



*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**



**Google My  
Church**



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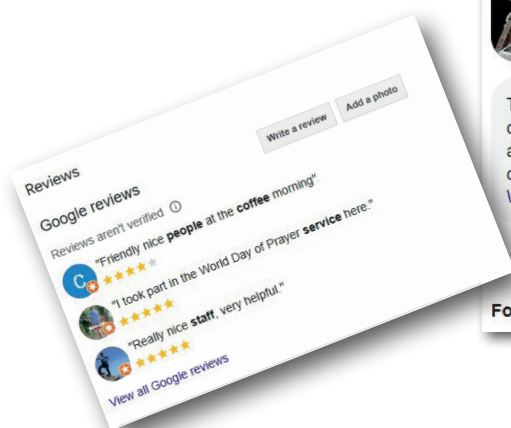


# Google My Church: a guide for churches



## Introduction

In today's digital age, having an online presence is crucial for any organisation, including churches. One of the easiest ways to get your church's information online and make it accessible to your local community is through **Google Business Profile** (formerly known as Google My Business). If you haven't heard of it before, don't worry – this booklet will walk you through how Google Business Profile can help your church grow and reach people in your area, why it's important to keep the profile updated, and how to access and manage your church's profile.



### United Reformed Church



The United Reformed Church is a Protestant Christian church in the United Kingdom. As of 2024 it had approximately 44,000 members in around 1,250 congregations with 334 stipendiary ministers.

[Wikipedia >](#)

**Founded:** 1972



# Why a Google Business Profile is important for your church

## 1. Improve local visibility

When people search for churches in your area, having an updated Google Business Profile means your church is more likely to appear in search results. Your church's name, location, service times, and contact details will show up on Google Search and Google Maps, helping new visitors find you easily.

## 2. Build trust with your community

An updated profile allows you to showcase what makes your church special. You can share information about your services, activities, and community events, making it easier for people to learn about what's happening at your church. When potential visitors see current, accurate information, they are more likely to trust your church.

Be sure to include a business description on your Google My Business profile. This is your chance to share a brief and engaging paragraph that gives people a glimpse into who your church is. What's your church's purpose and mission? What traditions or values do you hold dear? And most importantly, what can visitors expect when they come through your doors? A well-written description will help potential visitors feel more connected and informed before they even arrive.

### From Chingford United Reformed Church

"The Forest Group is a family of two churches - Chingford URC and St James' URC - on the edge of Epping Forest, which came together in 2004 to share resources, expertise and ministry and be church together. Even though each church has kept its identity and main activities, we enjoy regular joint services and other activities together, like bible studies, coffee mornings or quiet days. We are part of the Heath, Havering and Forest Local Area Group of the United Reformed Church and we belong to Thames North Synod."



### 3. Share important updates

Whether you're hosting a special event, offering new services, or changing your service times, Google My Business is a great place to quickly inform people of these updates. Posting pictures, events, and announcements on your profile helps to keep your congregation and visitors informed in real-time.

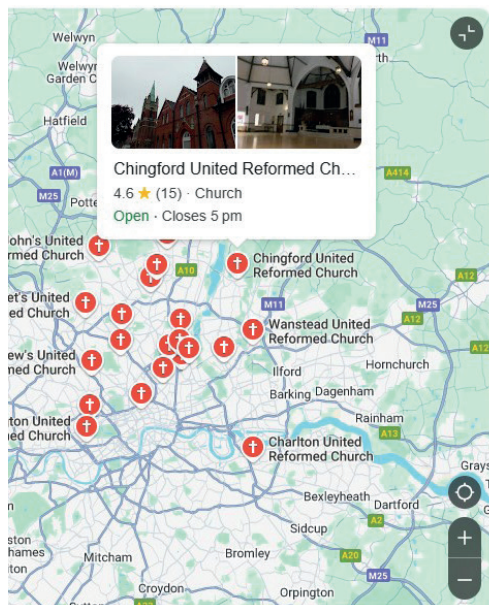
Just like you might share updates on Facebook or Twitter, **Google Business Profile** is a great way to keep people in the loop about what's happening at your church. You can use the "Post" and "Event" features to spread the word about upcoming services, events, or anything exciting going on!

