

# **Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM)**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Community Partner**

Keith Devine and Brenda Henry

### **Student Consulting Team**

Olivia Van Zandt

Xavier Xia

Teresa Yang

## **Background**

Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM) is a cooperative ministry comprising ten ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) congregations in the greater Pittsburgh area. PLUM's ultimate goal is for each congregation to be seen as a mission outpost and it hopes to see the Gospel's mission at the center of each congregation's planning, ministry, and life. The PLUM staff consists of seven relevant members for the project. PLUM's primary method for communicating information to its current members and attracting new members is through its website.

## **Project Description**

### **Project Opportunity**

PLUM faced issues with how their organization's information was being centralized and communicated on their website. Their website is very text-heavy with redundant information, which makes it confusing to find information and difficult to navigate. PLUM's website uses Microsoft Frontpage 2003, which was discontinued in 2007, and tedious to maintain for the webmaster. The opportunity involves making the PLUM website follow current modern design values and redesigning it to address the issues stated and improve user experience.

### **Project Vision**

Our project vision was to create a Google Sites website that is easy to use for those of varying technological abilities, provides the breadth and depth of PLUM's necessary information and events, is engaging enough for someone who is looking for a church to join, and does not frustrate the webmaster or anyone working on the site behind the scenes. We hope that the easy-to-use system of Google Sites will save the webmaster time editing the website, allowing for more focus on content and engagement.

## **Project Outcomes**

The team designed and developed a new website for PLUM using Google Sites. This website is a newly redesigned, modern, and mobile-responsive website that has an SSL certificate. The new website now has a navigation bar, is less text-heavy, has less clutter on pages, and contains a public-facing events Google Calendar so users can view upcoming events in a monthly view, while continuing to show visitors all the necessary information about PLUM.

These features make the website easier to navigate and more appealing to potential visitors, allowing PLUM to attract more potential churchgoers. By building the website on Google Sites, PLUM's webmaster can now more easily maintain the website due to Google Sites's visual and easy-to-use templates. He also now maintains and backs up important website files in a Google Drive folder, rather than having all the information only available on his local computer. The team also conducted weekly meetings with the webmaster to guide him through creating the new website and equip him with the necessary experience and knowledge to continue maintaining the website moving forward.

## **Project Deliverables**

The team delivered a newly redesigned Google Sites website and a public-facing events Google Calendar. The website incorporates all the essential information required by PLUM and now serves as the official online platform for PLUM. Additionally, the Google Calendar houses all public events for PLUM members, seamlessly integrated and displayed on the new Google Sites website. Furthermore, we provided PLUM with documentation with tutorials on Google Sites and Google Calendar.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations to help PLUM sustain its progress and increase its capacity are to utilize Google Help, which offers extensive resources and official documentation for Google Sites, providing a platform for users to post questions and receive answers. The team also recommends that PLUM integrate Google Drive into PLUM's workflow, facilitating a smoother flow of information among members and connecting various aspects of the organization more efficiently. Finally, the team recommends that the website and Google Calendar be updated and maintained on a weekly basis to ensure all information and events are up to date. Finally, the team recommends having additional personnel to assist the webmaster with maintaining the website.

## **Student Consulting Team**

**Olivia Van Zandt** served as the project manager. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Business Administration and Cybersecurity and International Conflict. She will be interning at Raymond James Financial as an information technology intern.

**Xavier Xia** took the lead on Google Calendar and Website Domains for PLUM. He is a fourth-year student completing a dual degree in IS and Stats/ML with a minor in Computer Science. He will be working as a Software Engineer at Bloomberg LP upon graduation.

**Teresa Yang** served as the client transition manager and took the lead on Google Sites and design. She is a fourth-year student studying Information Systems with an additional major in Human-Computer Interaction and a minor in Business, and is pursuing UX design post-grad.