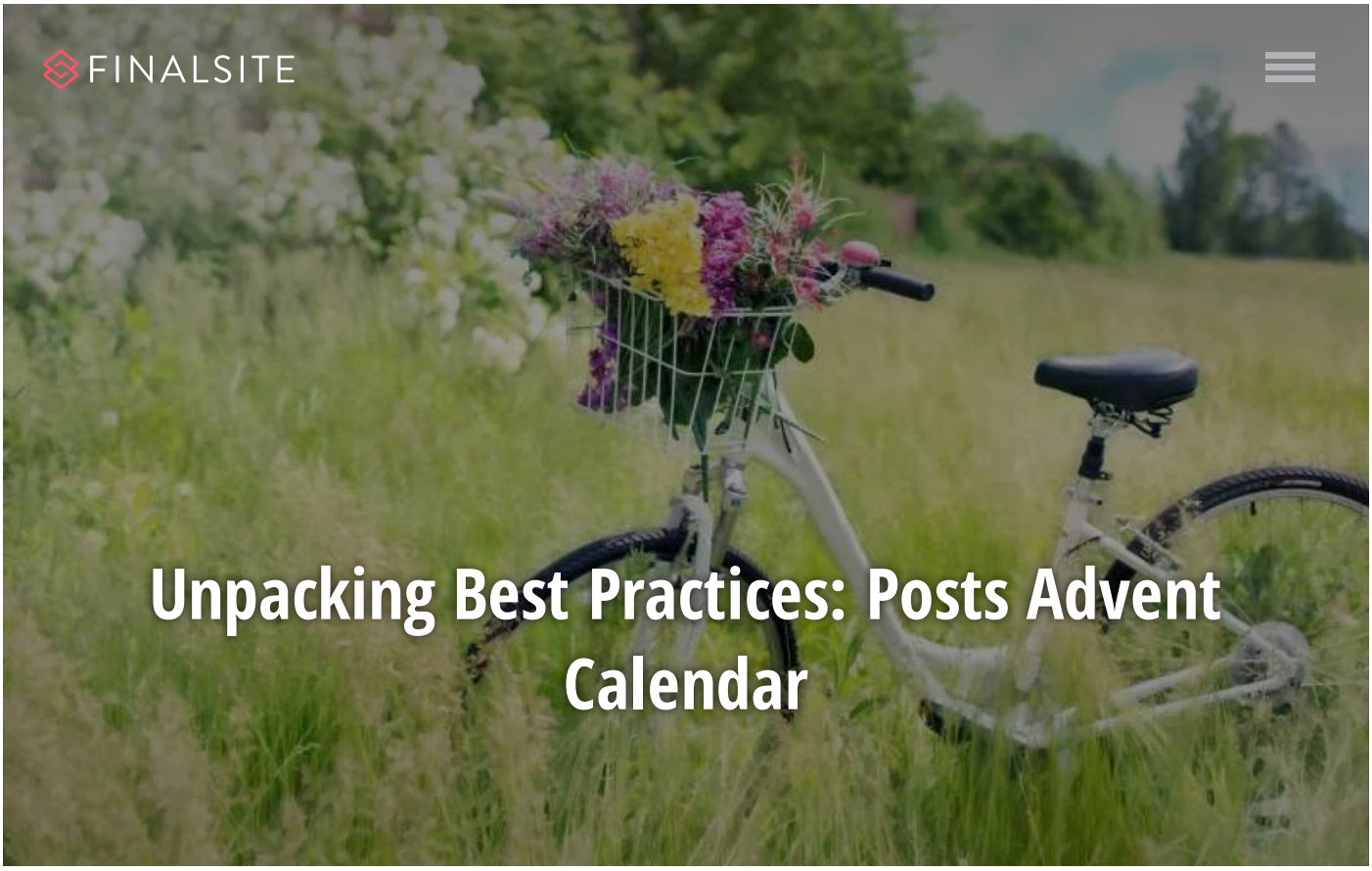

Lauren Lentini | FEB 28 2019

Last month on the Finalsite blog, Andrew Martin featured a beautiful advent calendar created by Seattle Preparatory School using our Posts module. It was inspiring! I wanted to build one for myself. In case any of you feel the same way, I'm taking you along for my journey.

Here at Finalsite headquarters, up in blustery Connecticut, there's only one thing we can think about: spring! So I'm going to make my advent calendar a Countdown to Spring. Imagine all the things you could use a countdown for, though: countdown to graduation, countdown to the last day of school, countdown to the *first* day of school...

