

Multisite Church Website Approach 2: Standalone Sites

We continue our Multisite Church Website series this week by looking at "Standalone Sites." This is when churches choose to create separate sites for each one of their campuses. (By contrast, you might want to revisit [last week's post](#) on churches who keep all campuses under one digital "roof.")

This method works well when one church has multiple locations with separate preaching pastors and/or leadership teams. A church can convey that, while they are bound together in mission, each location has a unique identity. Locations have greater autonomy in developing their web presence.

We are working with [Harbor Presbyterian](#) here in San Diego to implement this strategy. Harbor chose this method because while it's one church community, each campus has its own preaching pastor and leadership team.

At Harbor, each campus serves as a local area church with shared central services. Additionally, each campus has its own visual brand, contextualizing each campus for the communities they seek to reach. The church has seven locations and is launching new ones each year, with some being as far as an hour apart.

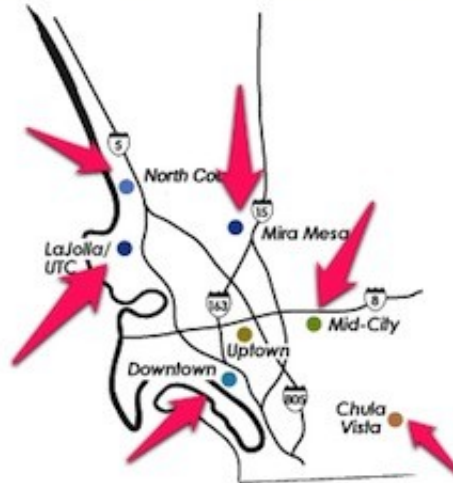
Here's what their main site looks like. Note the different locations:

HARBOR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WELCOME

Harbor Presbyterian Church is a multi-site, multi-ethnic church with worship services in multiple San Diego locations. Our strong desire is to reach out and become involved in the life of each of these communities by sharing God's love not only on Sundays, but also in other practical ways throughout the week. We would love to have you join us for one of our services or serve with us in one of the ministries you'll find as you navigate our site. Thanks again for your visit!

Click on any of the sites on the map for detailed information.



The screenshot shows the website for Harbor Presbyterian Church Downtown. At the top, the browser's address bar contains the URL www.harbordowntown.org, which is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow pointing to it. The website header includes the church's name, contact information (Sundays 9:30am, Snowflake Building, 705 16th Street, 92101, 619.699.5950), and a navigation menu with links for Home, Sunday Worship, Get Involved, News & Events, Sermons, Resources, and About Us. The main content area features a Christmas event announcement for Sunday Dec 25, 9:30-10:30AM, with details about the service and location. To the right, there are sections for Event Listing, Calendar, a search bar, Online Giving (with a dropdown for 'General Fund' and a 'Donate' button), Recent Sermon (with a 'VIEW ALL' link), and a Church Photo Gallery.

The Chula Vista site:



