

A FREE GUIDE FOR CHURCH LEADERS

How to Claim Your Church's Google Business Profile

A plain, step-by-step walkthrough for pastors and church office staff. No technical background needed.

Inside this guide

1. Find your church on Google
2. Claim an unclaimed profile
3. If someone else already owns it
4. Verify your church
5. Fill in what visitors need
6. Protect it for the long term



WHY THIS MATTERS

The sign out front, for neighbors searching on their phones

When someone in your town searches for "church near me," Google usually shows a map with a few nearby churches before it shows any websites. Each of those map pins is a **Google Business Profile**: your church's name, address, phone number, photos, and reviews.

Most churches already have one, even if nobody at the church set it up. Google often creates profiles automatically from public information. But until someone from your church **claims and verifies** the profile, you can't correct wrong details, add current photos, or reply to reviews. Meanwhile, anyone can suggest edits to it.

76%

of people who search for something nearby on their phone visit a related business within a day.

Source: Think with Google

Claiming your profile is free. It takes about 20 minutes of work at the start, plus a short wait while Google confirms that you represent the church. It doesn't change your message or your worship. It simply makes sure that the people already looking for a church like yours find accurate information and a clear way to visit.

Part of a seven-step series. This is Step 1 of the **Found on Google** series, seven short guides that help neighbors searching online find your church. Each step builds on the one before it. When you finish, continue with the Step 2 guide, **Make your Profile Strength look good**.

BEFORE YOU START

Have these ready

- ☐ **A church-owned Google account.** Use a shared church address such as office@yourchurch.org, not a volunteer's personal Gmail. If that person moves away, the profile shouldn't leave with them.
- ☐ **Your church's official name**, written exactly as it appears on the sign out front.
- ☐ **Your street address, main phone number, and website address.**
- ☐ **A smartphone and keys to the building.** Google may ask you to record a short video at the church to prove you represent it.

1

Find your church on Google

On a computer, sign in to your church's Google account and open [Google Maps](#). Search for your church's name and city, then select your church. Here is what you may see and which part of this guide to go to next:

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT IT MEANS	GO TO
A Claim this business or Own this business? link	A profile exists, but no one has verified it yet.	Part 2
A message that says " Someone else may manage this Business Profile " when you try to claim it	Someone has already verified it. This is often a former pastor, secretary, volunteer, or web company.	Part 3
No claim link at all	Your account may already own it. Search Google for my business while signed in to check.	Part 5
Your church doesn't appear	There is no profile yet. Create one at business.google.com/add and select Add your business to Google .	Part 4

SEEING TWO LISTINGS FOR YOUR CHURCH?

Don't create a third. Claim the one with the correct address (and ideally the most reviews). Once you're verified, you can report the extra listing to Google as a duplicate.

2

Claim an unclaimed profile

On a computer

1. Open Google Maps, signed in with your church account.
2. Search for your church's name and city, and select it.
3. Select [Claim this business](#), then [Manage now](#).
4. Choose a verification option and follow the steps on screen (see Part 4).

On a phone

1. Open the Google Maps app and search for your church.
2. Select your church from the results.
3. Tap the **About** tab, then [Claim this business](#), then [Manage now](#).
4. Choose a verification option and follow the steps.

3

If someone else already owns it

This is common. Someone may have verified the profile years ago and since moved on. You have two ways forward.

Option A: Ask the current owner (fastest)

Ask your former pastor, church secretary, past volunteers, or your previous website company whether they set it up. If you find the owner, ask them to add your church account as an **Owner**. In their profile they select **More**, then **Business Profile settings**, then **People and access**, then **Add**. Once you're added as an owner, they can transfer primary ownership to you and remove themselves.

Option B: Request ownership through Google

1. Go to business.google.com/add.
2. Enter your church's name and address, and choose it from the list.
3. When you see "Someone else may manage this Business Profile," select **Request access**.
4. Fill out the form and select **Submit**.

Google emails you a confirmation and notifies the current owner, who has **3 days to respond**. If they approve, you'll get an email and can start managing the profile. If they deny it, you can still suggest edits or appeal.

NO RESPONSE AFTER 3 DAYS?

You may be able to claim the profile yourself. Open the confirmation email, select **View request**, then **Verify**, and follow the steps. Google notes this option isn't always available.

4

Verify your church

Verification is how Google confirms you actually represent the church. Google decides which methods you're offered. The most common are:

- **Video recording** (Google recommends this when it's offered)
- **Phone call or text** with a code. Automated phone menus can't receive the code, so if your church line has a phone tree, choose text or have someone answer directly.
- **Email** to an address shown on the verification screen
- **Live video call** with Google support, during your listed hours

Tips for a video that passes the first time

The video must be recorded live through your Business Profile on a phone (you can't upload a video you recorded earlier). It must be one continuous, unedited take of at least 30 seconds. Plan it before you press record.