#### TIP

When updating your hours of operation, it's best to list only your service times. This helps people know exactly when they can join you.

### 4. Attract new visitors

A well-maintained Google Business Profile not only provides your regular attendees with easy access to your church's information, but it also helps you attract newcomers. People looking for a church nearby or researching local services can easily find your church with a simple search, increasing your potential outreach.

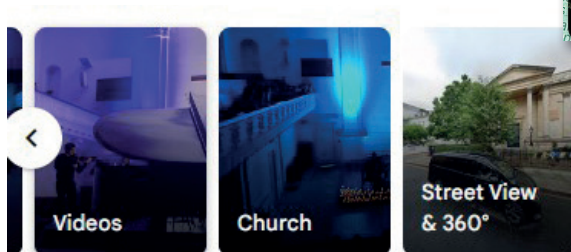
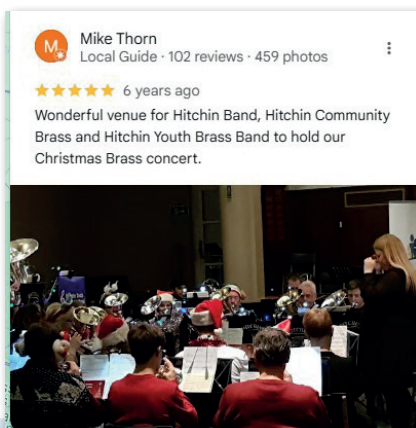




# The importance of regular updates

Keeping your church's Google Business Profile updated is vital to ensuring that people can easily find and engage with your church. Regular updates help you to:

- **Show accurate service times:** If you have any changes to your regular service times or special seasonal events, make sure these are updated promptly to avoid confusion.
- **Highlight new programs or ministries:** Update your profile to reflect any new programs, youth groups, or outreach initiatives, so your community knows what to expect and can get involved.
- **Share photos and videos:** Give your church community – and those who might be looking for a church home – a window into the life and heart of your congregation. Share recent photos and videos from church events, services, small groups, or





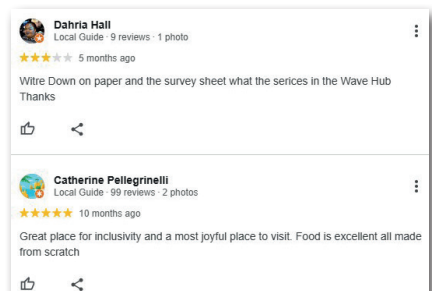
# TIP

Adding a few lovely photos to your Google Business Profile is a good way to reflect your church's identity and give people a feel for who you are. Including an exterior shot also helps visitors recognise the building when they're on their way.

even behind-the-scenes moments. Whether it's a joyful baptism, a heartfelt worship night, or a simple gathering over coffee, these glimpses tell a story of connection, faith, and belonging. They help people feel the warmth, love, and spirit of your church, even before they step through the doors.

- **Engage with your community by responding to reviews:**

Google allows visitors to leave reviews and ask questions about your church. Responding to these promptly helps build trust and show that you are active and engaged in your community – thanking people for their kind words or addressing any concerns with care. It's a great way to show your church is welcoming and attentive. Share posts about upcoming events, services, or special celebrations to keep your profile active and inviting. If anyone has questions about your church – like service times, accessibility, or what to expect when they visit – respond directly to help them feel more informed and comfortable before they even step through the door.





# How to find and edit your church's profile

URC Churches on Google are 'owned' by the administration of the Communications/Ministries offices of the URC. All ownership rights are held together at Church House for safeguarding reasons, but the profiles are managed and updated by local churches.

*Note: If you are an LEP, you will need to choose which denomination will hold the ownership rights to your page.*

## **About your Google church ownership**

To help protect each church's Google Business Profile and ensure continued access, all URC profiles are now owned by Church House. A designated person at your local church will still have full management access, but overall ownership stays with us at Church House – so your church keeps full use of the profile without the risk of losing access.

We've made this decision based on past experiences where a site manager moved away, became unavailable due to illness, or passed away. In those cases, the church was left without access to their own pages, which was understandably frustrating and difficult to resolve.

