teams!

[List ministry opportunities and training dates]

Simply reply to this email if you are interested in serving this Easter and we'll help you find a place!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Be a part of our biggest outreach of the year - Easter! Sign up to serve with one of our ministry teams this Sunday.



6 WEEKS TIL EASTER

You've met with your team, you have laid out a plan, now it's time to confirm and put your plan into action!

ACTION STEPS

- Confirm your Easter service times and Good Friday service
- Confirm any special outreaches or kids' activities
- Order your custom Easter invites at newlifeadmin.org by February 28

WEEKLY SCRIPT

Spring is just around the corner which means Easter is coming! Every year we go through one of the gospels leading up to Easter. It's a powerful time to look closely at who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and share the gospel message with people. So today I want to ask you three questions to consider as we prepare for the Easter:

- Pray - who are you praying for these next few weeks?
- Invite - who can you invite to New Life this Easter?
- Engage - where can you serve this Easter season?

Next week we're starting a brand-new series and it's a great opportunity to invite someone to join you.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Who is on your heart right now? Take a moment to pause and pray for them.



5 WEEKS TIL EASTER

The month before Easter is a great time to review your services and make any changes or improvements. You want to do these several weeks before Easter so that your team has time to work on and implement the changes. Put on the eyes and ears of a first time guest!

ACTION STEPS

- Do a walkthrough of the church and make a list of anything that needs changed, updated, or replaced before Easter (signs, cards, stands, etc.)
- Listen/watch your service online and make any notes for improvement
- Ask 3-4 people to complete a secret shopper evaluation of your service
- Custom Easter orders are due March 1!**

WEEKLY SCRIPT

Happy March! Today we're starting a brand new series called _____. Over the next few weeks, we're going to be looking at the identity of Jesus. Our world has lot's of different views and opinions about Jesus, but we think it's best to go to the source, the gospels, to find out who Jesus really is and what he came to do. I hope you will join us these next few weeks for our series.

This is also a great time to invite a friend. We've included an invite in the bulletin today that you can give out or maybe take a picture and text it to a friend. Every week of this series is focused on Jesus and we will give people an opportunity to respond to God's call of salvation.

EMAIL

Subject: Are you ready?

Easter is coming and we're believing for many lives to be transformed. This year you get to play a big part in our Easter at New Life outreach. Each week we are giving each person one invite card to give away. That's it! Take a moment right now to pray and make a list of some family, friends, or neighbors you can invite to church this Easter.

To help, we've also created some digital invites that you can share directly with your friends. Go to easteratnewlife.com to download and share an invite!

SOCIAL MEDIA

We're saving a seat for you. (photo of empty seat with sign for YOU)



4 WEEKS TIL EASTER

One of the most important steps in planning for Easter is what happens after Easter Sunday. A clear, strong follow up process is essential to making your Easter outreach effective.

ACTION STEPS

- Review your current guest follow up process and each person involved. Find any steps that are getting missed and fill them in
- Test your email, phone, voicemail, and website to make sure everything is working and going to the correct person
- Perform a Google search for your location and make sure all information is up to date. Email website@newlifechicago.org for help.

WEEKLY SCRIPT

Easter is coming and we're believing for many lives to be transformed. This year, you get to play a big part in our Easter at New Life outreach by doing one simple thing: invite.

Each week we are giving each person one invite card to give away. That's it! I'm sure that right now there is someone on your heart who you'd like to invite to New Life this Easter. Maybe it's a family member or friend. Or maybe you'll share an invite with your neighbor next door or a coworker. God will lead you to the right person, and when he gives you that opportunity, you'll have an invite ready.

EMAIL

Subject: A big announcement for Easter!!!

Our Easter invite video just went live on social media! Please take a minute to go watch the video, then help us spread the word by liking, sharing, and leaving a comment.

[link to Facebook/Instagram]

SOCIAL MEDIA

How can we pray for you this week?



3 WEEKS TIL EASTER

Breathe! Easter is just a month away. You're almost there. God's got you!

ACTION STEPS

- Equip your congregation with invites and pray for one person they can invite to church this Easter.
- Add all of your Easter services and events to Online Community and your Facebook page.
- Stock up on resources like coffee mugs, offering envelopes, and First Steps books. Make sure you have plenty to get you through the season.

WEEKLY SCRIPT

We're just four weeks away from Easter! This week, we have a special video announcement releasing on our Facebook and Instagram page. Here's how you can help.

Look for the video coming out this week. Watch the video and then we need you to like, share, and comment to help spread the word.

We've also created some digital Easter invites that you can download and share online. Go to easteratnewlife.com to download a free Easter invite!

EMAIL

Subject: 3 Things to do before Easter!

