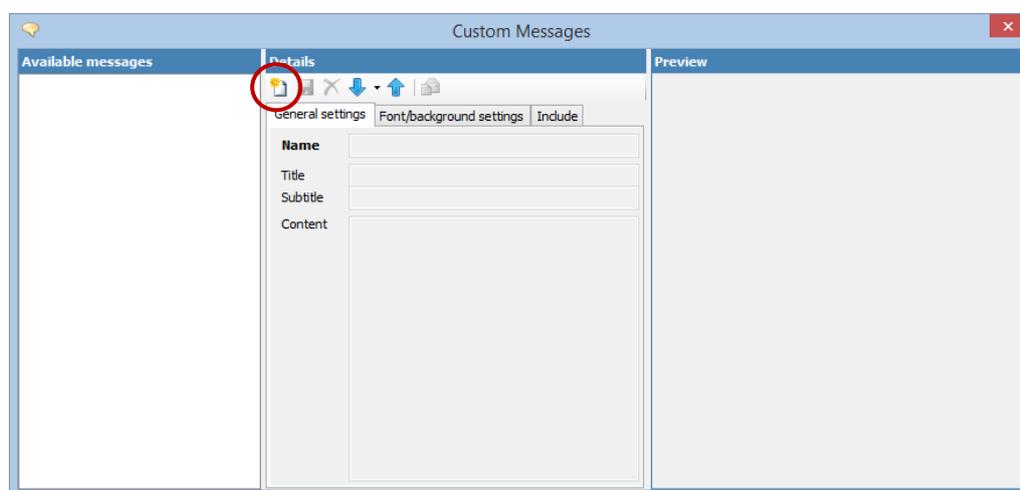


Chapter 12: Custom messages

Not everything you want to display on an overhead is really a song. Maybe it's as simple as a "Welcome to our church" message. Sometimes it's announcements or notices that need to cycle through and then repeat. Sometimes it might be a creed (like the Apostles' Creed).

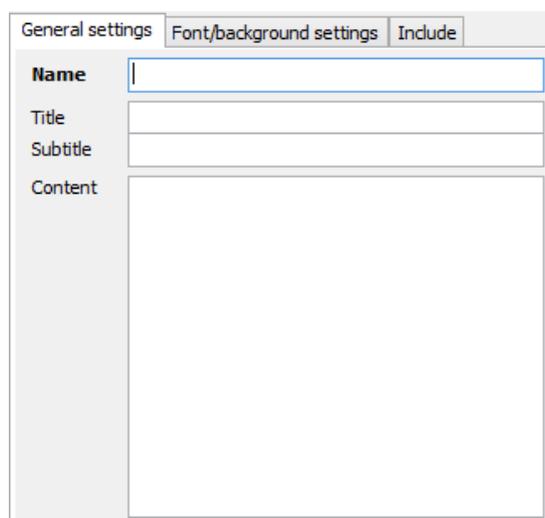
While there is no reason you can't create a song record and put all the information into "verses", CMO has a system designed just for these purposes. They are called custom messages.

To access the custom message setup facility, go to the "View → Custom Messages..." menu.



Initially, a new installation of CMO will not have any custom message. To create a new message, click on the  button, or press Ctrl+N.

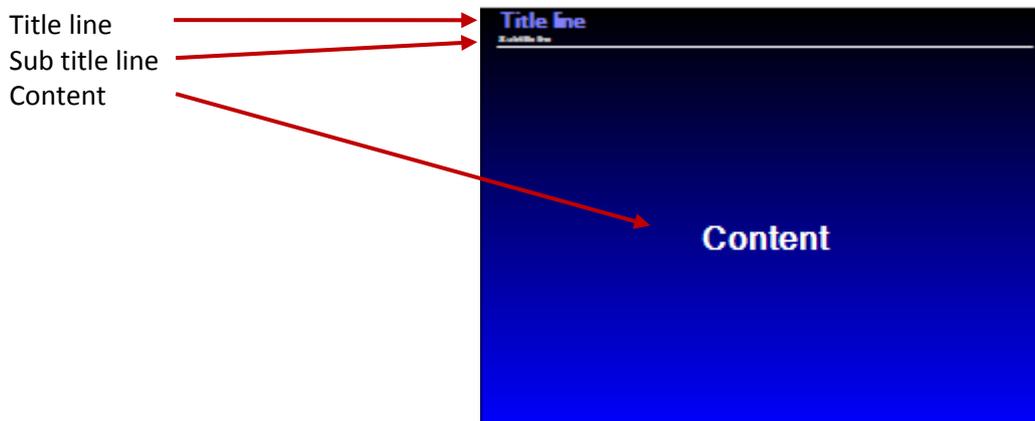
Content



	General settings	Font/background settings	Include
Name	<input type="text"/>		
Title	<input type="text"/>		
Subtitle	<input type="text"/>		
Content	<input type="text"/>		

