CHURCH EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

(Almost) Everything You Need to Plan a Successful Event

You wanted to plan an event... and now you're holding a small book!

Do not be discouraged! Read on….

Events are vital to our church community - they help us grow in faith, build relationships, and reach out to our neighbors. This guide simply helps ensure that every event—whether large or small—is set up for success from the very beginning. Think of it as a helpful companion rather than a burden.

Our Commitment to Faithful Stewardship

As faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us—including finances, facilities, volunteer time, and energy—we approach event planning prayerfully. This helps us to:

- **Discern together** whether an event aligns with our mission and serves God's purposes
- **Use our resources wisely** by planning thoroughly and avoiding unnecessary expenses
- **Honor our community** by ensuring events don't overburden volunteers or create scheduling conflicts
- **Make decisions collectively**, trusting that the Spirit moves through our leadership and community wisdom

Please know that most of these steps will feel natural and intuitive once you get started, and you're not expected to do this alone—your Ministry Chair and the church office are here to support you every step of the way.

> ***Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." - 1 Peter 4:10***

Thank you for using your gifts to serve our community and for embracing this process as an act of faithful stewardship! May God multiply your efforts!

TRINITY
United Church of Christ
of Collegeville

532 East Main Street, Collegeville PA 19426 610-489-4223 hello@collegeville.church
Pastor Rev. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green 302-542-4107 pastor@collegeville.church

The Planning Process

STEP 1: Event Request Form

Start here! Submit this form to get your event approved by leadership before making any commitments (suggested timeline: as soon as possible but no less than 6-8 weeks before proposed event date)

STEP 2: Wait for Approval

DO NOT make any commitments, contact vendors, or make any purchases (including related costs) until approved. Wait for approval from Ministry Chair, Council, and Pastor (if needed). Once approved, you'll receive confirmation and can begin detailed planning

STEP 3: Follow the Event Planning Guide

- Use the suggested timeline checklist to stay organized
- Submit Purchase Request Forms (enclosed) to Ministry chair for all expenses BEFORE they occur.
- Coordinate all marketing and communications yourself
- Hold a required volunteer meeting before the event to communicate gratitude and expectations. Please see the Planning Guide for more information.

STEP 4: Complete the Evaluation Form

After the event, share the blessings and graces you experienced, and opportunities for growth. Help us make future events even

Need Help? Contact your Ministry Chair or the church office at hello@collegeville.church.

Let's get started! →

TRINITY
United Church of Christ
of Collegeville

532 East Main Street, Collegeville PA 19426 610-489-4223 hello@collegeville.church
Pastor Rev. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green 302-542-4107 pastor@collegeville.church

EVENT REQUEST FORM

⚠️ **IMPORTANT: Complete and obtain approval BEFORE making any commitments to vendors or venues.**

Date of Request: _____ **Requested By:** _____

Ministry/Committee: _____

Event Name: _____

Proposed Date(s) (check church calendar in office for conflicts)**:** _____ **Alternative Date(s):** _____

Time: Start: _____ End: _____ _____ **Setup Time Needed:** _____

Location: □ Church Building (room(s): _____) □ Off-site: _____ □ Outdoor

Target Audience (check one)**:** □ Members Only □ Members + Guests □ Community Outreach □ Other: _____

Expected Attendance: _____

EVENT PURPOSE

Describe the event and its purpose:

How does this event embody Christ's love and align with our mission to welcome all, actively serve those in need, inspire others on their faith journey, or serve as a resource to the wider community?

Is there a Bible verse or passage that inspires this event or that will be useful in guiding it? If so, which?

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Total Estimated Expenses: $_____

Major Expenses Categories

- Venue/Rental: $_____
- Food/Catering: $_____
- Entertainment/Speakers: $_____
- Supplies/Decorations: $_____
- Marketing/Printing: $_____
- Other: $_____ (_____)

Estimated Income: $_____

Major Income Categories

- Registration/Tickets: $_____
- Donations: $_____
- Fundraising: $_____

Net Impact (□ Income/□ Expense): $_____

Budget Source: □ Ministry Budget (specifiy: _____) □ General Fund □ Special Fund □ Self-Funded

Additional Financial Notes:

RESOURCES NEEDED

Volunteers Needed: _____ people for approximately _____ hours each (include setup/cleanup, registration, hospitality, Technical

Church Resources: □ Tables (#____) □ Chairs (#____) □ Kitchen □ Projector/Screen □ Other: _____

Additional Requirements: (permits, insurance, special needs, background checks, etc.)

