

# Overview

This design represents a very literal interpretation of the WCC Identity Manual. This manual suggests a very clean, almost sterile, presentation. I believe this approach is beneficial to the World Council of Churches for several reasons. First, a clean design (one without heavy use of drop shadows, borders, gradients, textures etc) is less contextual and therefore more hospitable to a diverse audience. Second, a clean design is less subject to design trends thereby increasing longevity and limiting the "dated" feel. Third, a clean design places a greater emphasis on content which leads the reader to a deeper level of engagement.

Visually, with very few exceptions, I have kept to the core white/black/red colors from the WCC Identity Manual. In addition to achieving the aforementioned simplicity, this approach also helps make the photographs/images "pop" which maximizes their intended emotional response. The design also makes use of generous amounts of "negative space." These negative spaces (empty areas below quicklinks, in the header between the logo and the liturgy, around the search area, etc) give the eye opportunities to rest and make the site feel more open.

The layout is based off of a 16 column vertical grid which is broken down into 4 equally sized columns (*see grid illustration*). This symmetry makes it very easy to detect the boundaries of various content sections. These generous column widths also ensure there are enough characters per line to make the copy pleasant to skim.

The following are brief descriptions of some of the design decisions and will also touch on some of the above principles.

## **Header:**

The header follows the "web site" version of the logo per the WCC Identity Manual. Its placement in the upper left acts as the foundation for the left->right, top->bottom flow of the site organization. There is ample amount of negative space in the header both to make it stand out and to allow for resizing slightly under an 800px width.

# Design Overview



## World Council of Churches

A fellowship of 349 Churches from all around the world and most Christian traditions, seeking Unity, common Witness and Service

### The Season of Lent

- » Explore the Lima Liturgy
- » Browse Liturgical Resources

» Eng | Fra | Deu | Esp | Rus

- About
- Programmes
- News
- Resources
- Member churches

 Search

sitemap | contact us

Browse our RSS Feeds

Signup for E-News

#### QUICKLINKS:

- Press room
- FAQ
- Visit us
- Youth
- Bossey institute
- Library & archives
- Job opportunities

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*The WCC is a platform for churches seeking visible unity through theological reflection, prayer and spiritual life.*

- FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians vow to continue dialogue on visions for church and society [\[read more\]](#)
- Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have vowed to strengthen their solidarity [\[read more\]](#)

### get involved: ...in ecumenical Unity!

The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from grassroots initiatives by church members and local congregations. WCC not only supports church officials in their talks. It also offers spaces and resources for each Christian to develop his/her ecumenical spirituality.

- Resources for the advent time
- Ecumenical prayer cycle
- Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

### News

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» [News Archive](#)

### Events

Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits  
21.03.09 - 24.03.09 | Bangkok, Thailand  
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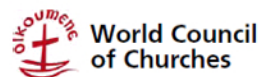
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community  
18.05.09 - 24.05.09 | Bossey, Switzerland  
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» [Events Archive](#)