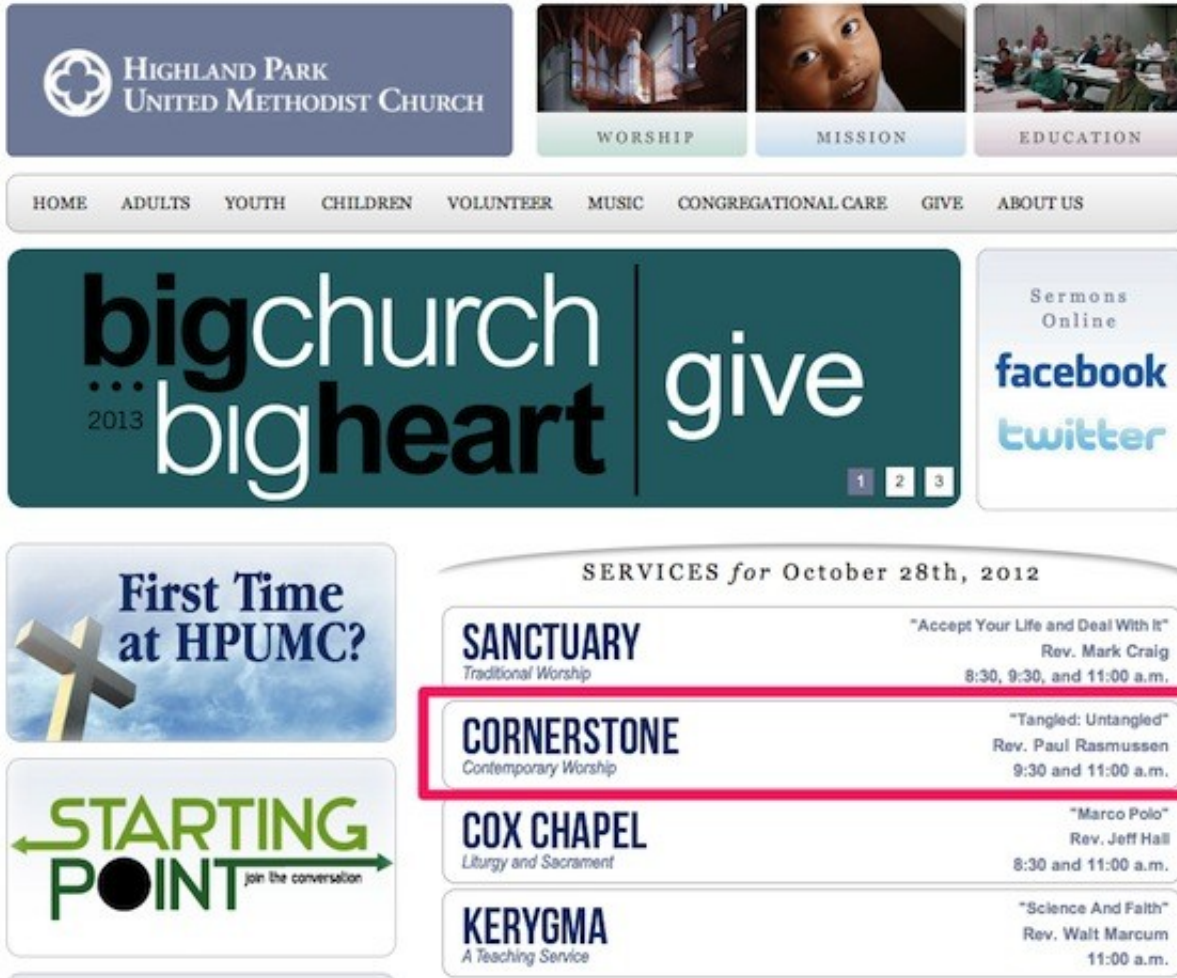
It should be noted that this approach requires a healthy amount of resources. With separate sites, each online outpost must be managed individually. Content creation, design, and updates must be accounted for on each site.

Aside from Harbor, here are a few more examples of churches who use the "Standalone Site" approach for their multisite website strategy.

Multisite Church Website Example - Highland Park

While Highland doesn't have a true standalone solution, I chose to include it because each campus site is designed differently. Visually, they're telling the user these faith communities are different. Some of campuses have their own microsite while others exist as a page on the main site. The giveaway is the URL structure.