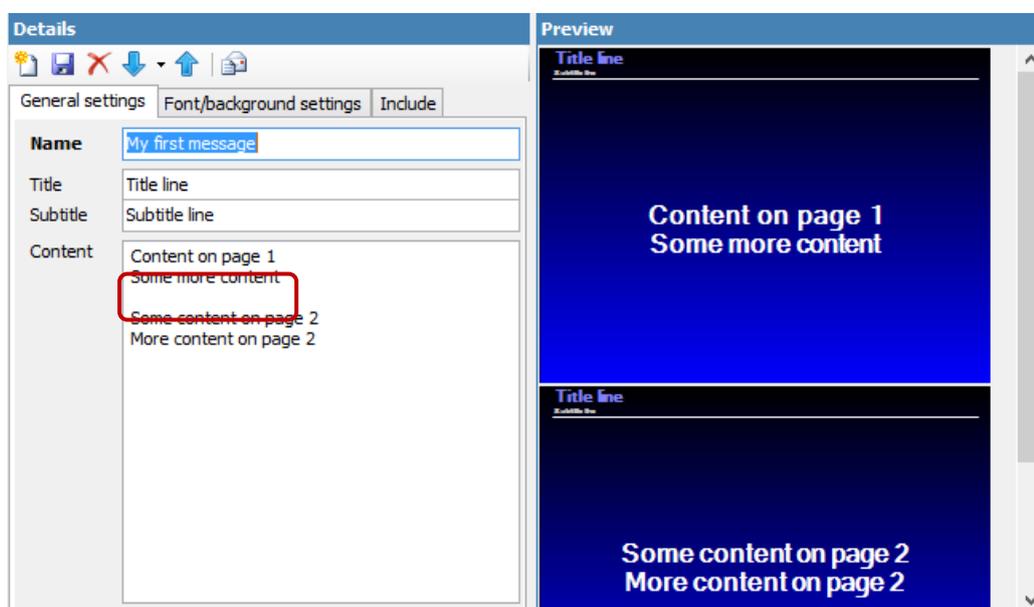
The first thing to enter is a **name**. Every custom message must be given a unique name, as the name will be used to identify each message in the list.

You can then decide how this message will look. There are three components to the text



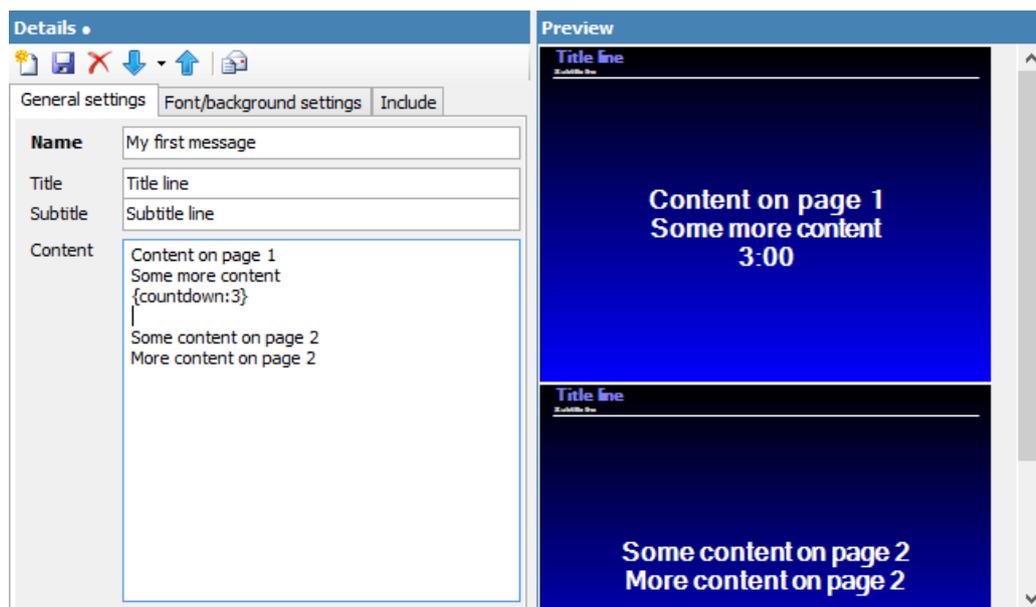
If you don't want to include a title or subtitle, you can leave them blank. But you do need to include something in the content field, or no message can be rendered.

As with songs, if you want multiple pages in your message, simple put a blank line between sections of text.



