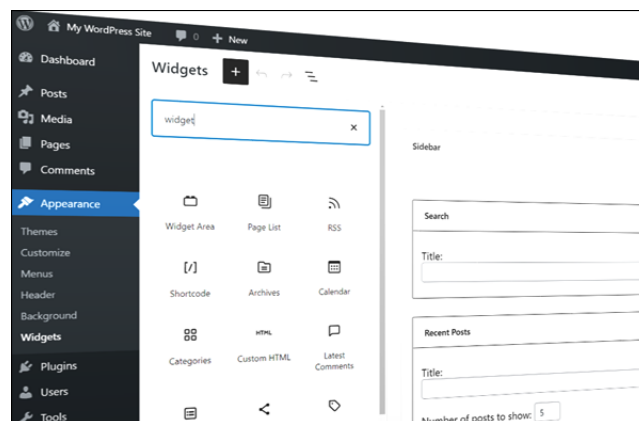


# How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 1

[wptrainingmanual.com/wordpress-tutorials/use-widgets-1](https://wptrainingmanual.com/wordpress-tutorials/use-widgets-1)

June 12, 2020



In part 1 of this tutorial series on using widgets, you will learn the basics of using and managing widgets in WordPress.

This tutorial covers:

For additional tutorials, go here:

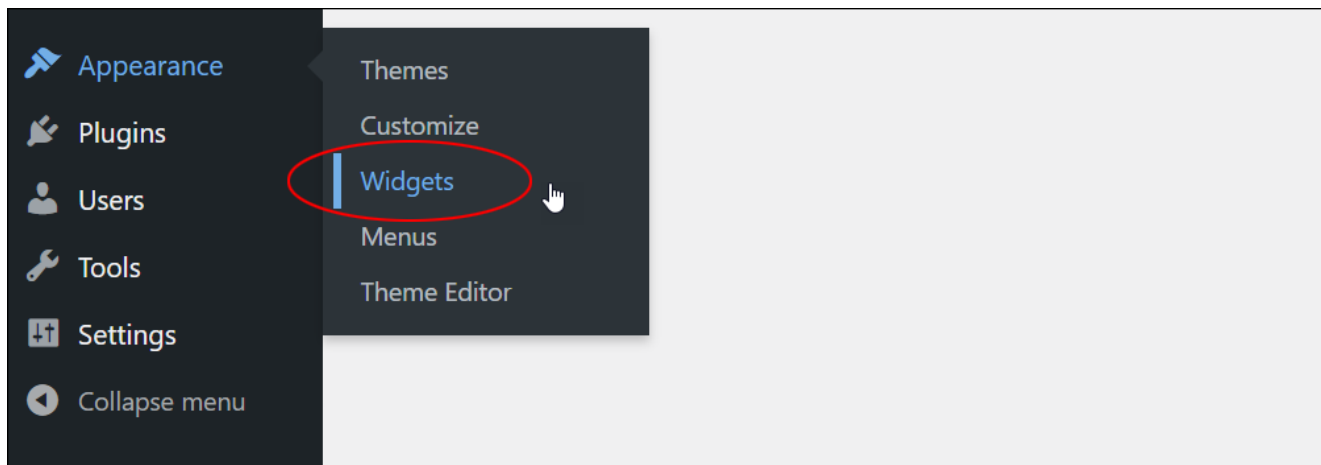
- **[WordPress Widgets Explained](#)** – Learn what WordPress widgets are, how widgets work, and how widgets can help you customize and extend the functionality of your website or blog.

- **How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 1** – *(You are here)*
- **How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 2** – Add commonly-used widgets to your sidebar, header, or footer.
- **How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 3** – Set up useful widgets to boost user engagement on your site.

## Widgets – The Basics

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To access the Widgets screen, log into your WordPress admin area, and select **Appearance > Widgets** from the main menu.



Click on Appearance – Widgets to go to the Widgets section of your site.

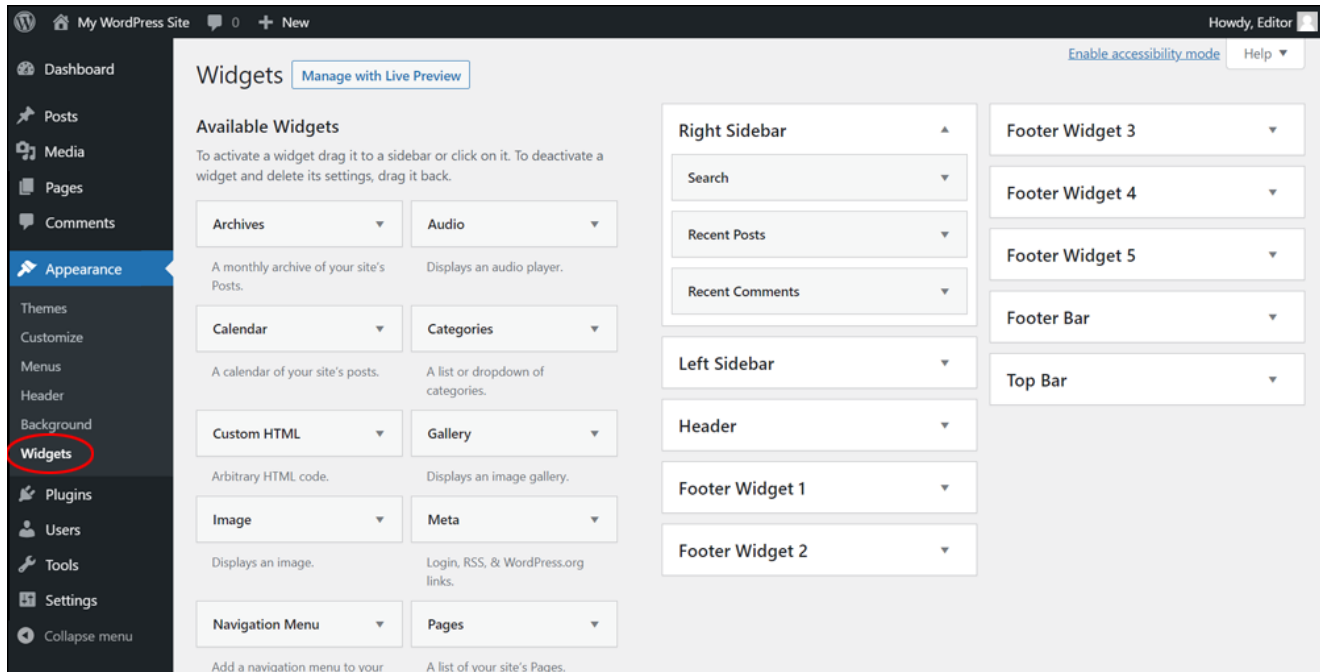
This will bring you to the Widgets screen.



Your Widgets screen will look different depending on the WordPress theme and editor you have installed.

### Classic Widgets Screen

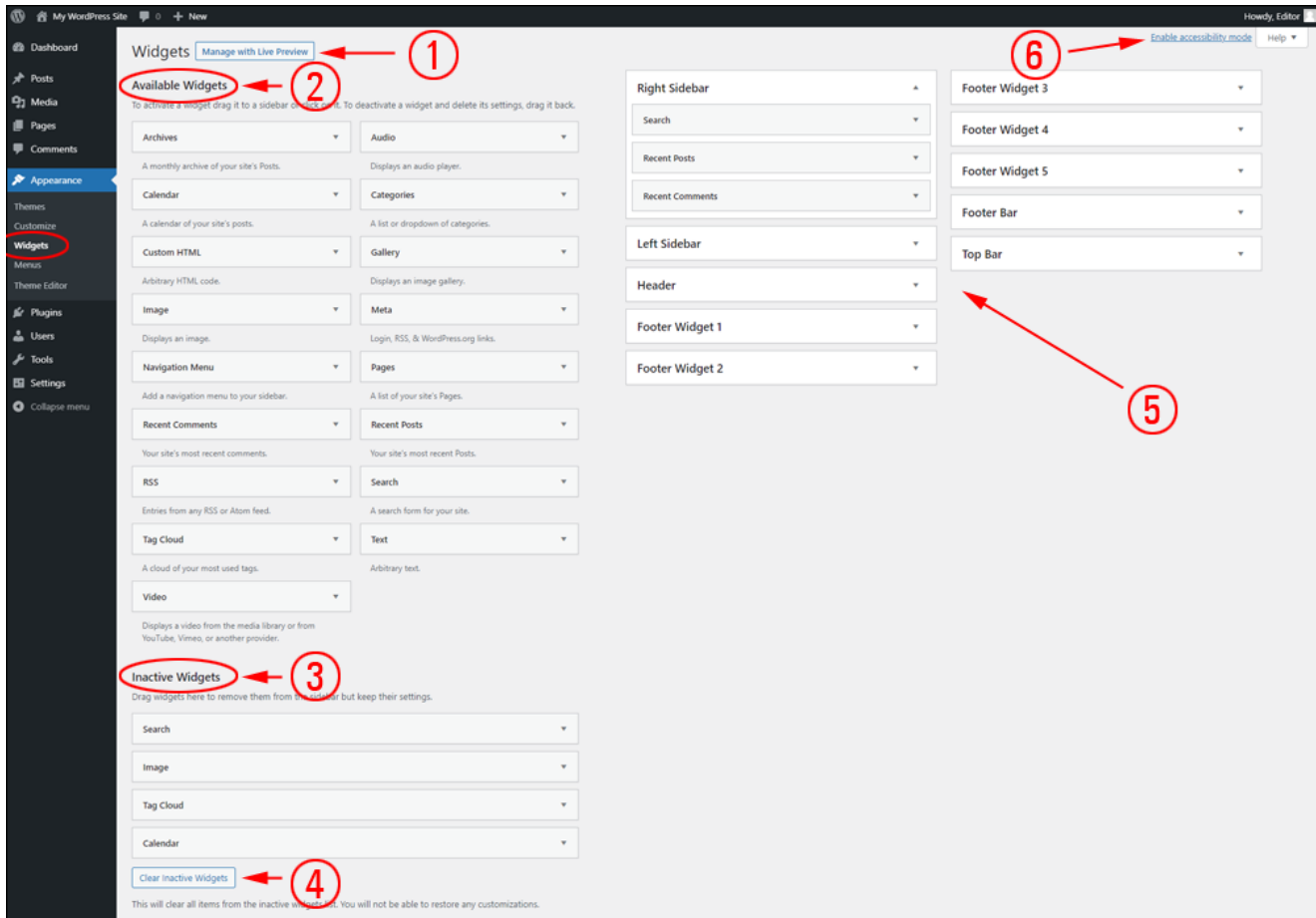
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Classic Widgets screen.

The Classic Widgets screen includes the following sections and features:

1. **Manage with Live Preview** – Manage widgets in the **Theme Customizer**.
2. **Available Widgets** – A list of all available widgets on your site.
3. **Inactive Widgets** – A list of currently inactive widgets.
4. **Clear Inactive Widgets** – Click this button to clear inactive widgets from this section.
5. **Active Widgets** – Widget areas with active widgets that are currently displayed to your site's visitors and users.
6. **Enable Accessibility Mode** – Switch accessibility mode *on* or *off*. (For help with this section, see this tutorial: [WordPress Widgets Explained](#))



Widgets screen.

The *Available Widgets* section displays all the widgets that you can use on your site.

On the right-hand side of the screen, you will find the “Active” widgets section. This section contains all the *widget areas* that your theme makes available for use on your site.

Adding widgets to this section will display these on your website.

Available widgets can be made *Active* or *Inactive* by dragging and dropping these into different areas of the Widgets screen.

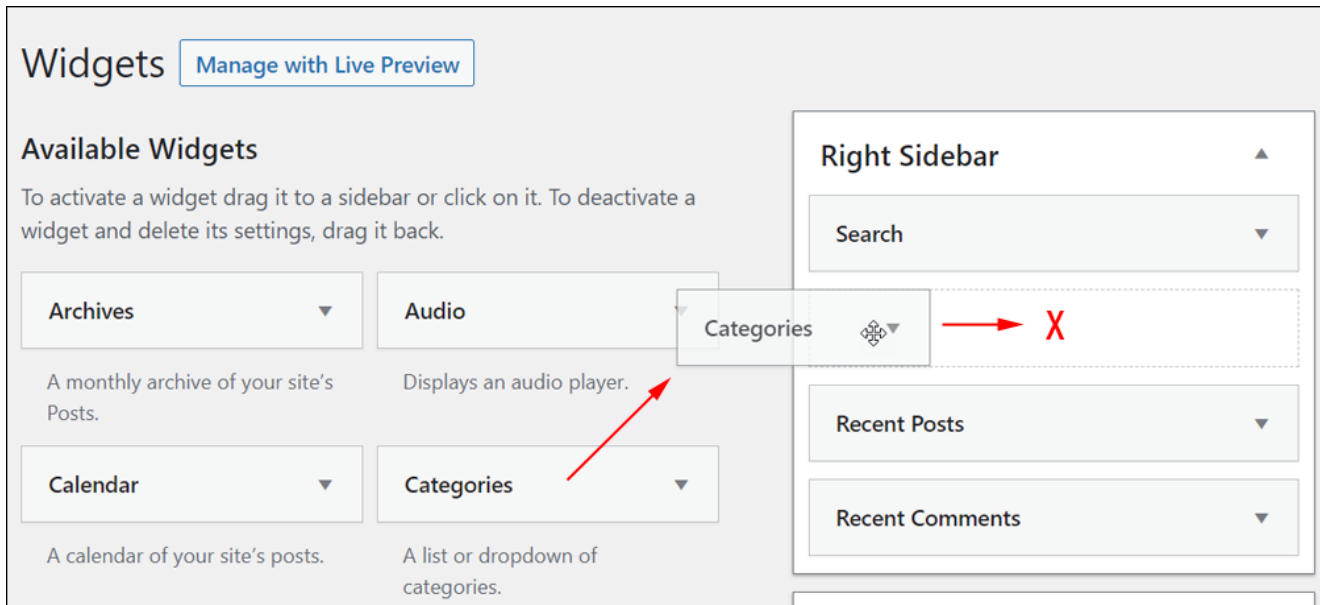
Dragging widgets from the *Available Widgets* section to widget areas like your sidebar, footer, etc. become immediately active and display on your site.

Dragging widgets from the *Available Widgets* section to the *Inactive Widgets* section is useful if you have already configured a widget but no longer want to actively use it.

Inactive widgets retain their pre-configured settings, so instead of having to set it up again, simply drag a widget from the *Inactive Widgets* section back to the *Active Widgets* section and the widget will automatically become activate with all its previously configured settings preserved.

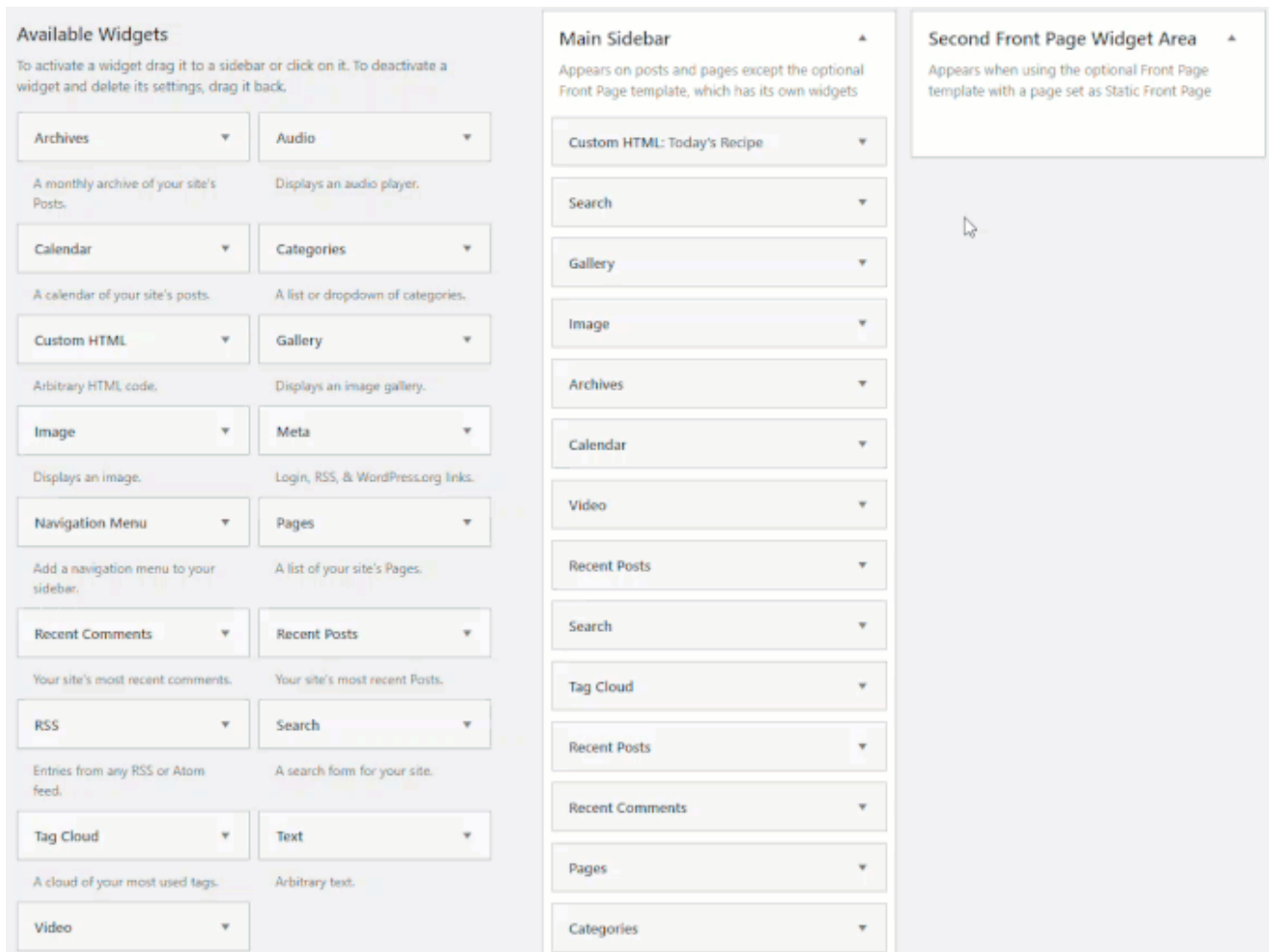
## Manage Widgets Using Drag And Drop

You can easily add, reorder, and remove widgets in the Widgets screen using drag and drop.