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page 1637

# Table of Contents

<p><b>1a. HEADER [LOGO]</b></p>  <p><b>World Council of Churches</b></p> <p><i>A fellowship of 349 Churches from all around the world and most Christian traditions, seeking Unity, common Witness and Service</i></p>	<p><b>1b. HEADER [LITURGY]</b></p> <p>... of Lent ... Liturgy » Browse Liturgical Resources</p> <p>» Eng   Fra   Deu   Esp   Rus</p>		
<p><b>2b. NAVIGATION</b></p> <p>Programmes</p> <p>News</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Member churches</p>	<p>The WCC is:</p> <p><b>3a. FEATURE [NAV]</b></p> <p>» Witness</p> <p>Service</p>  <p><b>3b. FEATURE [GRAPHIC]</b></p> <p><i>Together, churches have a stronger voice to speak against injustice, violence, destruction of God's creation. They can join their resources for ecumenical education and be a valid interlocutor with people of other faiths.</i></p>	<p><b>3c. FEATURE [GET INVOLVED]</b></p> <p>get involved ... [GET INVOLVED]</p> <p>Be part of the churches' action in the World. Learn about situations in other countries, support WCC statements. Be part of the preparations for the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Decade to Overcome Violence - International Ecumenical Peace Convocation</li><li>Support the Ecumenical Water Network</li><li>Other ways of getting involved in concrete Witness</li></ul>	
<p><b>4. ALTERNATE NAV</b></p> <p>sitemap   contact us</p>	<p><b>3d. FEATURE [SUMMARY]</b></p> <p><b>3e. FEATURE [NEWS/STORIES]</b></p> <p>FEATURES: Indigenous theologians to suggest visions for church and society <a href="#">[read more]</a> Ecumenical conference to tackle racist patterns left by slave trade <a href="#">[read more]</a></p>		
<p><b>5. SUBSCRIPTIONS</b></p> <p>Signup for E-News <a href="#">✉</a></p>			
<p><b>6. QUICKLINKS</b></p> <p>Press room</p> <p>FAQ</p> <p>Visit us</p> <p>Youth</p> <p>Bossey institute</p> <p>Library &amp; archives</p> <p>Job opportunities</p>	<p><b>7. NEWS</b></p> <p>News</p> <p>Zambian church keen to deepen ecumenical ties 16. March 09 <a href="#">[read more]</a></p> <p>Those who are for unity need to live out Jesus' words, Focolare president says 9. March 09 <a href="#">[read more]</a></p> <p>Apply now: Stewards Programme 2009 9. March 09 <a href="#">[read more]</a></p>	<p><b>8. EVENTS</b></p> <p>Events</p> <p>Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits 21.03.09 - 24.03.09   Bangkok, Thailand <a href="#">[read more]</a></p> <p>Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community 18.05.09 - 24.05.09   Bossey, Switzerland <a href="#">[read more]</a></p>	<p><b>9. MISCELLANEOUS PRAYER/CYCLE</b></p> <p>Ecumenical Prayer Cycle</p>  <p>15 March - 21 March 2009 Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam</p>
<p><b>10a. FOOTER [CONTACT]</b></p>  <p><b>World Council of Churches</b></p> <p>120 Rue de la Corniche, P.O. Box 2100 CH-1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland Tel: +41 22 791 61 11   Fax: +41 22 791 0361 oikoumene.org</p>	<p><b>10b. FOOTER [COPYRIGHT]</b></p> <p>©2009 World Council of Churches page 1637</p>		





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- About
- Programmes
- News
- Resources
- Member churches

 Search

[sitemap](#) | [contact us](#)

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#### QUICKLINKS:

- [Press room](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Visit us](#)
- [Youth](#)
- [Bossey institute](#)
- [Library & archives](#)
- [Job opportunities](#)

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► [Unity](#)

[Witness](#)

[Service](#)



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Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have vowed to strengthen their solidarity [\[read more\]](#)

### News

Zambian church keen to deepen ecumenical ties  
16. March 09 [\[read more\]](#)

Those who are for unity need to live out Jesus' words, Focolare president says  
9. March 09 [\[read more\]](#)

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9. March 09 [\[read more\]](#)

[» News Archive](#)

### Events

Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits  
21.03.09 - 24.03.09 | Bangkok, Thailand  
[\[read more\]](#)

Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community  
18.05.09 - 24.05.09 | Bossey, Switzerland  
[\[read more\]](#)

[» Events Archive](#)

### The Season of Lent

- [» Explore the Lima Liturgy](#)
- [» Browse Liturgical Resources](#)

[» Eng](#) | [Fra](#) | [Deu](#) | [Esp](#) | [Rus](#)

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- [Resources for the advent time](#)
- [Ecumenical prayer cycle](#)
- [Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity](#)

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page 1637

## ***Liturgy:***

The colored bar and liturgical title are designed to rotate according to the current liturgical day or season (*see liturgy illustration*). I have previously written a simple conditional function (in php) that can make these items change dynamically according to the date. In terms of design, the splash of color helps to prevent the clean design from feeling too “corporate” yet is restrained so that it does not compete with the impact of the logo or the photographs. More importantly, representation of the liturgy can help focus the sense of community between the various member churches and adds another theological lens through which the site's content is engaged.