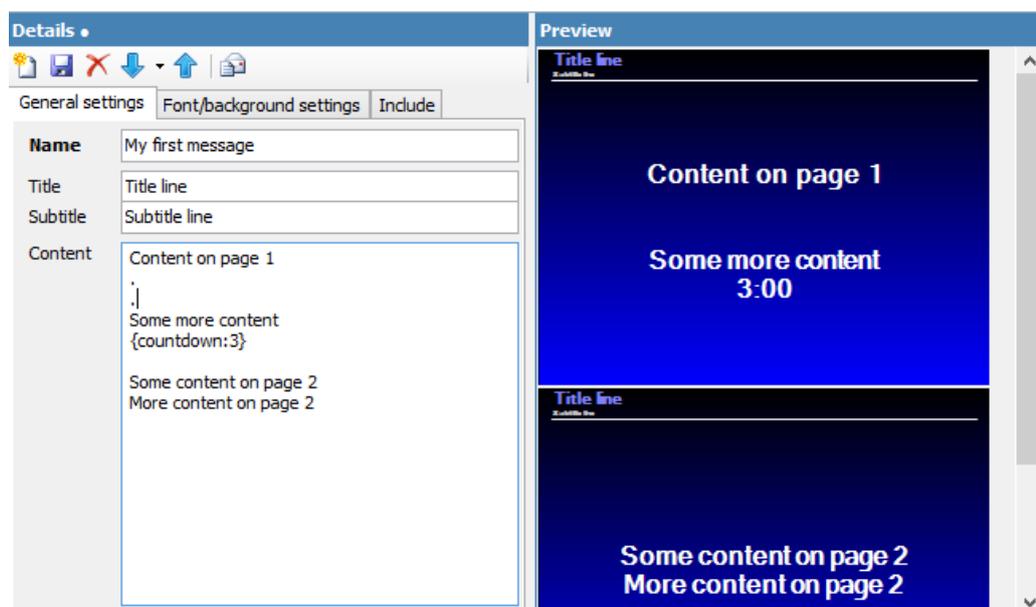
Countdown timer

If you want a countdown timer to appear on one of the pages, include the text "{countdown:X}" where "X" is a number of minutes. So, for example, to include a 3 minute countdown, add "{countdown:3}" to the text.



Blank lines

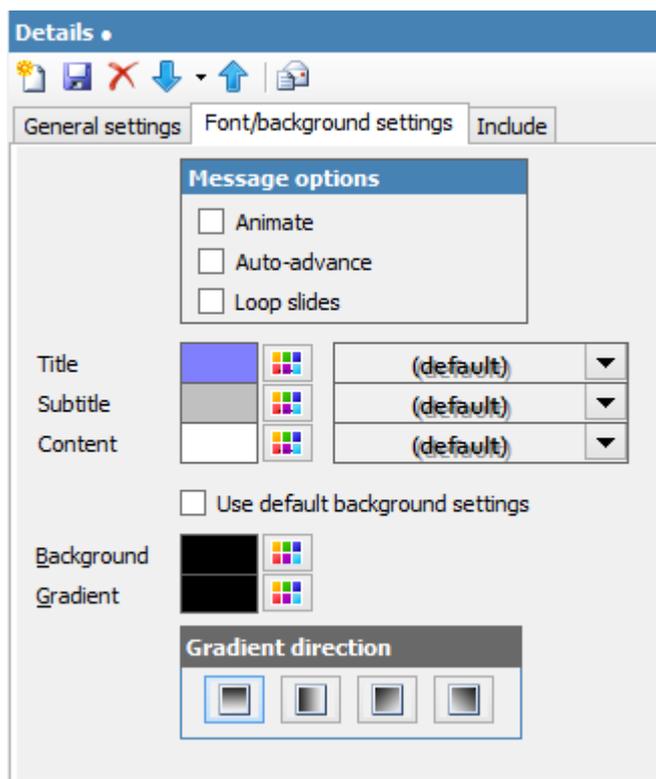
As with songs, if you want to include a blank line in a section of text, put a "." (full stop) on a line by itself.



Font and background settings

There are two ways to set the font and background for a custom message. If you want all your custom messages to have the same look and feel, go to the "Overheads → Overhead display options..." dialog, and adjust all the settings for "Custom Messages": font and colour settings, background settings and alignment settings. These settings will then apply to all custom messages by default.

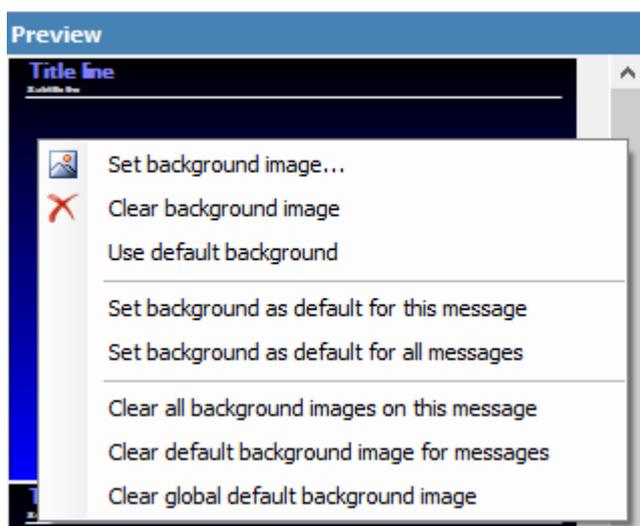
If, however, you want to apply individual styles to each custom message, you can go to the "Font/Background" tab on the custom messages dialog.



Here you can override all the default colour and font settings for this custom message.

By unchecking the "Use default background settings", you can apply different background colours and gradients to your custom message.

To apply background images to the message, right click on one of the samples in the "Preview" section to bring up a context menu. From there, background images can be selected.



You also have some additional options:

- **Animate:** This option will scroll the content of the message up and down the page. This can be useful for any messages that are likely to be displayed for a

considerable length of time (like a "Welcome to our Church" message) in order to minimise screen burn-in.

