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6. Be an authentic congregation.

Do all you can to keep this Easter from being a “one-morning stand.” Build on the momentum and intentionally follow up with people. Give everyone a flier or postcard about an event such as a service project, meal, or fellowship activity scheduled soon after Easter. Make sure everyone in the congregation knows that the Sundays after Easter are important. Start now to plan how you will reach out to first-time visitors: a phone call, a handwritten note, or a small token that says, “Our Easter was more joyful because you were with us.” When pastors and leaders work together, the whole season of Eastertide can be full of Easter joy!

7. Be a prepared congregation.

Easter is a great time to invite

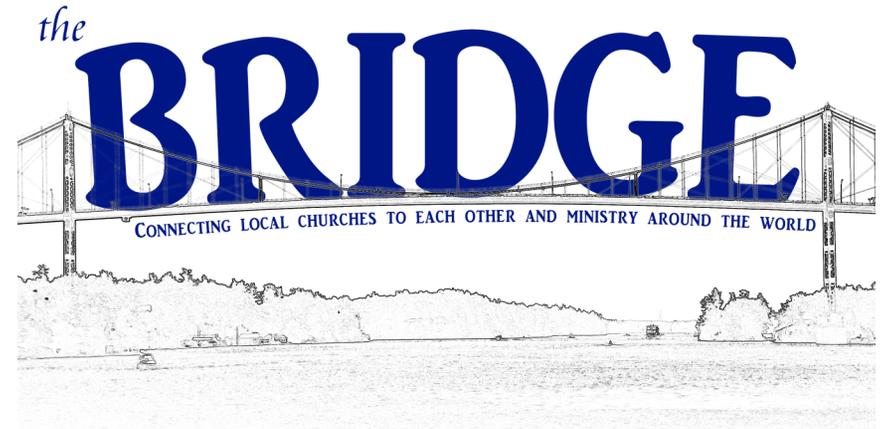
all of your newcomers to an upcoming series of services this service launches. Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity by actually planning and announcing the whole series on Easter Sunday, as well as before. This will not only help you address the typical “low Sunday” that follows Easter, but it will help make clear that Easter, like Lent, is actually a season designed since its inception in the early church to help the newly baptized or other newcomers identify the Spirit's gifts in their lives, prepare them for ministry in the world, and deepen their understanding of core Christian teachings. For more on how each of the Sundays in Easter Season relate to such a series, visit <http://bit.ly/UMCplanningEaster> to view a webinar and download handouts that support it.



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A LOOK INSIDE!

Getting ready for Easter

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April 2017, Issue 1

Seven Tips to Get Ready for Easter



By Rosanna Anderson, Ken Sloane, and Taylor Burton-Edwards

For many churches, Easter Sunday will have the largest attendance of the year! Especially for stewardship and finance leaders, the focus can become the Easter Sunday offering. While funding your church's mission and ministry is important, don't let the size of the offering define your Easter Sunday experience! Here are a few tips:

1. Be an inviting congregation.

Use every means at your disposal to invite people to worship with you on Easter Sunday. Use your mailing list, your web and social media pages, and ads in local newspapers. Send the message that Easter Sunday

is a wonderful day to try out your church or reconnect with the church. Include details -- such as worship times and parking — that will help new folks.

2. Be a welcoming congregation.

Make sure your greeters are positive people. It's helpful if one greeter has been around for years and knows folks who haven't been there in a while and may want to reconnect. This is also a good day to have greeters outside to help new people with parking and direct them to accessible entrances to worship.

3. Be an attractive congregation.

The Building. Make sure your building is in top shape: It should be uncluttered, with signs indicating

where to find restrooms, the nursery, and fellowship hall. Walk around and view everything with fresh eyes to see what could help visitors.

The Nursery. This space is like a church's handshake, so give the right first impression! It should be clean and baby proofed. There should be at least two adults present whose dependability and kindness as caregivers are evident when they meet families.

The Grounds. Let new life shine through the natural beauty around your church. Don't wait until after Easter to hold a spring clean-up day. Plan early enough so your site reflects your congregation's commitment to being a Resurrection church!

4. Be a missional congregation.

Find ways to let people know how your congregation is touching people's lives. Use the bulletin, PowerPoint slides, or posters to share how

you are agents of transformation locally and globally. Support the Easter theme by providing concrete examples of places where the church has helped offer hope in the tombs of despair, where those the world had written off are raised up to new life! Connect the Easter story in ways that show that the risen Christ has power!

5. Be an inclusive congregation.

As you plan worship, be conscious of the presence of people who may be unfamiliar with the traditions of your congregation's worship or Christian worship all together. Include in the bulletin the words of the Doxology, Lord's Prayer, and the words your congregation speaks after the reading of the Scripture. If you invite people to open Bibles and read along, include page numbers so people who haven't memorized the order of the books of the Bible can easily find "2 Corinthians."