# Liturgy Palette (incomplete)

## Advent (Blue)

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Eng | Fr | It | Sp | De | Ru

**About**  
Programmes  
News  
Resources  
Member churches

SEARCH

Website | Contact us  
Browse our 600 News  
Sign up for News

CONTACTS:  
Press room  
FAQ  
Site map  
Health  
Bible Institute  
Library & archives  
Job opportunities

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The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from a common faith in Jesus Christ and from a shared commitment to social justice and human rights. The WCC will only support church officials in their role, if they offer space and resources for each Christian to develop their ecumenical spirituality.

**Resources for the advent time**  
• Ecumenical prayer cycle  
• Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

**FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians use to continue dialogue on issues for church and society (read more)  
Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have united to strengthen their solidarity (read more)

**News**  
Zambian church leads to deepen ecumenical ties (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Those who are for unity need to be on their guard (read more)  
Franchise provided leads to new church members (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Apply now: Stewardship Programme 2020 (6 March 2020) (read more)

**Events**  
Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for All (23-25 March 2020) (Geneva, Thailand) (read more)  
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community (28-30 March 2020) (Geneva, Switzerland) (read more)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**  
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## Ordinary Time (Green)

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Eng | Fr | It | Sp | De | Ru

**About**  
Programmes  
News  
Resources  
Member churches

SEARCH

Website | Contact us  
Browse our 600 News  
Sign up for News

CONTACTS:  
Press room  
FAQ  
Site map  
Health  
Bible Institute  
Library & archives  
Job opportunities

**get involved!**  
An ecumenical unity?  
The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from a common faith in Jesus Christ and from a shared commitment to social justice and human rights. The WCC will only support church officials in their role, if they offer space and resources for each Christian to develop their ecumenical spirituality.

**Resources for the advent time**  
• Ecumenical prayer cycle  
• Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

**FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians use to continue dialogue on issues for church and society (read more)  
Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have united to strengthen their solidarity (read more)

**News**  
Zambian church leads to deepen ecumenical ties (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Those who are for unity need to be on their guard (read more)  
Franchise provided leads to new church members (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Apply now: Stewardship Programme 2020 (6 March 2020) (read more)

**Events**  
Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for All (23-25 March 2020) (Geneva, Thailand) (read more)  
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community (28-30 March 2020) (Geneva, Switzerland) (read more)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**  
23 March - 25 March 2020  
Cambridge, Leam, Vietnam

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CH-1211 Geneva 1 Switzerland  
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## Advent \*3rd Wk (Pink)

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Eng | Fr | It | Sp | De | Ru

**About**  
Programmes  
News  
Resources  
Member churches

SEARCH

Website | Contact us  
Browse our 600 News  
Sign up for News

CONTACTS:  
Press room  
FAQ  
Site map  
Health  
Bible Institute  
Library & archives  
Job opportunities

**get involved!**  
An ecumenical unity?  
The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from a common faith in Jesus Christ and from a shared commitment to social justice and human rights. The WCC will only support church officials in their role, if they offer space and resources for each Christian to develop their ecumenical spirituality.

**Resources for the advent time**  
• Ecumenical prayer cycle  
• Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

**FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians use to continue dialogue on issues for church and society (read more)  
Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have united to strengthen their solidarity (read more)

**News**  
Zambian church leads to deepen ecumenical ties (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Those who are for unity need to be on their guard (read more)  
Franchise provided leads to new church members (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Apply now: Stewardship Programme 2020 (6 March 2020) (read more)

**Events**  
Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for All (23-25 March 2020) (Geneva, Thailand) (read more)  
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community (28-30 March 2020) (Geneva, Switzerland) (read more)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**  
23 March - 25 March 2020  
Cambridge, Leam, Vietnam

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CH-1211 Geneva 1 Switzerland  
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## Good Friday (Black)

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Eng | Fr | It | Sp | De | Ru

**About**  
Programmes  
News  
Resources  
Member churches

SEARCH

Website | Contact us  
Browse our 600 News  
Sign up for News

CONTACTS:  
Press room  
FAQ  
Site map  
Health  
Bible Institute  
Library & archives  
Job opportunities

**get involved!**  
An ecumenical unity?  
The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from a common faith in Jesus Christ and from a shared commitment to social justice and human rights. The WCC will only support church officials in their role, if they offer space and resources for each Christian to develop their ecumenical spirituality.