By keeping ownership at Church House, we can make sure your church never loses access. If there's ever a gap – like if the current volunteer steps down – we're able to step in and help manage the site until a new person is appointed. This approach is simply about safeguarding your church's online presence and ensuring everything keeps running smoothly, no matter what happens. These actions will ensure that the church access is safeguarded for all eventualities.



## TIP

If you are part of a local URC, chances are the URC offices have already set up a Google Business Profile for your church.

**Here's how to find and manage it:**

Please avoid creating a duplicate Google My Business profile, as this can cause confusion for Google. If your church already has a duplicate profile, kindly reach out to us at [urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk](mailto:urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk) and we'll help resolve the issue.

### Step 1: Search for your church's name on Google

Start by typing your church's name into Google Search or Google Maps. Your church's profile may appear directly in the search results or on the map. If you find your church's profile, click on it.

### Step 2: Make updates

If you are already a manager, you can update all the details, including:

- Church name and address,
- Church phone number or, if there is not one, your Synod office number
- Service times
- Website or Facebook link etc (if applicable)
- Photos of your church and activities
- Hours of operation
- Special events
- Correct positioning on Google maps
- You can also respond to reviews, add posts about upcoming events, and answer any questions people may ask about your church



# How to become a Manager of an existing Google Business Profile

If you'd like to help manage your church's Google Business Profile – whether that's updating information, posting events, or responding to reviews – you can become a **Manager** of the profile (you can have several managers per church). Here's how to request access:

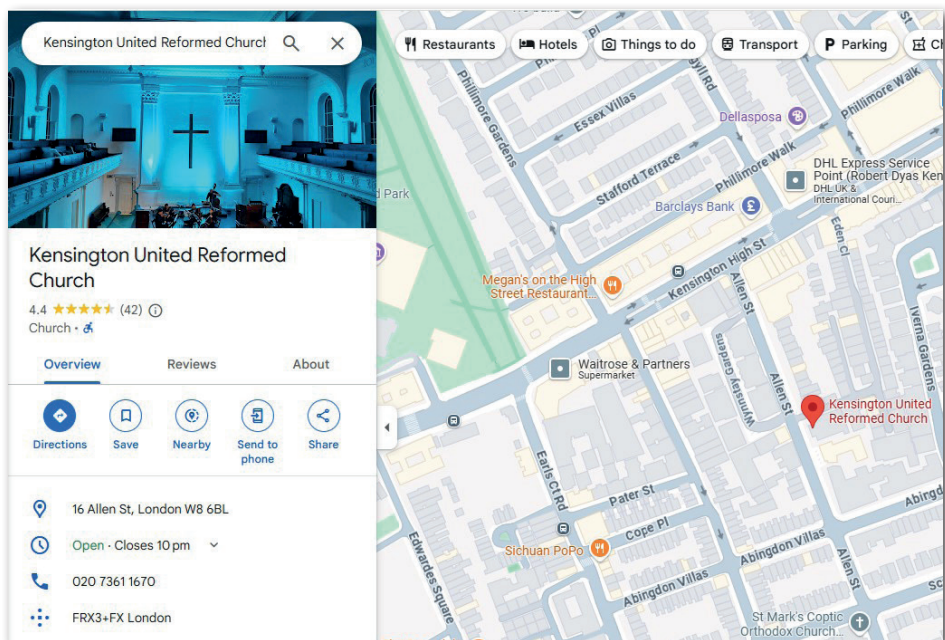
## Step 1: Confirm permission with your church secretary

Before submitting your request to Church House, please confirm with your own Church Secretary that you have your churches approval to manage the profile on their behalf. Please supply your Church Secretary with the name and email address that will be used and then you can submit a request to Church House, as described below. Once your Google online request has been received Church House will check with your Church Secretary to confirm that you have received this permission, which may cause a delay of a few days. You will then be granted Manager access to your church's Google Business Profile (you will receive confirmation by email).

