

SYSTEMS FRICTION SCAN

Harbor Community Church

A concise review of where your church’s digital tools may be creating unnecessary work, duplicate effort, or fragile handoffs.

WEBSITE	harborcommunity.example
PREPARED FOR	Operations Team
DATE	September 5, 2026

FINDINGS	CREDENTIALS USED	NEXT STEP
3 Specific, evidence-led observations	0 Public-facing review only	1 Prioritized implementation path

IMPORTANT CONTEXT

This scan is intentionally conservative. It identifies visible friction signals and reasonable questions to investigate; it does not assume how your internal processes work. Recommendations should be validated with the staff or volunteers who own each workflow before changes are made.

SAMPLE DOCUMENT – fictional church and illustrative findings

What we can see from the outside

A quick map of the public-facing systems and the three areas most worth investigating first.

SYSTEMS OBSERVED

Surface	Publicly visible setup
Website	Squarespace
Church management	Planning Center / Church Center
Giving	Planning Center Giving + PayPal link
Email / communications	Mailchimp + staff email
Forms / registrations	Church Center registrations + website contact form
Streaming / media	YouTube

PRIORITY OVERVIEW

FINDING 01 Two event sources The website publishes event details while registrations route into Church Center, creating a possible two-source maintenance pattern. HIGH	FINDING 02 Visitor handoff The public “Plan a Visit” form appears to submit through the website rather than directly into the church’s member system. MEDIUM	FINDING 03 Giving overlap Planning Center Giving and PayPal are both publicly offered, but their intended use is not obvious from the member-facing experience. MEDIUM
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HOW TO READ THIS

WE CAN SEE Public pages, visible integrations, registration destinations, giving links, member-facing tools, and obvious duplication or maintenance signals.	WE CANNOT SEE Internal data quality, staff ownership, permissions, automation rules, manual workarounds, or whether a visible overlap is intentional.
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Event information appears to live in two places

The website publishes event details while registrations route into Church Center, creating a possible two-source maintenance pattern.

PRIORITY	LIKELY EFFORT	AREA
High	Quick win	Events & registrations

WHAT WE OBSERVED

The public Events page contains dates, descriptions, and calls to action, while registration buttons send visitors to Church Center registration pages.

Evidence reviewed: harborcommunity.example/events • harborcommunity.churchcenter.com/registrations

WHY IT MAY MATTER

If event details are edited independently, staff may need to update the same information twice. Over time, dates, locations, or registration status can drift between surfaces even when both tools are working correctly.

RECOMMENDED NEXT MOVE

Choose one canonical source for event details. If Church Center is already the registration source, consider making it the source of truth for operational event data and keeping the website focused on presentation and discovery.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Staff update an event once. Members see consistent information everywhere, and registration status does not depend on someone remembering a second update.

VERIFY BEFORE CHANGING

Ask who currently creates events, where changes are made first, and whether website content is manually copied from Church Center or maintained independently.

The newcomer form may depend on an inbox handoff

The public “Plan a Visit” form appears to submit through the website rather than directly into the church’s member system.

PRIORITY	LIKELY EFFORT	AREA
Medium	Small project	Guest follow-up

WHAT WE OBSERVED

The Plan a Visit form is hosted on the website. Public pages do not show whether submissions create or update a Planning Center People record or trigger an assigned follow-up workflow.

Evidence reviewed: harborcommunity.example/visit • public Planning Center / Church Center links

WHY IT MAY MATTER

If submissions arrive only by email, follow-up can depend on one person noticing, forwarding, or manually re-entering information. Even a well-run manual process creates key-person dependency.

RECOMMENDED NEXT MOVE	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE
Confirm where the form data lands. If staff currently re-enter visitor details, connect the form to the existing newcomer workflow or replace it with a form that writes to the system already used for follow-up.	A visitor submits information once; the right staff member is notified; the record lands in the correct system; and follow-up status can be seen without checking an inbox.

VERIFY BEFORE CHANGING

Confirm whether an existing integration already handles this privately. Review consent, data-minimization, and who should have access before automating any sensitive fields.

Two giving paths may need clearer roles

Planning Center Giving and PayPal are both publicly offered, but their intended use is not obvious from the member-facing experience.

PRIORITY	LIKELY EFFORT	AREA
Medium	Quick win	Giving experience

WHAT WE OBSERVED

The Give page presents Planning Center Giving as the primary option and also includes a separate PayPal link.

Evidence reviewed: harborcommunity.example/give • external Planning Center and PayPal destinations

WHY IT MAY MATTER

Multiple payment methods can be intentional, but they may also create reconciliation work, inconsistent donor records, or uncertainty about which method members should prefer.

RECOMMENDED NEXT MOVE	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE
Document the intended purpose of each channel. If PayPal serves a legitimate edge case, label it clearly. If not, consider consolidating around the primary giving system after confirming finance requirements.	Members know which giving method to use, staff know why each channel exists, and donor/reconciliation workflows are as consolidated as practical.

VERIFY BEFORE CHANGING

Finance staff should confirm fees, recurring gifts, donor history, restricted funds, and any legacy commitments before changing a giving channel.

05 / RECOMMENDED PATH

Turn observations into a small, controlled improvement plan

Validate the internal workflow first. Then fix the highest-value friction without creating another platform to maintain.

A PRACTICAL 30-DAY SEQUENCE

01 Validate Confirm the actual workflow, owners, and source of truth behind each finding.	02 Fix Implement the highest-value quick win or small project with a reversible scope.	03 Standardize Document ownership and automate only where it reduces real recurring work.
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SUGGESTED ORDER

#	Finding	Priority	Effort
1	Two event sources	High	Quick win
2	Visitor handoff	Medium	Small project
3	Giving overlap	Medium	Quick win

IF YOU'D LIKE HELP

We can scope any recommendation into a fixed-price Systems Cleanup.

You can also implement these recommendations internally or with an existing vendor. If a finding is better handled by someone else, we'll say so.

Reply to the email that delivered this scan to discuss next steps.

ABOUT MINISTRYLAYER

MinistryLayer is the technical layer behind your ministry. We provide remote help for the work that falls between a church's website, Planning Center / Church Center, forms, email, giving, registrations, and other cloud tools. The goal is not to add more technology; it is to make the technology you already use require less attention.