Resources

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I didn't use any special tools to make these, by the way. I used the tools available in Preview for Mac to create black-and-white versions, crop, resize, and overlay text.

Next, I'm going to upload them to Resources. These are going on my Support Blog Resources board, so to keep everything organized, I'll put them in that board's folder in Resources. I use the Bulk Upload tool to upload everything at once. I already have logical names for my files, but I do want to add an "advent" tag, just in case I need to find them all quickly later. Since these are going into Posts, I don't need to add them to a gallery, either.

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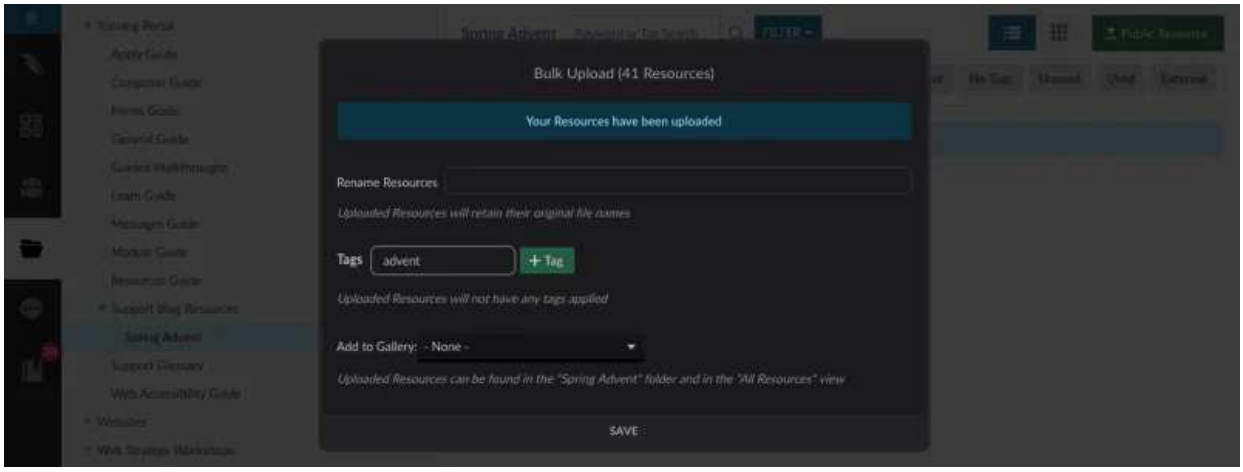

Once my files are uploaded, I do want to go in and add titles and alt text to each image. Overlaid text isn't recommended for accessibility, so I want to make sure each of my images has alt text that includes what's written on the picture. This takes a little while, but it's important.

