

# SEO & Web Design Best Practices

practical advice to turn your church website into a  
ministry powerhouse

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mission lab



# mission lab



CALVARY**PHX**

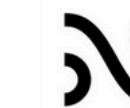
 MINISTRY PASS



 NORTH WAY  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

 GOSPEL IN LIFE



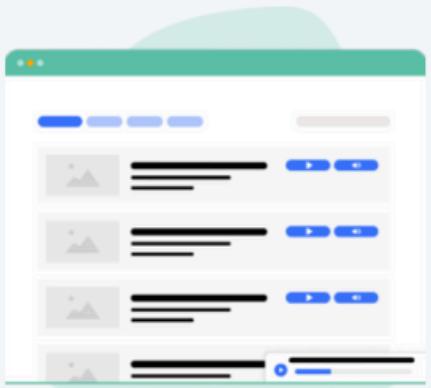
 StoryLoop

 SUNDAYSOCIAL™

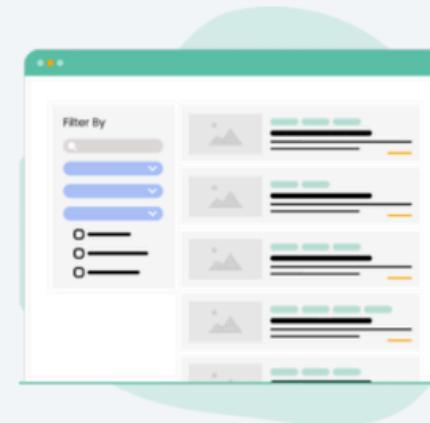


church plugins

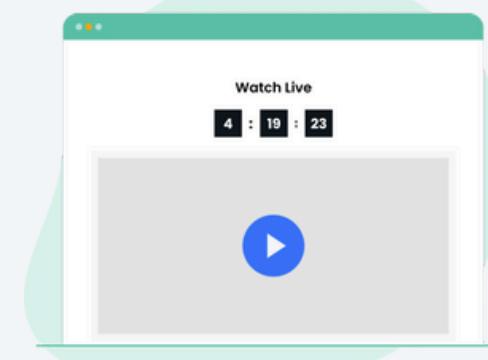
CP Sermons



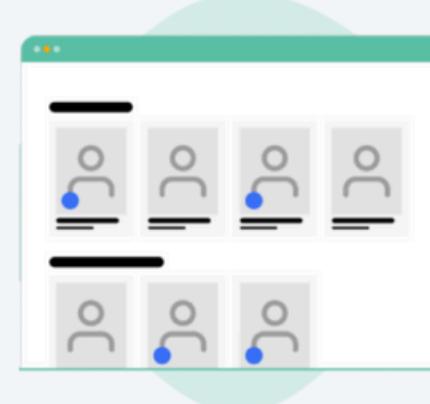
CP Groups Directory



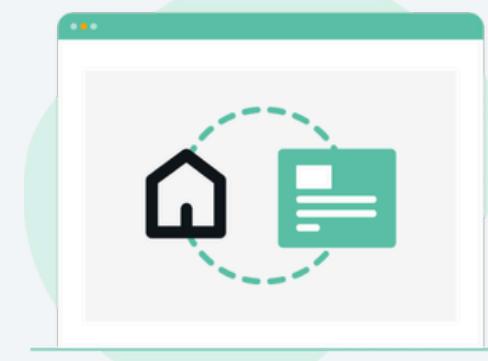
CP Live



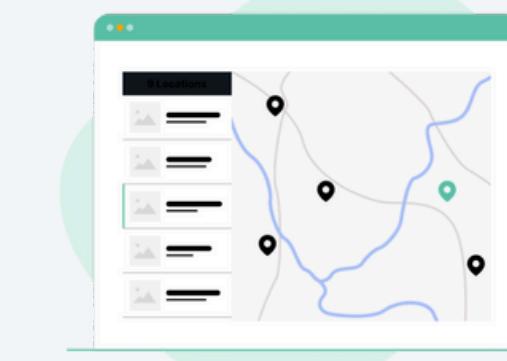
CP Staff Directory



CP Connect



CP Locations



## SEO & Web Design Best Practices

# Agenda

1

The Audience

2

Content Strategy

3

Accessibility & SEO



[missionlab.dev/citn24/](https://missionlab.dev/citn24/)

“

**Making your website welcoming and easy for people to use is a way to love people you've never even met.... It also increases the chances you'll actually get to meet them.**