We are counting down just three Sundays until Easter! As we prepare for our biggest outreach season of the year, YOU have an important part to play. I'm asking everyone in our church to do three things...

1. **Pray!** Only God can change a person's heart. Pray for people to be open and ready to receive the Good News of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.
2. **Invite!** We've created invites for you to handout, but don't stop there! A phone call or text message can be just thing someone needs to take the step to come to church.
3. **Share!** We've created some social media invites for you to download and share with friends. It's easy, free, and fun! Visit easteratnewlife.com to learn more!



I'd love to hear about who you are inviting and how I can pray for you this Easter. Simply reply to this email and let me know!

SOCIAL MEDIA

You're invited to celebrate Easter at New Life on Sunday, April 9 at 10:00am. We have a welcoming atmosphere, live music, and Kids Zone your children will love. All are welcome!

[Include 60 second video invite with the pastor]



2 WEEKS TIL EASTER

Small groups are a great place to connect with others and build community. Having strong small groups will help you better connect new people as they come to church this Easter. Mobilize your small groups this week to pray and invite people for Easter.

ACTION STEPS

- Take time in each of your small groups to pray for people by name.
- Write a press release and send it out to any local news outlets or contacts.
- Record a video with your pastor giving people a behind the scenes tour.

WEEKLY SCRIPT

The countdown is on! Easter is just 3 weeks away! We're so excited and we're praying that God will do an amazing work across our city. This week we want you to take some time in your small group to pray for our city, pray for our Easter outreach, and pray for people by name. God is the only one who can change a human heart and so we're praying that he would be preparing people's hearts to respond to the gospel this Easter.

SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: Easter is almost here!

Easter is almost here and is a great opportunity to bring someone with you to church. Be praying this week about who God might be leading you to invite. One simple way you can do this is go to easteratnewlife.com, download an invite, and share it with a friend.

[Insert Easter service times and special events]

Thank you for partnering with us to believe God for great things this Easter. See you Sunday!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Post a behind the scenes video or photo of your team in action.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Below is a sample press release that you can customize and send to your local media contacts. Contact neighborhood newspapers, Patch, DNAinfo, community groups like Nextdoor, Chamber of Commerce or school parent groups on Facebook. You can also reach out to local reports on Twitter.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2023

Free Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, April 4 at Hiawatha Park

Norridge, IL – New Life Community Church in Norridge is presenting a free community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4 at Hiawatha Park.

The Easter Egg hunt will begin at 10:30AM and is open for children ages 2-10. Children can collect eggs filled with candy, toys, and a special prize egg to win an Easter basket. There will be over 10,000 Easter eggs and bags will be provided, though you are welcome to bring your own basket.

“We love to serve our community and look forward to this event every year,” says Pastor Tom Fitzmaurice. “It’s a fun activity and a great opportunity to meet our neighbors,” says Maggie, one of the New Life attendees.

New Life Community Church in Norridge meets on Sundays at 11:45am. More information is available at newlifenorridge.org.

New Life Community Church is one church that meets in 27 locations throughout Chicagoland. For additional information, locations, and service times visit www.newlifecommunity.church or call the main office at (773) 838-9470.

Contact

Your Name, Role

Phone, Email





1 WEEK TIL EASTER

Invites are arriving in homes and reach your neighbors. Take a moment during the service to pray for your surrounding community and your Easter outreach initiatives.

Celebrate Palm Sunday and bring people into the Easter story through the worship music, message, and palm branches!

[Include specific reminders for your service times, volunteers, etc.]

ACTION STEPS

- Handout extra invites on Sunday and pray for the community
- Send out a street team to pray and invite neighbors
- Begin Facebook ad campaign (see webinar)
- Take a photo of an Easter invite and text a friend from the service
- Highlight your special service times and reminders for next week
- Celebrate any responses you have already seen through your outreaches

SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: Celebrate Easter with us this Sunday at New Life!

Easter is this Sunday and we're so excited to celebrate with you, your family, and friends! As we prepare for this Sunday, here are a few reminders:

1. We will have two services this Sunday at 9:30am and 11:30am. Please consider attending one and serving at the other.
2. If this is your first Easter at New Life, you're going to love it! We have a powerful worship service planned plus some fun activities for our Kids Zone!
3. Please arrive early so you have time to park, grab coffee, and check in. Our parking lot is reserved for new people and first time guests. We have a special parking area for volunteers arriving early.

I'm looking forward to seeing you this Sunday as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus!