GOOGLE ASKS YOU TO SHOW	WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE AT A CHURCH
Where you are	Start at the street. Show the street sign, your building number, and a nearby landmark or neighboring building.
That the church exists	Show your permanent church sign. The name on the sign must match the name on your profile exactly.
That you manage it	Unlock the front door or church office with your key, then show something only staff can access, such as the office, a supply closet, or the sound booth.

KEEP THESE OUT OF THE SHOT

- Other people's faces. Record on a weekday when the building is empty.
- Offering records, giving statements, bank or tax numbers, and member directories.

After you submit, Google reviews your verification. This can take a few days. While you wait, avoid changing your church's name, address, or category.

Fill in what a first-time visitor needs

Once verified, open your profile (search **my business** on Google while signed in) and complete each section. Picture a neighbor deciding whether to visit this Sunday.

SECTION	WHAT TO DO
Name	Exactly as it appears on your sign. Don't add a city, tagline, or phrase like "Bible-Teaching Church" unless it's truly part of your name. Google can suspend profiles for this.
Category	Choose the most specific accurate one. Start typing your tradition (for example Presbyterian, Baptist, or Anglican) and pick the closest match Google offers.
Service times	Include them in your description and on your website. Google's guidelines say places with varied schedules, like worship services, generally shouldn't list regular hours. If your church office keeps consistent hours, you can list those.
Website	Link to your homepage, or to a "Plan Your Visit" page if you have one.
Phone	A number someone answers, or at least a voicemail someone checks.
Description	Up to 750 characters, no links. Say who you are, when you meet, and what a visitor can expect.
Photos	Current photos of the outside with your sign, the entrance visitors should use, parking, and the sanctuary. If members appear, ask their permission first. Step 5 of this series covers photos in detail.
Attributes	Mark features like a wheelchair-accessible entrance, restroom, or parking.

EXAMPLE (FICTIONAL CHURCH)

Grace Presbyterian Church is a Bible-believing congregation in Springfield. We gather every Lord's Day at 10:30 AM for worship, with Sunday school for all ages at 9:15 AM. You can expect reverent worship, hearty congregational singing, and preaching that works through the Scriptures book by book. Visitors are always welcome, and our nursery is staffed during the service. Parking and the main entrance are on Oak Street. We would be glad to meet you this Sunday.

6

Protect it for the long term

Many churches lose access to their profile when the one person who managed it moves on. A few simple habits prevent that.

- ☐ **Add a second owner.** Invite an elder, deacon, or staff member: **More**, then **Business Profile settings**, then **People and access**, then **Add**. Each person needs their own Google account. Owners have full control; managers can edit almost everything but can't add or remove people.
- ☐ **Write it down.** Record which account owns the profile and keep it with your other church records, like your website and domain logins.
- ☐ **Check it monthly.** The public and Google can suggest changes to your profile. Make sure your details are still correct. Step 2 of this series shows how to use Google's Profile Strength tool to find and fill any gaps.
- ☐ **Plan for Christmas and Easter.** Many people look for a church around these holidays. Update your service times and post an announcement a few weeks ahead (Step 6 covers posts).
- ☐ **Invite honest reviews, and reply to all of them.** Reviews help neighbors decide whether to visit. Steps 3 and 4 of this series explain how to ask for reviews within Google's rules and how to reply graciously, even to critical ones.

QUICK REFERENCE

Common mistakes to avoid

MISTAKE	WHY IT CAUSES TROUBLE
Claiming with a volunteer's personal account	When they leave, access usually leaves with them.
Creating a new profile when one already exists	Duplicates split your reviews and confuse visitors.
Adding keywords or a city to your name	It breaks Google's rules and can get the profile suspended.
Using a P.O. box as your address	Google doesn't allow it. Use the address where you meet.
Setting it up once and never returning	Old photos and outdated times turn visitors away.

THE FOUND ON GOOGLE SERIES

Seven simple steps to help neighbors find your church

1 Claim your church's Google Business Profile

THIS GUIDE

2 Make your Profile Strength look good

3 Invite honest reviews

4 Respond to every review

5 Add photos and videos

6 Post regular updates

7 Match your details across 40 directories

Next up: **Step 2, Make your Profile Strength look good.** Take one step at a time. Each one makes it a little easier for people searching nearby to find your church and walk through the door.

If you'd rather not carry this alone, or just want someone to look over what Google shows your neighbors, we'd be glad to talk. Five More Talents serves conservative, Bible-believing churches with websites, local search, and online outreach. You lead. We support.

Schedule a free 20-minute Outreach Discovery Call

go.fivemoretalents.com



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