# The Audience

Remembering the people we are serving

## The Audience

# 4 Audience Types

1. Prospective Visitors

2. New & Not Yet Connected

3. Engaged Regulars

4. Staff & Volunteers

# Prospective Visitors

- ✓ Snap judgements on credibility / trustworthiness (first 0.2 to 2.6 seconds)
- ✓ Do I look like I'd belong here (scan for people like me + obvious red flags)
- ✓ Some users will want to diving deeper into info about the church, the pastor, ministries, and sermons
- ✓ Logistical checks - Verifying proximity and presence/times of key ministries (e.g. Middle School Ministry)



**The Waylen Family**

New to town with 1st grade boy and 3 year old girl

# New & Not Yet Connected

- ✓ Connect (groups, relevant ministries, service opportunities, upcoming events, etc)
- ✓ Stay Informed (Emails, texts, podcasts, social media)
- ✓ Seek help or guidance (discipleship, groups, peer groups, counseling, self-serve research)
- ✓ Grow Spiritually (listen to latest sermon, find resources on a topic, learn about baptism, start giving)



**ERIN**

Shy single woman craving connection, unsure where to start

# Engaged Regulars

-  Serve (learning where there are service needs, signing up, etc.)
-  Update my data (address, family info, managing email subscriptions)
-  Manage giving (update payment info, setup recurring donation)
-  Discipleship (seeking to be mentored and to find mentoring opportunities)



**ART & ERIKA**

Struggling with their teenager and looking for wisdom from an older couple

# Staff & Volunteers

- ✓ Attempting to do great things on a limited budget
- ✓ Keep data updated and synced across systems
- ✓ Wearing lots of hats, including some that are outside of their comfort zone
- ✓ Need to rely on volunteers who may or may not be consistently reliable
- ✓ Adapting to changing or competing priorities.



**PHIL (COMMS DIRECTOR)**

Trying to balance need for process without losing site of relationship.

**EMPATHY:** putting yourself in others' shoes to understand their needs and feelings, so you can create solutions that truly help them.





# Content Strategy

Intentionality produces clarity

# Navigation Guidelines

-  Navigation is clearly visible at all times
-  No insider language in navigation items
-  No more than 5 navigation items (6th ok if a button)
-  Dropdown options are organized and no more than 7 items
-  Avoid Non-Standard Patterns

## Navigation Guidelines

# Navigation is clearly visible at all times



The screenshot shows a navigation bar with the following menu items: ABOUT, CONNECT, EVENTS (highlighted in blue), WATCH, GIVE, HELP, and BRIDGE MEMBERS.

**Contrast Checker**

Home > Resources > Contrast Checker

Foreground Color: #00E5FE (blue) | Background Color: #FFFFFF (white)

Lightness (for both colors): High (blue) / Very Low (white)

Contrast Ratio: 1.53:1

[permalink](#)