WEEKLY SCRIPT

Next Sunday is it - Easter at New Life! We've praying and preparing for the past few months and we're excited to celebrate next Sunday. We're going to need everyone's help.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Easter is almost here and we're so excited to celebrate with you and your family! Visit our website for service times and invite a friend to join you on Sunday.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You're Invited!!! [photo of person holding an invitation]

FACEBOOK AD EXAMPLES

[Graphic] Celebrate Easter at New Life _____ on Sunday, April 9 at 10:00am. All are welcome!

[Photo] It's our biggest Sunday of the year and you're invited! Join us for a special Easter service the whole family will enjoy. See you Sunday, April 9 at 10:00am.

[Video] Hi, I'm Pastor _____ from New Life _____ and I'd like to invite you and your family to celebrate Easter with us on Sunday, April 9 at 10:00am. We have live music, casual dress, and a fun Kids Zone your children will love. I look forward to seeing you soon!



RESURRECTION SUNDAY

Celebrate the resurrection of Jesus!

ACTION STEPS

- Schedule a photographer to take photos using the shot list
- Share photos online, tag @newlifechicago, and share #easteratnewlife
- Invite everyone back for the start of a new series next week

WEEKLY SCRIPT

Happy Easter and Resurrection Sunday! Turn to the person next to you and say He Is Risen! We're so glad you've chosen to celebrate Easter with us here at New Life and we hope you enjoy today's service. A few things I'd like to highlight for us today...

- Welcome first time guests, fill out a Welcome Card and stop by our Welcome Center for a free gift!
- Invite to new series next week (place invites in bulletin or on seats)
- Mother's Day is just around the corner (share Mother's Day outreach)

OFFERING SCRIPT

It's so great to have everyone here to celebrate Easter at New Life! And right before we receive today's offering, I want to say a big thank you to all of those who support the ministry here at New Life. Special shout out to all those who have already given online this week or who have set up recurring giving. You're making a big difference!

Today as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, I want to remind you that we are part of a bigger movement of God. As we worship here, there are thousands of people across Chicagoland and even internationally who are doing the same thing. What a blessing to be a part of a church that is reaching people for Jesus!

So, as you give today, we want to remember the work and the mission that God has called each of us to be a part of. Together we can reach more people and make a huge impact this Easter and beyond. Let's pray.

SOCIAL MEDIA

What an amazing celebration today! [post your top 5 photos from Sunday]



BONUS: 10 IDEAS FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

First off, thank you! Your ministry to children is so important and though often unnoticed, God sees your work. It's amazing how a simple word of encouragement, a big smile and high five, or a small toy or snack can make a difference in a child's week. Here are some ideas to prepare your children's ministry for Easter.

1. Equip children and parents with invites to invite their friends.
2. Plan a training time for your volunteers and show your appreciation by including a special lunch and thank you gift.
3. Recruit extra volunteers. Extra people on Easter means you need extra hands and people available to welcome and assist your teachers.
4. Do a walk-through of your children's ministry and see what needs to be updated, replaced, or thrown out.
5. Plan a lesson series that they need to come back to hear how the story ends. Part 1 on Palm Sunday, Part 2 on Easter, Part 3 after Easter.
6. Do a special craft that they can take home with them.
7. Make it fun! The first question parents will ask their kids is "Did you have fun today?"
8. Snacks! Get the good stuff and be sensitive to allergies.
9. Give new children a gift bag. Order some drawstring backpacks, water bottles, stickers, etc.
10. Have a prize box that children can pick a prize from at the end of class.



BONUS: 10 IDEAS FOR MOTHER'S DAY

If Easter is our biggest Sunday of the year, Mother's Day is our second biggest Sunday. When momma wants the family to go to church, everybody goes! Be ready on Easter Sunday to announce your Mother's Day service and plans to invite people back. Don't forget about the dad's either!

1. Give a special gift to all the ladies - a flower, potted plant, or small notebook are a few ideas.
2. Plan a special women's brunch and a big giveaway to your women's groups (spa package, restaurant gift card, iPad mini).
3. Do a photo booth or photo station on Mother's Day. Free photos for all!
4. Plan a special Mother's Day kids craft.
5. Preach a special Mother's Day message.
6. Consider blessing a single mom in your congregation or community.
7. Share a story (live or video) of a mom in your church.
8. Pray a special blessing over the women at the end of service.
9. Make a video with kids sharing what they love most about their mom.
10. Buy a bunch of different Mother's Day cards and hand them out at the end of the service. Bonus: Have your ministry leaders write a short note of encouragement in the card.

BONUS: 3 IDEAS FOR FATHER'S DAY

1. Wear your favorite sports team jersey and hat on Sunday.
2. Host a pancake breakfast or grill hot dogs for after service.
3. Recognize the fathers with a small gift and pray a special blessing over them during the service. Give out awards, t-shirts, hats, etc.

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