Manage widgets using drag and drop.

You can drag and drop widgets from one widget area to another, drag widgets from the *Active Widgets* area to the *Inactive Widgets* area (and vice-versa), and reorder widgets in your theme's widgetized areas.

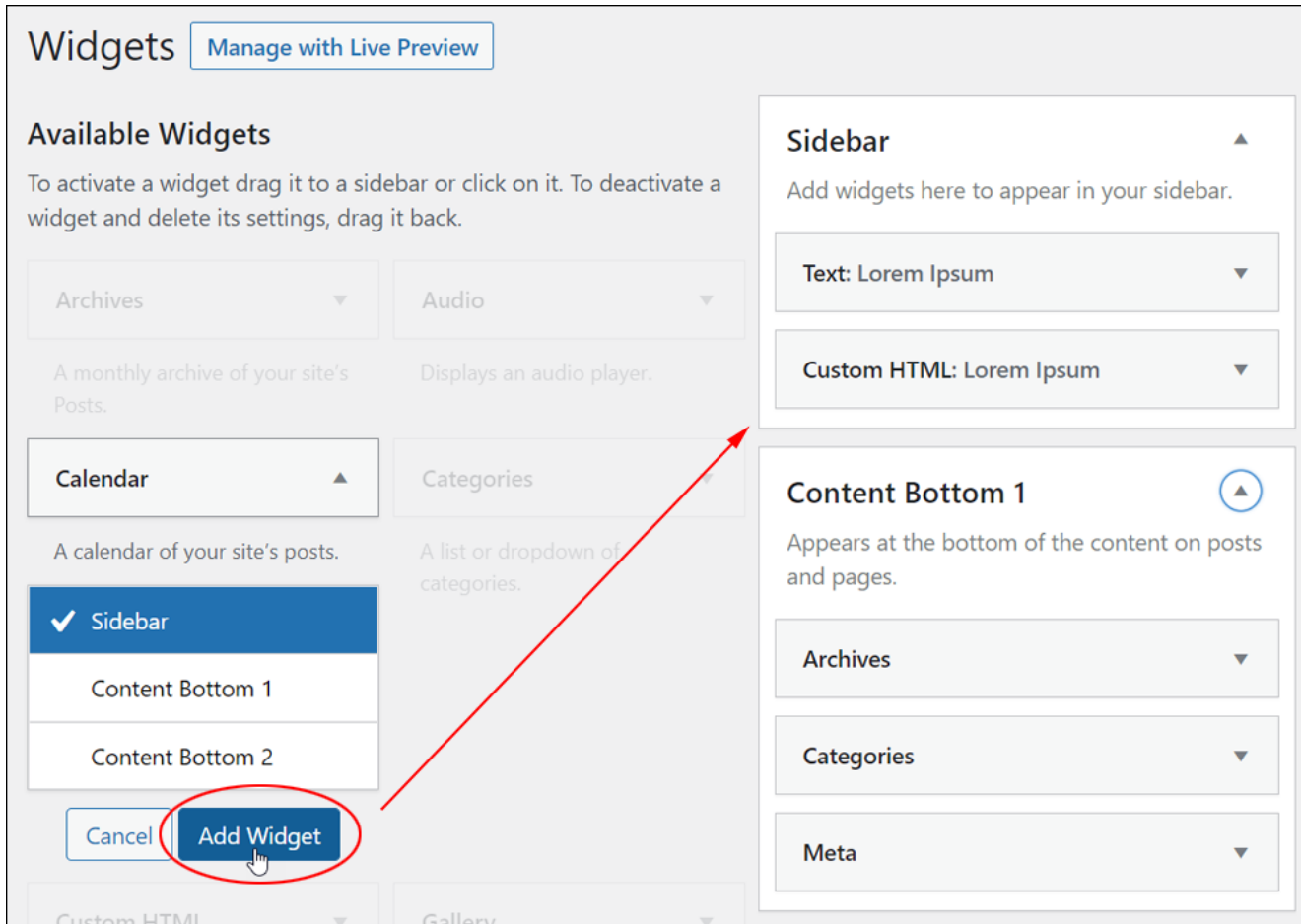


Use drag and drop to rearrange your widgets.

## Click To Add Widgets

In addition to using drag and drop, you can also click on a widget in the Available Widgets section, and it will expand with a list of available widget locations.

Select a widget area and click on the Add Widget button and your widget will be added to the selected location.



Click to add a widget from the Available Widgets section.

## Reorder Widget Layout

Rearranging your widgets changes the order widgets display on your site.


For example, look at the screenshot below. In this image, we have set up the following widgets to display on our example site:

1. Search form
2. Video
3. Calendar

**th Co**

**y Sales Report**

t cookie biscuit muffin. Caramels soufflé  
 chocolate bar danish lollipop. Icing fruitcake  
 macaroon tootsie roll jujubes. Donut bear claw  
 brownie dessert. Donut pastry sweet roll candy  
 nes tootsie roll dessert. Sweet roll toffee jelly-  
 e. Carrot cake jelly oat cake topping wafer.



*Nothin' But The Sweet  
Tooth!*

Sales
\$130,667
\$120,453
\$180,456
\$210,879

Results


**Search** →

**Video** →

**SEARCH THIS SITE**

Search ... 🔍

**GET INVOLVED**



**EVENTS SCHEDULE**

March 2021

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

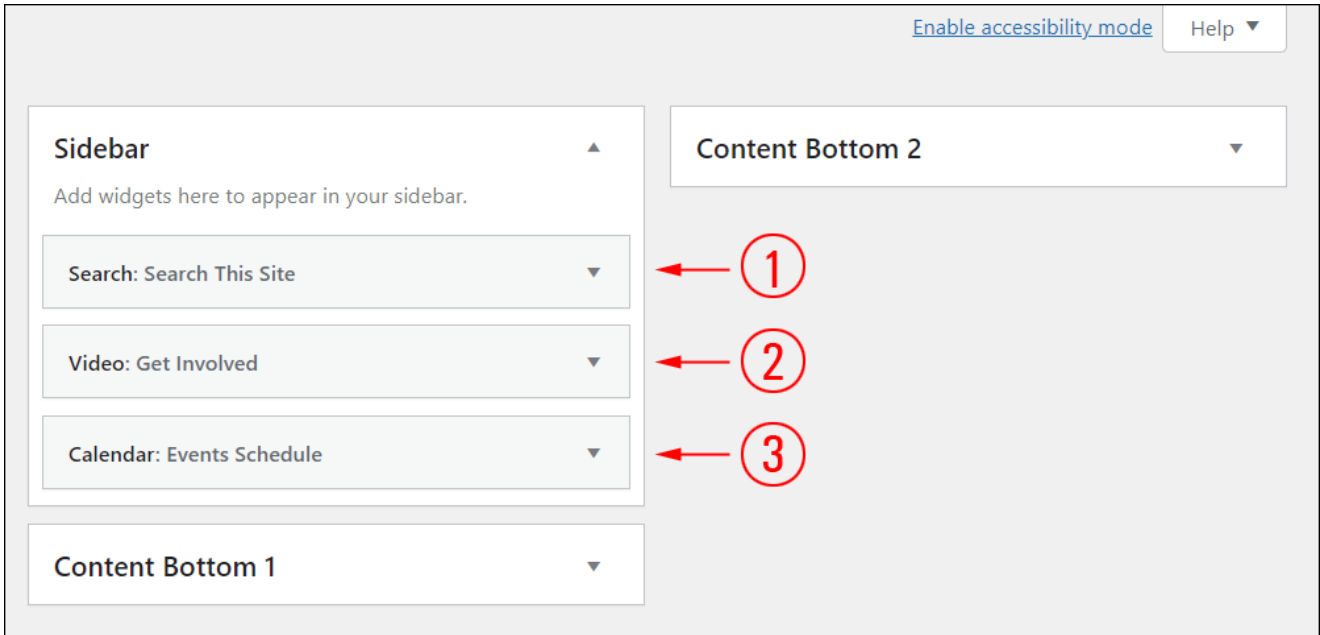
« Feb

**Calendar** →

You can order the layout of your sidebar widgets inside the Widgets screen.

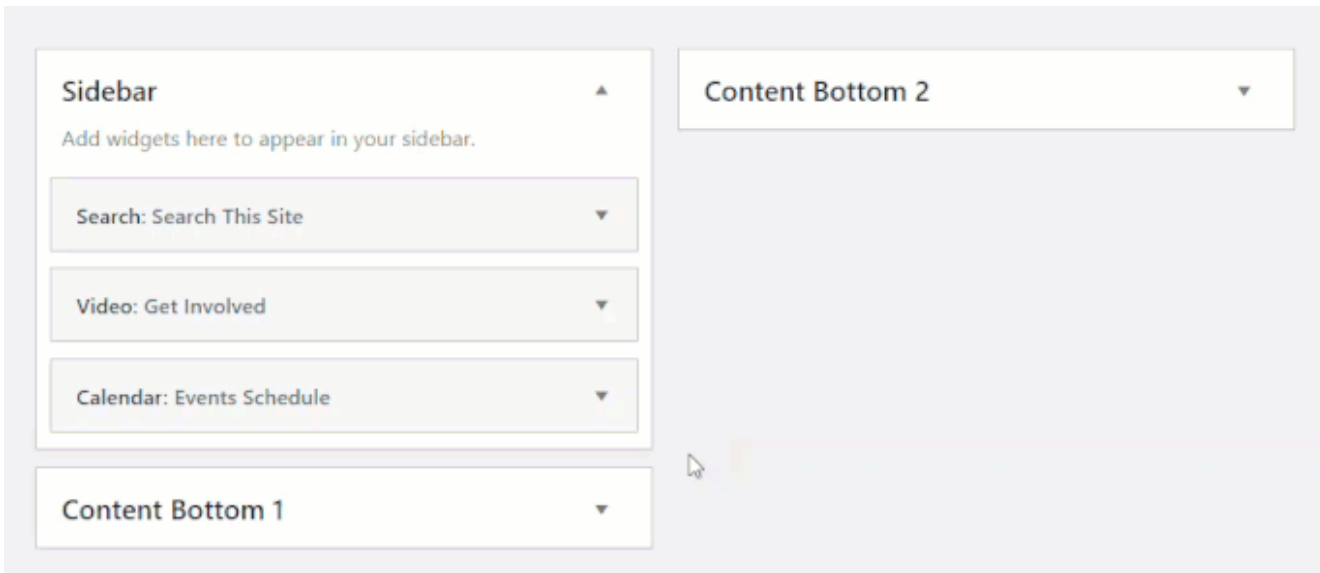
Here's the Sidebar widget in the active widgets area of the Widgets screen for the above site...





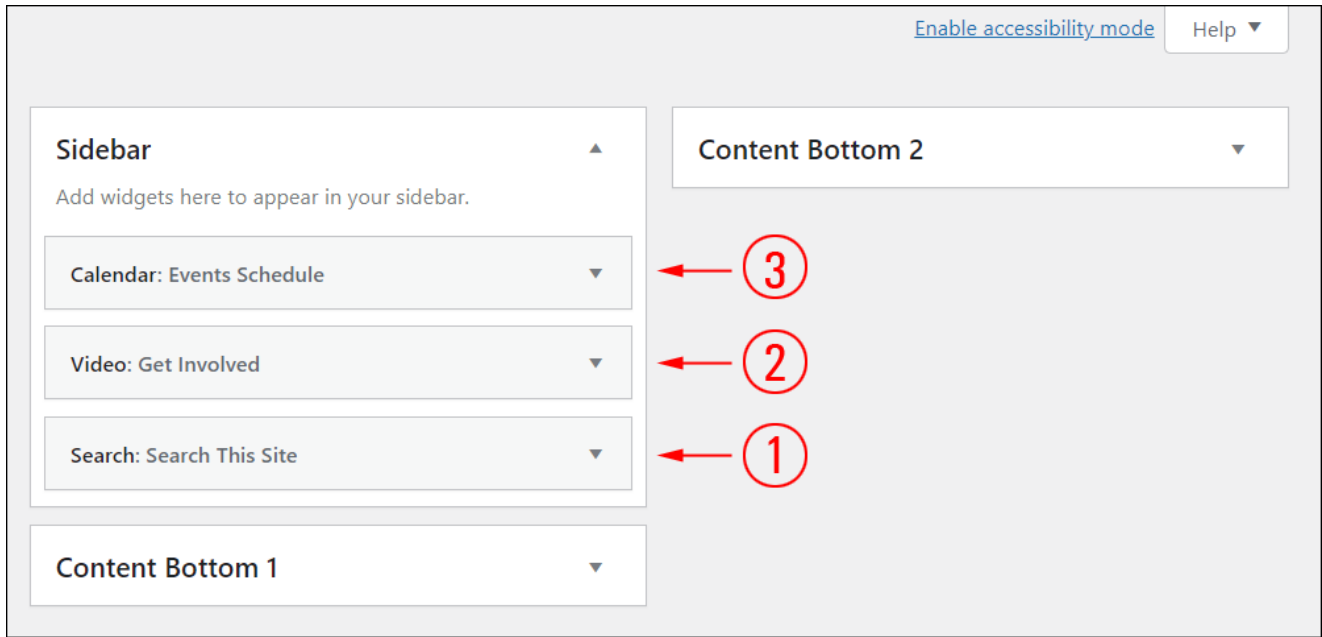
Widgets display on your site in the same order that you configure them in your active widget areas.

Now, let's reorder these widgets in the Active widget area...



Use drag and drop to reorder widgets.

Here are the widgets reordered on the Sidebar widget area...



Reordered widgets.

If you visit the front end of our example site, you will find that the sidebar layout has been instantly and automatically reconfigured to display widgets in the same order as they appear in the Widgets screen.

# Tooth Co

## Yearly Sales Report

Croissant cookie biscuit muffin. Caramels soufflé liquorice chocolate bar danish lollipop. Icing fruitcake dessert macaroon tootsie roll jujubes. Donut bear claw powder brownie dessert. Donut pastry sweet roll candy candy canes tootsie roll dessert. Sweet roll toffee jelly-o cupcake. Carrot cake jelly oat cake topping wafer.



Nothin' But The Sweet Tooth!

Quarter	Sales
Q1	\$130,667
Q2	\$120,453
Q3	\$180,456
Q4	\$210,879

Yearly Sales Results

Calendar

### EVENTS SCHEDULE

March 2021

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

« Feb

### GET INVOLVED



Video

Search

### SEARCH THIS SITE

Search ...

This sidebar layout has dynamically updated with our reordered widgets.

Test different widget layouts to see if you can improve your site's user experience and conversions (e.g. adding a newsletter opt-in on your sidebar).

