



Co+Create Network Guide USING FREE DESIGN TOOLS FOR BETTER GRAPHICS October 2019

Co+Create Network
for Church Admins and
Communicators

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Overview

This guide covers the basics of how to use the online tools Pixabay and Canva for creating original graphics for your church events, social media pages, and much more.

Pixabay

Pixabay.com offers free-to-use photos, illustrations, vectors, and even video clips. You can use Pixabay to obtain royalty free pictures and graphics on virtually any subject. Other royalty free photo websites include Upsplash.com and Pixels.com. Which site you use is personal preference.

Canva

Canva.com is an online graphic-design website. It uses a drag-and-drop format and provides access to a variety of templates, vector images, graphics, and typefaces. The tools can be used for both web and print media. The free version is great and will serve most of your needs, however there are more features available with a membership fee of about \$12 per month.

Overview on How To Create Graphics in Canva

Select the type of graphic you need, or enter your desired dimensions. You can go to “Templates” to see a list of possible design template sizes and uses. Once you select a template you can change the text, typefaces, colors and graphic elements such as photos and icons to suite your needs. You can upload your own graphic elements, such as your church logo, using the “Uploads” tab on the menu to the left of the screen. This is also where you can search for specific elements to add to your design. If a graphic has the Canva watermark over it, it is not free and you will need to pay for it or subscribe as a member before you download. If you don’t want to pay for your design, you can avoid this by deleting the “paid” element and replacing it with something similar from Canva or Pixabay. Once you are finished editing your design, select the download arrow towards the upper left of the screen, choose your file type, hit download, and enjoy your custom graphic!



Stock Photo and Design Template Uses and Limitations

Between Pixabay and Canva, you are able to design endless custom graphics for your church. No matter the event or format you need, you will be able to create something of professional quality. However, stock photos and design templates are not appropriate for every situation. For example, if you want to portray life in your church, it's better to use a real photo of your church building or congregants versus a slick-looking stock photo. You want to convey authenticity in your graphics, as well as professionalism. Use your best judgment about when and where stock photography makes sense.

Similarly, design templates have their limitations. While they provide high quality, fast design solutions, they can sometimes lack detail and continuity with your brand. If you are creating graphics that need to closely reflect your church's brand, such as a logo, consider whether a pre-designed template can really meet your needs or if you would be better off finding a professional to assist you.

Still Have Questions?

The Co+Create Network hosts an online Zoom meeting on technology and communication topics every month. Our meetings typically take place on the third Thursday of the month from 4:00-5:00 pm. To join us, go to www.rmucc.org and click on Co+Create Network to register.