**Resources for the advent time**  
• Ecumenical prayer cycle  
• Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

**FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians use to continue dialogue on issues for church and society (read more)  
Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have united to strengthen their solidarity (read more)

**News**  
Zambian church leads to deepen ecumenical ties (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Those who are for unity need to be on their guard (read more)  
Franchise provided leads to new church members (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Apply now: Stewardship Programme 2020 (6 March 2020) (read more)

**Events**  
Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for All (23-25 March 2020) (Geneva, Thailand) (read more)  
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community (28-30 March 2020) (Geneva, Switzerland) (read more)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**  
23 March - 25 March 2020  
Cambridge, Leam, Vietnam

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## Christmas/Easter (Gold)

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A liturgy of 300 Churches from all around the world and most Christian traditions, seeking Unity, common Witness and Service.

Eng | Fr | It | Sp | De | Ru

**About**  
Programmes  
News  
Resources  
Member churches

SEARCH

Website | Contact us  
Browse our 600 News  
Sign up for News

CONTACTS:  
Press room  
FAQ  
Site map  
Health  
Bible Institute  
Library & archives  
Job opportunities

**get involved!**  
An ecumenical unity?  
The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from a common faith in Jesus Christ and from a shared commitment to social justice and human rights. The WCC will only support church officials in their role, if they offer space and resources for each Christian to develop their ecumenical spirituality.

**Resources for the advent time**  
• Ecumenical prayer cycle  
• Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

**FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians use to continue dialogue on issues for church and society (read more)  
Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have united to strengthen their solidarity (read more)

**News**  
Zambian church leads to deepen ecumenical ties (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Those who are for unity need to be on their guard (read more)  
Franchise provided leads to new church members (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Apply now: Stewardship Programme 2020 (6 March 2020) (read more)

**Events**  
Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for All (23-25 March 2020) (Geneva, Thailand) (read more)  
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community (28-30 March 2020) (Geneva, Switzerland) (read more)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**  
23 March - 25 March 2020  
Cambridge, Leam, Vietnam

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## Pentecost (Red)

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Eng | Fr | It | Sp | De | Ru

**About**  
Programmes  
News  
Resources  
Member churches

SEARCH

Website | Contact us  
Browse our 600 News  
Sign up for News

CONTACTS:  
Press room  
FAQ  
Site map  
Health  
Bible Institute  
Library & archives  
Job opportunities

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The ecumenical movement takes its strength and momentum from a common faith in Jesus Christ and from a shared commitment to social justice and human rights. The WCC will only support church officials in their role, if they offer space and resources for each Christian to develop their ecumenical spirituality.

**Resources for the advent time**  
• Ecumenical prayer cycle  
• Other ways of getting involved for Christian Unity

**FEATURES:** Indigenous theologians use to continue dialogue on issues for church and society (read more)  
Indigenous theologians and representatives from various continents have united to strengthen their solidarity (read more)

**News**  
Zambian church leads to deepen ecumenical ties (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Those who are for unity need to be on their guard (read more)  
Franchise provided leads to new church members (6 March 2020) (read more)  
Apply now: Stewardship Programme 2020 (6 March 2020) (read more)

**Events**  
Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for All (23-25 March 2020) (Geneva, Thailand) (read more)  
Pursuing Unity as an Inclusive Community (28-30 March 2020) (Geneva, Switzerland) (read more)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**  
23 March - 25 March 2020  
Cambridge, Leam, Vietnam

100 route de Ferney, PO Box 2200  
CH-1211 Geneva 1 Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 796 10 11 | Fax: +41 22 796 1060  
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## ***Navigation:***

The top level navigation design mirrors the signage inside the WCC offices as presented in the WCC Identity Manual.

The next sub level of navigation will behave as a "flyout" in the parent elements but will appear inline when content within the subnavigation set is active (*see navigation illustration*).

Keeping all of the navigation together in a vertical column solves several content challenges:

1. consistency between top level navigation and sub navigation
2. flexibility for long page titles
3. flexibility for multiple levels of subnavigation
4. continuity with the left->right, top->bottom organization

The proximity between the navigation, the search form, and the quicklinks creates a universal location for all things related to traversing the site. This improves usability yet also makes it easier to mentally "ignore" the navigation area when the user's focus is on the content. It also keeps the header area clean bringing slightly more content above the fold.

