



THE
bridge app

Relational | Missional | Local

Getting More from The Bridge App



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Our Journey 2025

Christian Reformed congregations and leaders have identified specific goals that we are individually and collectively striving towards, and have expressed these goals as the Our Journey 2025 'Milestones'.

Milestones

Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God calls the church to live a life grounded in scripture, shaped by spiritual disciplines, and centered around intentional discernment.

Listen to the voices of every generation, shaping us for ministry together.

God has blessed us with rich diversity in our churches, including the diversity of people representing many different ages. Let's become places that value the perspectives, leadership, and gifts of all generations.

Grow in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation, and welcome, sharing our faith as we build relationships with and honor the cultures of our neighbors and newcomers.

God has blessed us with rich diversity in our churches including a variety of races, ethnicities and cultures. In order to embrace this diversity fully, we must become places of active listening and repentance in pursuit of shalom, places of hospitality and welcome towards all people, and places of justice and reconciliation.

Share the gospel, live it missionally, and plant new churches in our neighborhoods as we discover how to connect with our local and global ministry contexts.

God calls us as individuals and congregations to embody Gospel witness everywhere and in all of our life. This includes practicing the way of Jesus in our neighbourhoods and the world, and dedicating abundant resources (time, talent, treasure) to this cause.

Pray

Developing a 12-month prayer calendar with a focus on our community



Include the prayers of your church family in your personal prayer life, and submit your own prayer requests as they arise, so others can pray for you.

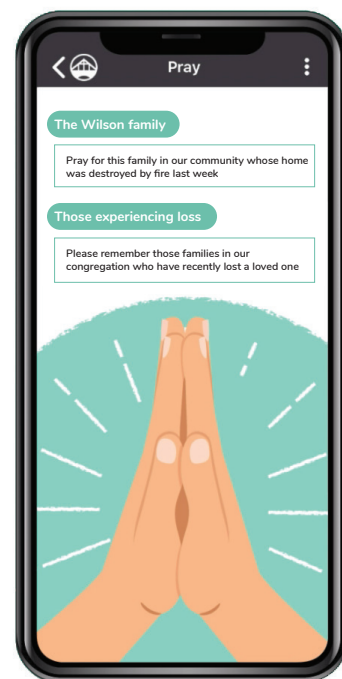
Pray

We have listed some ideas for utilizing the PRAY function to supplement, compliment and contribute toward a culture of prayer within the local church. This reflects the Our Journey 2025 objective to **Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Solicit input from pastors, elders, deacons, ministry leaders, staff and the congregation, in order to develop a list of needs within the community that the local church serves. If your church has a prayer coordinator, that person could prepare a monthly post with items that members of the congregation are asked to pray for during that month. This could also be assigned to an elder or a volunteer.

Assemble the list of prayer needs into 12 logical groupings/topics, and then assign one grouping to each month of the year, to be the area of prayer focus for that month. Use the Pray function to share some prayer bullet points with the congregation, and then also give priority to this topic during worship service prayers.

To assist with planning, below are some examples of prayer points around a variety of topics. Local churches are encouraged to prepare their own list by drawing from some of these examples and based on their awareness of local needs and issues.



January

Our local schools, administrators, teachers, students, bus drivers, school trustees

February

Seniors and shut-ins in our community/ neighbourhood, those with disabilities, ride services to bring seniors to appointments, social activities, spiritual care for seniors and shut-ins

March

Food bank and those it serves, volunteers, suppliers, service clubs, community organizations

April

Medical professions, doctors, nurses, hospitals, dentists, walk-in clinics

Etc.