## Step 2: Submit a request via Google Business Profile

To request Manager (*not ownership*) access to your church's Google Business Profile, you can submit an online request by follow these steps:





1. **Sign in to Google:** Make sure you are signed in with your Google account. If you don't have one, you'll need to create it.
2. **Search for your church:** On Google or Google Maps, search for the business or place you want to request management access to.
3. **Find the “Request Access” option:**  
You should see an option such as “Request Access” on the business profile page. This is typically located under the “Own this business?” or “Is this your business?” section. Some interface options can appear differently depending on the device. You may need to try from a different device or browser.
4. **Fill out the Request Form:**  
Click **Request Access**, and a pop-up will appear asking for your contact information and relationship to the business.



## 5. Wait for the response from URC Church House:

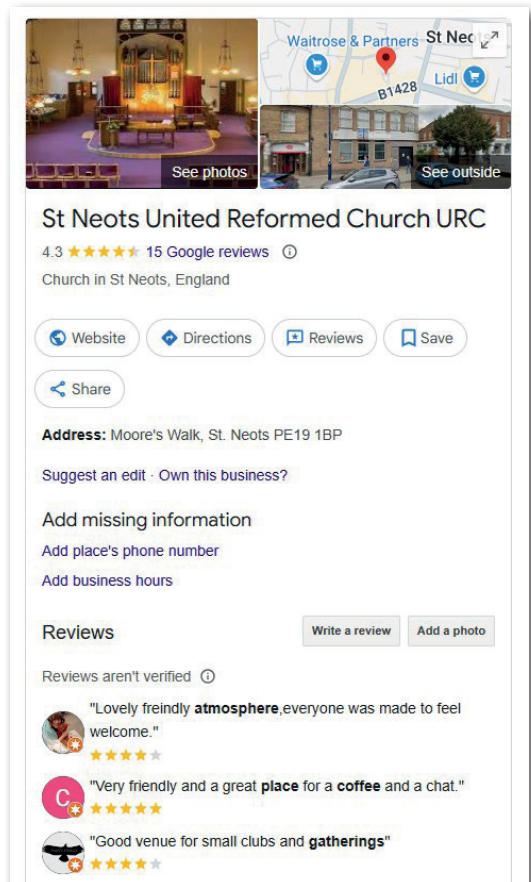
Once you submit the request, Church House staff will receive a notification. A response may take a few days as they need to verify your details.

## Alternative Step 2: Submit a request via Church House

You may email church house directly with your request at **urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk**. Please include your church's full name, address, and a URL linking to the google link you are requesting access to, along with the name and the email address that you are requesting access for. A response may take a few days as we still need to verify details.

## TIP

Keep your content and photos up to date by refreshing them at least once a year. It's a simple way to show that your church is active, vibrant, and engaged in the life of your community.





# What to do if there's no profile for your church?

If you've searched for your church and can't find an existing profile, don't worry! It's easy to get one set up.

- 1. Contact the URC office:** If you believe your church does not yet have a Google Business Profile, you can get in touch with the URC staff for assistance. Just email **[urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk](mailto:urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk)** to let them know you need a profile for your church. The URC office will create and help set you up for managing your Google church profile.
- 2. Provide the required information:** When contacting the URC office, be ready to provide your church's full name, address, and any other relevant information to help create the profile.

## Conclusion

In today's digital world, Google Business Profile is a powerful tool for churches to connect with their community, share updates, and increase visibility. By regularly updating your church's Google profile, you can ensure that new and returning visitors can easily find information about your church, its services, and activities. If your church does not yet have a profile, don't hesitate to contact the URC office at **[urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk](mailto:urcgoogleaccount@urc.org.uk)** to get started.

Your church's profile is an opportunity to shine online, share your mission, and welcome new members into your congregation. Take the time today to explore and update your church's profile – **your community is waiting to find you!**



This is one in a series of booklets designed to give information to those working and volunteering within the United Reformed Church.

The booklets can be read and downloaded at  
[www.urc.org.uk/information-guides](http://www.urc.org.uk/information-guides)



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© United Reformed Church, April 2025  
Written by Sara Foyle  
Produced by the Communications Team of the  
United Reformed Church  
The United Reformed Church, Church House,  
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT  
020 7916 2020

[www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