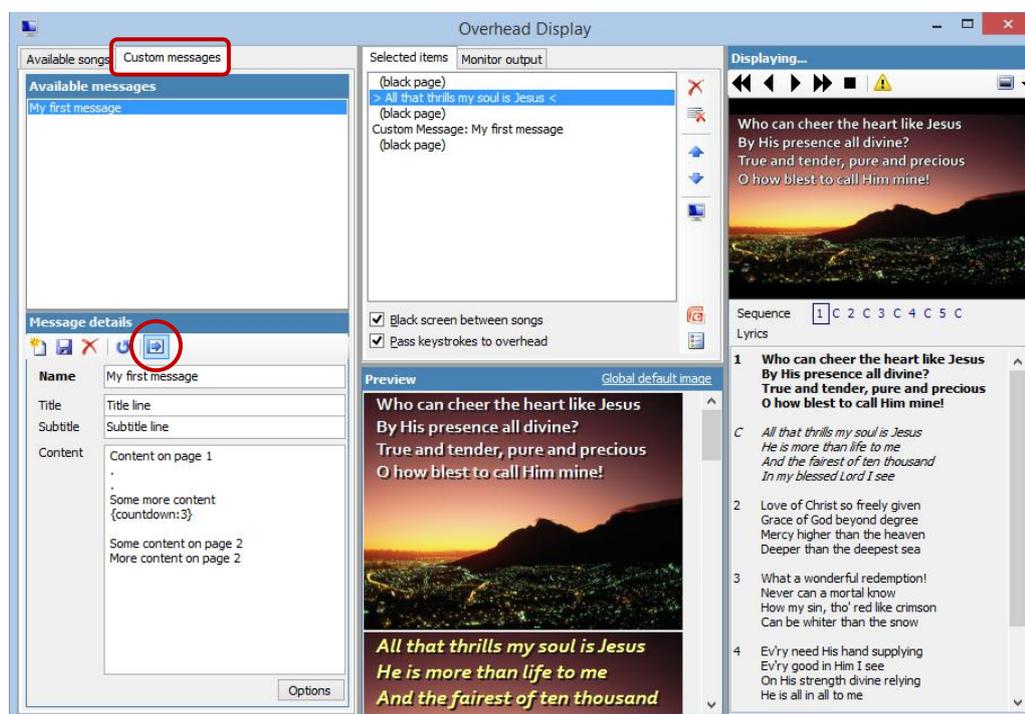
- **Auto-advance:** If there are multiple slides in the message, this option will wait a defined number of seconds and then automatically go to the next slide. When you check this option you will see a new field that allows you to enter the number of seconds.
- **Loop slides:** If there are multiple slides in the message, and you have the "Auto-advance" option turned on, you can also choose to loop the slides in the message. So, after advancing through each of the slides in the set, it to go back to the first one and start again. The operator will need to manually move on the next the component slide deck.

Auto-Include

Some custom messages you create you will want to include in all your services. For instance, you might want to include a welcome message every time a service starts, or maybe an ending message like "Join us for morning tea".

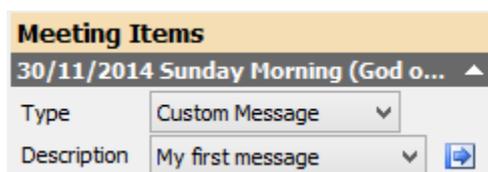
There are a number of ways you can get your message into the overhead list.

You could manually add these items to the overhead list, by going to the "Custom messages" tab, selecting your message and adding it to the list.



This would work, but you would need to remember to do it.

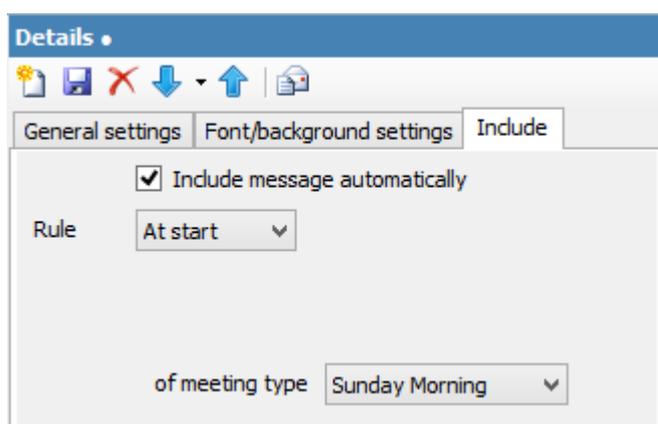
Alternatively, if you prepare your meetings in advance, you could add the custom message to the order of service.



But again, you need to remember to do this.

The third method of adding a custom message to the overhead list is to apply an inclusion rule to the message.

On the custom messages dialog, click on the "Include" tab to set up the inclusion rule.



There are four types of inclusion rule:

1. At start: This will include the message at the start of the order of service.
2. At end: This will include the message at the end of the order of service.
3. Before...: This will include the message before a certain item.
4. After...: This will include the message after a certain item.