Continue with other topics/themes for the remaining months of the year:

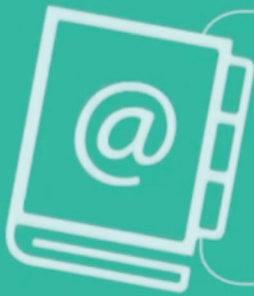
- local elected officials
- police, fire department, ambulance and paramedics and other emergency services
- snow plow operators and road maintenance
- retailers and the local economy
- the homeless, the unemployed and under-employed, young people seeking first job
- coaches of local sports teams and leaders of youth activities
- farmers/food producers
- pastors and spiritual leaders in our community
- the local environment and natural resources
- Federal government, Prime Minister and Cabinet, local MP, staff, critical issues
- Provincial government, Premier and Cabinet, local MPP, staff, critical issues
- single parent families and the struggles they face



- **Decide who will coordinate the prayer campaign (pastor, elder, prayer coordinator, other).**
- **Give the coordinator(s) permission to post Announcements and Prayers (Portal/Organization/Manage My Organization/Mobile Application/then under 'Approved email addresses' add the email addresses of the users who will be able to directly post an Announcement or Prayer. They can then do so by sending an email to the email addresses shown below the list of Approved Email Addresses).**
- **The coordinator(s) can now prepare the content, and post it to either the Announcements or Pray function of the app using the 'post by email' method outlined above.**
- **Another option is for the coordinator to prepare the entire year of prayer-related content in advance, and have the local Bridge App admin create 12 monthly posts, each scheduled to begin on the first day of the designated month, and expire at the end of the month.**

Directory

Building relationship connections,
especially with newcomers



Add your contact information to your church's membership directory. Include a photo of yourself or your household.



Directory

Every church desires to be a welcoming place, where members know each other, feel genuinely connected, and easily know who to reach out to with any ideas, questions or concerns.

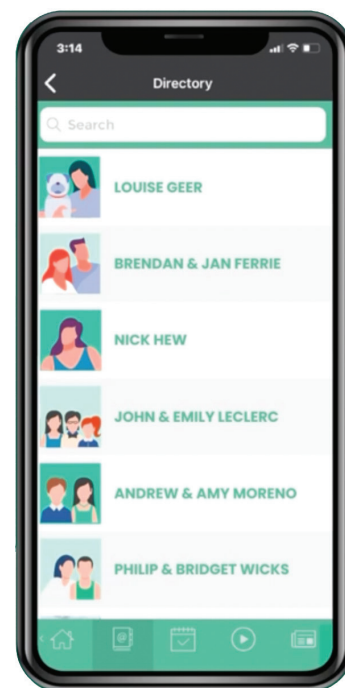
When it comes to the relational aspects of a church's culture of hospitality, the responsibility rests with all individual members. However, there are a variety of ways that leaders and administrators can help to create the right environment and lead by example to foster an environment that is **welcoming and conducive to building relationships within the congregation and among newcomers.**

One such example is to actively use the photo feature within the Directory function on The Bridge App. This allows all app users to immediately put names to faces, and to quickly recognize all members – especially newcomers and those outside of their social circle. It also enables new members to more quickly get to know the congregation and feel 'at home'. Let's face it, a quick introduction and chat with someone before or after worship is not always sufficient for retaining a name.

Bridge App administrators can play a positive role in creating greater hospitality by encouraging all members to upload and update their Household profile photo. One of the best ways to achieve this is by directly approaching all those in leadership positions, asking that they upload a photo to the Directory. Examples of such leaders would include:

- Members of Council, Board of Directors, committees, etc.
- Staff and Ministry leaders
- Bible study groups
- Personally contact new members to request a photo for posting in Directory

As more and more people upload or update their photo, you will hopefully see growing momentum throughout the entire congregation. Use bulletins and electronic newsletters to encourage those who have yet to upload their photo.



For those who may feel they lack the technical ability to upload a photo from within the app, invite them to email their photo to the church office so that the Bridge App administrator can upload it for them.

It is recommended that the local Bridge App Administrator(s) regularly review the Directory/Household information from within the portal, and update any information (e.g. births, marriages, deaths). Adult children who are living at their parents' home should be assigned with their own 'Household' within the app. This not only acknowledges that your congregation recognizes them as an adult, but it is also necessary for donations made via the Give function to be credited to the correct donor, since donations are recorded by household.

Sample Announcement:

Posting your individual or family photo to the Directory in The Bridge App is an easy yet effective way of helping new members to feel connected and welcome. To upload a photo, simply launch the app, and select your listing from the Directory. Then click on the 'camera' icon in the upper right to either take a photo or select from your photo album. Or, email a photo to the office and we will upload it for you.