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1000 x 1000 269.84 KB

Title Countdown to spring

Name spring-cover .jpg

Description

body p

Alt Text Water droplets on dandelion seeds with Countdown to spring

125 character max

Tags

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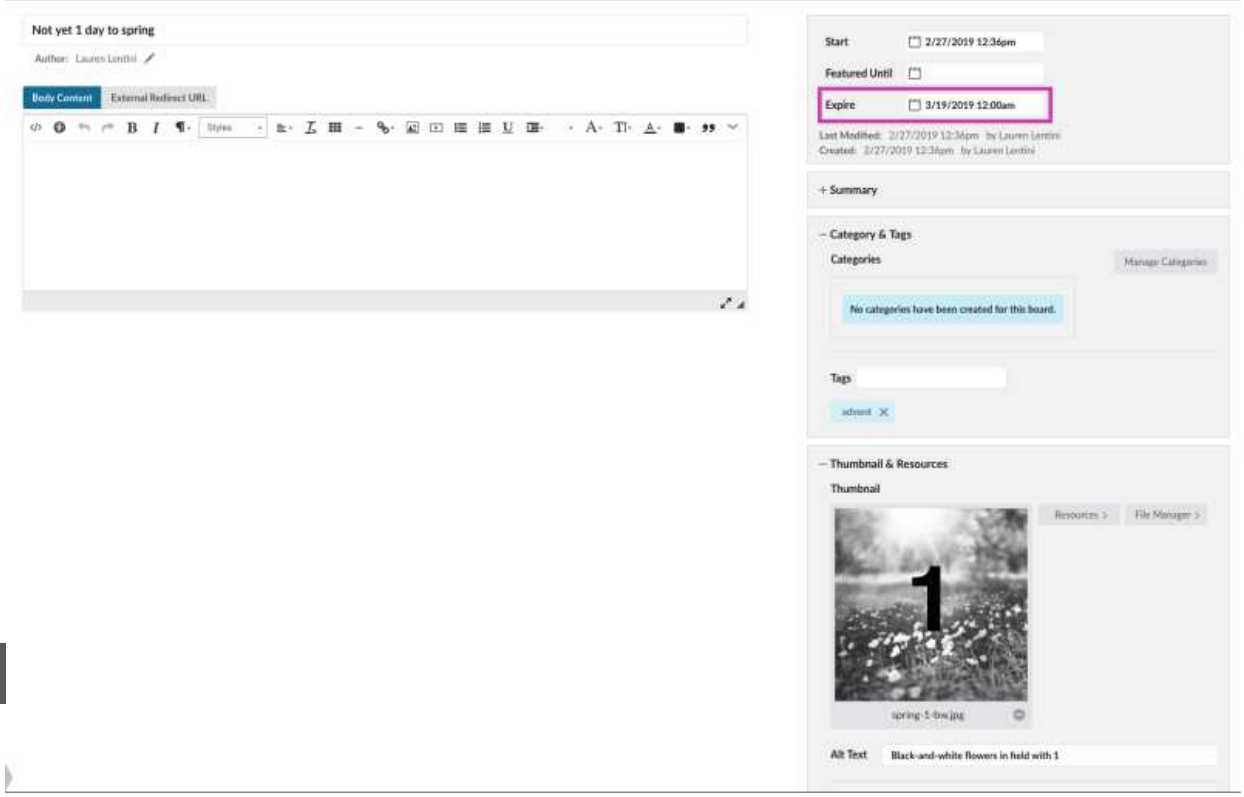
Now that all my images are ready to go, I can head to Posts and set those up. I want to think about it before I start, though, to make sure I don't have to go back and make a bunch of changes. I'm looking for a grid of images that counts down to 1, with black-and-white images being replaced by colorful images as the days change. Therefore, I want all my black-and-white image posts to start immediately, then expire at midnight the day of the switch.



The colorful image posts will not be scheduled to start until midnight of their day. I also want people to be able to click on the colorful images to see a quote about spring, so I'm going to put that in the body content of my post.

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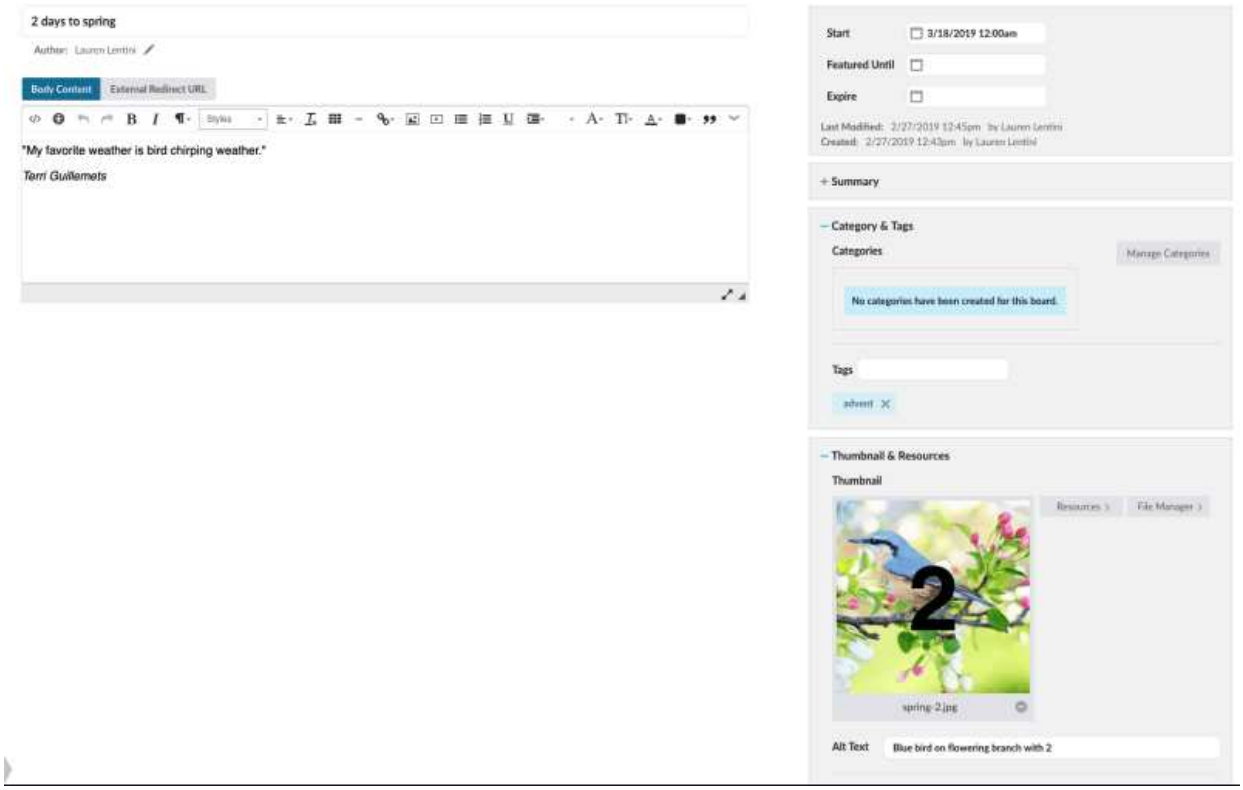