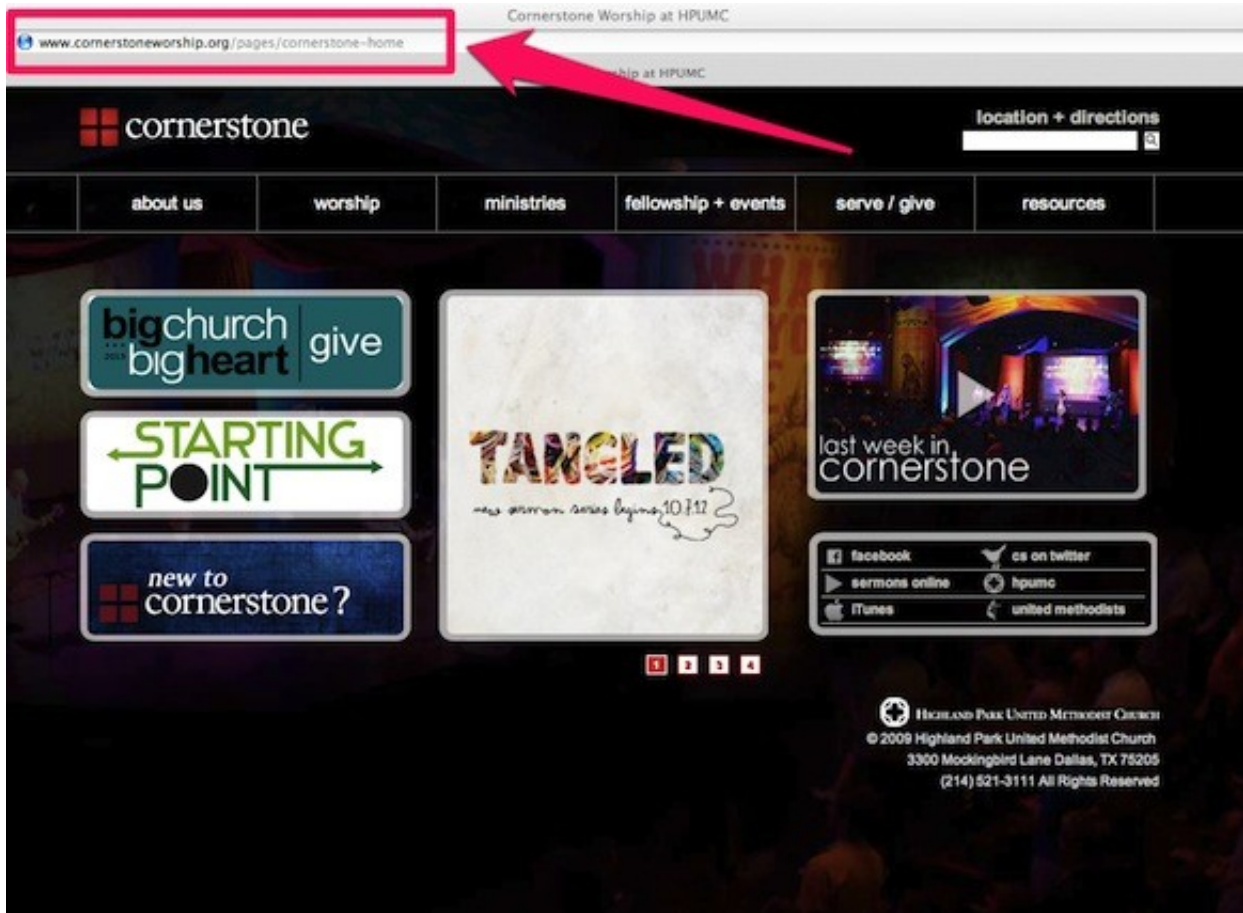
Here's the main site:



The screenshot shows the website for Highland Park United Methodist Church. At the top left is the church's logo. To its right are three image-based buttons labeled 'WORSHIP', 'MISSION', and 'EDUCATION'. Below these is a horizontal navigation menu with links for HOME, ADULTS, YOUTH, CHILDREN, VOLUNTEER, MUSIC, CONGREGATIONAL CARE, GIVE, and ABOUT US. A large banner features the text 'bigchurch 2013 bigheart give' and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter. Below the banner are two columns of content. The left column contains two promotional boxes: 'First Time at HPUMC?' with a cross icon and 'STARTING POINT join the conversation' with a dot icon. The right column is titled 'SERVICES for October 28th, 2012' and lists four services: SANCTUARY (Traditional Worship), CORNERSTONE (Contemporary Worship), COX CHAPEL (Liturgy and Sacrament), and KERYGMA (A Teaching Service). The CORNERSTONE service entry is highlighted with a red border.

SERVICES for October 28th, 2012	
SANCTUARY <i>Traditional Worship</i>	"Accept Your Life and Deal With It" Rev. Mark Craig 8:30, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.
CORNERSTONE <i>Contemporary Worship</i>	"Tangled: Untangled" Rev. Paul Rasmussen 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.
COX CHAPEL <i>Liturgy and Sacrament</i>	"Marco Polo" Rev. Jeff Hall 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.
KERYGMA <i>A Teaching Service</i>	"Science And Faith" Rev. Walt Marcum 11:00 a.m.