- Approach everyone who is in a leadership role, asking them to upload a photo to the Directory
- Follow-up by asking those who did not upload a photo to send one by email to the Admin (before posting an announcement to all members, try to create momentum by having a large number of photos already posted to the Directory)
- Post an Announcement in the app, as well as in the church's bulletin or newsletter, explaining the process for uploading a photo and encouraging all members to do so
- Approach a volunteer photographer within the congregation, and hold a 'Photo Day' when individual and family photos can be taken (e.g. before or after the service) and have the Admin upload those photos to the Directory

Spiritual Growth

Going deeper before and after Sunday's message



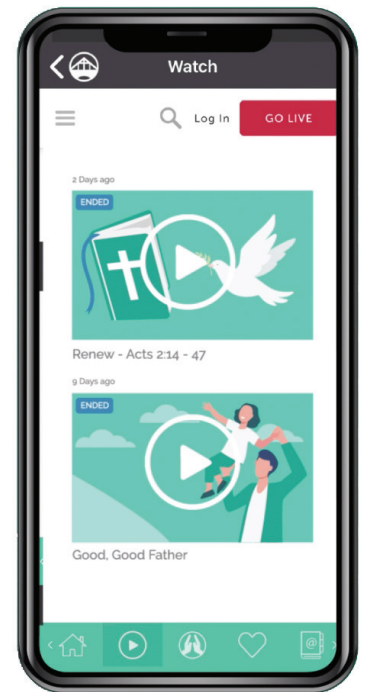
Spiritual Growth


In addition to providing an always-available Bible and daily devotionals, The Bridge App can also be used in other ways to **cultivate practices of spiritual discipline within your congregation and equip members to live lives that are grounded in scripture.**

One example is to use the Announcements function of the app to communicate with your congregation, by posting some Bible passages, questions and readings/reflections to assist members in preparing for and following up on Sunday's message.

By investing a few minutes to prepare a post on Thursday or Friday that helps members to prepare for Sunday's message, and a follow-up post on Monday, you can assist members to retain more of the message and explore ways to integrate it into their daily lives.

When posting via the portal, these Announcements can be scheduled with start and end dates, so you can prepare this content in advance and have it automatically publish at your preferred date and time. And if posting via the email method, many email programs also allow you to schedule when the message is sent. In this way, The Bridge App makes it easy and convenient to engage with your congregation before and after Sunday's message.



 **TIPS**
Did you know you can schedule your messages/emails (e.g., Friday and Monday mornings at 7:30 am)

Some examples of content include:

BEFORE SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

- A Bible passage to read to prepare for the message
- A devotional or other article to reflect on
- Questions to consider (individually, family, or small groups)
- Images, art, visuals that relate to the message
- A YouTube, Vimeo or custom video to watch
- A song to listen to (with link to a YouTube, mp3 or mp4 file)

AFTER SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

- A Bible passage to assist in recalling or reflecting on the message
- A post-sermon summary with key bullet points
- An 'action for the week' to put the message into motion
- An invitation to members to ask follow-up questions
- A song to listen to that reinforces the message, or calls it into action

○ Provide your pastor with this document, providing a description and various ideas for utilizing The Bridge App prior to and after Sunday's message

○ Ensure that your pastor's email address is listed among the email addresses that can directly post an Announcement or Prayer (Portal/Organization/Manage My Organization/Mobile Application/Approved email addresses) and provide them with the recipient email address for posting 'public' or 'members only'

- memberprayers@crc.etadvance.com → delivers Prayers to verified users
- publicprayers@crc.etadvance.com → distributes to guest users and verified users
- memberannouncements@crc.etadvance.com → delivers Announcements to verified users
- publicannouncements@crc.etadvance.com → distributes to guest users and verified users



Who Does What

Navigating the network of staff,
ministries and programs



Who Does What

Church organizational structures can be complex and confusing to understand, especially with regular turnover of office-bearers, committee and board members, staff, and volunteers. Even if members know who the current office-bearers and committee members are, it's not always clear where the responsibility lies for various ministries or programs.