I've also added an "advent" tag to each of my posts, and I've put the image in as a Thumbnail. Since I took the time to add alt text to my images when I put them into Resources, that alt text automatically replaces the default alt text of the post title.

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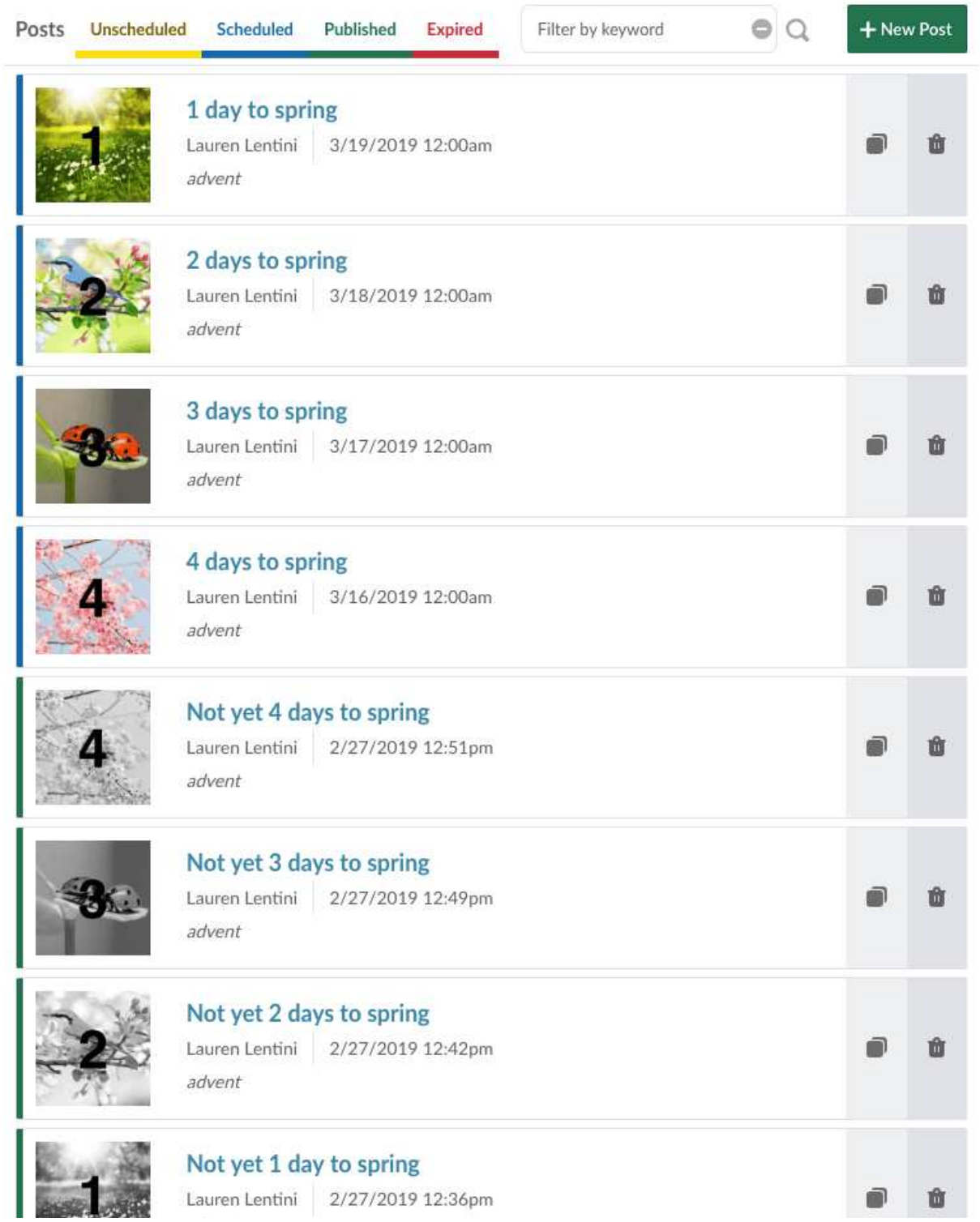
As I'm creating my posts, I can see they're lining up according to their Published and Scheduled status. This would be a problem if I tried to put them in the element this way, but I'm going to create a collection to keep them in the right order.



