



MAILCHIMP FOR CHURCHES



a guide for churches

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HELLO	2
BUILDING YOUR MAILING LIST	3
CREATING A NEWSLETTER	10
CREATING RSS-TO-EMAIL CAMPAIGNS.....	20
SOCIAL SHARING.....	25
RESOURCES	28

HELLO.

MailChimp makes it fun and easy to send email newsletters, manage subscriber lists and track newsletter performance, but what does that have to do with you? Why should churches be concerned with email?

Chances are, your church has been sending newsletters, either physically or digitally, for a long time. Newsletters provide a great way to keep your congregation informed about news, events, schedules and more. You may have close relationships with many of the people that attend your church, but newsletters provide structure, keeping them informed about everything your church is offering in a way that may not otherwise be available.

In this guide, we'll cover all the basic features MailChimp offers for churches, and how you can use them effectively. We'll talk about building your mailing list, creating newsletters, and using social sites to connect with your congregation.

And did we mention that you can send up to 3,000 emails to up to 500 subscribers per month completely free? That's right, FREE. No credit card, no expiring trial, and no hidden fees or commitments. You get access to our amazing features, including powerful reports, list management, awesome templates and more integrations than you can shake a stick at. Plus, we provide a 15% discount to nonprofit organizations, so when you're ready to start sending more emails, you'll enjoy a nice discount off our normal pricing. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? We think so.

Please note that this document is intended to serve as an introductory guide to MailChimp's features for churches. There's a lot more we can do, and you may have questions about some of our other features. If your questions aren't addressed here, please feel free to contact our support staff at mailchimp.com/support, and we'll be happy to assist you.

BUILDING YOUR MAILING LIST

There are several ways to build your mailing list. MailChimp only allows permission-based sending, but that doesn't mean you have to collect your list online. Lots of churches have cards in their pews or at events that can be used as signup forms. As long as everyone on your mailing list has, in some way, said "Yes, I would like to receive email from you," that counts as permission. It can mean checking a box on a card at your church, or filling out a subscribe form on your website.

MailChimp offers several ways to build your mailing list by allowing you to present your readers with opportunities to sign up and receive email updates. Let's begin with setting up your list in MailChimp and adding interest groups, and then we'll look at the different ways you can add new subscribers to your list.

When you log in to MailChimp, the first screen you see is the dashboard. From there, click the **Lists** tab.



If you've never created a list before, just click the big orange **Create New List** button.



Next, we'll ask you to fill out some basic information about your list. Note the list reminder field: You must provide this for your subscribers to remind them why they're getting email from you.

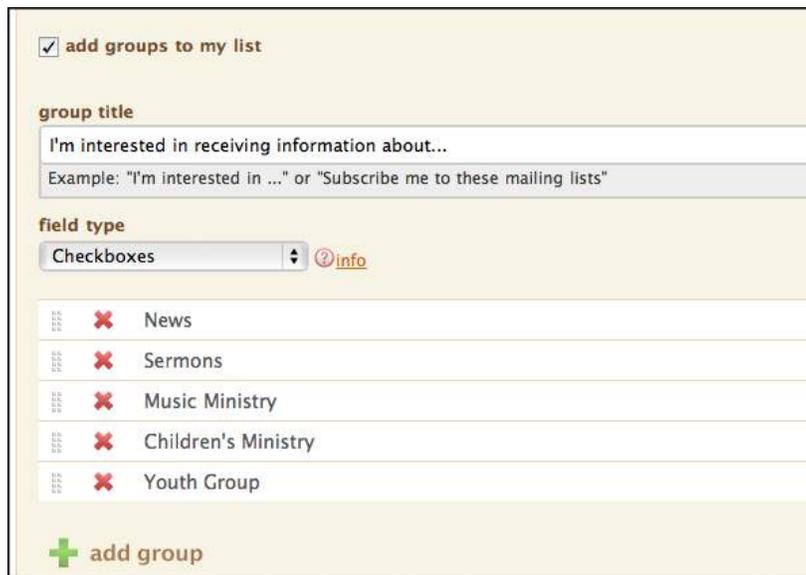
The screenshot shows a form titled "set up your new list" with several input fields and a text area. The fields are: "list name *" (filled with "Imaginary Church Mailing List"), "default from name *" (filled with "Imaginary Church"), "default reply-to email *" (filled with "info@imaginarychurch.net"), and "default subject" (filled with "Imaginary Church News"). Below these is a "remind people how they got on your list *" section with a text area containing the text: "You subscribed to receive news from Imaginary Church on our website, or you filled out a card at church." Below the text area is an example: "Example: 'You are receiving this email because you opted in at our website...'" or "We send special offers to customers opted in at...". At the bottom, there is a section "Is this the correct contact info for this list?" with a "why is this necessary?" link and a form containing the address: "Imaginary Church, 123 Church Way, Suite 8A, Atlanta, GA 30318". An "edit" button is located at the bottom left of the form.

After you set up and save this information, you should set up **groups**. Groups allow you to segment your list and send emails to your subscribers based on their preferences. For example, you probably have lots of different ministries at your church, including nursery, music, prayer, youth group, and more. You may want to include basic information about everything that's happening at the church in the general newsletter that goes to everyone, but you can also send more detailed information about the various ministries only to the people that are involved in them and have asked to receive updates.

To set up groups, click **Groups** on your list (on the **Lists** page).

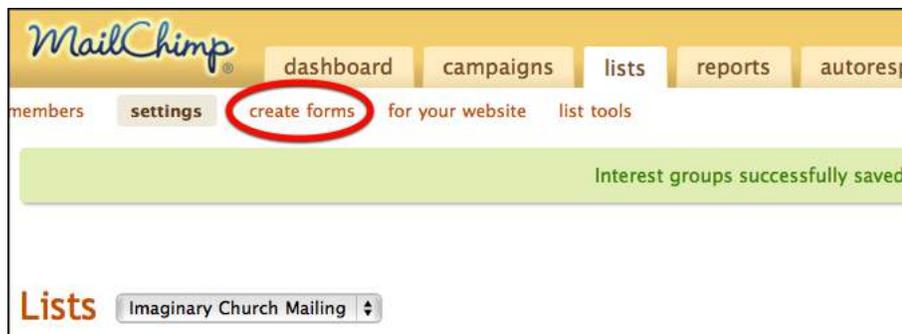


Check the **Add groups to my list** box, and add the appropriate groups for your list (you can add up to 30 of them). Note that the title you give the group will be displayed on your signup form, so make sure it's something descriptive. For **Field type**, use checkboxes, because they allow your subscribers to choose more than one interest group.