Event Organizer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Ministry Chair Approval: _____ **Date:** _____

Council Approval: _____ **Date:** _____

Pastor Approval*: _____ **Date:** _____

*Pastor approval is generally not needed unless Pastor's presence is required or desired at the event)

Submit this form to Ministry Chair. *Once approved, the Event Planning Guide will help organize event details*
Please note that it is a general list to help guide you in the planning. Your event may involve more or less planning.

TRINITY
United Church of Christ
of Collegeville

532 East Main Street, Collegeville PA 19426 610-489-4223 hello@collegeville.church
Pastor Rev. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green 302-542-4107 pastor@collegeville.church

Purchase Request

Please complete and submit this form to the Ministry Chair, Finance Chair, or Pastor for approval.

Date:	
Name of Person Requesting Purchase	
Ministry or Event this Purchase is for	
Date Needed	
Amount Requested	$
Payment Method* (check one)	□Check Payable to: _____ □Church Credit Card □Events Credit Card □Cash
Vendor Information (Name of Store or Contractor name and address)	
Additional Project Requirements: Please describe any related costs, labor, permits, or ongoing commitments this purchase may require (e.g., installation, training, maintenance, volunteer time, etc.	

**All tax-exempt purchases MUST be made using a church credit card, check, or cash. IRS rules forbid the use of personal funds for tax exempt purchases. No sales tax should ever be paid for any goods or services.*

List of Items to be Purchased (If applicable, or attach itemized estimate from Vendor)

Quantity	Description	Cost

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Approved By**: _____ Date: _____

Declined on: _____

Remarks: _____

*****If total cost is more than $500, Council approval and vote are required.***
For costs of less than $500, Ministry Chair and/or Pastor may approve purchase unless the budget amount of the ministry that is benefitting from the purchase has been met or exceeded. In that case, church council will need to approve the purchase.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY *Budget Account Name/Number:*

TRINITY
United Church of Christ
of Collegeville

532 East Main Street, Collegeville PA 19426 610-489-4223 hello@collegeville.church
Pastor Rev. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green 302-542-4107 pastor@collegeville.church

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Event: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Coordinator: _____ **Ministry Chair** _____

Use this checklist to stay organized after your event is approved. Please note that this list serves as a general guide and therefore cannot include all steps necessary for all events. For every step, always consider:

***WHAT** needs to be done and **WHAT** is needed to complete it, **WHO** will do it, **HOW** will they know, **WHEN** does it need to be done by.*

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BUT PREFERABLY ABOUT 6-8 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT AND AFTER EVENT HAS BEEN APPROVED

□ Add event to church office and online calendar (email hello@collegeville.church with date, time, location). Any calendar conflicts should have been resolved prior to the Event Request.
□ Reserve rooms/facilities needed
□ Submit all Purchase Request Forms
□ Verify budget is available for all expenses
□ Start recruiting volunteers

4 WEEKS BEFORE

Marketing & Communications - *Nothing happens automatically - you must coordinate all announcements*

□ Email hello@collegeville.church for bulletin (due Tuesday for Sunday inclusion).

- Include exact wording and dates needed

□ Email hello@collegeville.church for newsletter (due 15th of February, May, August, November)

- Include exact wording and any needed information.

□ Plan website/social media posts (coordinate with admin, provide full wording)

□ Setup registration system if needed

Signage & Banners - *Nothing will be ordered or installed unless you arrange it*

□ Banner needed? If yes: ($30-80, allow 2 weeks)

- Size (Normally 2x6 or 4x8)? _____ Who will design it? _____
  Where will it be installed? _____ Who will install it? _____
- Ordered by: _____from: _____ Order date: _____

□ Plan directional signs and needed displays
□ Assign decoration responsibilities

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

Volunteer Coordination

□ Confirm all volunteer positions filled
□ **Schedule required volunteer meeting** (Date: _____ Time: _____ □onsite □ online)

- **REQUIRED for all events - must be held before event day whenever possible**
- Brief on assignments and responsibilities
- Review event details and timeline
- Communicate behavior covenant (included) and church policies
- Answer questions and address concerns □ Create volunteer contact list
  □ Explain reimbursement policy (only church card purchases are tax-exempt)

Food & Hospitality (if applicable)

□ Finalize menu
□ Coordinate volunteer cooking or order catering
□ Reserve kitchen
□ Plan setup and clean up
□ Order/gather supplies
□ Note any dietary restrictions

1 WEEK BEFORE

□ Confirm all supplies purchased
□ Double-check volunteer commitments
□ Create setup timeline for event day
□ Create handouts and any other information that will help volunteers on the day of the event.