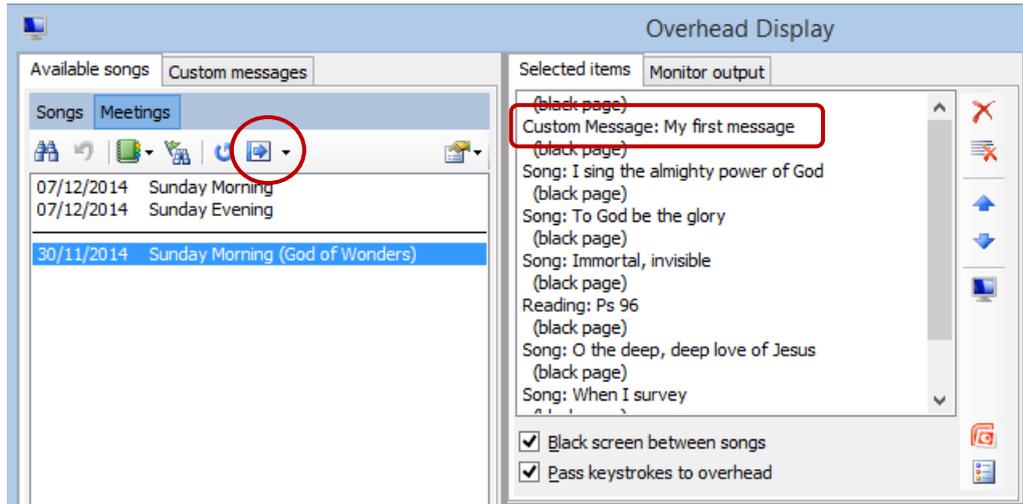
We also need to set the type of meeting this will apply to. This can be a specific meeting, like "Sunday Morning", or it can be set to "{any}", which means the custom message will be added to all meeting types.

Inclusion rule examples

With a system like this it is better to look at a few examples to better understand how it works.

Example 1: At start

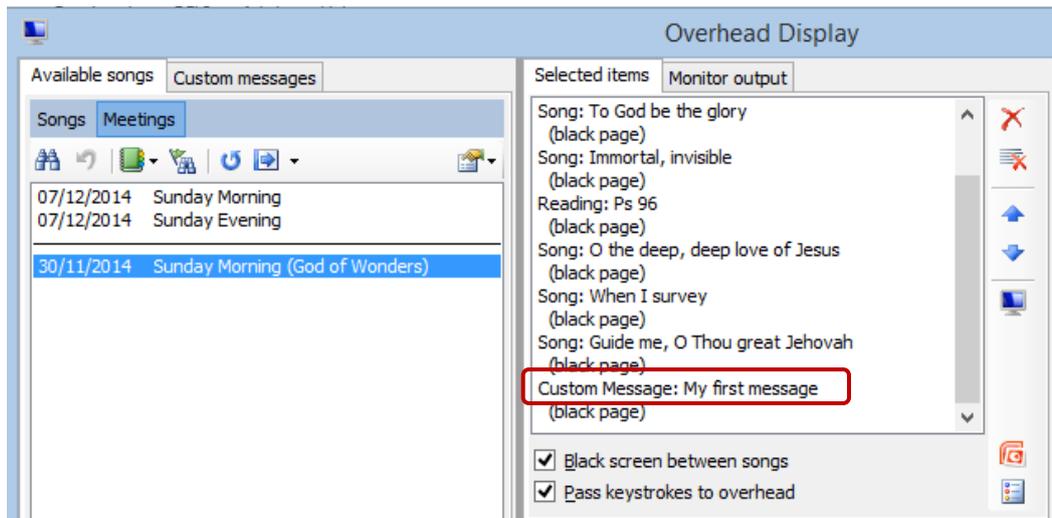
If we set our message to be included at the start, whenever we load a meeting order of service into the overhead list, this message will be added to the start.



In this example, all I've done is click the "Add meeting" button, and the custom message was added to the start of the order of service.

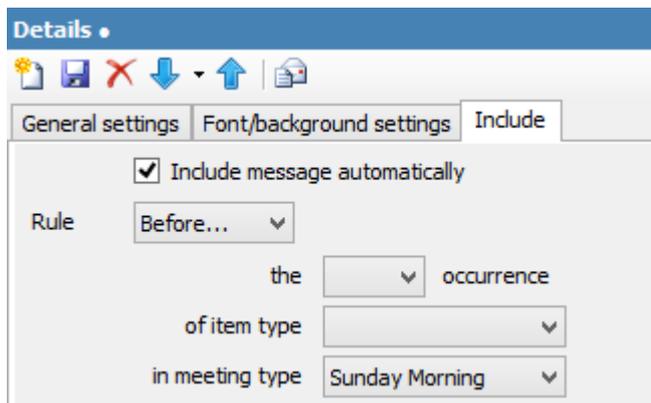
Example 2: At end

If we set our message to be included at the end, this time the custom message appears at the end of the list.



