

Eight winter parking solutions

Even with a mild winter this year, the fear of snow always seems to linger as we anxiously await the week's forecast. So, as you trudge through the winter for a few more months, consider the parking needs of your congregation this winter and how you can provide more options during the weeks the snow does fall.

Have a disciple's heart: remember it takes extra effort to come to church in the winter

Envision the unsaved parker's dilemma if he or she is coming to your church for the first time in bad weather. Each new cleared parking space you provide opens up an opportunity for another person to hear the Gospel.

Empower the church to clear the parking lot

Call on members of your church to help shovel or plow your parking lot. Make clearing the snow into a volunteer position if you don't already have a paid staff member plowing snow. Offer a discount for the teenagers in your church looking to make money for youth camp by letting them shovel the sidewalks. Use the church to help keep your parking lots clean.

Prioritize visitor parking

Do you have signs for visitor parking? Is it close and is it obvious? Make sure you put up signs for visitor parking close to the church in locations that are easy to find. This will shorten a visitor's walk in the cold weather.

Provide parking instructions on your website, bulletin, or other handouts

Can visitors find information about parking on your website, bulletin, or other handouts? Are you a city church with street parking as the only option? Inform attendees about close parking garages, free parking spaces, and other alternatives if your church parking lot is small.

Share a parking lot with another church or business

If you are located in a busy area with several businesses or churches nearby, offer to share parking lots with others, staggering the times you use the parking lots. You'll both benefit by having access to more parking spaces.

Encourage church members to carpool

Encouraging carpooling can provide members of the church without transportation a way to get to church, and also lower the number of cars driving to church each week. Start a new ministry and post a list of willing drivers and passengers that need a ride to bring them together.

Plan for spring by the renewing of your parking plan

Now is the time to plan for your church's parking needs as you evaluate the size of your church and how easily they fit into your parking lot. Consider reconfiguring or expanding your parkway if you continue to struggle to find places to park. An expanded park lot may be exactly what you need to see growth in your congregation.

Hold a parking meeting

Hold a meeting to discuss the need for more parking if the lack of space is a problem for many churches in your neighborhood. Include the city parking and land planning department officials in your meeting and present your concerns about the limited parking available.