The screenshot shows a form titled "add groups to my list" with a checked checkbox. Below this is a "group title" field containing the text "I'm interested in receiving information about..." and an example: "I'm interested in ..." or "Subscribe me to these mailing lists". The "field type" is set to "Checkboxes" with an "info" icon. A list of groups is shown, each with a red "X" icon and a name: News, Sermons, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry, and Youth Group. At the bottom, there is a green plus icon and the text "add group".

Once the groups are successfully saved, you can begin creating forms for your website. Click **Create forms** near the top of the **Lists** screen.



On the form creation page, there are lots of things you can do:

The screenshot shows the Mailchimp form creation interface for a list titled "Imaginary Church Mailing". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Top Navigation:** Includes "Lists", "Imaginary Church Mailing", "save & exit", "forms & response emails", "Signup Form", "build it", "design it", "language English", and "auto-translate".
- Form Preview:** Shows a form titled "Imaginary Church Mailing List" with fields for "Email Address *", "First Name", and "Last Name". Below these are checkboxes for "I'm interested in receiving information about..." with options: News, Sermons, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry, and Youth Group. A "Subscribe to list" button is at the bottom. A "MAIL CHIMP" logo is visible at the bottom right of the preview.
- Field Settings Panel:** On the right, there are options to "add a field" and "field settings". Available field types include: text, number, multiple choice, drop down, date, address, phone, website, and image. A "checkboxes" button is also present.
- Annotations:** Numbered circles (1-7) highlight specific features: 1. Signup Form dropdown; 2. design it button; 3. Link to subscribe form; 4. create embed code for small form; 5. add a field button; 6. field settings button; 7. checkbox for "I'm interested in receiving information about...".

1. The form that's shown above is the signup form, but there are several other forms you can customize as well, including a thank-you page, confirmation email, unsubscribe form and more.
2. You can design all your forms to look however you want, and it's best to make them look as much like your church website as possible. You can use the same color palette and upload an image to replace the text header.
3. You can place the link to your subscribe form on your website, so that when people click the link, they're taken to the signup form.
4. As an alternative to placing a link to your subscribe form on your site, you can also embed the form directly onto your site. (It may take a little more technical expertise.)

5. The form above only asks for a few pieces of information, but you can add more fields if you want to capture addresses, phone numbers, etc. Just click the field type in the right column and add a field.
6. You can change the settings for each field, too. You can decide which fields are required for signup.
7. Notice that your interest groups have been added to the signup form.

Once you complete your form and place a link to it on your website, you're all set. When people fill out the form and submit it, they'll be automatically added to your mailing list.

Uploading Contacts

If you collect email addresses physically at church, you can upload them to MailChimp, too. Here's how you do it.

First, transcribe the content of the cards you collected at church to a program on your computer, like Microsoft Excel. You can include the same interest groups on the cards, and upload them along with the email addresses.

Email Address	First Name	Last Name	Interests
john@imaginarychurch.net	John	Smith	Sermons, News, Music Ministry
sally@imaginarychurch.net	Sally	Smith	Sermons, News, Youth Group, Children's Ministry, Music Ministry
tom@imaginarychurch.net	Tom	Bennett	Youth Group, News
dave@imaginarychurch.net	Dave	Tolley	Music Ministry, News, Children's Ministry
monica@imaginarychurch.net	Monica	Martinez	Prayer Ministry, Sermons, Youth Group

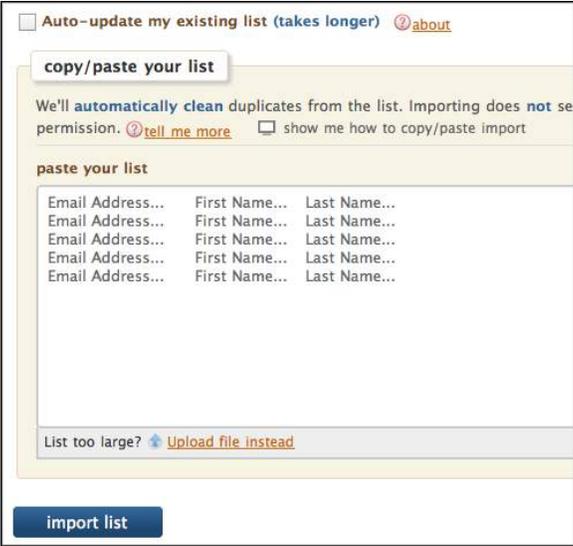
Head back to the main **Lists** screen and click **Import** on the list where you want to add your subscribers.



Choose **Copy and paste from Excel** in the list of import options.



Paste your list into MailChimp. If you want to update existing contacts on your list with new information, just check the **auto-update** box above the copy/paste section.



When your list import is finished, you'll be asked to verify the columns on your list. Note that MailChimp automatically recognizes your interest groups.

name this column Email Address <small>delete</small> <small>ok ></small>	First Name text field <small>edit delete</small>	Last Name text field <small>edit delete</small>	I'm interested in receiving information about... checkboxes field <small>edit delete</small>
Email Address	First Name	Last Name	Interests
john@imaginarychurch.net	John	Smith	Sermons, News, Music Ministry
sally@imaginarychurch.net	Sally	Smith	Sermons, News, Youth Group, Children's Ministry, Music Ministry
tom@imaginarychurch.net	Tom	Bennett	Youth Group, News
dave@imaginarychurch.net	Dave	Tolley	Music Ministry, News, Children's Ministry

That's it! Now you've got an official MailChimp list and you're ready to send your first campaign.