**Normal Text**

WCAG AA: **Fail**  
WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

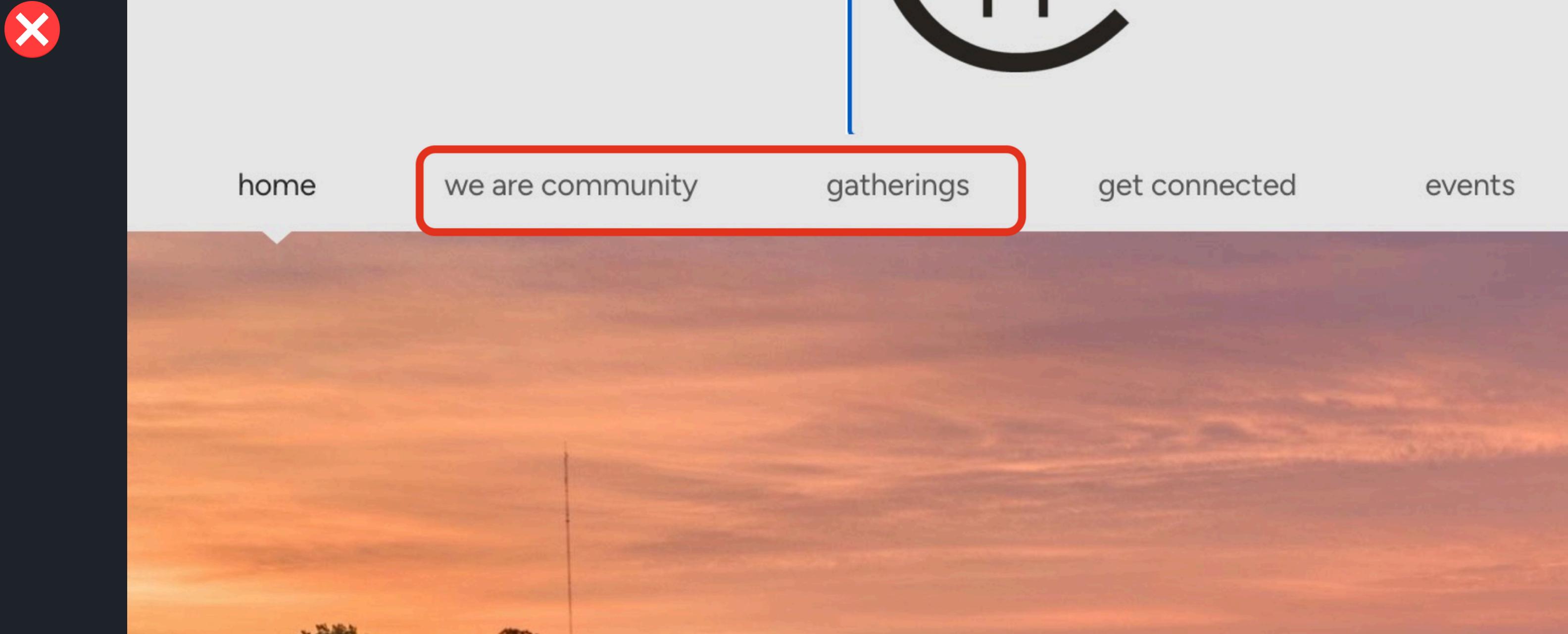
**Large Text**

WCAG AA: **Fail**  
WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

## Navigation Guidelines

# Avoid Non-Standard Language



## Navigation Guidelines

# 5 navigation items (6th ok if button)



NORTH WAY  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Visit   Connect ▾   Watch ▾   Give   SELECT A LOCATION ▾  



NORTH POINT  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

I'M NEW   EVENTS   WATCH   DONATE   JOIN US SUNDAY  



SBC

VISIT   CONNECT   SERVE   WATCH   CARE   **SELECT YOUR CAMPUS**   GIVE NOW   FOR THE VALLEY  



abundant

Watch & Connect   Locations   Get Involved   Community   Care   Next Steps   Give   Contact

About   Internship   Shop   Classes   Events   Downtown   Careers

## Navigation Guidelines

# Super Dropdowns - 5 categories max

**X**

**MARINERSCHURCH**

**01** About

- About Mariners
- Statement of Faith
- Leadership Team
- Careers
- Contact Us

**02** Watch

- Mariners Live
- Messages
- Mariners Kids Online
- Junior High: JHM Live
- High School: Upside Down

**03** Get Involved

- I'm New / Welcome to Mariners
- Join a Group
- Volunteer at Mariners
- Events
- Baptism

**04**

- PLAN A VISIT
- MY MARINERS
- GIVE ONLINE
- I BELIEVE
- MULTIPLY CAMPAIGN

**05** Outreach

- About Outreach
- Local Outreach
- Global Outreach
- City Outreach
- Disaster Relief

**06** Ministries

- Worship
- Women
- Men
- Kids
- Youth
- Young Adults

**07** Resources

- Prayer
- Chaplains
- Marriage
- Weddings & Memorials
- Mariners Cafe
- Food Pantry & Thrift Store