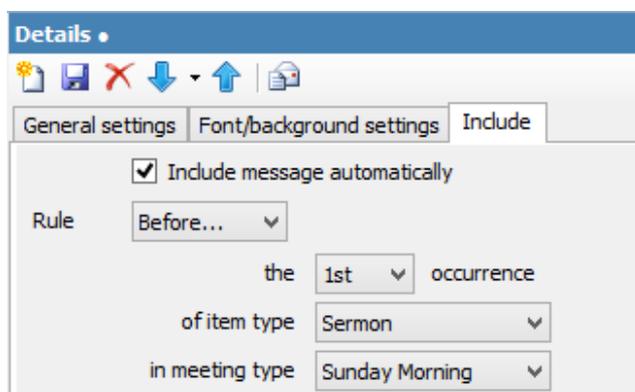
Example 3: Before

When we use a "before" rule, we need to define some additional parameters.

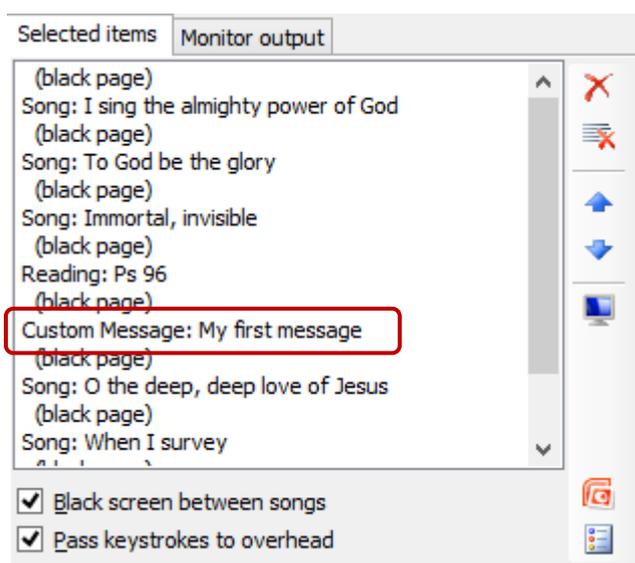


The before rule reads like this: "Include this message before the **nth** occurrence of the item type **X**". We need to specify these values.

In our case, we want this custom message to appear just before the sermon, so we would enter "1st" for the occurrence, and "Sermon" for the item type.



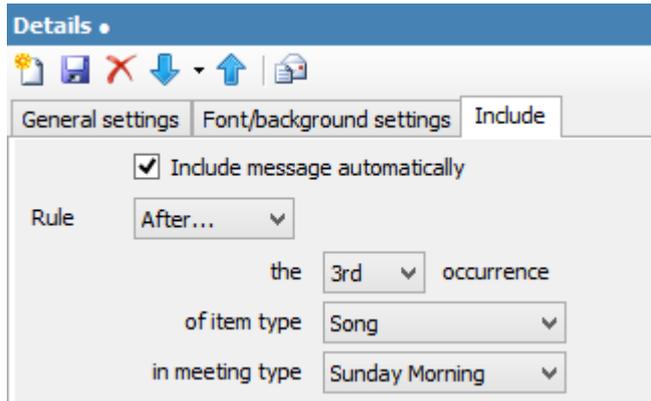
Now when we add a meeting to the overhead list we see this:



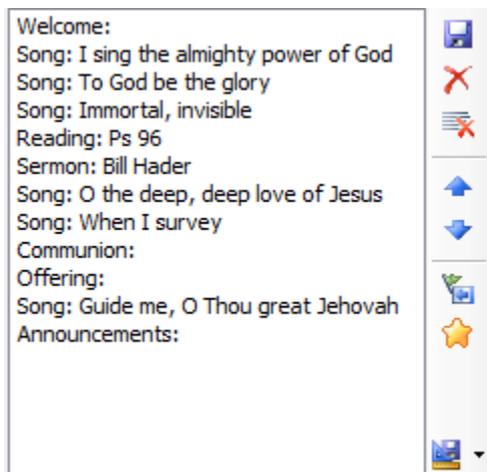
Notice that, while the sermon item doesn't get added to this list, as it has no meaning here, CMO understands where in the order of service it would have appeared, and so it inserted the custom message in the correct spot.

Example 4: After

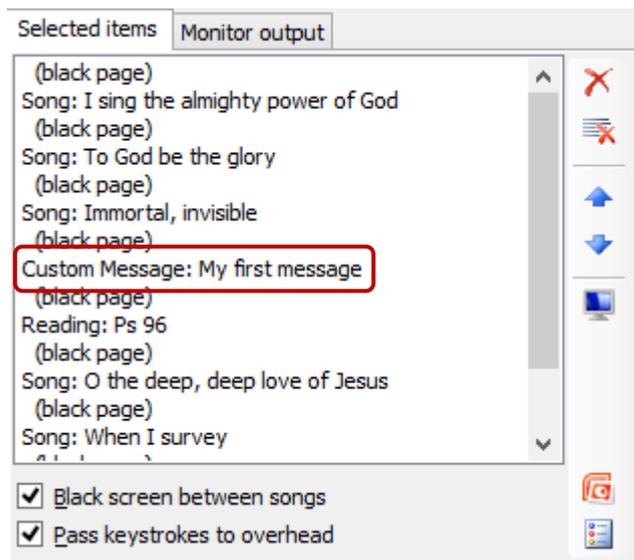
This is similar to the before rule, in that we need to specify which occurrence of which item to include this message after.



Here, I've set the rule to include the message after the 3rd song. In our sample meeting, the third song is "Immortal, invisible".



