

Fifty Under \$50

Budget-friendly outreach ideas for your church.

There are lots of ways to reach out to your community for under \$50. Here is a list to get you started. Make sure to create a Facebook Event page for any events you may have and use social media platforms to promote your offerings to the community.

1. **Stop N' Pray Day** - Set up your parking lot with a drive-through prayer lane. Have members available to either write down prayer requests or pray on the spot. Time it so that it is available either before or after school or on a Saturday morning.
2. **Date Night In** – provide free childcare for parents and provide the parents with a spaghetti dinner and a movie at the church.
3. **Community Clean-Up** – grab some trash bags and go out and pick up trash in your community or parks. Try to wear similarly colored shirts so people see you as a group. Have the day/time listed on your community calendar of events and invite the community to join in!
4. **Welcome Wagon** - Deliver welcome baskets to people who move into your community. Include baked goods or pantry items, information about your church, as well as coupons to or a list of local businesses. The Chamber of Commerce can provide you with the names and addresses of people who recently have relocated to your area.
5. **Pray for Pets** – host a Blessing of the Animals Service where people can bring their pets to be prayed for. Invite the Humane Society to bring adoptable pets to possibly match with new owners.
6. **ICU Snacks** – provide snacks for the waiting room in your local hospital's ICU unit. Leave prayer cards for people to fill out and pick them up regularly to add to the church prayer list.
7. **Wrap It!** – offer free gift-wrapping for mall shoppers. Gather donated wrapping paper, scissors, tape and ribbon throughout the year so you have enough. Check with your local mall about setting up a space. If it is not allowed or renting space is cost-prohibitive, host a wrapping event at your church.
8. **Christmas Card Ministry** – Collect donations of Christmas cards and host a day when people can write in them for shut-ins, nursing home residents, active military, and the local homeless. Make sure to attach a label with the church information on it.

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9. **Community Garden** – designate a portion of your church property for a community garden. Invite local honor society students to help cultivate in exchange for their needed community service hours. Use the vegetables for either your food pantry or a community meal at harvest. No yard space? Start an herb garden club and “spice” up your visitor bags!
10. **Trunk or Treat** – Host a Trunk or Treat at your church to provide a safe place for children to trick or treat on Halloween. Urban churches meeting in found spaces can host the same but use decorated suitcases to hold their candy offerings!
11. **Work Concessions** – put together a team of volunteers to work concessions at local high school or community sporting events.
12. **Hero Recognition** – host a lunch or dinner and invite local first responders (police, firemen, EMT, etc.) to honor them and the services they provide to the community.
13. **Coat Closet** – Gather donations of new and gently used coats of all sizes and start a coat closet for anyone that needs one.
14. **Warmth in Winter** – collect donations of hand and foot warmers, apply a label with the church information and pass them out to the homeless in your area.
15. **Reading Mentors** – host a Reading event where children can come and read to adults. Collect new/gently used children’s books and let each child take one home.
16. **Story Hour** – host a Story Hour and have members read to children. Dress up as one of the characters or as Mother Goose to make a stronger impact with the children.
17. **Lend Your Rooms** – If you have a traditional church building, offer your Sunday School rooms to groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Divorce Recovery, Eating Disorders Anonymous, Al Anon or local counselors.
18. **Blue Sunday** – host a Blue Sunday in the winter when people are most prone to SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). Bring in extra lighting, decorate the church with a beach theme (borrow summer floats, etc. from members), ask members to wear bright colors and show videos/slides of the sun or the ocean. Go off liturgy and preach about being fishers of men or letting your light shine.
19. **Art Show** – put the word out for local artists and host an art show.
20. **Community Talent Show** – host a talent show and ask local businesses to donate services and products as a sponsor.



