

# Migration Checklist — Don't Lose Your Rankings

A free checklist from ChurchCreation.com

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## PHASE 1 · BEFORE YOU MIGRATE

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- Export 16 months of Search Console data (queries & pages)
- Record GA4 organic sessions for top pages
- Crawl & inventory every URL (Screaming Frog)
- Flag top pages & pages with the most backlinks
- Back up all content, media & database
- Build the new site on password-protected, noindexed staging

## PHASE 2 · PLAN REDIRECTS

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- Keep URLs identical wherever possible
- Build a 1:1 redirect map (old → new)
- Never redirect everything to the homepage
- Use 410 only for permanently removed pages

## PHASE 3 · PRESERVE ON-PAGE SEO

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- Carry over titles, meta, headings & full content
- Keep image alt text & schema
- Update internal links to the new URLs
- Set self-referencing canonical tags

## PHASE 4 · LAUNCH

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- Implement 301s server-side; verify each is a single 301
- Remove the staging noindex / Disallow
- Confirm SSL & force HTTPS
- Point DNS to the new platform (keep the domain)

## PHASE 5 · AFTER LAUNCH

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- Submit the new XML sitemap in GSC
- Request indexing for the homepage + top 10–20 pages
- File Change of Address (only if the domain changed)
- Re-crawl for 404s & redirect chains
- Monitor GSC, rankings & 404s at 30 / 60 / 90 days
- Keep redirects live at least 1 year

## PHASE 6 · CHURCH OFF-SITE SWEEP

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- Update the website link in Google Business Profile
- Update social bios, bulletin & email footers
- Re-check printed QR codes & app links
- Migrate in the off-season (not Christmas/Easter)

# 301 Redirect-Map Template

Copy into a spreadsheet, fill in every changed URL, then import into your redirect tool.

## Redirect map

One row per changed URL. Pre-filled with the church pages that matter most — replace with yours and add rows.

OLD URL	NEW URL	TYPE	NOTES
/old-sermons	/sermons	301	Highest-equity pages — verify first
/give.html	/giving	301	Bookmarked by regular givers
/visit-us	/plan-your-visit	301	Shared with first-time guests
/events/2025	/events	301	Point legacy event URLs to the hub
/old-blog/(.*)	/blog/\$1	301	Pattern redirect for a whole folder

Verify each redirect returns a single **301** (not a 302 and not a chain). On WordPress, import this as a CSV into the free Redirection plugin; on Squarespace, paste rules into Settings → Advanced → URL Mappings.