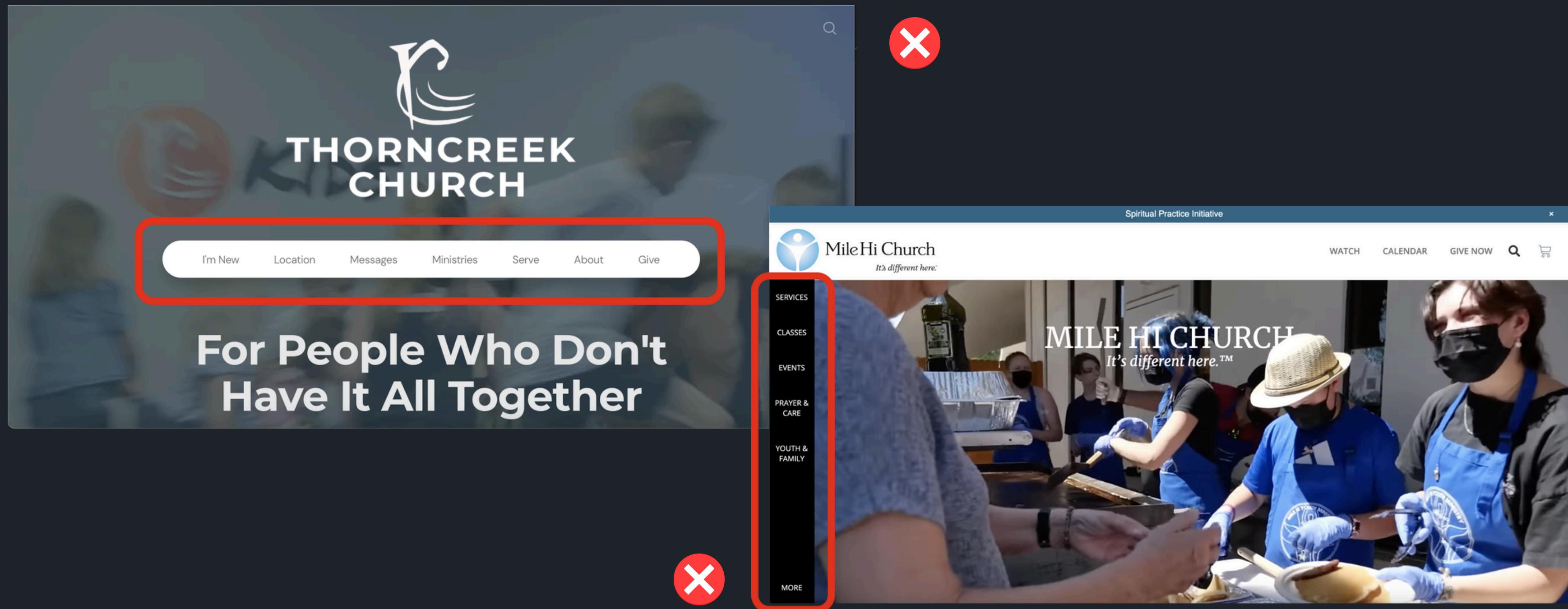
**08**

- Irvine
- Huntington Beach
- Mission Viejo
- North Irvine
- Santa Ana

SO LARGE IT REQUIRES SCROLLING ON 13 INCH MACBOOK

# Navigation Guidelines

# Avoid Non-Standard Patterns

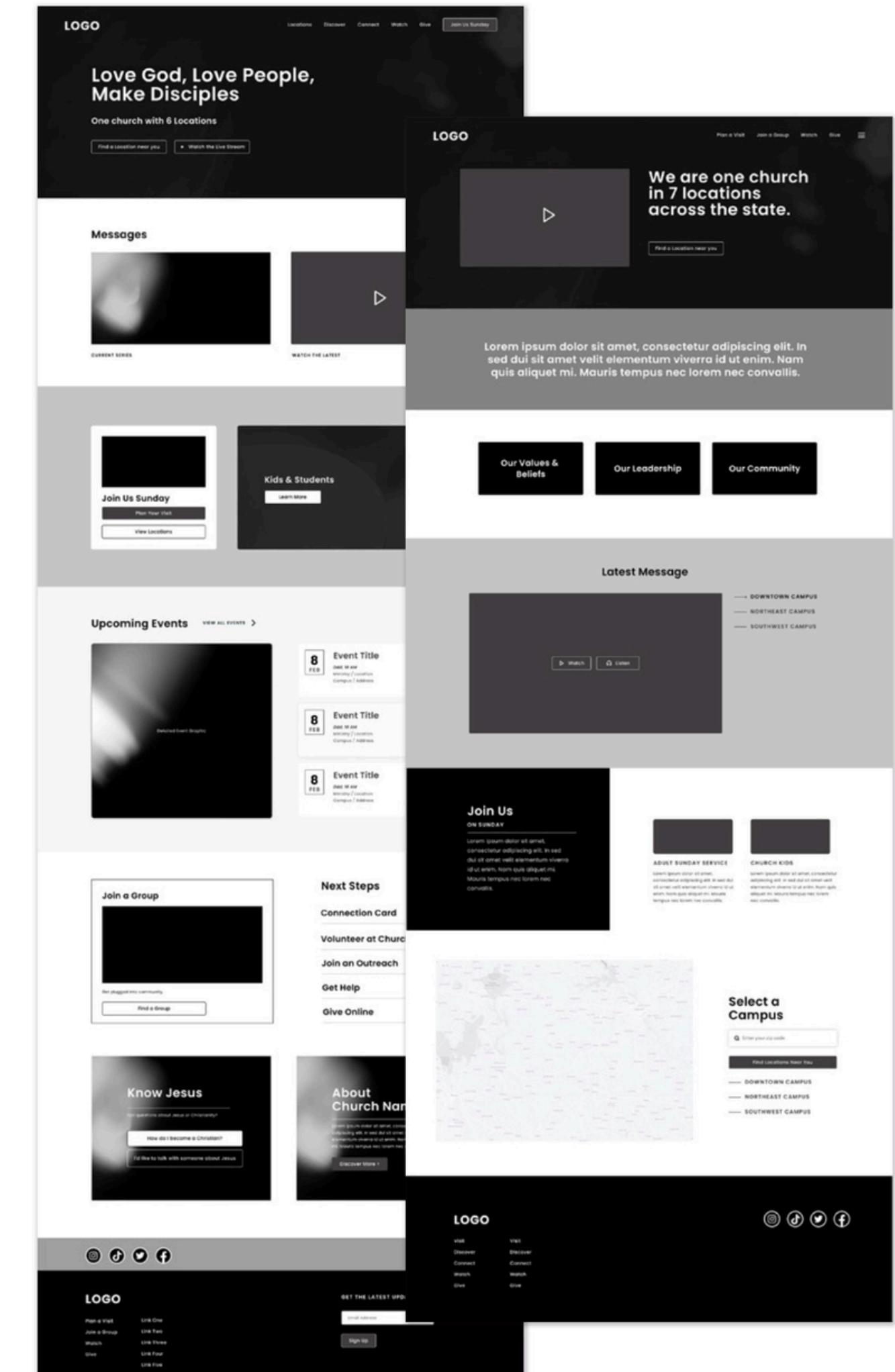


# Home Page Content

- ✓ Address or crossroads
- ✓ Kids ministry summary (what ages at what times)
- ✓ Student ministry summary (what ages, what times, where)
- ✓ Lead pastor summary
- ✓ Service time(s)

# Recommended Home Page

- Hero Banner
- Latest Message and/or Current Series
- Plan a Visit / What to Expect
- Kids / Families (ages + times)
- Events
- Groups
- Next Steps
- Select a Campus Map
- Jesus / Altar Call
- About
- Newsletter



# Primary Supporting Content

*1 click from home page or less*

-  Directions (open in google maps/new tab)
-  What to expect when visiting (Plan a Visit)
-  Latest Sermon
-  Learn About Jesus
-  Contact Info
-  Events, Ministries, Staff, Small Groups (list or general information)

# Secondary Supporting Content

*2 click from home page or less*

-  Beliefs / Statement of Faith
-  Church's Priorities (Mission, Vision, Values, Outreach Programs/Partners)
-  Denominational affiliation (if applicable)
-  Ministry Pages (Children, Student, etc)

A photograph of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored hoodie. He is looking upwards and to the right with a wide-eyed, shocked expression. His mouth is slightly open. He appears to be leaning over a laptop. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Accessibility & SEO

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Communication that is clear and searchable

# Global Settings

-  The site title includes the church's name and location
-  Google Analytics and Search Console tracking codes are installed
-  No Keyword stuffing! Write for humans and Google will reward you.
-  Add redirects for any 404 errors

# Page Titles & Headings

- ✓ Use the church's name and location where appropriate