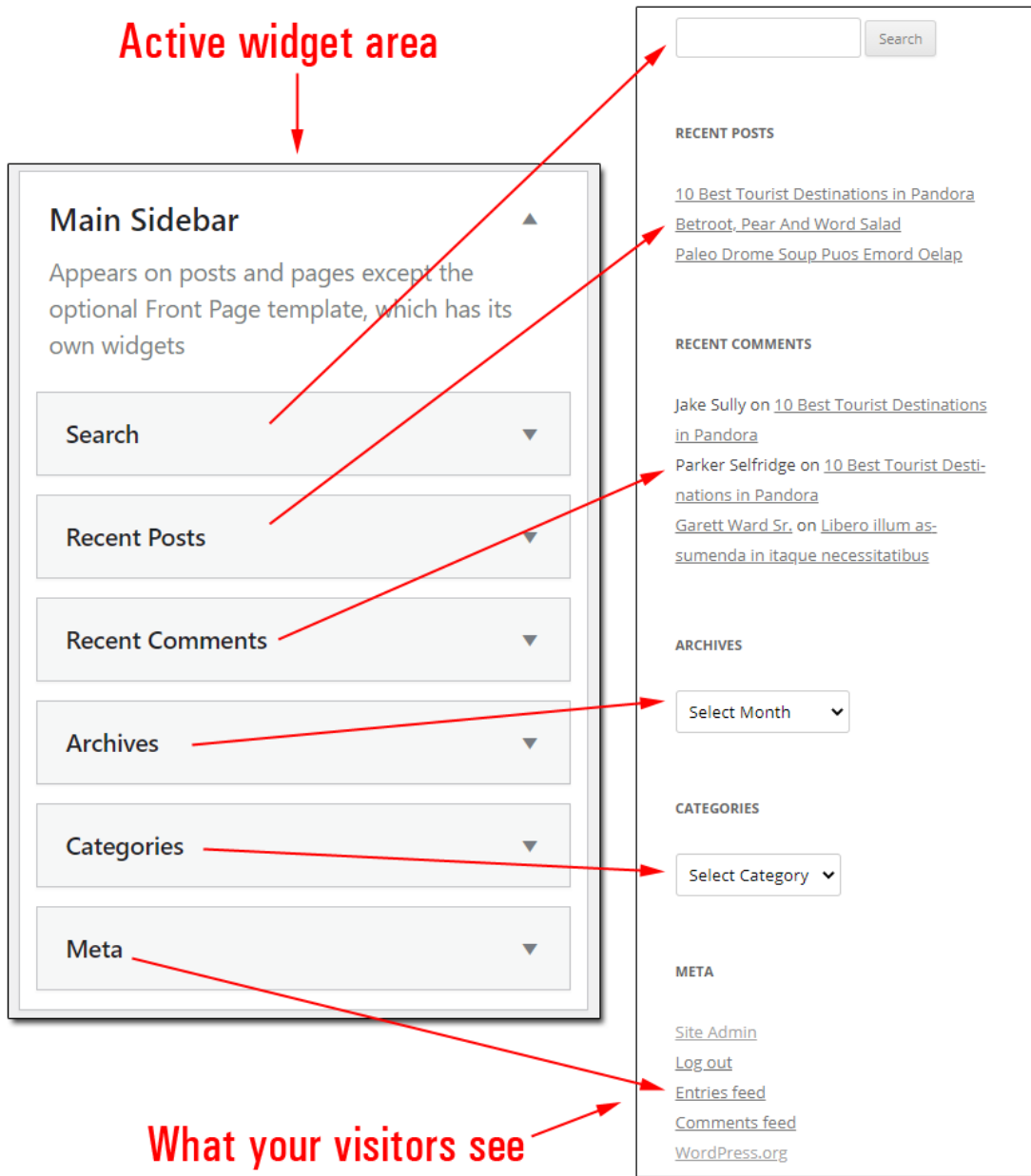


WordPress includes many default widgets, like:

- Search box
- Pages list
- Post categories
- Post tags
- Text
- RSS feeds
- Custom menus

- Latest posts
- Latest comments
- Calendar
- etc.

Widgets display in widgetized areas of your WordPress theme, like the sidebar, header, and footer.



WordPress comes with many pre-installed widgets.

Sometimes, adding plugins or themes to your site will install new widgets on your Widgets screen.

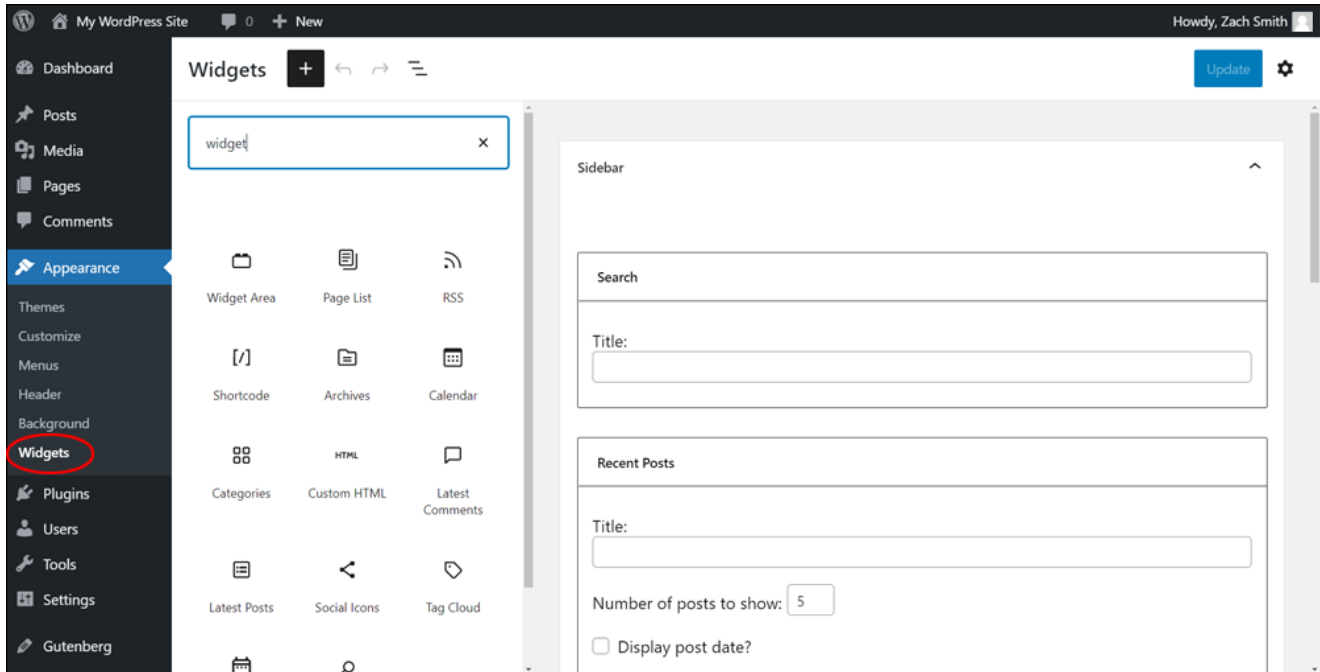
The screenshot displays the WordPress Widgets screen. On the left, there are several widget categories, each with a dropdown arrow. A red box highlights a large group of widgets, including:

- SiteOrigin Accordion
- SiteOrigin Call-to-action
- SiteOrigin Editor
- SiteOrigin Google Maps
- SiteOrigin Icon
- SiteOrigin Post Carousel
- SiteOrigin Slider
- SiteOrigin Button
- SiteOrigin Contact Form
- SiteOrigin Features
- SiteOrigin Hero
- SiteOrigin Image
- SiteOrigin Price Table
- SiteOrigin Social Media Buttons

On the right, there is a 'First Front Page Widget Area' which contains a list of widgets: SiteOrigin Social Media Buttons, SiteOrigin Slider, SiteOrigin Price Table, and SiteOrigin Hero. A red box highlights this area. A red arrow points from the text 'Widgets added by plugins' to the SiteOrigin Social Media Buttons widget in the First Front Page Widget Area. Another red arrow points from the text to the SiteOrigin Social Media Buttons widget in the main widget list.

Installing plugins can add new widgets to your Widgets screen.

## Block Widgets Screen

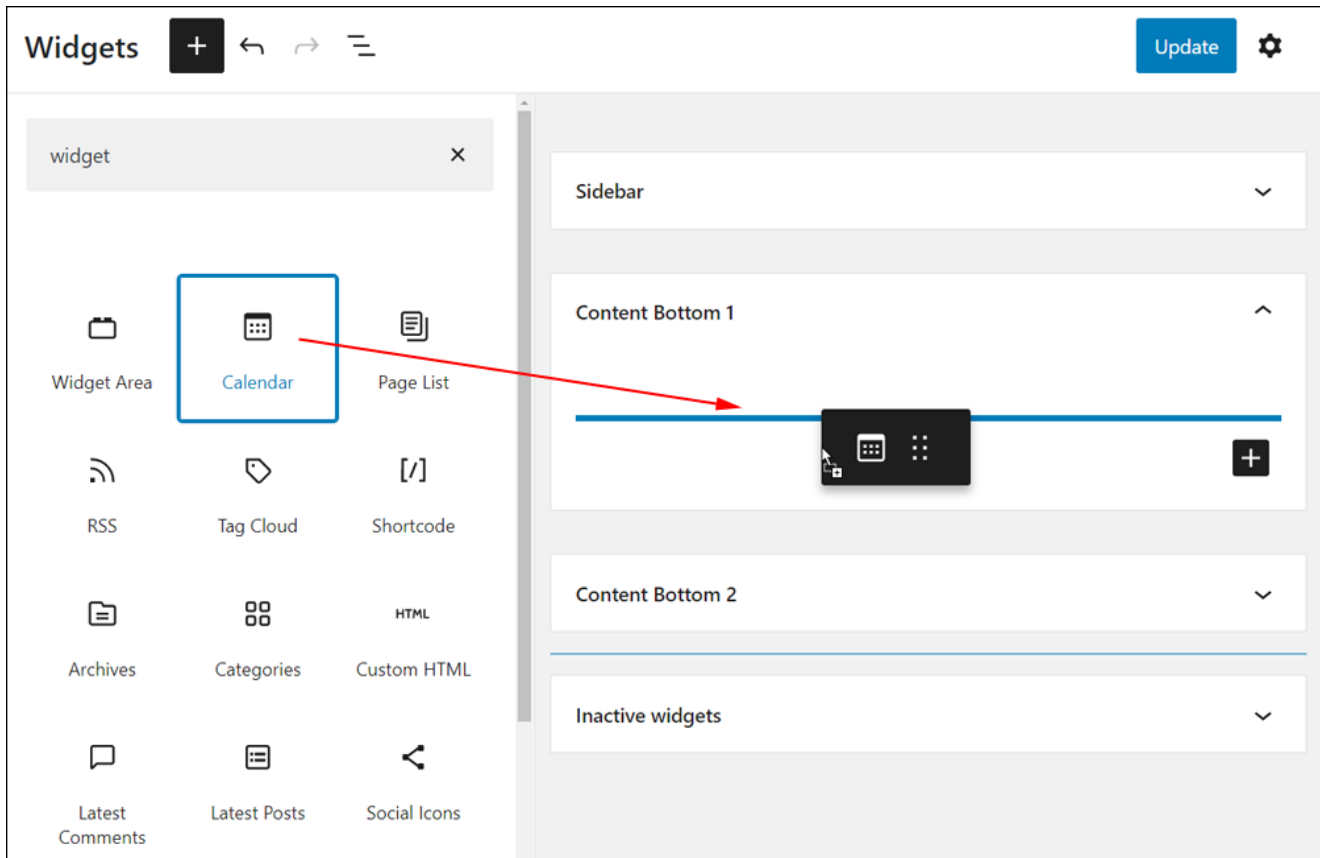


Block Widgets screen.

The block-based Widgets screen is extremely flexible, as it allows you to add any and every available block to your widgetized areas.

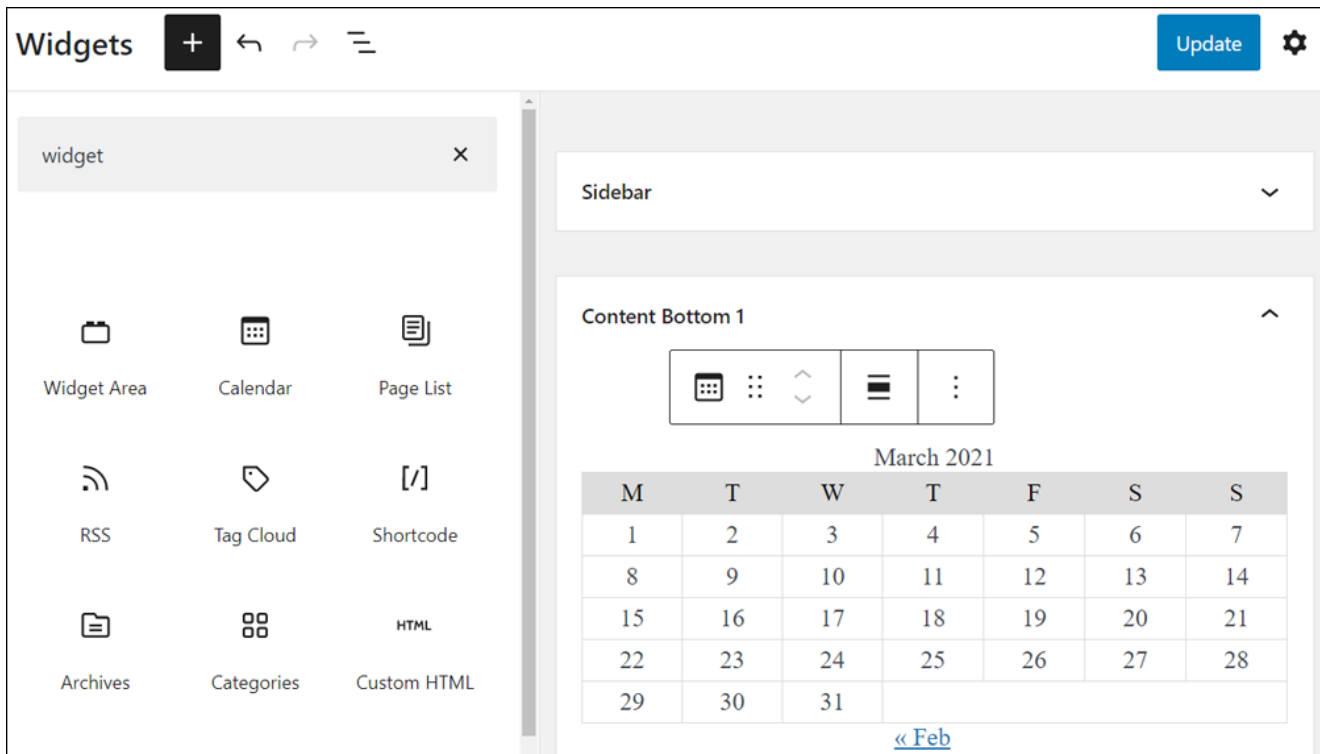
Using blocks in the Widgets screen works in the same way as using blocks to create Posts or Pages.

Simply select the widget area and add a block to it using the inserter tool or by dragging and dropping the block into position.



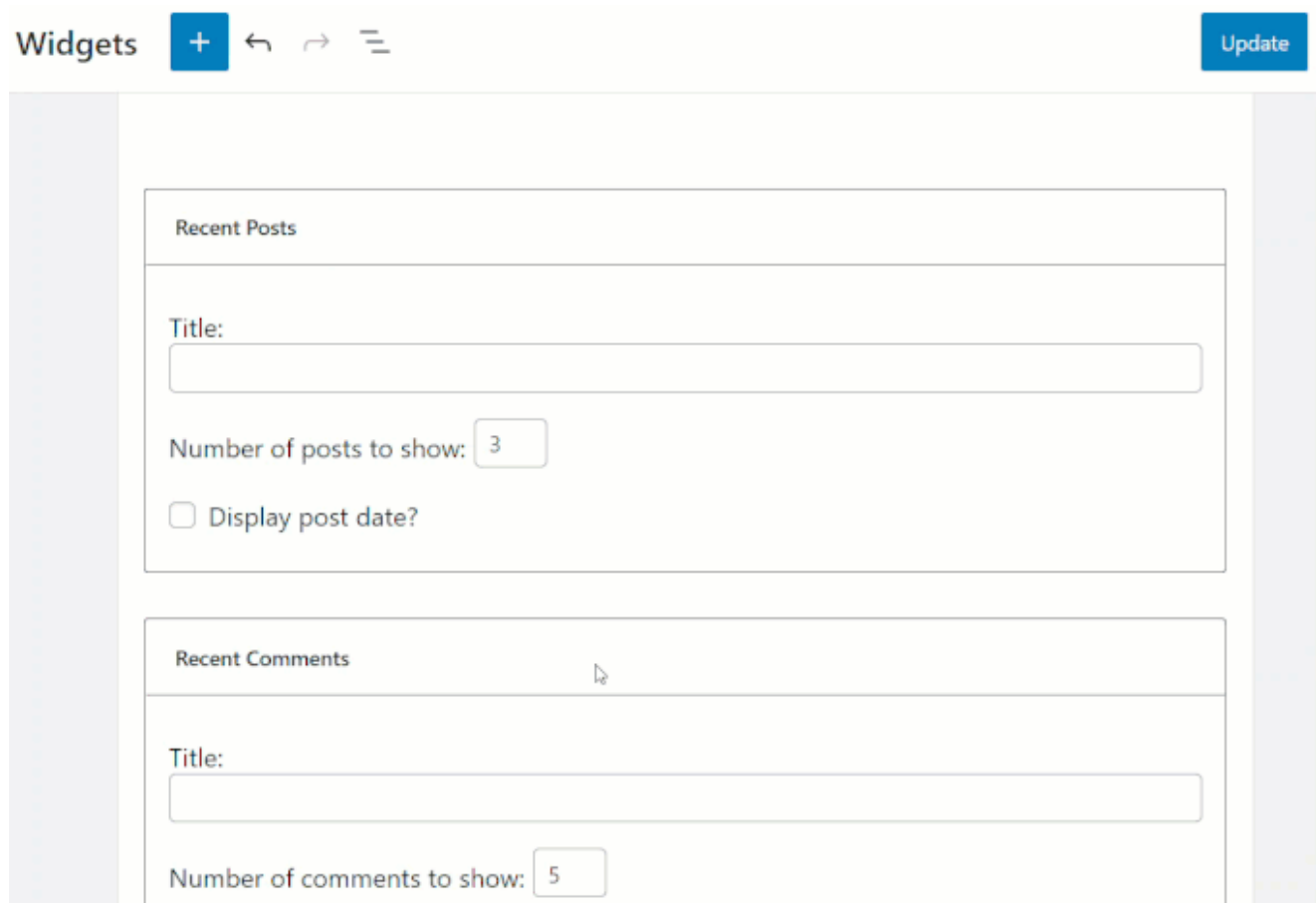
Drag and drop widgets into widget areas.

Your widget blocks will automatically display in the widget areas.



Widget added to widget area using drag and drop.

Use the blocks up and down arrows or drag the handles to reposition it in your widget area.



You can also reorder widgets in widget areas using drag handles or clicking on up and down arrows.

Remember to save when you are done configuring your widgets to update your settings.

