

GBUMC Name Tags: The Project

Tom Browder

2024-09-17

Introduction

This paper describes my project to create suitable name tags for use by GBUMC congregants and staff.

A. Status as of Sunday, 2024-09-15

I will continue to tweak the name tags, and welcome any suggested changes. I do plan to make the embellishment pattern (aka GBUMC logo) exactly the same as the one that appears on the bottom-right corner of today's bulletin. There are also technical issues to fix that unduly slow the generation of each name tag.

B. My motivation

In my advanced age, it is getting harder to remember names. Seeing congregants with an easily-readable name tag helps recalling the name for use in conversation. My name tag design fits that requirement.

Importantly, it also identifies one as a GBUMC congregant and is very suitable for wear at any church-related event, particularly public events such as Trunk or Treat or other outreach events.

C. Unique features of the name tag

1. If printed correctly on two-sided paper, the same design (and names) appear even if it is flipped over as happens so often when one is wearing them.
2. Dimensions, text, colors, and embellishments are easily changed.
3. They are cheap to produce: Clear plastic badge holders from Walmart (including our local "little" Walmart) or Amazon can be bought for 50 cents or less and they have pocket clips included. Suitable lanyards are also inexpensive.
4. With the current size of them, eight name tags can be printed per sheet of paper. (I know the church has a good color-capable printer.
5. They are easy to cut out and assemble.

6. Mistakes are readily corrected.

D. Producing the name tags

I have created a free, publicly available (see details below), Raku computer language program (see <https://Raku.org>) that creates the two-sided PDF sheet for US Letter paper in Portrait orientation. The program is command-line executed on computers running a GNU/Linux operating system (I use Debian). It should also run on a MacOS system when I eventually port the program to it using my wife's Mac (that is a low priority until users request it by filing an issue on GitHub OR emailing me).

Note the Mac system will have to have some Rakudo and other prerequisite programs installed (I have one to work with for my use, but check with your IT person for any computers on the church's private network).

It is also possible to port it to Windows, but that is not so easy given the weirdisms of the Windows OS preventing so many prerequisites from being ported to it.

E. Running the name tag program

The only input required is a list of names in a plain text document such as a CSV file or a Windows Notepad file. That file is provided as the only input to the program, and the output is a single PDF document suitable for printing on almost any modern printer, or viewing in most modern web browsers.

The input file must be formatted according to these rules (see Formatting notes):

- one name per line
- last-name first-name middle-name
 - in that order, middle-name is optional

Formatting notes:

- names may be separated by spaces or commas
 - in a CSV file use the first two or three cells
- the first-name (along with any middle-name) will be printed on the first line of the name tag
- the last-name will be printed on the second line of the name tag

F. Program code

The program source code is publicly available in the /dev directory of the FontFactory repository in my GitHub account (see <https://github.com/tbrowder/FontFactory>). The program file name is 'make-name-tags.raku'.

G. Technical notes

Issues to be corrected:

- Make the logo image an XObject to improve efficiency
- Crop the image to eliminate bounding transparent pixels
- Create hot links for the URL references in this document

Possible enhancements:

- Add staff position as a third line in a smaller font size

Summary

The project provides a turn-key solution to an inexpensive way to provide name tags if desired. It has been fun to do and it has added to my knowledge (and that of my Raku PDF mentor) of PDF graphics handling and clipping.

I am happy to assist in producing or helping with any part of using the name tags. I can also easily produce the PDF documents at home if I receive the input files, and then email them back to the requestor.

I am available to answer questions or provide other help in person or by email (tom.browder@gmail.com) or mobile phone (850-830-8078). (I normally don't answer unless I recognize the number, but will return your call if you leave a voice message.)