When we add this meeting to the order of service, the message is added in the correct spot.

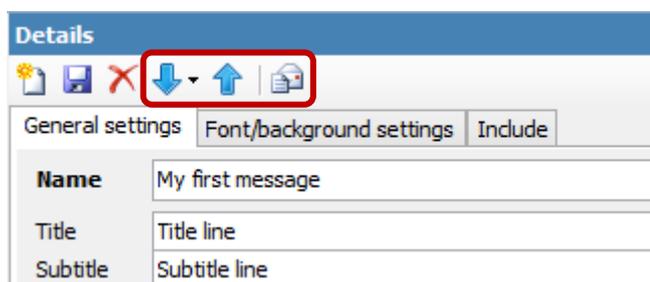


Importing, exporting and emailing

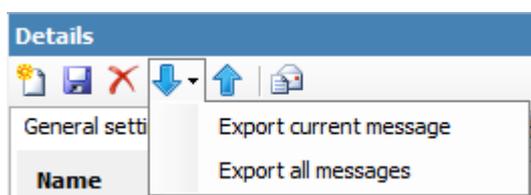
One purpose that custom messages can be used for is announcements. Using the system, it is simple to add a series of slides with church-related information. For instance, "Women's Bible Study will be meeting at 7pm on Thursday night. See Carol for details".

However, it may not be the job of the service planner to create these messages. Instead, someone else will create them, and then all the service planner has to do is include them in the meeting overheads.

CMO makes it easy for another person to create these slides by having import and export functions, and an email function, on the custom messages dialog.

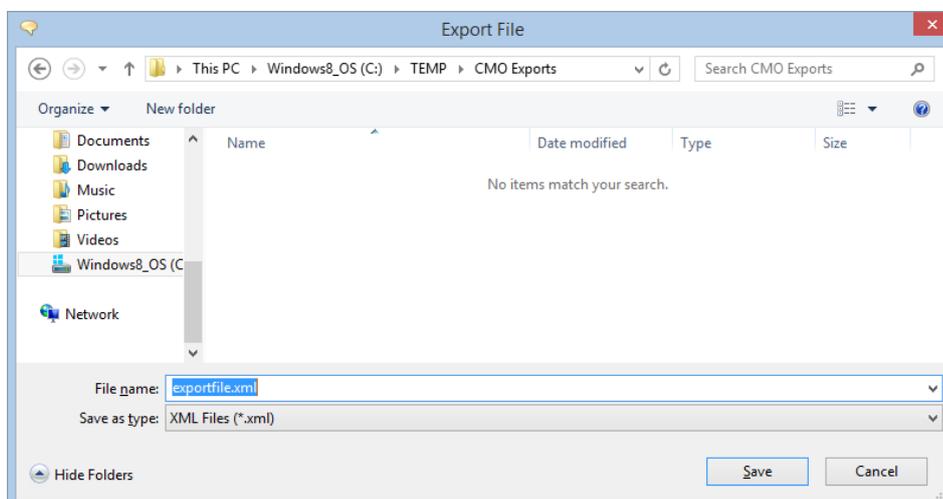


Once you have created and saved your custom message, click on the  button to export it.

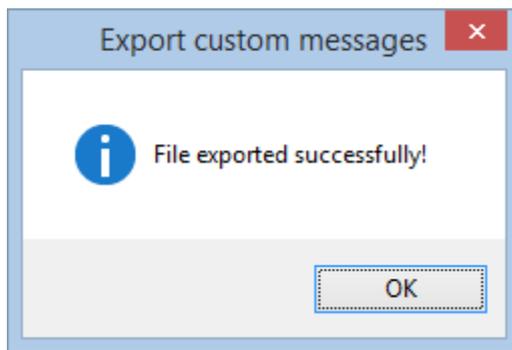


You can choose to either export the currently selected message, or all the messages in the list.

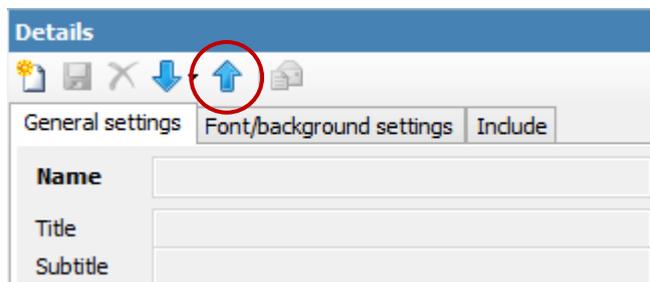
You will then be asked to give a name to the export file, and where you want to save it.