	Email Address	First Name	Last Name	I'm interested in receiving information about...	member rating	date added	
view	john@imaginarychurch.net	John	Smith	News, Sermons, Music Ministry	★★★★★	02/22/2010 01:24pm	✘
view	sally@imaginarychurch.net	Sally	Smith	News, Sermons, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry, Youth Group	★★★★★	02/22/2010 01:24pm	✘
view	tom@imaginarychurch.net	Tom	Bennett	News, Youth Group	★★★★★	02/22/2010 01:24pm	✘
view	dave@imaginarychurch.net	Dave	Tolley	News, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry	★★★★★	02/22/2010 01:24pm	✘
view	monica@imaginarychurch.net	Monica	Martinez	Sermons, Youth Group	★★★★★	02/22/2010 01:24pm	✘

Can my subscribers choose to receive emails in formats besides HTML?

Yes. By default, we include a preference in your subscribe form that allows your subscribers to choose how they want to receive email. HTML includes all your images, links and formatting; text strips out everything but the text in your email; and mobile reduces image sizes and stacks your content into a single column for easy reading on a mobile device.

MailChimp is the *only* email service provider that offers a mobile format, and we think it's a great option for subscribers who are on-the-go and prefer to read email on their phones. It preserves the images and links from your HTML campaign, but presents them in a way that's more suitable for mobile reading than full HTML. For example, here's a regular HTML email campaign and it's mobile counterpart, shown side by side:



If you want to remove this option from your subscribe form, go to **Lists → Settings → List Name & Defaults** and uncheck the **Let your subscribers pick an email format?** box.

CREATING A NEWSLETTER

Now that your list is all set up, you're ready to send your first newsletter.

From the MailChimp dashboard, click the big orange **Create Campaign** button and choose **regular ol' campaign**.



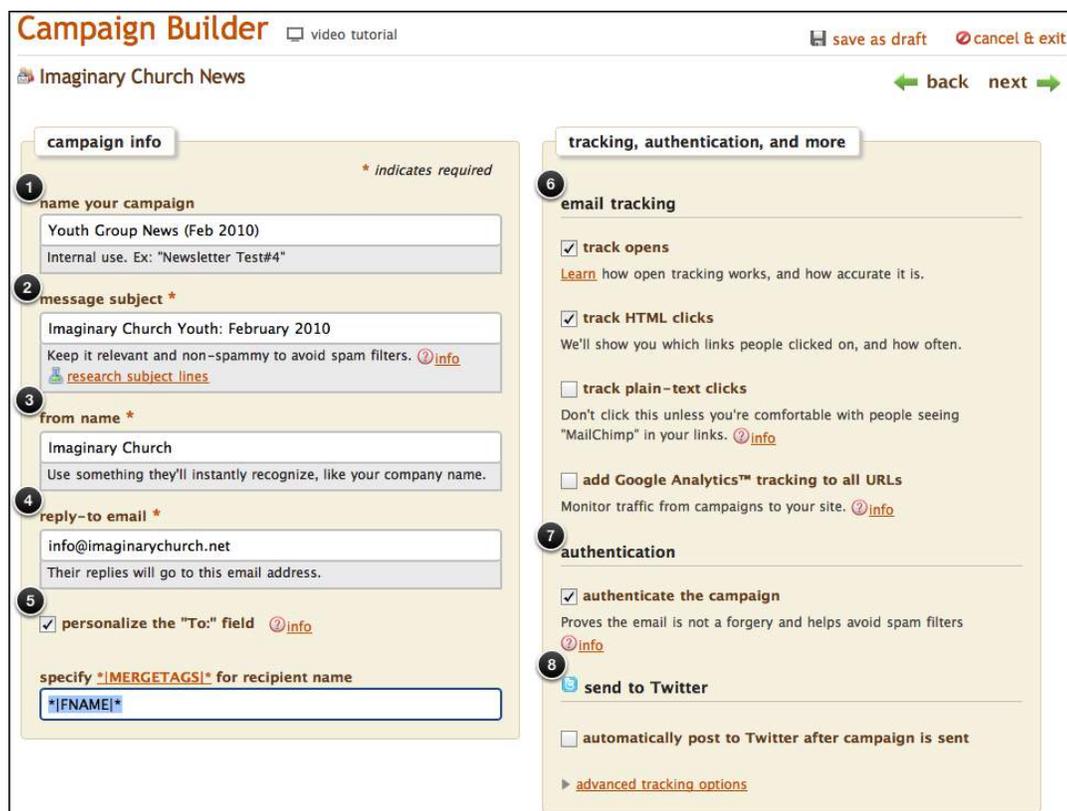
The first step in creating your newsletter is deciding where you want to send it. You can either send it to you entire mailing list, or you can send it to a segment of the list.



If you choose **Send to entire list**, you go immediately to the next step. If you choose **Send to segment of list**, you'll enter the criteria for the group you're sending to. You can segment the date subscribers were added to your list, where they're located and more. In this case, we'll send our newsletter to everyone interested in receiving information about the youth group. After you select your segment, click **Send to Segment**.

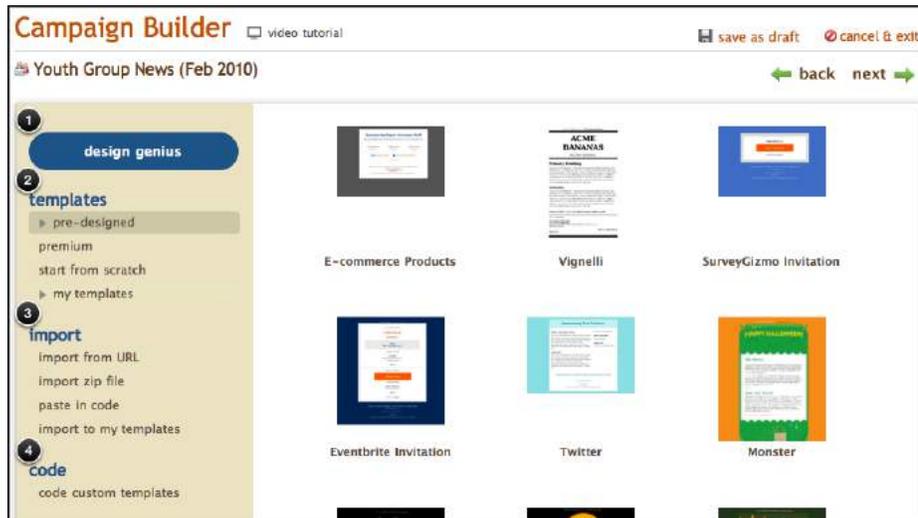


In the next step, set up the details of the newsletter.