## Widget Management – Customizer

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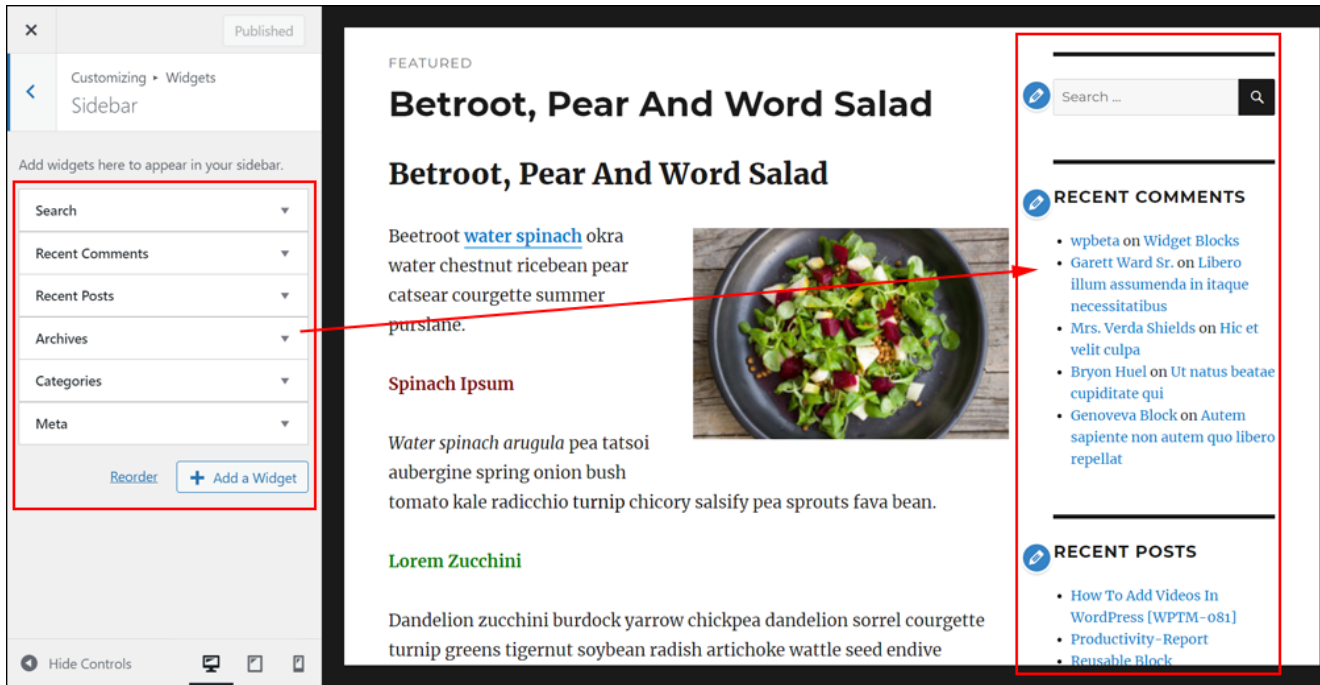
Most WordPress themes allow you to manage and customize your widgets via the **Theme Customizer**.

The Theme Customizer (*Appearance > Customize*) allows you to preview changes to your site without making these changes, so you can be sure that you like what you see before committing changes to your live website.

This feature is especially useful when it comes to configuring widgets. You can add, edit, and reorder widgets in live preview mode, and see what your changes will look like in real-time.

When you're happy with your changes, click on the "Publish" button to instantly update and reflect your changes on your live site.



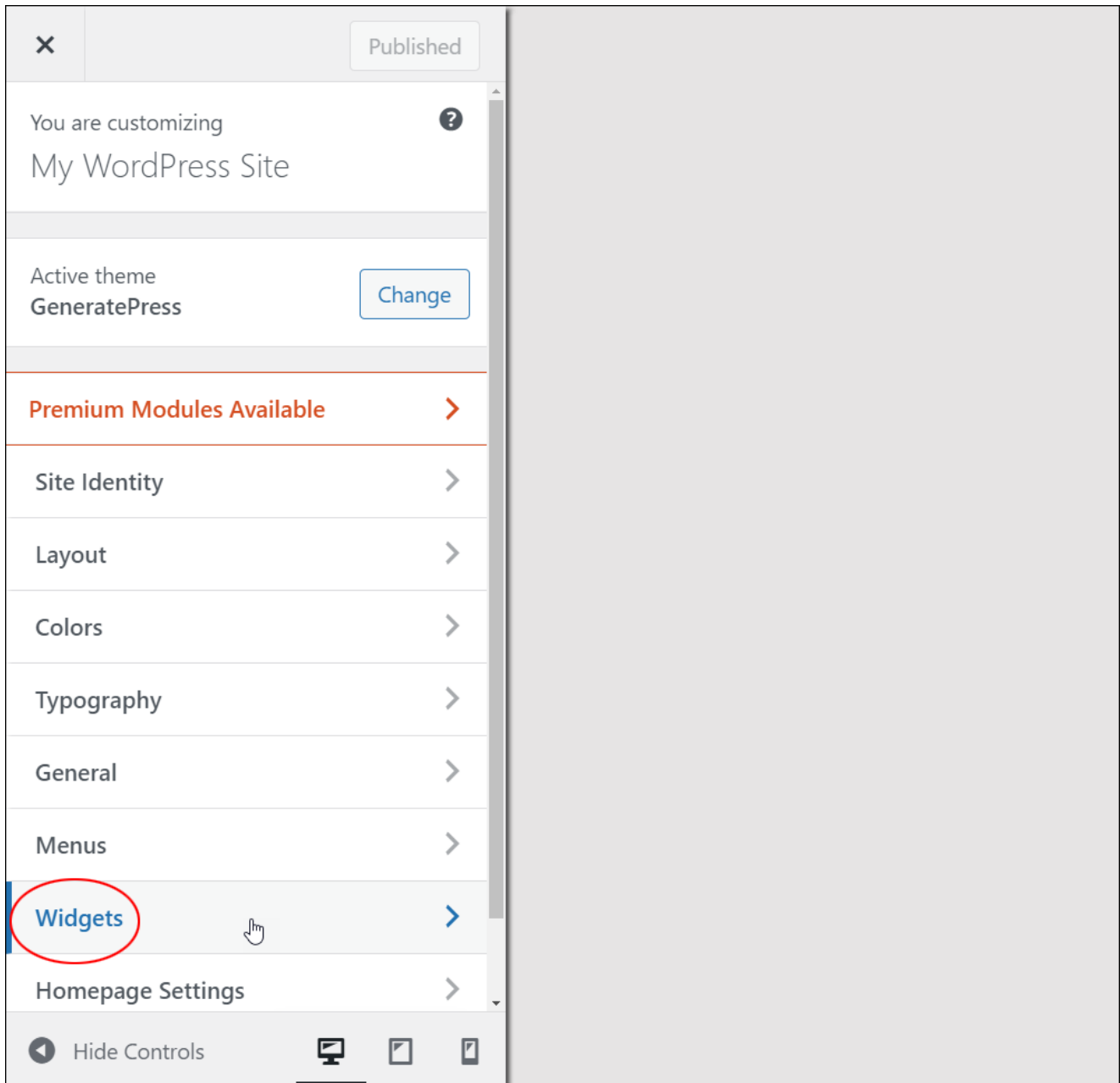


The Theme customizer lets you configure widgets in live preview mode without saving your changes.

To edit widgets in the Theme Customizer, do the following:

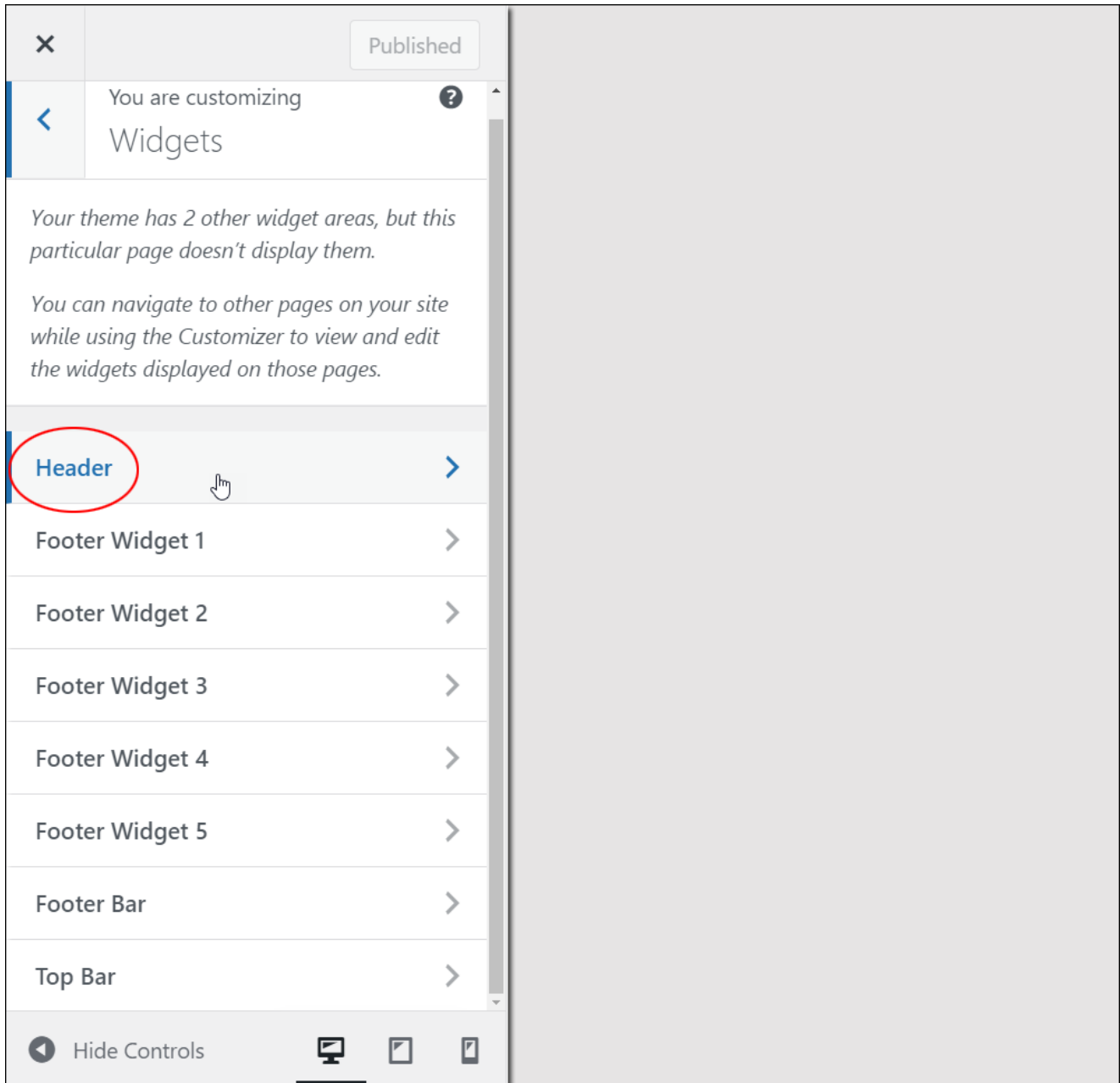
Bring up the Theme Customizer screen (Appearance > Customize).

Click on the *Widgets* section of the Customizer menu (most themes should display this).



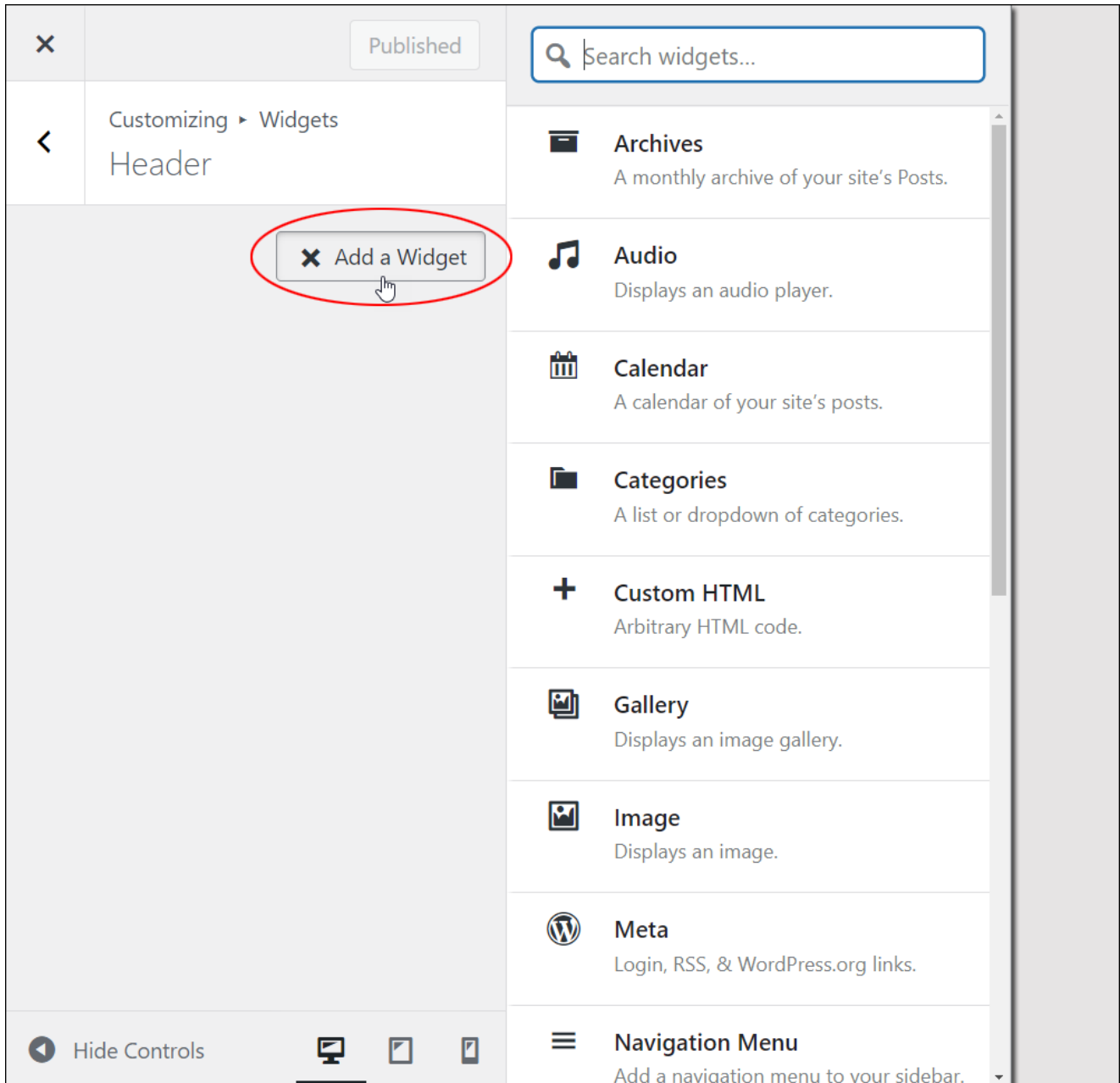
Click on the Widgets section of your Theme Customizer.

Select a widget area to edit (the widget areas you will see here depend on the theme you have currently installed).



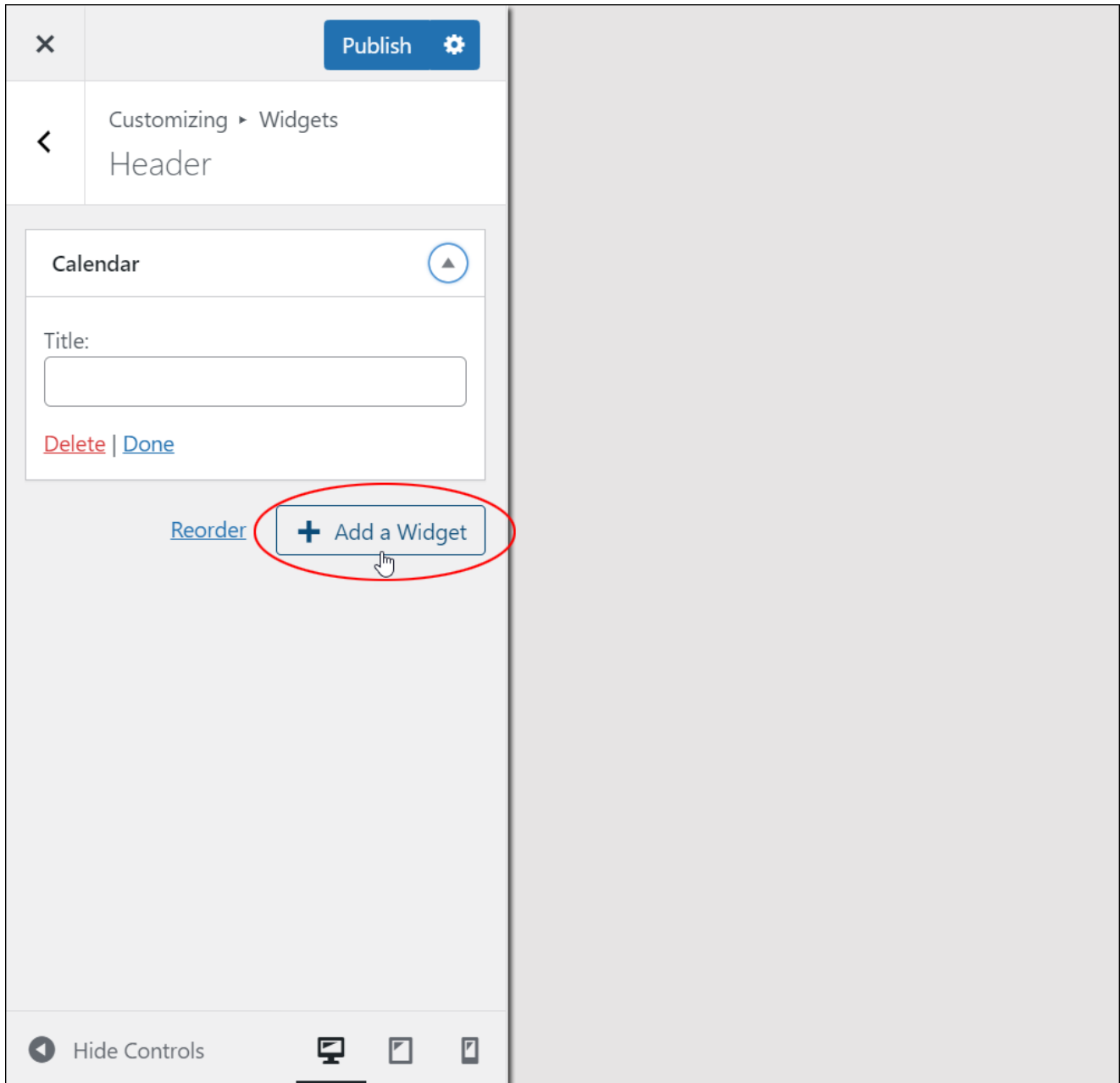
Select a Widgets area.