Local Bridge App administrators are encouraged to use the app, and other means, to provide members of the congregation with a clear guide to the programs and ministries that your church offers, and the necessary information to enable members to connect with the right person. This is beneficial to long-time members and newcomers alike.

There are a few different ways to accomplish this, depending on what works best within your church.

- Create a Custom Button that links to Google doc or PDF of committees, ministries, programs, etc., with either a key contact person or a full list of officebearers, members.
- Create a Shared Folder that contains documents about the various committees, ministries, programs, boards, etc.
- List all ministry, committee, and program representatives under 'Personnel' in the Church Details listing (accessed from the Home screen of The Bridge App – see image)
- Add ministry, program and officebearer contacts to the top of the Directory, as if the 'role' was a 'household' (A-Elders, A-Deacons, A-Church School, A-Youth Leaders, A-Nursery, etc.)



No matter which method works best for your congregation, local administrators are encouraged to find the method that works best in your context and use The Bridge App to provide a clear guide to who does what within your congregation.

- Go into the portal (Organization/Key Personnel) and add the information for each person that you wish to list under your church's Key Personnel. Advise your members through bulletin, newsletter and Bridge App announcements that key personnel information is available via the app and where to access it.
- Alternatively, gather or prepare the necessary document(s) outlining 'who does what' in your congregation, and then either create a Custom Button that links to a specific document, or a Shared Folder that contains multiple documents and resources.



Announcements

Closing the gap between those 'inside'
and 'outside' the loop



Follow your church's
latest announcements,
news and events.

Announcements

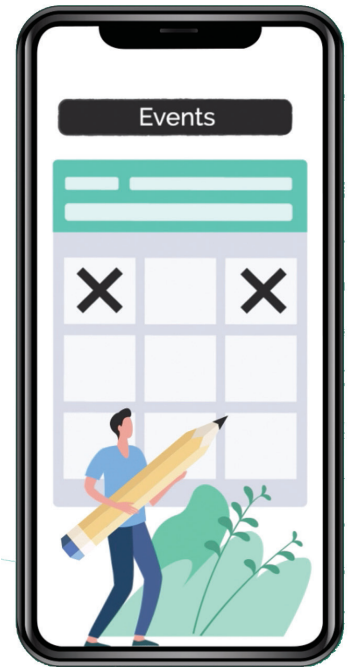
Timely and effective communication with members is a challenge for many congregations. And whenever there is something that needs to be communicated, the process usually requires that the message needs to be sent out by a particular person – typically the church office administrator. By the time committee reports and council minutes reach the membership, it has become old news and far too late for any meaningful input from members.

An even more problematic situation is when a select group (family, friends, work colleagues) is repeatedly the first to hear about important Council or committee matters. This creates a division within the congregation that separates those ‘in the know’ from those who are outside the loop.

Through the Announcement or Shared Folder functions on The Bridge App, there are ways to ensure that all of your members have access to critical information, and at the same time.

When it comes to posting an Announcement on The Bridge App, a local church administrator can designate various members of the congregation to post directly to the app. This means that the Clerk or Secretary of Council can post an Announcement containing meeting highlights immediately following a Council, Elders or Deacons meeting. The same thing applies to the committees or programs within the church. The leaders of the Cadets, GEMS, Coffee Break, Friendship, or youth ministries can communicate directly with the congregation via a Bridge App Announcement without having to ask the office administrator to circulate the message on their behalf.

You will certainly want to put some guidelines in place regarding content and frequency, but allowing select committees and ministries to post directly to The Bridge App can streamline and expedite communication within your congregation.



Another effective option is to create a Shared Folder on a Google drive, where Council and committee minutes and reports are saved, and which can be accessed via the 'Shared Folder' option on The Bridge App. You can find additional information about creating Shared Folders and Shared Documents in the Administrators Manual for The Bridge App.