1. This is the name of your newsletter internal to MailChimp, so make sure it's descriptive
2. This is what will appear in the subject line when people receive your email.
3. The "from name" is the person or organization that sends the email. It's generally best to use your church's name instead of your own.
4. If people click "reply" on your email, this is the default address where their replies will go.
5. If you want to personalize your email with your subscribers' first names, keep this checked. `*|FNAME|*` is the merge tag that dynamically inserts first names.
6. You can track who opens your emails and what links they click by checking these boxes. Tracking is helpful for analyzing how effective your newsletters are.
7. MailChimp authenticates newsletters by default, which means we insert a bit of code that acts like a license plate, letting spam filters know that we're playing by the rules.
8. If you use Twitter, MailChimp can automatically tweet your newsletter for you. The first time you check this box, we'll authenticate your Twitter account, and after that, you're connected forever. When we automatically post to Twitter, we include the subject line from your newsletter and a link to the web version of it.

The next step is to design your email. There are several ways to do it.

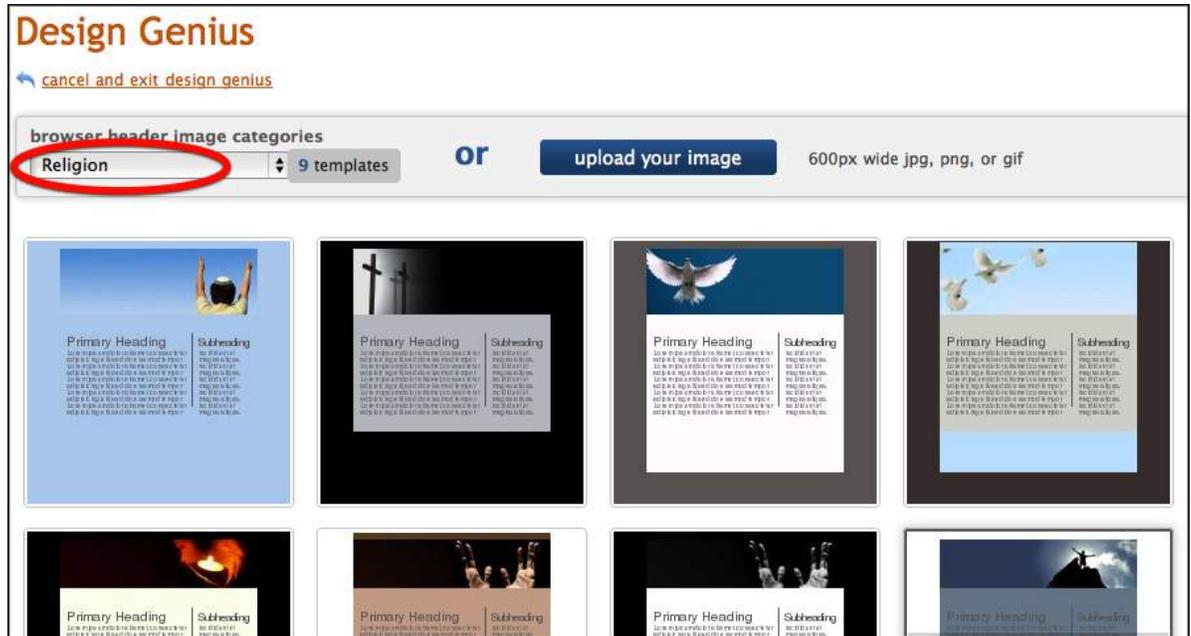


1. Design Genius is an easy way to put together your own template. We'll walk through Design Genius in the next step.
2. You can also choose one of our pre-designed or premium templates, but for general church newsletters, you're more likely to find something that suits you with Design Genius.
3. If you or someone on your staff is a web designer, you can create your own templates and import them into MailChimp.
4. Similar to importing, you can code your own templates if you have the technical savvy.

If you choose Design Genius, MailChimp will take you step-by-step through your newsletter design.