21. **Community Yard Sale** – offer up space in your parking lot and let the community bring items to sell. Let them keep their profits but put out a church donations box for anyone who feels lead to donate a portion of their profits.
22. **ESL Bible Study** – if you have someone who is multilingual, host a Bible study in another language or especially for ESL learners.
23. **Food Pantry** – start a food pantry for your community. Even if it is only open one day a week for limited hours, you will make connections with members of your community.
24. **Free Car Wash** – host a free car wash and DO NOT take donations. You will make more of an impact if you do this as a community service that is totally money and guilt free!
25. **Church in the Park** – a great Spring or Summer idea. Get permission from your local park. Let members bring their dogs, and have church service outside. After the service you can prayer walk in the park or have a picnic!
26. **VBS Partners** – Partner with other local churches to either schedule your VBS weeks to adjoin or share materials. Adjoining weeks with different themes will help parents plan multiple church experiences for their children.
27. **Water Games** – host a Water Games day in the summer where the community can come out and cool off. Have water balloons, fill the bucket races, splash pools, and popsicles.
28. **Get Crafty!** – start a monthly craft group for arts & crafts, scrapbooking or quilt-making groups.
29. **Computer Training** – host a computer basics training day for anyone who wants to learn basic computer skills. Let the youth help out with this.
30. **Blood Drive** – offer your space to the Red Cross for a local Blood Drive. Make sure to have donuts, cookies and juice for the people donating blood.
31. **Valentine’s for Seniors** – adopt a local senior center for Valentine’s Day. Make cards and “warm fuzzies” (a red heart with a cotton ball on it) to hand out to residents.
32. **Kite Day** – host a kite flying day and provide extra string and maybe a few kites for people who don’t have a kite. Or provide materials to make one!
33. **Coupon Ministry** – Is someone in your church a coupon king or queen? Have members bring their unused coupons and ask this person to hold a workshop to share how to save with coupons. Meet once a month to weed out expired coupons and give updates on sales and deals.
34. **Wacky Pancake Breakfast** – host a free pancake breakfast and use food coloring to have colored batter in squeeze bottles and make crazy art pancakes!



35. **Coffee Shop Night** – host a coffee shop night, have an open mic, play trivia, and have people switch tables once an hour!
36. **Local Events** - Check your local city events calendar and have a group attend an event wearing matching t-shirts and carry a sign that says “FREE HUGS”. Hand out church invitation cards and invite people to your church.
37. **Snow Days** – have a snowman building event on the church lawn and decorate with signs inviting people to church. Serve hot chocolate and cookies to attendees.
38. **Finals Week Breakfast** – Get permission from your local school to provide juice and donuts or egg wraps to students taking finals on those days.
39. **Lifesavers Handouts** – purchase rolls of Lifesavers in bulk, attach a connection card or church label and hand out randomly.
40. **Doggie Treats** – Make your own doggie treats or buy them from a pet shop (making them is more fun and cost-effective). Wrap them with a ribbon and connection card and hand them out at dog parks or leave them in a large zip lock bag for future visitors.
41. **Black Friday Hot Chocolate Giveaway** – go to your local shopping center on Black Friday and hand out free hot chocolate to shoppers.
42. **Christmas Tree Giveaway** – many Christmas tree lots will give away their unpurchased trees in the few days before Christmas. Ask if you can collect these and deliver them to needy families.
43. **Plastic Bag Sleeping Mats** - Upcycle all those plastic grocery bags by starting a “Plarn for the Homeless” (plarn is yarn made of plastic) and get your group to create waterproof mats for local homeless shelters. You could even make smaller versions for an animal shelter! Here are instructions for making these mats:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr_WHW_tGSE
44. **Laundry Ministry** – leave quarters and/or laundry detergent at your local laundry mat. Or even purchase an industrial size bottle of detergent with a pump and leave small cups for measuring. Leave a note that the bottle will be refilled by the church.
45. **Coloring Books & Crayons** – purchase coloring books and crayons and leave them in the hospital waiting rooms/urgent care.
46. **Bike-A Thon** – host a bike-a-thon and have the community bring bikes to ride courses, learn about bike safety and repairs and wash their bikes. Check with local sports businesses for free giveaway items as a sponsor and ask a local policeman to talk about bike safety and bike laws.
47. **Senior Sing-a-long** – Rent or borrow a karaoke machine and host a sing-a-long at your local senior center. Make sure you have discs that have older songs that the seniors will know the words to.



48. **Graffiti Project** – paint over graffiti in your neighborhood with either solid colors or a positive piece of art. Check with local ordinances for permission first.
49. **Nursing Home Birthdays** – host a birthday party once a month in a local nursing home for all residents born in that month. Provide cupcakes and a card for the birthday recipients.
50. **Chalk Party** – purchase sidewalk chalk and host a sidewalk instant art party for adults and children.

If you have ideas like this that you would like to share with other local churches, email them to LocalChurchServices@umcom.org!

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