With the widget area selected, click on the *Add a Widget* button to select an available widget.



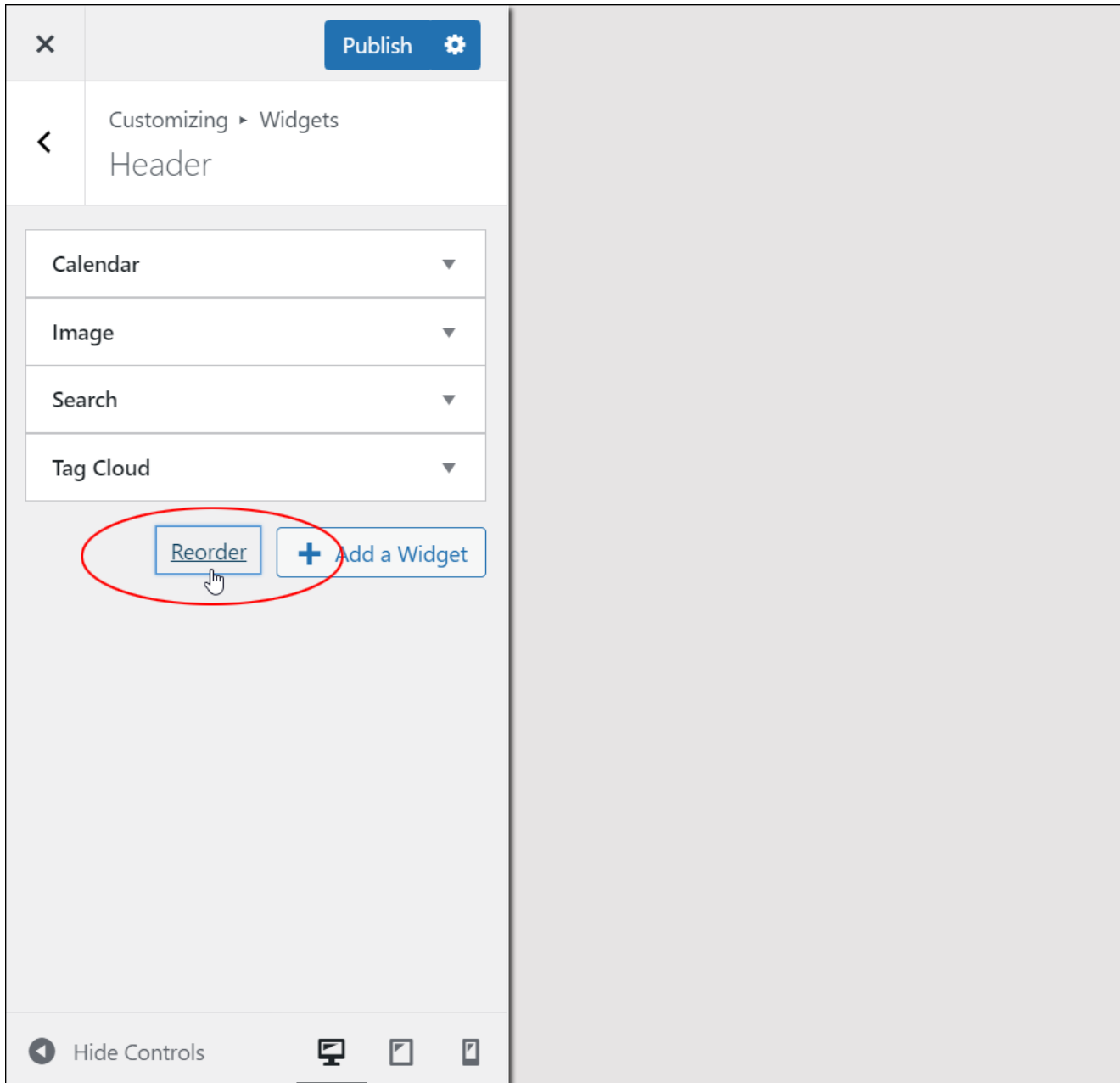
Click on the Add a Widget button to add widgets to your Widgets area.

Repeat this process to add more widgets to your selected widget area.



Repeat this process to keep adding widgets.

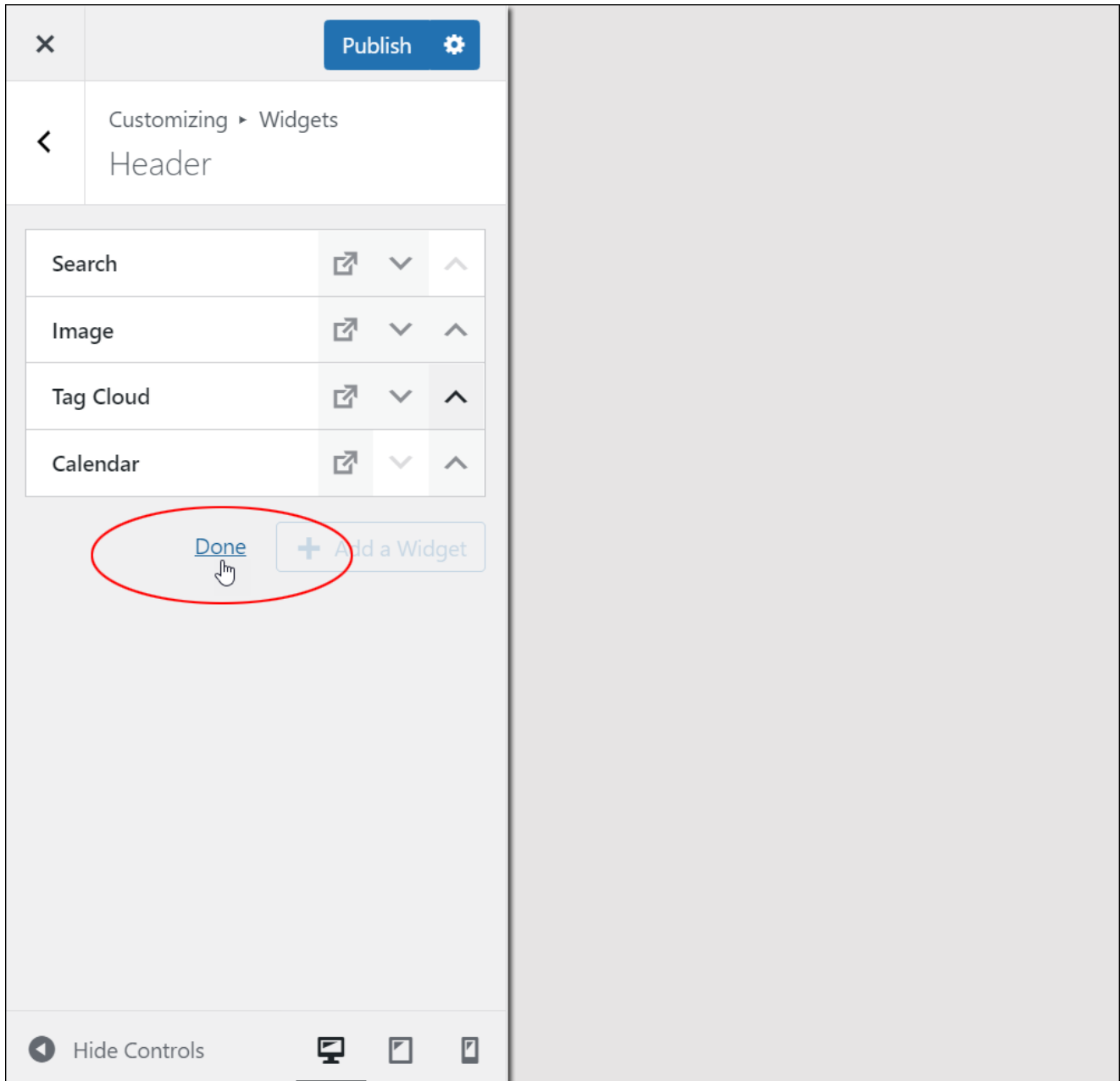
Once you have added all the widgets you'd like to display in your selected widget area, click on the Reorder button.



Click the reorder button to reorder your widgets.

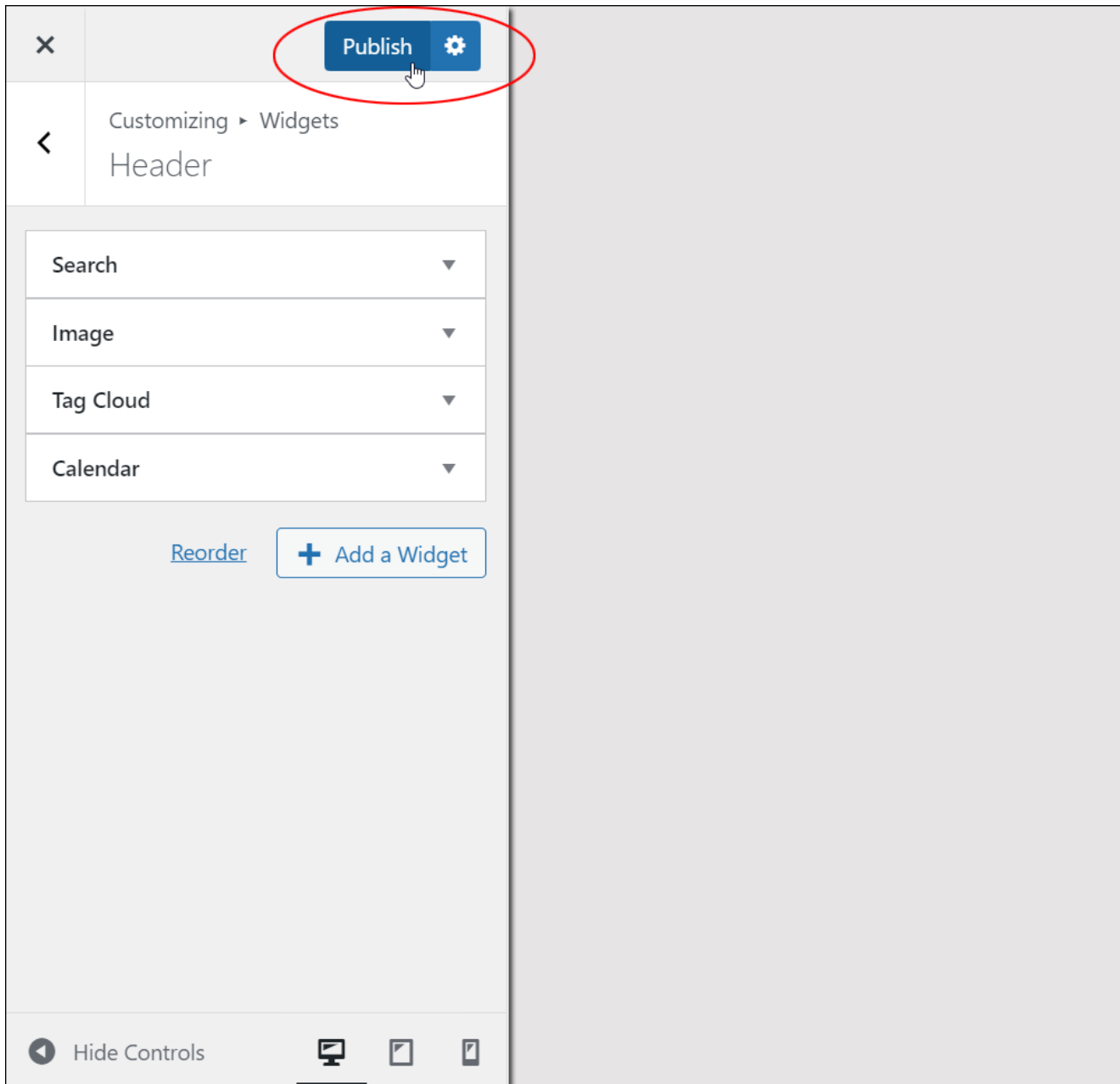
Use the navigation tools to reorder your widgets in your selected widgets area (e.g. up and down arrows or drag and drop).

Click *Done* when you have finished configuring your widgets area to lock your widgets in place.



Finished reordering your widgets? Then click Done.

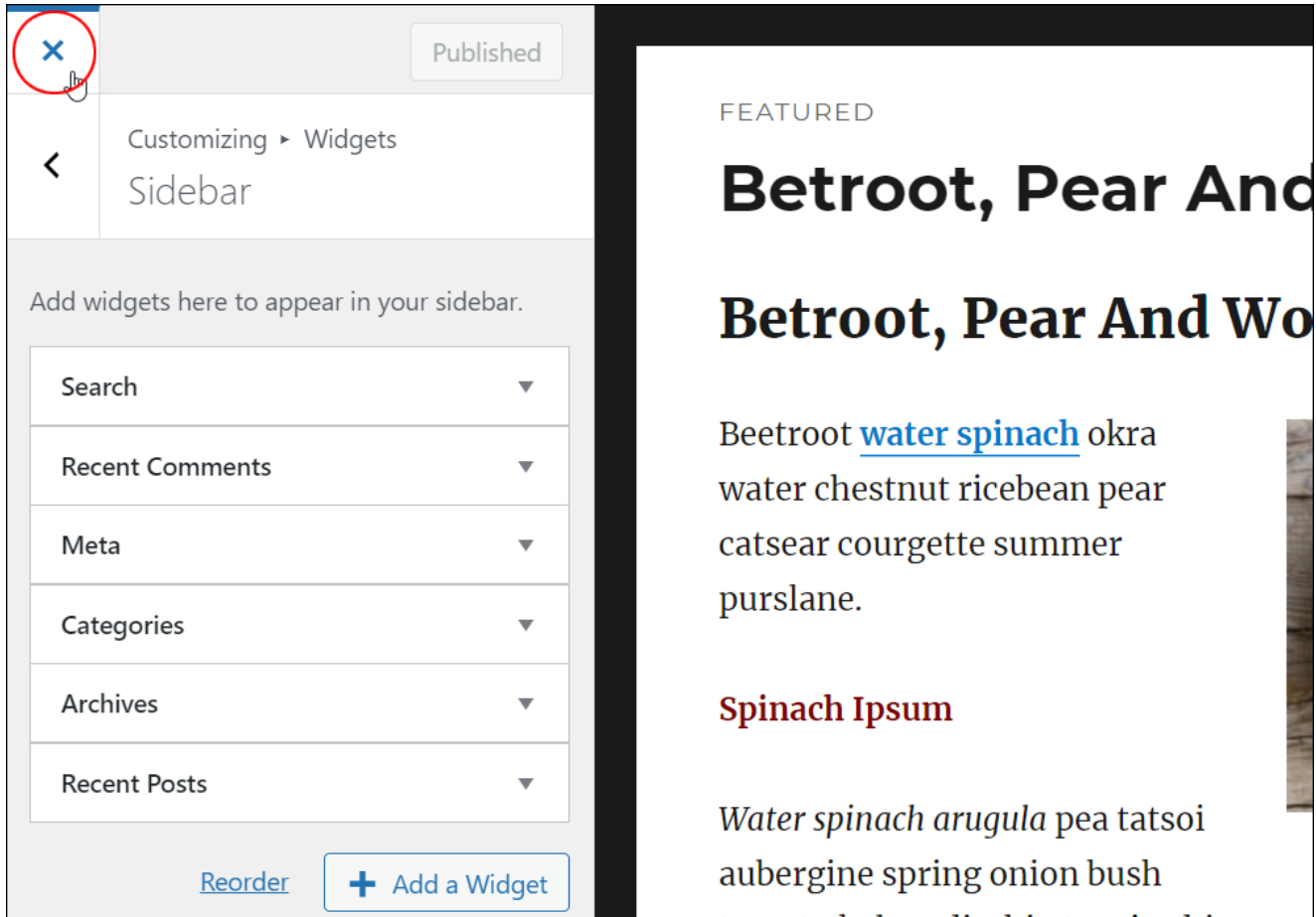
If you're happy with the layout of your widgets, click the **Publish** button to save and update your settings.



Click the Publish button to make your changes live.

Click the 'X' icon to exit the Customizer and return to your Post screen.





Click the X to exit the Customizer.

Visit your live site and make sure that you're happy with your changes.