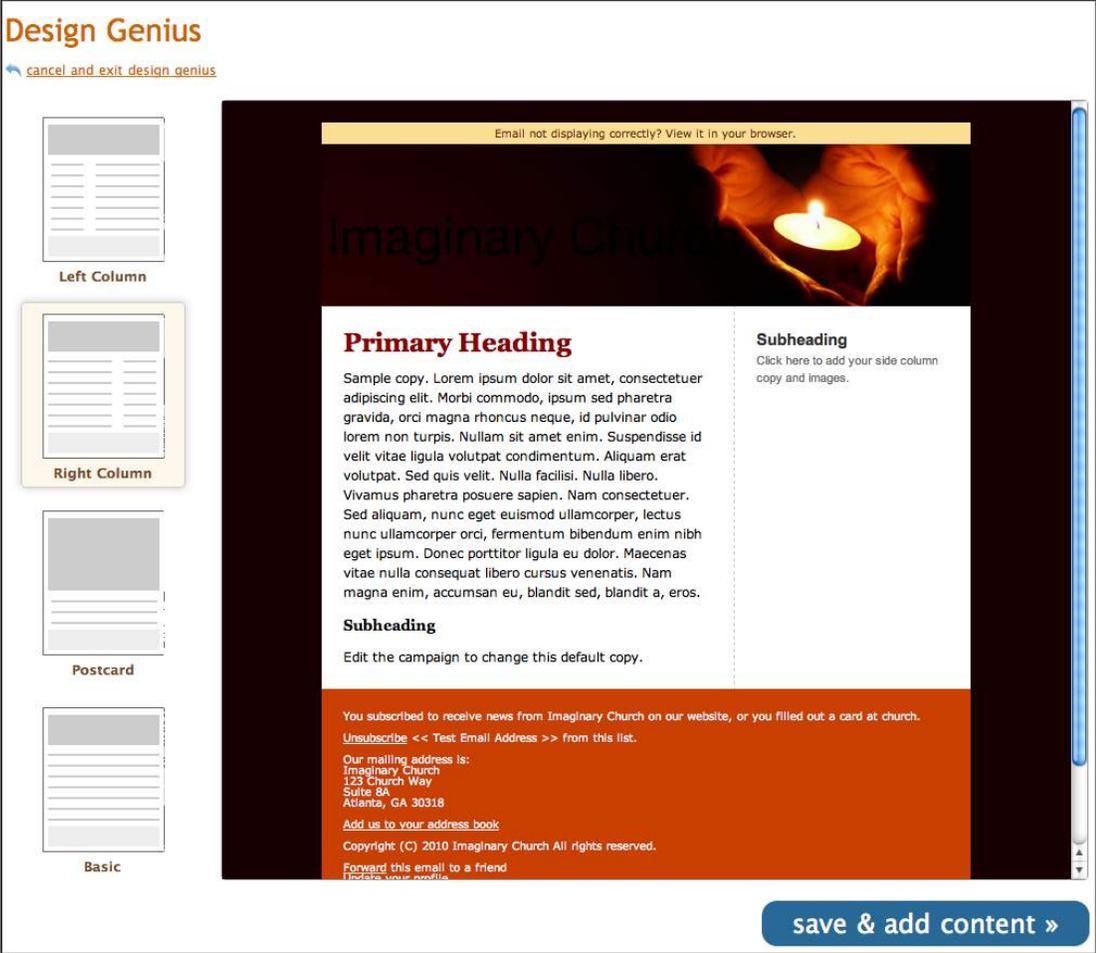
The first step in Design Genius is to choose a category. Select **Religion** and you can choose among several basic headers. You can also upload your own image.



In this step, choose the basic color palette for your newsletter. You can refine it later if you want. Don't worry about editing the text right now, either. We'll get to that soon.



The final step in Design Genius is to choose the layout for your newsletter.



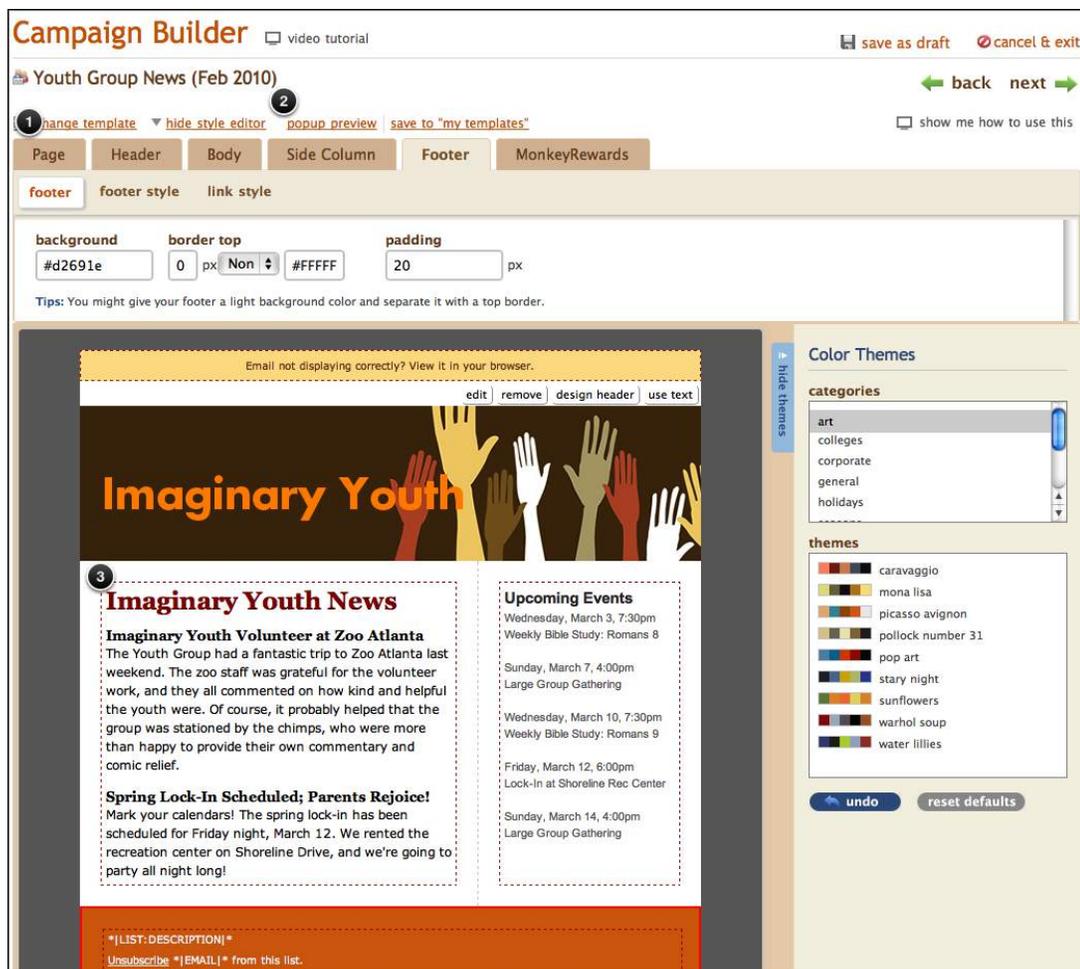
When you click **Save & add content**, you're prompted to give your template a name.



The next time you want to send an email with the same template, you'll be able to find this template in the **My templates** section of the campaign builder.



When you finish using Design Genius, the next step is to add content to your newsletter. You can also change all the visual elements of your newsletter in this step.



1. Clicking on **Style editor** opens an editor that allows you to change all the visual elements of your campaign, including colors, borders and links.
2. If you want a quick look at what your newsletter will look like when your subscribers receive it, clicking **Popup preview** will show you.
3. Each text section of the newsletter is editable. Just click on the section you want to edit, and you can add your content.