Here's the page for one of their more modern worship communities.



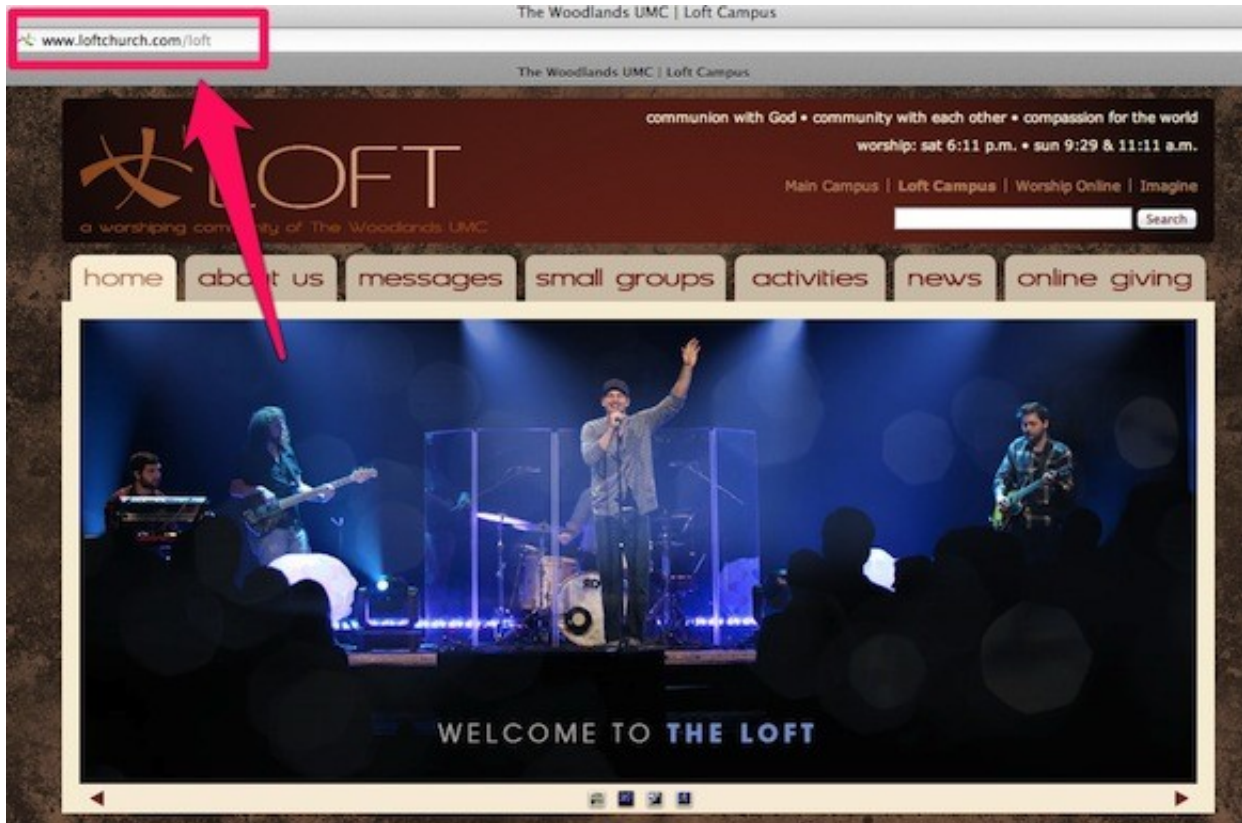
Multisite Church Website Example - Woodlands United Methodist

The Woodlands has a structure similar to Highland Park. The separate campus has its own website, URL, and theme. Visually speaking there are similarities between the main site and the Loft campus. They are distinct enough to communicate a difference.

The main site.



The Loft Campus site.



Conclusion

The Standalone Solution would work well for churches who have more of a distributed ministry model. Each campus would be responsible for updating its own content, sermons, events, and ministry info. The downside? It can take more internal resources to manage and execute effectively.

To read the previous posts in this series: [Introduction](#); [Part 1](#). To read Part 3, go [here](#).

To read more from Justin, go [here](#).