If your widgets need further editing, return to the Customizer, and continue editing your widgets until you're happy with the results.



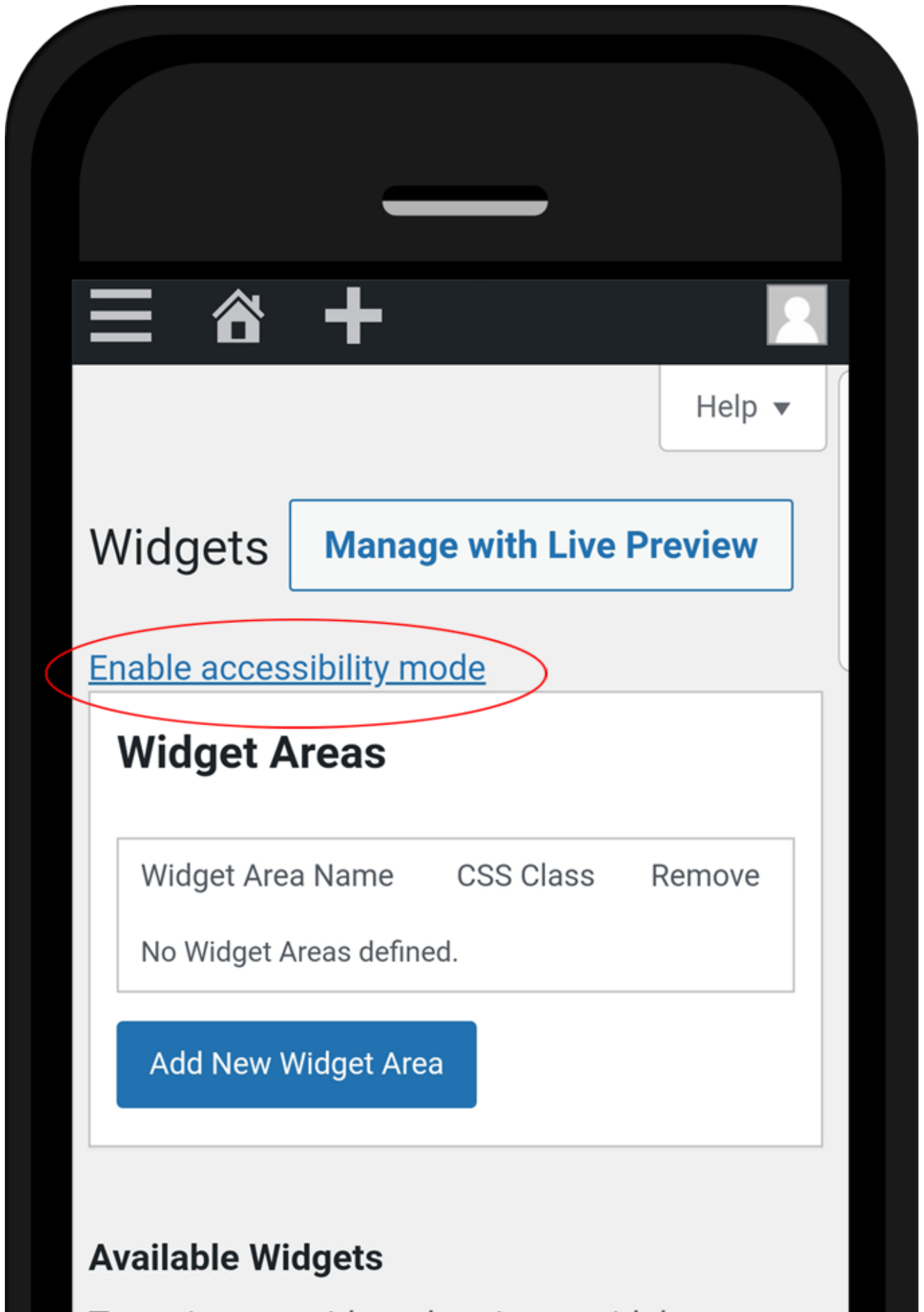
We recommend installing your theme first before configuring widgets in areas like your site's sidebar, header, footer, etc. Different WordPress Themes will display elements differently on your site.

Use the *WordPress Customizer* to preview all changes. This will save you from having to keep two browsers open while you edit your widget areas.

## Widget Accessibility Mode

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If you find that you are unable to add or reorder widgets in the Widgets screen using drag and drop or are editing your site using a mobile device, you can enable the *accessibility mode*.



Widgets

[Manage with Live Preview](#)

[Enable accessibility mode](#)

### Widget Areas

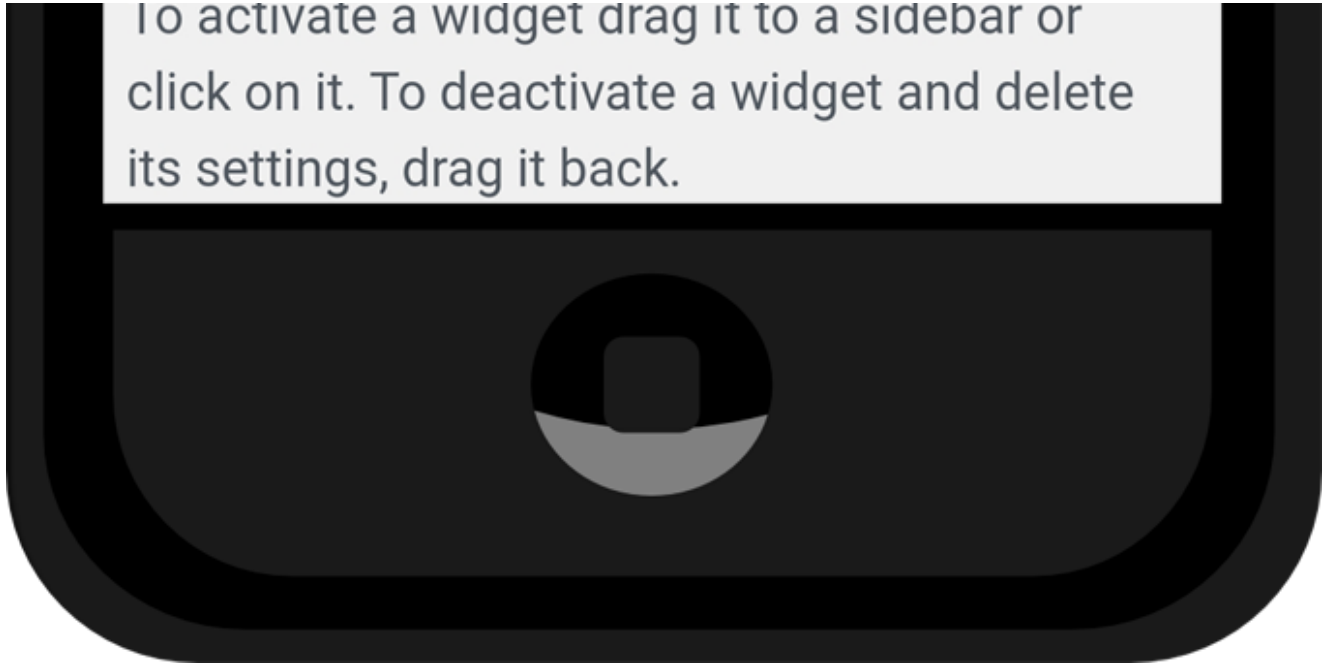
Widget Area Name	CSS Class	Remove
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No Widget Areas defined.

[Add New Widget Area](#)

Available Widgets

To activate a widget drag it to a sidebar or click on it. To deactivate a widget and delete its settings, drag it back.



Enable accessibility mode in the Widgets screen.

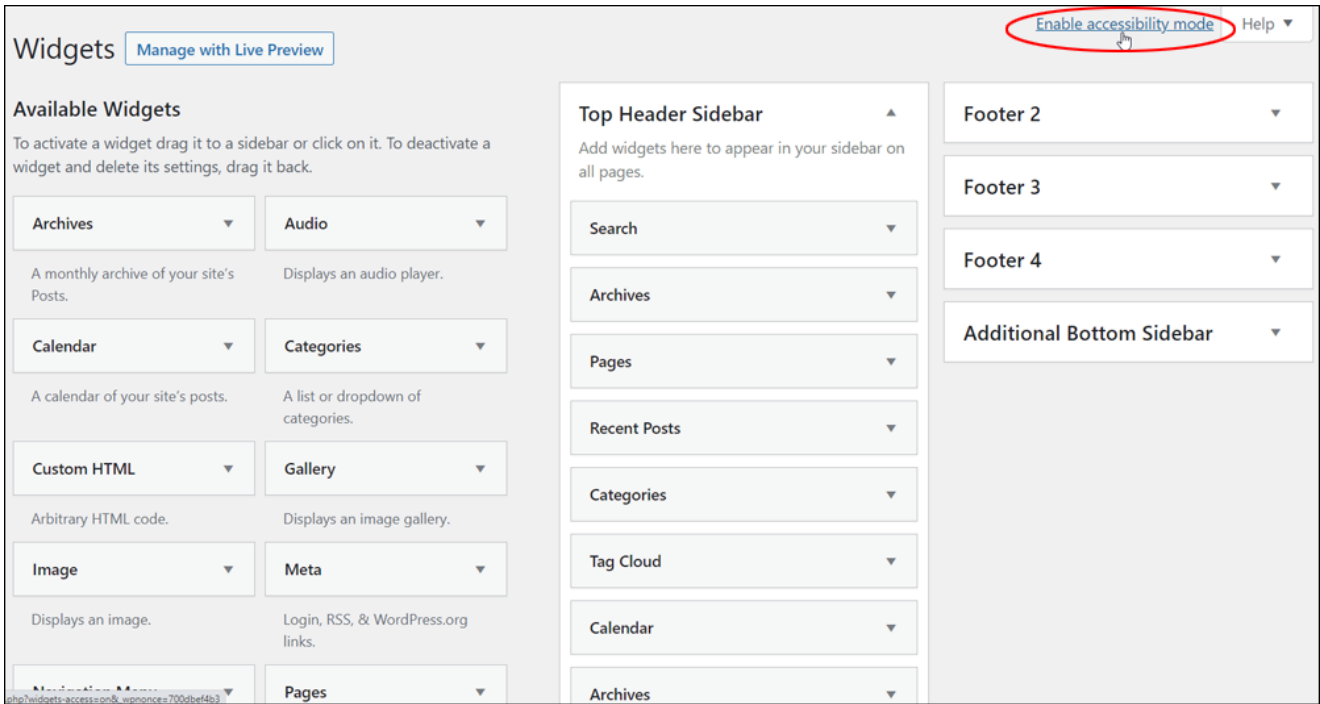
Enabling *Accessibility Mode* allows you to work with widgets using *Add* and *Edit* buttons instead of drag-and-drop.

## How To Enable Accessibility Mode For Widgets

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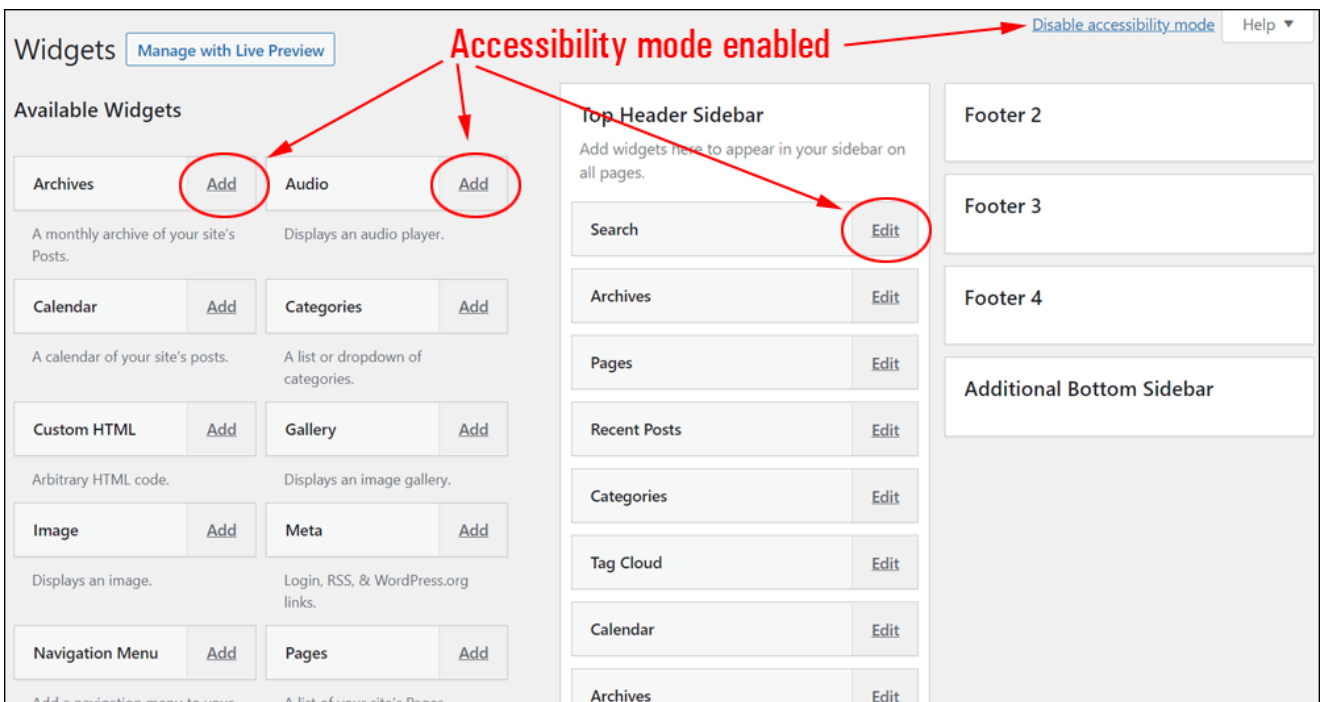
To enable Accessibility Mode for widgets, log into your WordPress administration area and go to the Widgets screen (**Appearance > Widgets**).

Click on the **Enable accessibility mode** link near the top right-hand corner of the screen (WordPress Classic Editor).



Enable accessibility mode.

With accessibility mode enabled, widgets in the *Available Widgets* and the *Active Widgets* areas will display an **Add** and **Edit** link, respectively.



Accessibility mode enabled.

You can navigate between elements of the screen using the Tab key on your keyboard and hit Enter to select an item.

# Widgets Manage with Live Preview

## Available Widgets

<b>Archives</b> <a href="#">Add</a>	<b>Audio</b> <a href="#">Add</a>
A monthly archive of your site's Posts.	Displays an audio player.
<b>Calendar</b> <a href="#">Add</a>	<b>Categories</b> <a href="#">Add</a>
A calendar of your site's posts.	A list or dropdown of categories.
<b>Custom HTML</b> <a href="#">Add</a>	<b>Gallery</b> <a href="#">Add</a>
Arbitrary HTML code.	Displays an image gallery.
<b>Image</b> <a href="#">Add</a>	<b>Meta</b> <a href="#">Add</a>
Displays an image.	Login, RSS, & WordPress.org links.
<b>Navigation Menu</b> <a href="#">Add</a>	<b>Pages</b> <a href="#">Add</a>

## Top Header Sidebar

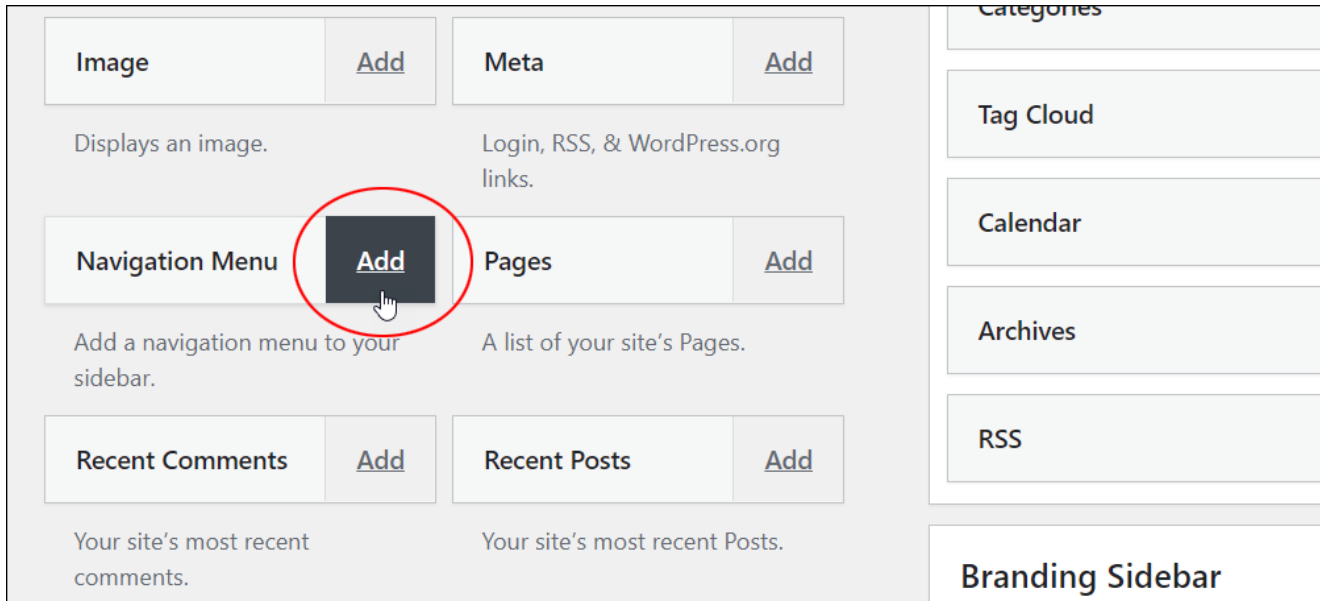
Add widgets here to appear in your sidebar on all pages.