The next step is to create a text-only version of your campaign. This is required for all campaigns because some people don't have HTML-enabled email clients, and others read email on phones that don't support HTML email. Click **Copy text from HTML email** and MailChimp will grab all the content from your HTML newsletter and reformat it as text.

The screenshot shows the MailChimp Campaign Builder interface for a campaign titled "Youth Group News (Feb 2010)". At the top, there are options for "save as draft" and "cancel & exit". Below the campaign title, there are "back" and "next" navigation buttons. A message states: "This text part was automatically generated from your HTML content. Please look it over and make sure everything was converted correctly." Below this, there is a section titled "Enter your plain-text message below" with a warning: "This plain-text email is displayed if recipients can't (or won't) display your HTML email. Your message might get trapped in spam filters without a plain-text message." A button labeled "copy text from HTML email" is circled in red. Below the button is a text area containing the plain-text version of the newsletter content, including a link to "view it in your browser" and a list of events for the month of March. At the bottom of the interface, there are buttons for "popup preview" and "send plain-text test".

The final step in the newsletter-building process is to confirm everything you've already done. If there are any issues with the newsletter, we'll let you know on this page. If you want to edit any part of the newsletter, just click on the relevant **Edit** button. There are lots of tools here to help you finalize your email.

Here's an example confirmation screen with explanations of each item and tool:

Campaign Builder video tutorial save as draft cancel & exit

Youth Group News (Feb 2010) back next

- List:** MailChimp will deliver this to a segment of the Imaginary Church Mailing List list (3 recipients) edit
- Subject Line:** "Imaginary Church Youth: February 2010" edit
- Replies:** All replies will go to Imaginary Church <info@imaginarychurch.net> edit
- Tracking:** You chose to track clicks and opens in the HTML email edit
- HTML Email:** You're sending an HTML email from the Imaginary Church Youth News template edit
- Plain-text Email:** You included a plain-text version edit
- Email Authentication:** Automatic email authentication will be enabled for this message edit
- MonkeyRewards:** A MailChimp affiliate link is included in your template footer edit

1 Test With Delivery Doctor beta
Delivery Doctor tests your campaign with many common spam filters and consumer ISPs, giving you insight into exactly what parts of your campaign might cause delivery issues. Available for all [monthly and pay-as-you-go accounts](#).

2 Test With Inbox Inspection
Inbox Inspection lets you see your campaign in 30+ email clients which will help you deliver a consistently beautiful email to all recipients.
buy 3 for \$14 run inbox inspection
You currently have 3 inbox inspections.

3 Pop up Preview **4 Send Test** **5 Schedule Delivery** **6 Send Now**

back next

1. **Delivery Doctor** sends your newsletter through common spam filters and will let you know if there are any specific issues with your newsletter. If so, you'll want to fix them so the newsletter is delivered successfully to everyone. Note that Delivery Doctor is only available for paid accounts.
2. **Inbox Inspector** (mailchimp.com/inboxinspector) shows you what your newsletter will look like in over 30 different email clients. Since different services will render your newsletter in different ways, it's helpful to see what it will look like in all of them.
3. Preview the final version of your newsletter.
4. Send a test to yourself or a friend to see how the newsletter will look when it shows up in your inbox.
5. Schedule delivery if you don't want the newsletter to be sent right away.
6. If everything looks good and you're ready to go, send your newsletter!

CREATING RSS-TO-EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

RSS stands for “really simple syndication,” and if your church has a blog or uses a content-management system to update its website, then people can use RSS to follow updates to the site without having to check in all the time. MailChimp provides a way to automatically send newsletter updates for sites that have RSS. It’s easy to set up, and it provides your subscribers with another way to learn about what’s happening at your church.

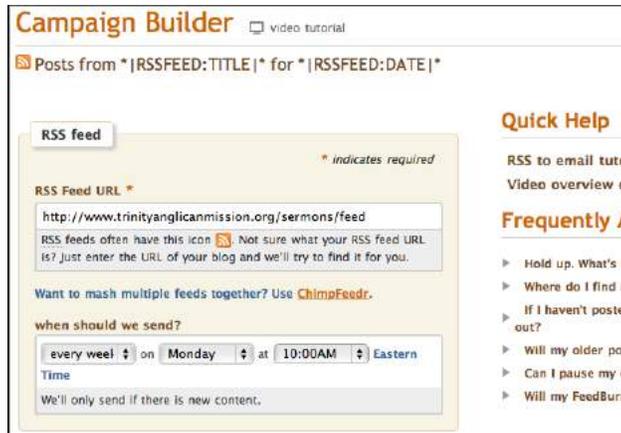
For example, maybe you post sermons on your site every week, and there may be different ways people can get them. They can go to your website and download them, and maybe people can subscribe as a podcast in iTunes. You may also consider setting up an RSS-to-Email campaign in MailChimp. That way, whenever you post new sermons to your site, MailChimp will automatically send an email with a link to download the sermon to whoever wants to receive it. Here’s how it works.

From the MailChimp dashboard, click the big orange **Create campaign** button and choose **RSS-driven campaign**.



Enter the URL of the site (or section of the site) you want to use. You can give us the URL of your RSS feed, but it’s not necessary. We can usually find it for you if you just provide your blog’s URL.