DAY OF EVENT

□ Setup crew arrives: _____ AM/PM
□ Room setup complete
□ Registration/welcome area ready
□ Food prep/serving areas ready
□ Emergency contacts available:

- Coordinator: _____ (Phone: _____)
- Ministry Chair: _____ (Phone: _____)
- Church Office: _____ (Phone: _____)

AFTER EVENT

□ Cleanup completed (please note that the event team is responsible for putting all things away. Please do not leave boxes or other items behind for the sexton to clean up unless this has been agreed upon with the sextons. Please do not use any of the classrooms or office space as long-term storage space. All rooms will need to be cleaned prior to their next use.
□ Equipment returned to proper locations
□ Complete financial reconciliation and submit to Ministry Chair.
□ Send thank you notes to volunteers
□ **Complete Event Evaluation Form and return it to the Ministry Chair or Office**

QUICK REMINDERS

✓ All purchases require Purchase Request Forms
✓ Tax-exempt purchases ONLY with church card/funds.
You cannot put tax exempt purchases, per IRS rules, on personal cards pay them with personal money.
✓ One volunteer meeting is required for all events (before event day whenever possible)
✓ Coordinate ALL marketing yourself - nothing happens automatically. Communication is the key.
✓ Banners take 2 -4 weeks and can be costly - plan ahead
✓ Bulletin deadline: Tuesday before Sunday
✓ Newsletter deadline: 15th of February, May, August, November

---

Questions? Contact Ministry Chair or Church Office

Planning completed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Remember: You are not alone in this work!

God has called you to this ministry, and the Holy Spirit will guide you through the planning process. Lean on your church family, ask for help when needed, and trust that God will provide what is necessary for this event to bear fruit.

"Let all that you do be done in love." - 1 Corinthians 16:14

May your efforts bring glory to God and blessings to all who participate!

TRINITY
United Church of Christ
of Collegeville

532 East Main Street, Collegeville PA 19426 610-489-4223 hello@collegeville.church
Pastor Rev. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green 302-542-4107 pastor@collegeville.church

Behavioral Covenant

We follow Jesus Christ who taught us that the greatest commandment is to "Love God and love our neighbor", and who declared to those who would follow him that we should, above all, "Love one another".

This covenant reflects our commitment as a community of faith to love God, love our neighbors, and love one another.

Our Purpose:

United in God's love and guided by God's spirit, we exist to faithfully share God's love with all and to serve all.

Our Mission:

To embody the love of Christ by welcoming all, actively serving those in need and by inspiring others to join us on our journey. We do this through:

- *Worship that balances traditional and progressive theology.*
- *Activities that empower people, enrich their lives, and help them grow in their faith.*

Our Vision:

Be an inclusive and vibrant community that, through its building, outreach, and missions, serves as a vital resource to the wider community. And where through worship, service and other programming, an ever-increasing number of people explore, find, growth in and live out their faith.

WE ARE A CHURCH OF LOVE AND GRACE

To live out our mission and vision, we need to be intentional about how we treat one another.

From the very beginning, followers of Jesus have struggled with how to live together in community. The early church faced conflicts, misunderstandings, and hurt feelings - which is why Paul spent so much time teaching about love, patience, forgiveness, and unity. We are no different. This covenant is our commitment to navigate those inevitable challenges with grace, honesty, and love - just as the early Christians learned to do.

And so, in the spirit of love and grace and with the help of God, we commit to:

Grateful Hearts *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

We are grateful for this community and the gift of belonging to something larger than ourselves. We recognize that we do not always get it right, and we are thankful for God's grace as we learn and grow together. We are grateful for one another, embracing our differences as gifts that strengthen our community.

Respectful Relationships *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.*
(1 Thessalonions 5:11)

We will build each other up, not tear each other down. We will treat one another with genuine respect and love, not engaging in degrading or mean-spirited language. We honor each person's gifts and participation in our shared life. We will be hard on problems but gentle with people, remembering that we are all doing our best.

Authentic Communication *Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:25)*

When we have concerns or disagreements, we will talk directly with the person involved rather than talking about them to others. We will not be involved in gossip or triangulation. If someone begins to talk to us about another person rather than going directly to them, we will gently remind them of this covenant, encourage them to speak directly with that person, and remove ourselves from the conversation so as not to perpetuate gossip. We will speak for ourselves, listen with open hearts, and assume good intentions. We know that conflict is natural—it is how we handle it that matters.