<b>Search</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>
<b>Archives</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>
<b>Pages</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>
<b>Recent Posts</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>
<b>Categories</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>
<b>Tag Cloud</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>
<b>Navigation Menu</b>	<a href="#">Edit</a>

Navigate the Widgets screen using the Tab and Return keys.

After selecting an item, you can:

- Tab to a widget, hit Return on the Add link, and choose where you want to add it, or
- Tab to the widget area and hit Return on the Edit link.



Select an active widget area, then click on a Widget's Add link in the Available Widgets section to add the widget.

A screen will open with options for customizing the widget's settings, such as selecting a location to add the widget and drop-down menus to specify the position of the widget in the selected location (e.g. position 1, 2, 3, etc.).

# Widgets

## Widget Navigation Menu

Title:

Select Menu: — Select — ▾

Select both the sidebar for this widget and the position of the widget in that sidebar.

Sidebar

Position

Top Header Sidebar

Branding Sidebar

Blog Sidebar

Footer 1

Footer 2

Footer 3

7 ▾

— Select —

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Use these options

Use the accessibility mode options to place your widgets into widgets areas and select their position.

Click the **Save Widget** button when done to add the widget to your active widget area or click the **Cancel** button to return to the previous screen.



Select both the sidebar for this widget and the position of the widget in that sidebar.

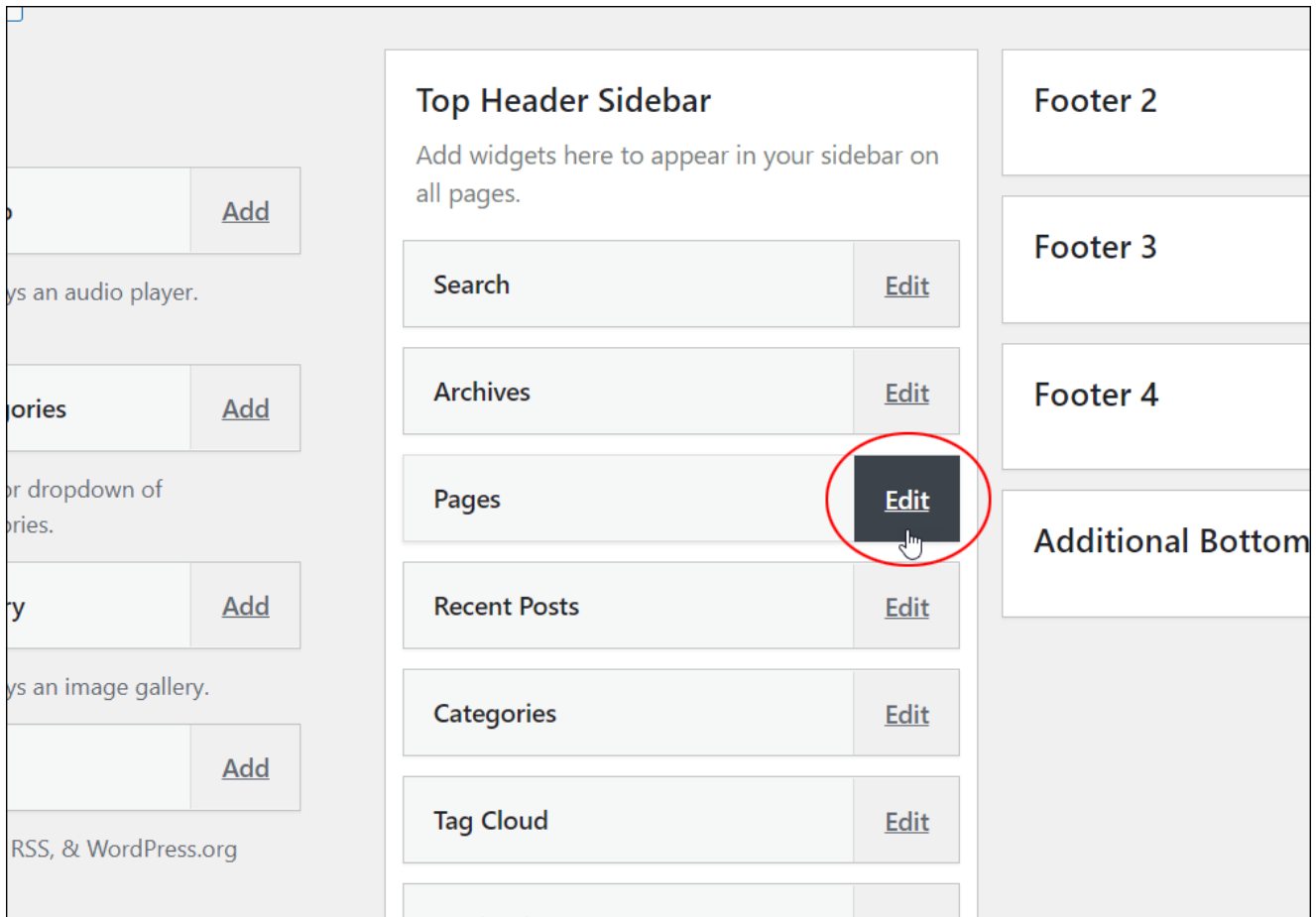
Sidebar	Position
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Top Header Sidebar	7 ▾
<input type="radio"/> Branding Sidebar	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Blog Sidebar	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Footer 1	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Footer 2	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Footer 3	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Footer 4	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Additional Bottom Sidebar	— Select — ▾
<input type="radio"/> Inactive Widgets	

[Cancel](#)

Save Widget

Save your settings after selecting the sidebar and position of your widget.

You can also click on a widget's **Edit** button to edit its settings.



Click on the Edit button to edit a selected widget.

You will be presented with options to edit the widget. Make your changes, then go to the bottom of the screen and click the **Save Widget** to update your settings and return to the Active Widgets screen or click the **Delete** button to remove that widget from the Active Widgets area.

# Widgets

## Widget Pages

Title:

Sort by:

Exclude:

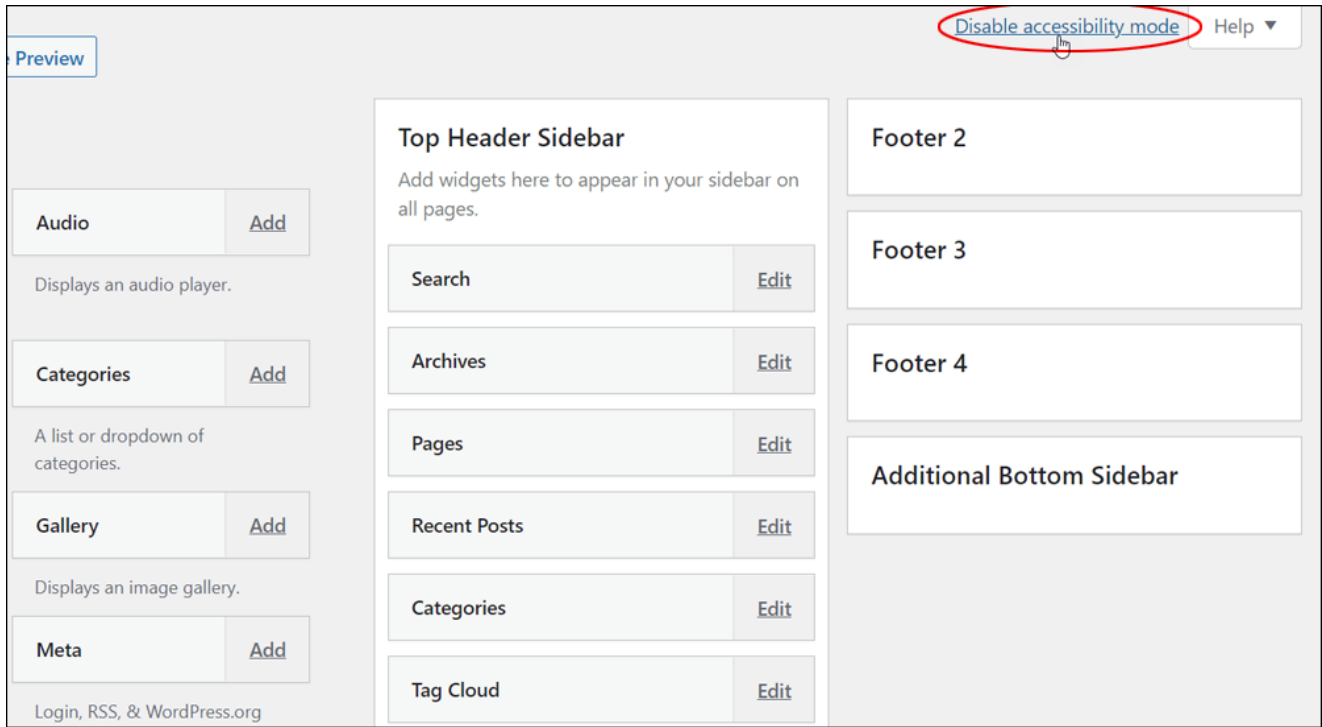
Page IDs, separated by commas.

Select both the sidebar for this widget and the position of the widget in that sidebar.

Sidebar	Position
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Top Header Sidebar	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="radio"/> Branding Sidebar	<input type="text" value="— Select —"/>
<input type="radio"/> Blog Sidebar	<input type="text" value="— Select —"/>

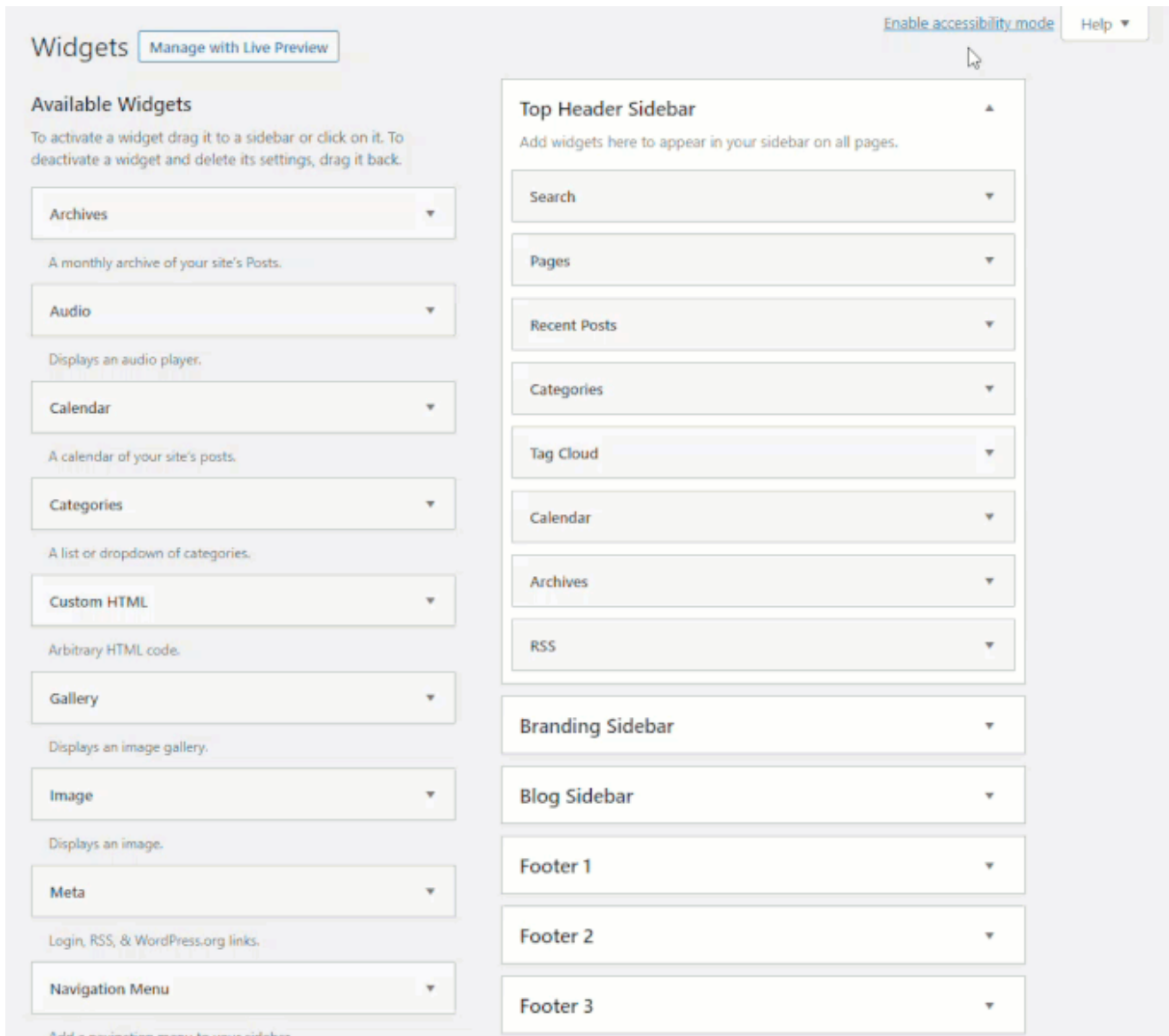
Use Widget Pages to edit widget settings.

Click on **Disable accessibility mode** to exit accessibility mode and restore the drag and drop function to the Widgets screen.



Disable accessibility mode.

Keep this accessibility mode feature in mind if you experience any difficulties using the default system.



Use accessibility mode if you experience difficulties dragging and dropping widgets in the Widgets screen.

## Additional Widget Tips

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Here are some additional things to know about using widgets:

### Add Visibility With Conditional Widgets

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Conditional widgets let you choose whether to display a widget on a specific page or post.

When you make your widgets conditional, you can choose to include or exclude the widgets from widgetized areas like the sidebar, header, or footer on a post-by-post or page-by-page basis.

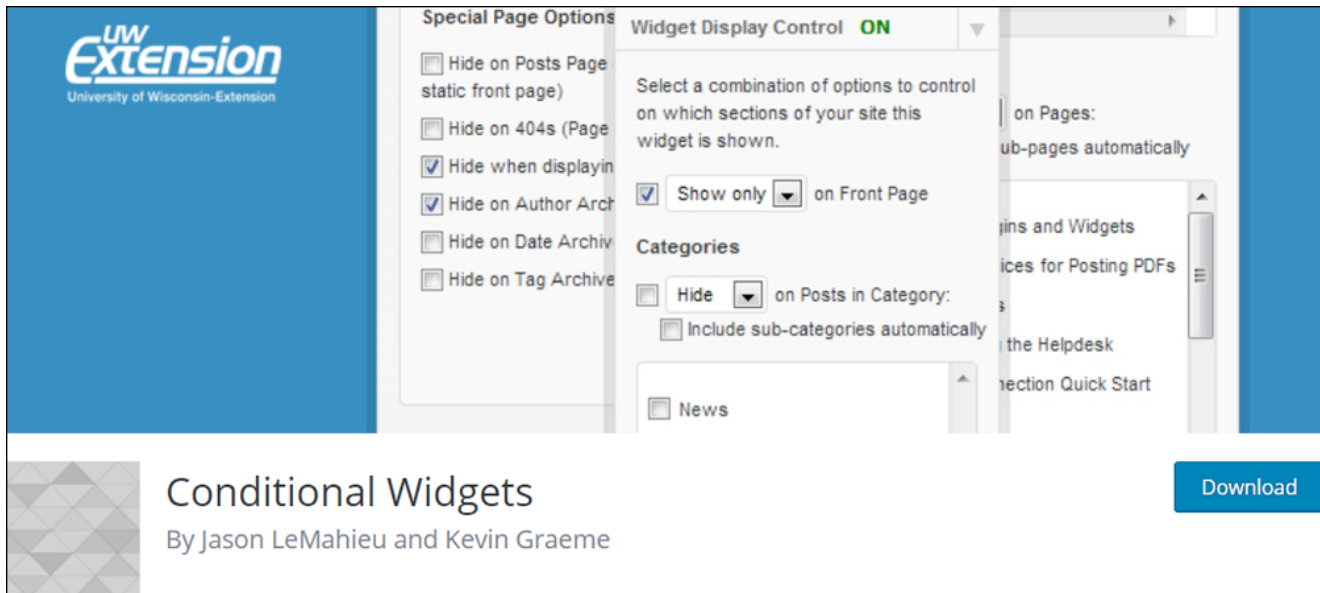
This allows you to make your sidebars, footer, header, etc. more relevant to each post or page on your site.

For example, you can add a map and directions widget to the sidebar of your 'About' or 'Contact Us' page and hide the widget on all your other posts or pages, freeing up widget space on your sidebar for more relevant content on other pages.

There are several conditional widget plugins you can choose from.

For example...

## **CONDITIONAL WIDGETS**



The screenshot displays the 'Conditional Widgets' plugin settings in a WordPress dashboard. The interface is split into two main columns. The left column, titled 'Special Page Options', contains several checkboxes: 'Hide on Posts Page (static front page)', 'Hide on 404s (Page not found)', 'Hide when displaying this widget', 'Hide on Author Archives', 'Hide on Date Archives', and 'Hide on Tag Archives'. The right column, titled 'Widget Display Control', is currently set to 'ON' and includes a dropdown menu set to 'Show only' on the 'Front Page'. Below this, there is a 'Categories' section with a dropdown set to 'Hide' on 'Posts in Category' and an option to 'Include sub-categories automatically'. A list of categories is shown below, with 'News' selected. To the right of the settings, a sidebar shows a list of widgets with a 'Download' button at the bottom. The main content area has a blue header with the 'UW Extension University of Wisconsin-Extension' logo and a title 'Conditional Widgets' by Jason LeMahieu and Kevin Graeme.