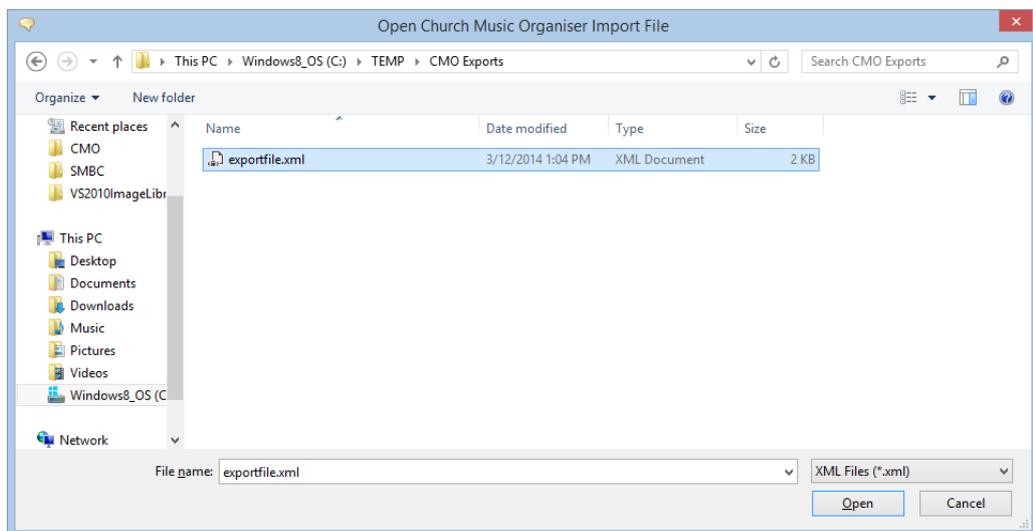
Once you click on "Save", the file will be created.



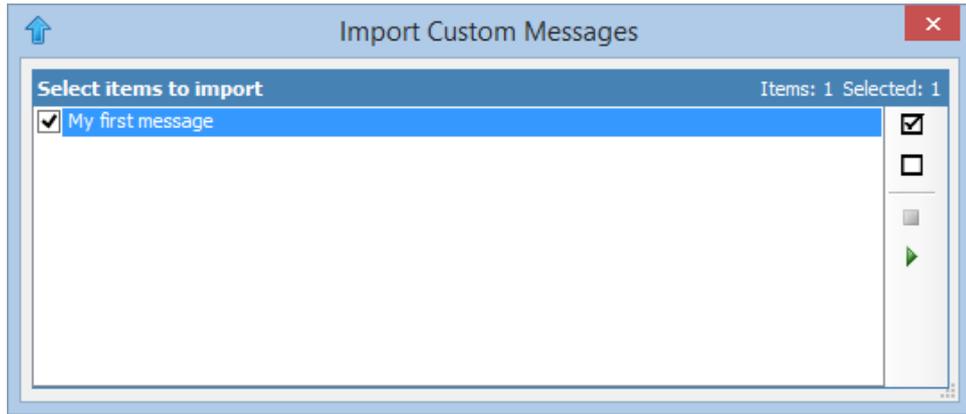
Then, you can take the export file to another computer and click on the import button.



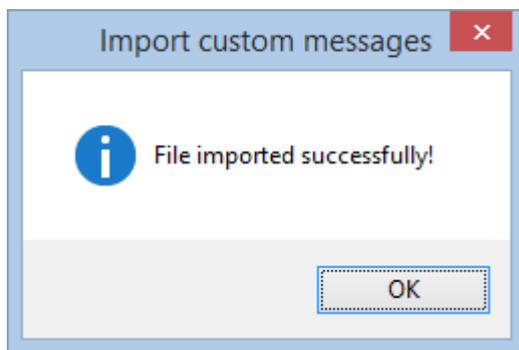
Select the file to import, and click "Open".



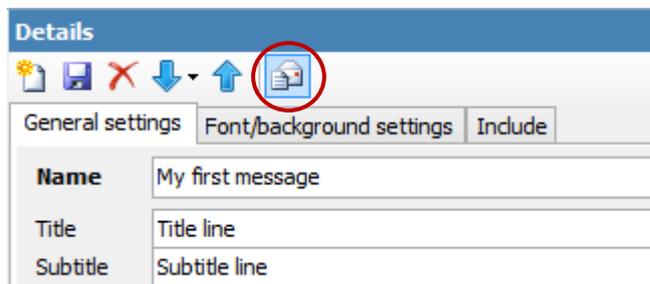
The Import selector dialog will be displayed. If there are more than one custom message in the export file you can select which ones you want to import.



Click on the  button to import the data.



You can streamline this process even further by using the email button  on the toolbar.



This will open the email dialog and automatically add an export file of the currently selected custom message.

The screenshot shows the 'Email Details' dialog box. It has a title bar with 'Email Details' and standard window controls. The main area is divided into sections: 'Recipients' (empty), 'Additional Email address' (with 'To' selected, 'Contact' dropdown, 'Email' input, and 'Add' button), 'Email Content' (with 'Subject' input, 'Select meeting' selected, and a dropdown), and 'Attachments' (with a list containing 'custommessage_export.xml', a 'ZIP all files in email' checkbox checked, and an 'Add' button). A 'SMTP Settings' panel is visible on the right. At the bottom are 'Save', 'Send', and 'Close' buttons.

You can then add recipients to send the file to, add a subject and some message text, and then click "Send" to send the file.

The recipient can then import the custom messages into their copy of CMO.

Summary

In this chapter we've looked at how to create custom messages, and format them for display. We've looked at how to use inclusion rules to automatically add them to a meeting presentation. We also covered the process of importing and exporting, and how to email custom messages to other CMO users.