## ***Search:***

The search button follows after the navigation to reinforce its use as an alternate browsing method.

## ***RSS/Email Signup:***

The subscription services are structured together. The feed link will lead to a page listing the various RSS feeds while the mail link will lead to the email list signup page.

## ***Quicklinks:***

Though previous discussion suggested the quicklinks could be removed, I think they are useful and wanted to see if I could keep them available. They are a great way to bring attention to items that would otherwise be obscured by the nested navigation. The conciseness of the top level navigation allows for the perfect amount of space for a few quick links. Lightening their contrast prevents the quicklinks from competing with either the main navigation or the main content.

# Navigation States

## Hover States

### About

[BACKGROUND](#)

[History](#)

[WCC Annual Review](#)

[FAQ](#)

[MEMBER CHURCHES](#)

[SELF UNDERSTANDING & VISION](#)

[ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE](#)

[FAQ](#)

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

### Programmes

### News

### Resources

### Member churches

[sitemap](#) | [contact us](#)

[Browse our RSS Feeds](#) 

[Signup for E-News](#) 

QUICKLINKS:

[Press room](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Visit us](#)

[Youth](#)

[Bossey institute](#)

[Library & archives](#)

[Job opportunities](#)

## Active States

### About

**[BACKGROUND](#)**

▶ [History](#)

[WCC Annual Review](#)

[FAQ](#)

[MEMBER CHURCHES](#)

[SELF UNDERSTANDING & VISION](#)

[ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE](#)

[FAQ](#)

[MAKE A DONATION](#)


### Programmes


### News

### Resources

### Member churches

[sitemap](#) | [contact us](#)

[Browse our RSS Feeds](#) 

[Signup for E-News](#) 

QUICKLINKS:

[Press room](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Visit us](#)

[Youth](#)

[Bossey institute](#)

[Library & archives](#)

[Job opportunities](#)

## Second Level Flyout

### About

### Programmes

### News

### Resources

### Member churches

**BACKGROUND**

**MEMBER CHURCHES**

**SELF UNDERSTANDING & VISION**


**ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE**

**FAQ**

**MAKE A DONATION**

[sitemap](#) | [contact us](#)

[Browse our RSS Feeds](#) 

[Signup for E-News](#) 

QUICKLINKS:

[Press room](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Visit us](#)

[Youth](#)

[Bossey institute](#)

[Library & archives](#)

[Job opportunities](#)



## ***Feature:***

The feature area serves as an introduction to the primary work of the WCC. Therefore it shares a large responsibility in engaging visitors to the homepage. The large photographs and strongly emphasized summaries capture the viewer's attention. In keeping with the left->right, top->bottom pattern, each feature moves from summary to involvement to features and finally to resources. Some space does need to be kept below the "get involved" copy to accommodate how the content will grow as the page width is reduced in the fluid layout.

### **FEATURE – NAVIGATION:**

The raised red tab stands out to call attention to the feature navigation. Non-active feature navigation links have a slightly transparent background so the photographs are not completely obfuscated. The active feature is indicated by an arrow, similar to the 3rd level of the main navigation.

### **FEATURE – GET INVOLVED:**

The get involved content occupies the full right column of the feature to provide flexibility long or short amounts of content.

### **FEATURE – NEWS/STORIES:**

The featured items within the feature area come last and provide a segue to the global news and events which follow.

## ***News/Events:***

The news and events sections contain abbreviated lists of recent news and events and links to the main news and events pages. Both the titles and the "read more" text are linked to the full news or events story.

*\*I have noticed that many larger news oriented sites have been moving away from the "read more" links such that we may want to reconsider whether they are still necessary.*

## ***The Prayer Cycle:***

Having content in all three columns at the bottom of the page helps maintain a sense of balance. I chose the prayer cycle simply as an example, though other sections may certainly be more suitable for different times. Promotional Banners may also go in this area, an example of which can be found on the [witness iteration](#).

## ***Footer/Copyright:***

Like the header, the footer is kept simple per the suggestion of the identity document and includes ample negative space.