Compassionate Understanding *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)*

We will listen respectfully and ask clarifying questions as needed. We will truly listen to each other's perspectives, recognizing that different viewpoints can help us see more clearly. We will seek to understand and encourage, rather than judge. We will focus on issues rather than personalities, responding with empathy. We know that staying curious is better than being certain.

Embracing Unity *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*
(Ephesians 4:3)

We are a church built on the foundation of Christ's love. We will focus on common goals, not positions or opinions. We will seek unity not by demanding everyone think alike, but by choosing love over being right. We will honor and support the decisions we make together, trusting that God works through our community even when we do not all agree.

When Things Get Difficult

When someone feels this covenant has been broken, we follow this path toward healing and reconciliation:

First, speak directly with the person involved, just the two of you, in an effort to seek resolution and re-establish better communication and relationship. Do not talk about the issue with others before you have spoken directly with the person. Most misunderstandings can be resolved through honest, caring conversation.

If there is not a satisfactory response or resolution, bring a second person with you to talk together with the person involved. The purpose of this other person is to make sure that words or actions have not been misunderstood by either party, and to serve as a witness to ensure that emotions and personal viewpoints do not cloud the bigger picture or damage the greater good and mission of Trinity.

If there is still not a satisfactory response or resolution, contact the church council, either in person or in writing, to document the issues and make the council aware of how the behavioral covenant has been violated. At that time, the church council will look into the matter and decide what steps need to be taken.

Throughout this process, we follow Jesus's teaching in Matthew 18 about addressing problems with grace and patience.

.

Matthew 18:15–20 (NIV)

15 If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

We commit to living by this covenant, and we give each other permission to gently remind one another when we fall short. We are all in this together, learning to love as Jesus loves.

TRINITY
United Church of Christ
of Collegeville

532 East Main Street, Collegeville PA 19426 610-489-4223 hello@collegeville.church
Pastor Rev. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green 302-542-4107 pastor@collegeville.church

CHURCH EVENT EVALUATION FORM

Event Name: _____ **Event Date:** _____
Event Organizer: _____ **Ministry/Committee:**
_____

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Actual Attendance: _____ **Originally Estimated:** _____

Attendance Breakdown:

- Church Members: _____
- Regular Attendees/Families: _____
- First-time Visitors: _____
- Community Members: _____
- Children: _____

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: _____ **Was attendance higher, lower, or about what you expected?** □ Higher □ About as expected □ Lower

Comments on attendance:

_____

_____

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Total Volunteers Used: _____ **Originally Estimated:** _____

- Did volunteers seem engaged and enthusiastic? □ Yes □ Somewhat □ No
- Were volunteer roles clearly defined? □ Yes □ Somewhat □ No
- Did volunteers receive adequate training/instruction? □ Yes □ Somewhat □ No

Comments:

_____

What volunteer challenges did you encounter?

_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for improving volunteer coordination:

_____

_____

FINANCIAL OUTCOME

Final Expenses: $_____ **Budgeted:** $_____ **Over/Under:** $_____

Income Generated (if any): $_____ **Projected:** $_____ **Over/Under:** $_____

Net Financial Result: $_____ (surplus) / $_____ (shortfall)

Were there any unexpected expenses? □ Yes □ No **If yes, explain:**

Financial notes and lessons learned:

EVENT LOGISTICS & ORGANIZATION

What logistical issues arose?

What worked exceptionally well?

MINISTRY & MISSION IMPACT

Did this event embody Christ's love and fulfill its intended purpose? □ Yes □ Partially □ No **Explain:**

Examples of how we embodied Christ's love and lived out our mission:

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Overall, how did participants seem to respond to the event?
□ Very positive □ Mostly positive □ Mixed □ Mostly negative □ Very negative

What specific positive comments did you hear?

What concerns or complaints were expressed?

Would participants likely attend a similar event in the future? □ Yes □ Maybe □ No

---

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE

Would you recommend doing this event again? □ Definitely □ Probably □ Maybe □ Probably not □ Definitely not

If yes, what changes would you make?

LESSONS LEARNED

Top 3 things that worked well:

Top 3 things to improve for next time: 1. 2. 3.

Overall Event Rating: □ Exceeded expectations □ Met expectations □ Fell short of expectations

Additional Comments:

Evaluation Completed By: _____ Date: _____

Ministry Chair Review: _____ Date: _____

Recommendations for Council/Leadership:

This evaluation will be kept on file and referenced when planning future events. Thank you for your event leadership!