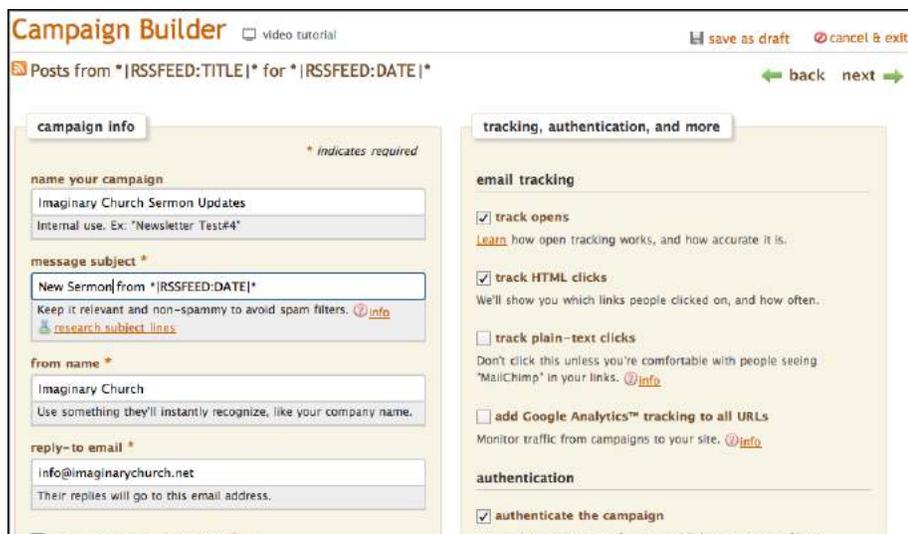
Choose the frequency for your updates. If you’re sending sermons, then you may want to send the newsletter every Monday morning. If you’re sending blog updates, and you don’t update your site very often, then you may consider sending a newsletter once per month.



Choose the list and/or segment that will receive the campaign. Click **Next**.



Name your campaign, give it a subject and review additional options on the preferences screen, just like we did in the first campaign.

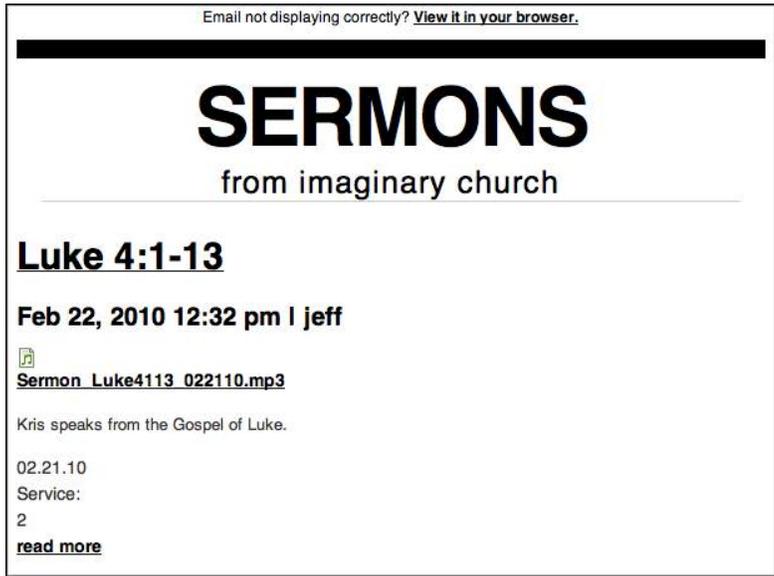


Choose a template for your campaign. Again, you can design the template yourself, or let MailChimp help you.

MailChimp uses merge tags to create RSS-to-Email campaigns. Use our handy merge tag cheatsheet if you want to customize how your RSS feed is displayed in your campaign. You can use the Pop-up preview tool to pull in live content and see exactly your campaign will look like when its delivered. When you've completed the template, click **Next**.



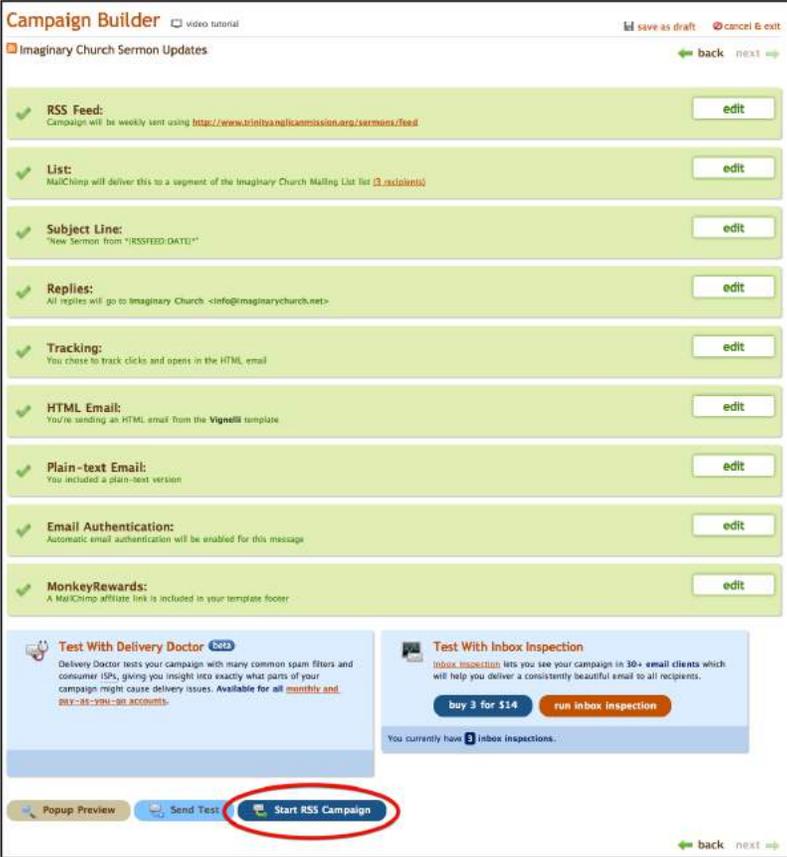
Here's what an RSS-to-Email looks like by default when content is added. The elements of the email (text colors, size, different pieces of information) can be customized with merge tags.



Next, create the text version of your campaign for readers who use mobile devices or have HTML disabled. Click **Next**.



Confirm the details of your campaign, send a test and if everything looks good, click **Start RSS Campaign**. Your first campaign will be delivered after the next time you update your site and at the frequency you determined in step 3.



Frequently Asked Questions

My RSS feed isn't working. Am I doing something wrong?

Our application generally cooperates really well with RSS feeds, but every once in a while, our customers have issues with their feeds not working correctly. Check to make sure you've added the correct URL for your feed (especially if you're having problems when you just add your blog's URL). If it still doesn't work, we recommend running your feed through Feedburner and giving us the Feedburner feed instead.