Conditional Widgets plugin.

Installing the **Conditional Widgets** plugin adds a *Widget Display Control* section to every widget, giving you complete control over the visibility of that widget on all areas of your site.

## Available Widgets

To activate a widget drag it to a sidebar or click on it. To deactivate a widget and delete its settings, drag it back.

<b>Archives</b> A monthly archive of your site's Posts.	<b>Audio</b> Displays an audio player.
<b>Calendar</b> A calendar of your site's posts.	<b>Categories</b> A list or dropdown of categories.
<b>Custom HTML</b> Arbitrary HTML code.	<b>Gallery</b> Displays an image gallery.
<b>Image</b> Displays an image.	<b>Meta</b> Login, RSS, & WordPress.org links.
<b>Navigation Menu</b> Add a navigation menu to your sidebar.	<b>Pages</b> A list of your site's Pages.
<b>Recent Comments</b> Your site's most recent comments.	<b>Recent Posts</b> Your site's most recent Posts.
<b>RSS</b> Entries from any RSS or Atom feed.	<b>Search</b> A search form for your site.
<b>Tag Cloud</b> A cloud of your most used tags.	<b>Text</b> Arbitrary text.
<b>Video</b> Displays a video from the media library or from YouTube, Vimeo, or another provider.	

## Inactive Widgets

Drag widgets here to remove them from the sidebar but keep their settings.

RSS: Coffee News
Tag Cloud
RSS: Jewelry News
Image: Get Our Latest Updates
Search
Recent Posts
Recent Comments
Archives
Categories
Meta
Search

## Sidebar

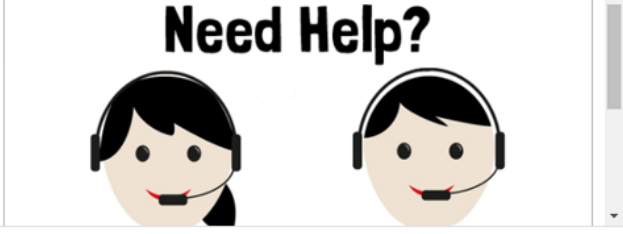
Add widgets here to appear in your sidebar.

### Text: Get Support

Title:

[Add media](#) Visual Text

**B I**



### Widget Display Control OFF

Select a combination of options to control on which sections of your site this widget is shown.

Show  on Front Page

**Categories**

Enable Post Logic and  on Posts in selected Categories:

- ALL Categories (or select below)
- Include sub-Categories automatically

- Coffee
- Coffee Blends
- Coffee Makers
- Coffee Recipes
- Design
- Fruit
- Mental Health
- Pets
  - Birds
    - Bird Care
    - Bird Toys
    - Bird Training
  - Cats

**Pages**

Enable Page Logic and  on selected Pages:

- ALL pages (or select below)
- Include sub-pages automatically

- Ad magni fugiat error quia praesentium omnis
- Animi cumque aut aliquam error nihil
- Aut nihil et cum nam iste provident
- Aut similique rerum dignissimos nesciunt neque porro
- Blog
- Consequatur ut reiciendis culpa alias rerum omnis
- Contact Page
- Doloribus eos voluptate quo eligendi eligendi tempore
- Ea excepturi sapiente velit ducimus
- Et possimus enim enim temporibus
- Eum et ut illo optio dolor
- Minus autem exercitationem voluptatum dolorum eum

**Special Page Options**

- Hide on Posts Page (when using a static front page)
- Hide on 404s (Page Not Found)
- Hide when displaying Search Results
- Hide on Author Archives
- Hide on Date Archives

Recent Posts	<input type="checkbox"/> Hide on Tag Archives <b>Other Options</b> Note: The following options will take precedence over those above. <input type="checkbox"/> Hide on Mobile <input type="checkbox"/> Hide on Desktop <a href="#">Delete</a>   <a href="#">Done</a>
Recent Comments	
Archives	
Categories	

The Conditional Widgets plugin lets you choose exactly where to display or hide widgets on your site.

This function lets you specify whether to display or hide widgets on areas like your sidebar based on conditions you set for a particular category, page, etc.

## Override Default Sidebar Widgets


Sometimes widgets will appear on your site's sidebar but won't show up in the active sidebar of your Widgets screen.

This happens with some themes. The theme will display its own default set of widgets in areas like the sidebar until you add widgets there.

For example, the site below shows widgets displayed in the sidebar.

# My WordPress Site

*My Tagline Goes Here*



Recipes
Salads
Blog

---

← The World's Most Desirable Jewelry Collection


## The Sweet Tooth Co

Posted on [March 20, 2021](#) by [Bob Writer](#)

### Yearly Sales Report

Croissant cookie biscuit muffin. Caramels soufflé liquorice chocolate bar danish lollipop. Icing fruitcake dessert macaroon tootsie roll jujubes. Donut bear claw powder brownie dessert. Donut pastry sweet roll candy candy canes tootsie roll dessert. Sweet roll toffee jelly-o cupcake. Carrot cake jelly oat cake topping wafer.

Quarter	Sales
Q1	\$130,667



Nothin' But The Sweet  
Tooth!

**Archives**

- [March 2021](#)
- [February 2021](#)
- [January 2021](#)
- [December 2020](#)
- [November 2020](#)
- [October 2020](#)
- [September 2020](#)
- [July 2020](#)
- [June 2020](#)
- [April 2020](#)
- [March 2020](#)
- [February 2020](#)
- [January 2020](#)
- [November 2019](#)

**Meta**

- [Site Admin](#)
- [Log out](#)

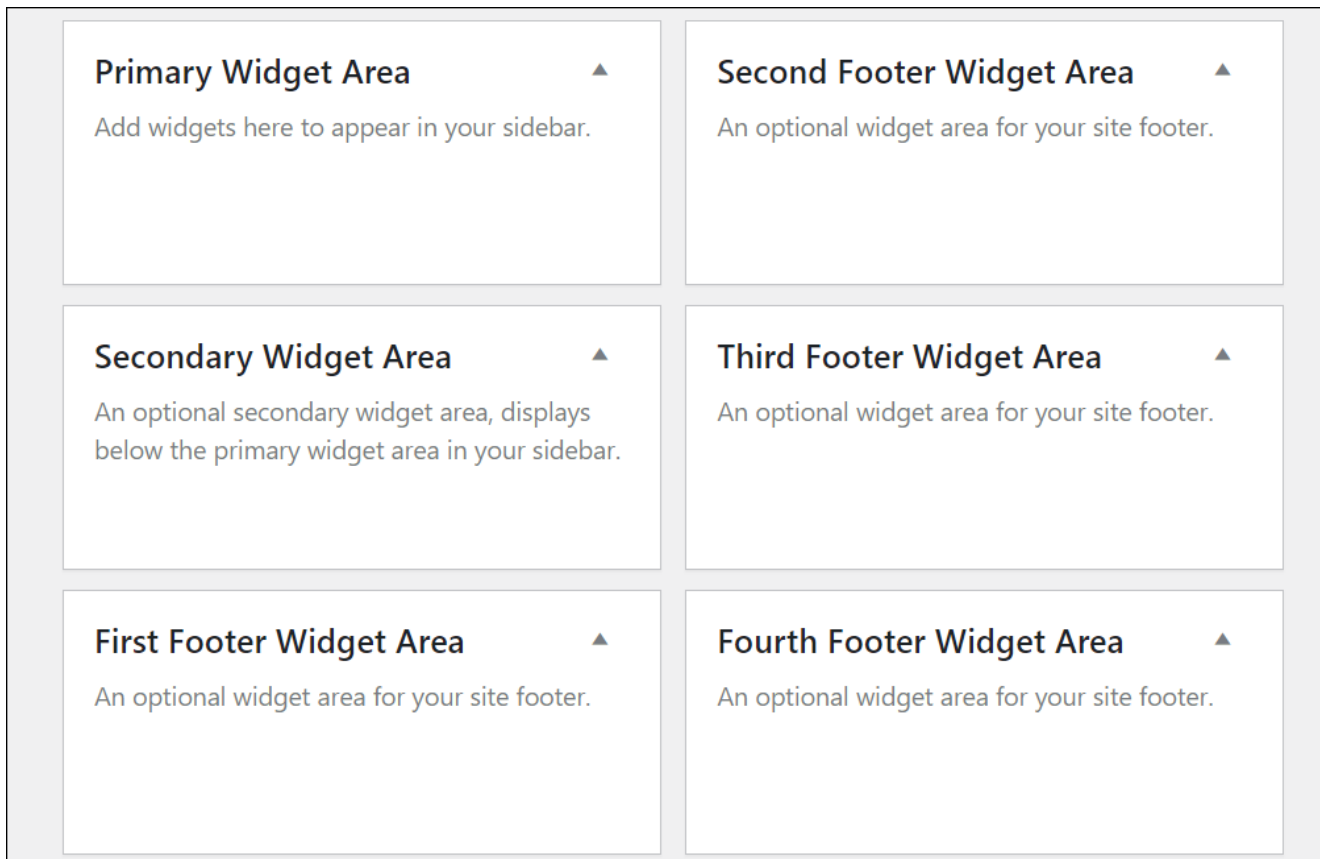
Sidebar  
Widgets



This theme displays sidebar widgets...



If you look in the Widgets screen, however, you will see that no widgets have been added to the active widget area.



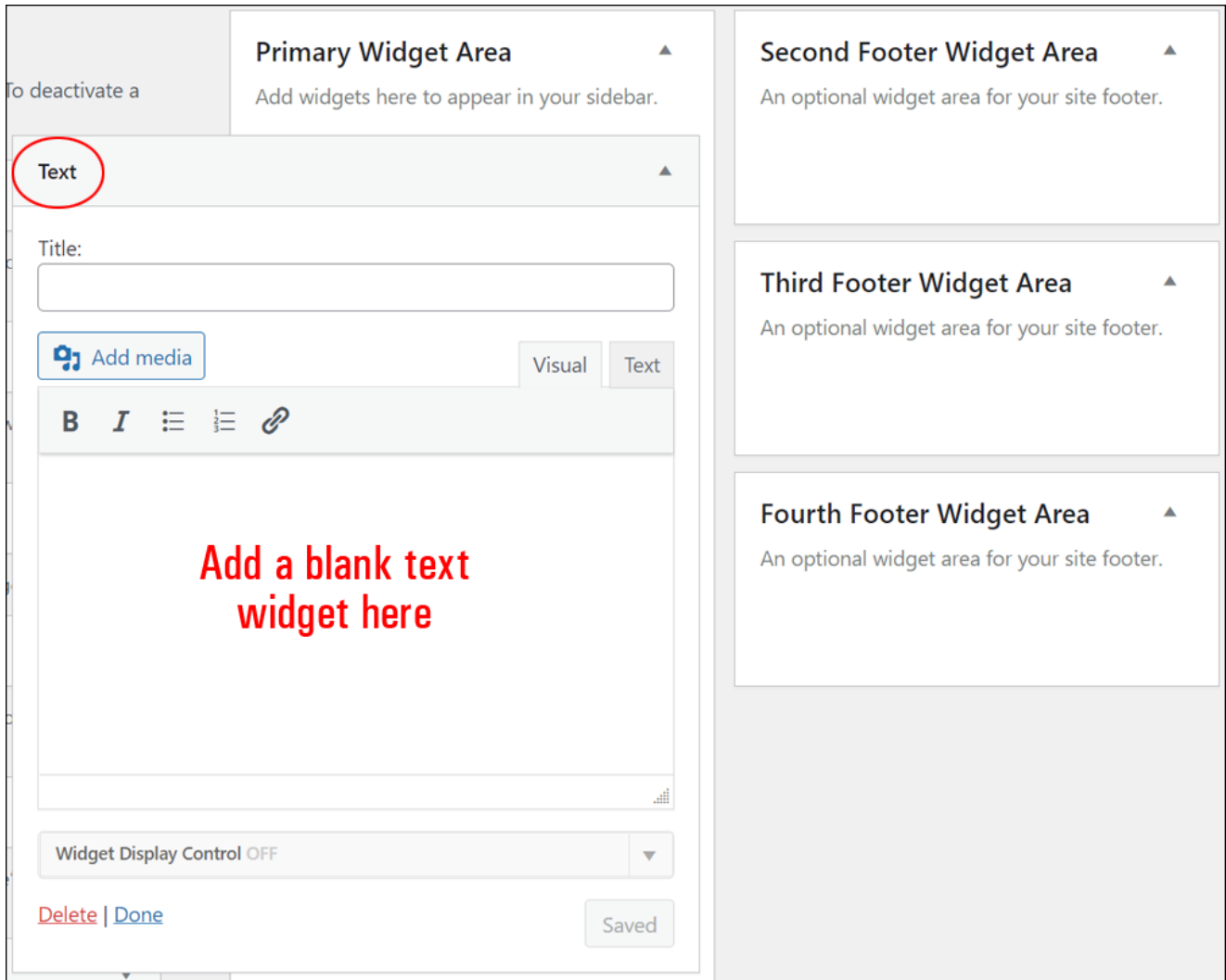
But no widgets have been added to Widget areas.

This theme, then, is probably using default widgets to ensure the sidebar is not left empty.

As soon as you add one or more widgets to an active widget area, the placeholder widgets will disappear and will be replaced with your newly added widgets.



If you don't want any widgets to display in the sidebar, either choose a theme page template without a widgets section or just add a *blank* Text widget in the sidebar (i.e. a Text widget with nothing added in the content area).



Add a blank text widget.

Your theme's default widgets will not display.



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Quarter	Sales
Q1	\$130,667
Q2	\$120,453
Q3	\$180,456
Q4	\$210,879



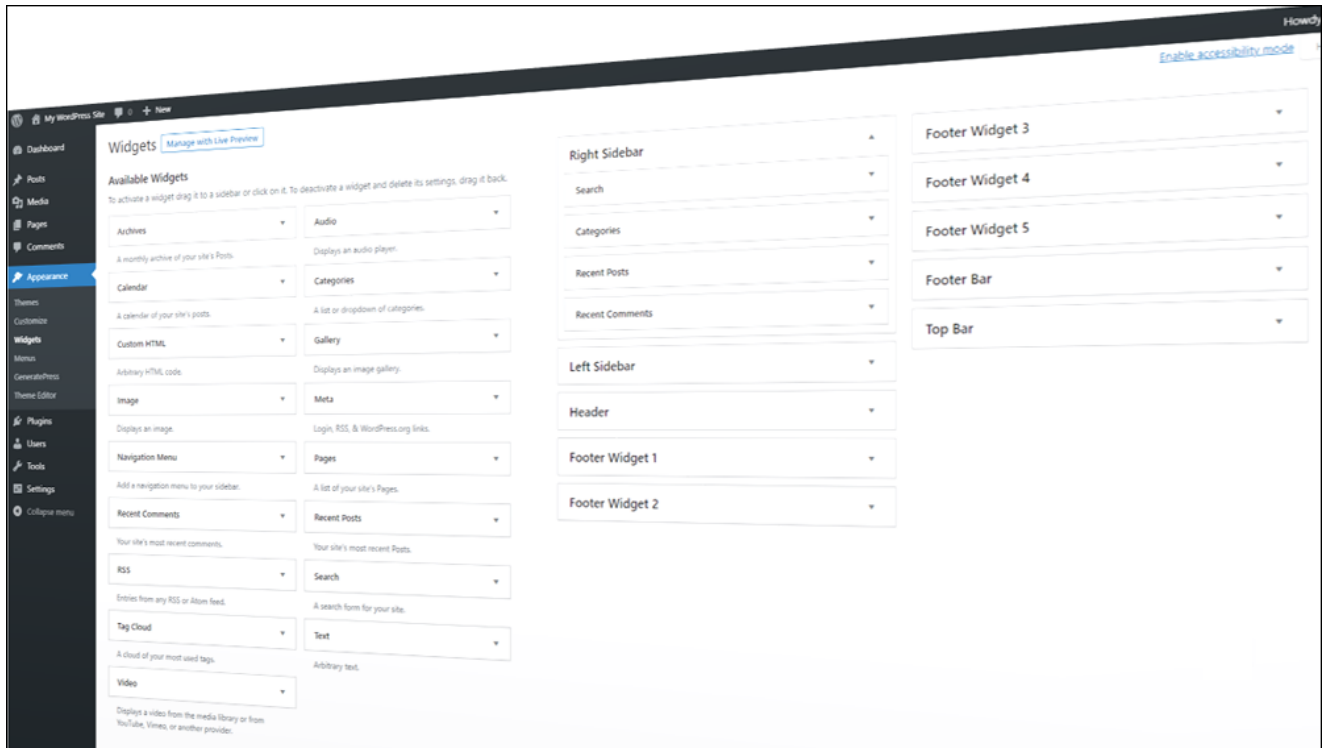
Nothin' But The Sweet  
Tooth!

No widgets here



No widgets displayed in the sidebar.

Congratulations! Now you know the basics of using WordPress widgets.



Learn about the basics of using widgets in WordPress.

\*\*\*

**This is the end of part 1 of this tutorial series on using Widgets.**

Now that you know the basics of using widgets, let's configure some commonly used widgets on your site.

To view the next tutorial on our series on using WordPress widgets, click here: [\*\*How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 2\*\*](#)

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Updated: April 9th, 2023