- ✓ Consider search terms (ex: About Us vs. About Grace Church)
- ✓ Make sure every page has an H1 element
- ✓ Use headings for page sections - it doesn't matter if it *looks* like a heading, it must *be* a heading

# Images & Videos

- ✓ Use ALT tags for images that describe the picture with relevant keywords
- ✓ Do NOT put important information as text in an image
- ✓ Avoid videos with rapid cuts or strobing lights
- ✓ Avoid stock photography... people want to see an accurate representation of the church

# Colors & Contrast

- ✓ Design with color blindness and other visual impairments in mind
- ✓ Make sure your buttons and text pass accessibility standards
- ✓ Links and buttons should have clear **hover** and **active** states
- ✓ For background media, ensure a high contrast between the background and the content.

ABOUT ▾

THIS IS A C

SUNDAYS - 10:00AM

I'm New

Watch

# Accessibility & SEO Tools



A photograph showing three people in a professional setting. A woman in the foreground, wearing a grey sweater, is smiling and looking at a white tablet held by a man next to her. Another man, wearing glasses and a blue shirt, is visible behind them, also smiling. They appear to be in a modern office or study room.

# Next Steps

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Now you know, what now?

# Something is better than nothing

- 1 Start with low hanging fruit
- 2 Prioritize updates that help visitors
- 3 Set aside time each week to make the site better
- 4 Connect with church leaders about the role the website performs in the church's mission

“

**Want to get more traction with your church leaders? Reframe problems and opportunities into human-centered stories.**

# SEO & Web Design Best Practices

## Q & A

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The Audience

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Content Strategy

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missionlab.dev/citn24/

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 church plugins

 mission lab