To do that, just go to feedburner.google.com and create a feed for your blog. Once you've completed the simple steps there, copy and paste your new Feedburner feed into the Feed URL field in the MailChimp campaign builder.

Will my old posts be emailed out in my first campaign?

No, we won't start sending email until new content is added to your feed.

Will my campaign go out if I haven't posted anything?

No, we only send campaigns when there's new content in your feed. So if you've got your campaign set to go daily, but you didn't post anything today, a campaign will not go out tomorrow.

How can I update, edit and pause my RSS-to-Email campaigns?

To update your campaign, go to **Campaigns** from the dashboard. In the left column beneath **Create campaign**, you'll see folders containing all your campaigns. Navigate to the RSS-to-Email folder, and you'll see a list of all your campaigns. Click on the one you want to update, and the "parent"—the template for your all your emails—will be the top item in the folder. Click **Edit email** to make changes.

SOCIAL SHARING

Social networking sites are excellent ways to connect with your congregation and promote your church. If you use sites like Twitter and Facebook, check out how you can integrate them with your newsletters using MailChimp.

Auto-tweet

Like we discussed in the Creating a Newsletter section above, you can automatically send your newsletter to Twitter. Just check the **Automatically post to Twitter** box on the campaign preferences tab when you're setting up the campaign.

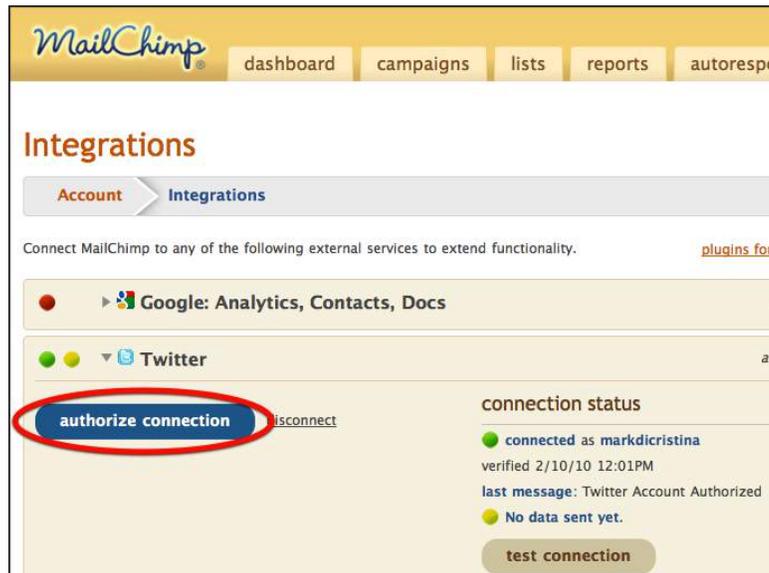
If you haven't set up a Twitter account in MailChimp, you'll have an option to do that instead. Once the account is set up, you won't have to re-authorize it every time.



MailChimp will automatically send a tweet with your subject line and a link to the online version of your email.

We shorten the URL using our EepURL tool, so you don't have to worry about having your tweet cut short.

If you want to change which Twitter account you use to tweet your campaign, click **Account** in the top-right corner of your screen, then click on **Integrations**. Choose Twitter and then **Authorize connection** to authorize a different account. You can only authorize one Twitter account at a time.



Twitter stats

MailChimp doesn't just let you tweet your email campaigns; we also make it easy to track how many *other* people are tweeting them, too. If you click on the **Reports** tab in your MailChimp dashboard, you'll be taken to a screen that lists all your email campaigns. Click on the name of one of your campaigns to view its overview report. From there, click **EepURL Stats** to see how many times your campaign has been tweeted and retweeted, who did the tweeting and a timeline of all tweets. (Note that only tweets that include the automatically generated EepURL for your campaign are included in this report.)



Social Share button

If you decide you want to tweet your campaign after it's been sent or you want to promote your campaign on a social network other than Twitter, use the social share button that appears beside your sent campaign in the Campaigns dashboard. When you click **Social share**, you'll be directed to a screen where you can share your campaign on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, StumbleUpon, Digg and Delicious.

The screenshot shows the 'Campaigns' dashboard in MailChimp. It includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'Create Campaign', 'inbox inspection', and 'all campaigns'. The main area displays a table of campaigns with columns for Name, Status, List, Emails, and Reports. The 'social share' button for the 'RSS Sermons' campaign is circled in red.

Name	Status	List	Emails	Reports
Imaginary Church Sermon Updates	Draft	Imaginary Church Mailing List	0	-
Youth Group News (Feb 2010)	Draft	Imaginary Church Mailing List	0	-
RSS Sermons	Sent: Feb 15, 2010 12:01 pm	NA	3	
Music Ministry Updates	Draft	NA	0	-

Social Share merge tag

In addition to sharing your own campaign, MailChimp allows you to offer your readers a way to share your campaigns. When you place the `*|MC:SHARE|*` merge tag in your template, MailChimp will add links to more than 20 social networks.

If you want to limit the networks in the social share merge tag, you can use `*|SHARE:SITE_NAME1,SITE_NAME2|*` to specify which sites are included. For example, `*|SHARE:Facebook,Twitter,Digg|*`.

RESOURCES

Signup Form Plugins

<http://www.mailchimp.com/plugins/>

Wufoo Form Integration

<http://www.mailchimp.com/blog/wufoo-form-integration-with-mailchimp/>

Formspring Form Integration

<http://www.mailchimp.com/blog/formspring-integration-with-mailchimp/>

Segmentation Overview

http://www.mailchimp.com/features/power_features/segmentation

ChimpFeedr (Combines Multiple RSS Feeds into One)

<http://chimpfeedr.com/>

Merge Tags Cheatsheet

<http://www.mailchimp.com/resources/merge/>

MailChimp Academy Support Videos:

<http://www.mailchimp.com/support/videos/>

Webinars:

<http://www.mailchimp.com/support/webinars/>

Benchmark Reports:

<http://www.mailchimp.com/charts/>

MonkeyWrench Newsletter:

<http://www.mailchimp.com/page/monkeywrench/>