- Ensure that the email address for the Clerk or Secretary of Council (or whichever governing body or committee you wish) is listed among the email addresses that can directly post an Announcement or Prayer (Portal/Organization/Manage My Organization/Mobile Application/Approved email addresses) and provide them with the recipient email address for posting 'public' or 'members only'
 - memberprayers@crc.etadvance.com → delivers Announcements to verified users
 - publicannouncements@crc.etadvance.com → distributes to guest users and verified users
- If you prefer to post minutes, agendas, reports and other documents in a Shared Folder, simply create the folder (see "Did You Know What You Are Missing? - SHARED FOLDERS BUTTON") and provide permission for the Clerk or Secretary of Council to add/edit documents within that folder.



Ways to Serve

Helping members to use their gifts and time in rewarding ways



Ways to Serve

Beyond a spiritual hunger and the desire to worship God and grow closer to Him, there are other factors that attract and retain local church members. These include relationships, programs, and the opportunity to share the gospel by expressing it missionally and practicing the way of Jesus within the local congregation and the community by using one's gifts and resources in meaningful ways.

However, few churches have a deliberate and coordinated strategy for helping members to identify and apply opportunities to use their gifts through volunteer service. As a result, the call for volunteers is often in reaction to an urgent need, and can be perceived as being driven by desperation rather than a deliberate search for the most qualified person.

While urgent needs will always arise, as is the case within any organization that largely depends on volunteers, churches can help to recruit volunteers and serve the needs of their members by preparing, maintaining and communicating a listing of all volunteer opportunities. And The Bridge App offers an excellent way to make that information readily available to all members of your congregation.

It is important to communicate volunteer opportunities in a way that reaches all members of your congregation. Often, when recruiting volunteers, the tendency is to focus on those who have 'done it before' or are already actively serving in similar capacities. A good communication strategy will help to ensure that your message also reaches new members, young people, recently retired members, and those simply looking to utilize gifts that may have been overlooked in the past.

While there are various ways to share information about volunteer opportunities through The Bridge App, here is one example that can be used within the app and through other communication channels within your congregation.



1. Begin by simply having someone take an inventory and prepare a list of all volunteer opportunities within the congregation (church ministries and programs, as well as outside agencies/organizations that the church partners with, such as food banks, thrift stores, etc.)
2. Where possible, attempt to include brief information about the required commitment, benefits of serving, how this opportunity fits into the mission of the local church or its service to the community, and provide key contact information (name, phone #, email address).
3. Once the inventory of opportunities is complete, either save the document in a Shared Folder or create a Custom Button that links to the document or PDF. The advantage to having a Custom Button or a document within a Shared Folder is that the information can be updated easily, while linking to a PDF will require the creation of a new PDF every time there is a change to the information.

Your members will now have access at any time to the various volunteer opportunities available through your congregation. At certain seasons of the year, you can also post an Announcement encouraging members to review the volunteer opportunities, and embed into that announcement a link to the Shared Document or PDF.

Alternatively, if your congregation already has a number of existing documents relating to volunteer roles, you can create a Shared Folder (Volunteer Opportunities) that contains all relevant documents and resources.



- **Prepare a sharable (Google) document that outlines all of the opportunities to volunteer within your congregation, along with other details regarding skills, expectations, time commitment and who to contact.**
- **Create a Custom Button (Volunteer Opportunities) that links to that document.**

Resources

We have provided ample resources available in a variety of formats – including PDF documents and videos – to assist you in your administration of the features



Resource Material

Access the resources below, and more, from the Resources menu in the portal.



Pray

- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Prayer Admin](#)
- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Using The Bridge App To Enhance The Prayer Ministry In Your Church](#)
- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Submitting a Prayer From The Bridge App](#)
- [Video Showing How to Post Prayers and Set Up Prayer Admins](#) (portal/ Help/Videos)
- [Town Hall – March 8, 2022](#)
Focused specifically on the prayer feature of The Bridge App (portal/ Help/Videos)
- [Setting Up the Prayer Function](#) (portal/Help)

Directory

- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Print Directory](#)
- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Upcoming Birthdays](#)
- [Video Showing How to Create a Print Directory](#)

Spiritual Growth and Announcements

- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Adding Announcements](#)

Who Does What and Ways to Serve

- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Custom Buttons](#)
- “Did You Know What You Are Missing? – [Shared Folders Button](#)



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