TELL YOUR STORY

UNIFIED COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
INDIANA-KENTUCKY CONFERENCE

IKC UCOM

Guidance to help congregations make themselves known in their communities.

1. Lean into storytelling.

Short, authentic stories shared on social media, in local newspapers, or through simple video clips can highlight the ministry, people, and impact of the congregation. Rural communities respond strongly to personal connection. Most small church marketing centers around "come to worship" or "come to bible study" without offering a compelling "why" in the marketing. "Be part of this community because of ...." This is often a much harder question to answer than it sounds, and groups should take a non-trivial amount of time trying to answer it.

2. Build partnerships with community organizations.

Visibility grows when churches collaborate—hosting shared events, opening space for local groups, or showing up at community gatherings. Presence is often the most effective form of marketing. Let them use the space, free, without hassle. Clean up after them without complaining. Get people in the door!

3. Use invitational, not institutional, messaging.

Instead of leading with programs or schedules, focus on why the congregation exists: welcome, belonging, hope, and service. People connect first to meaning, then to details. I think the UCC brand helps here, though some smaller congregations seem to be timing in trying to use it.

4. Celebrate small wins publicly.

A photo of a mission project, a story about someone helping, or even a simple “thank you” to the community for its support helps reinforce the church’s role as a neighbor and partner.

5. Equip members to be ambassadors.

Personal invitation remains the most effective form of growth. Helping members share their experiences—through a simple script, a shareable social post, or a story—can make a big difference. Invite people to make the post during worship or a meeting - peer pressure works!

A RESOURCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM

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