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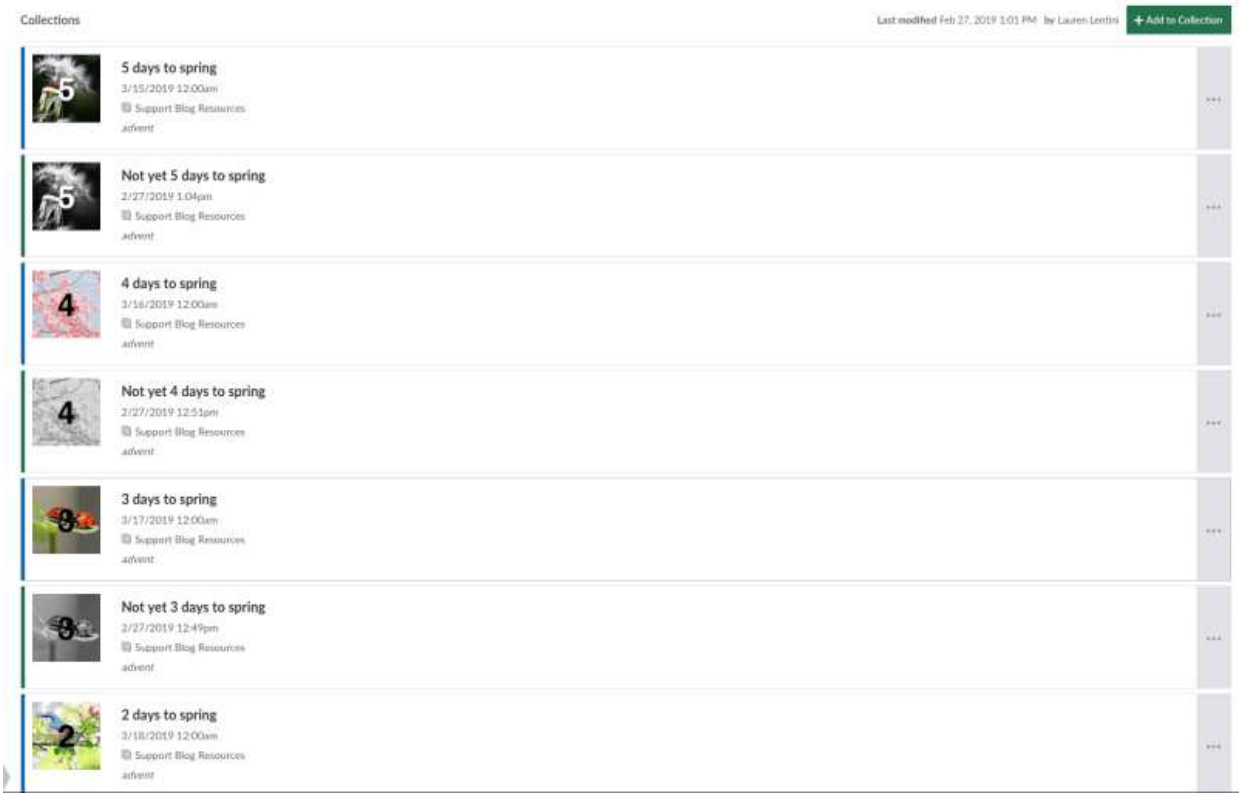

I have plans for my cover photo that will be made clear in the next section, so I'm going to go ahead and put a "Featured until" date on that post, and add it to my collection at the very beginning. I need it to be featured the whole time, though, so I'll just put the date way in the future.

Composer

Since my posts are coming along, I head over to Composer to set up my advent calendar page. I create a new page and choose a two-column layout with a wide right column. I add a Post element to each column.

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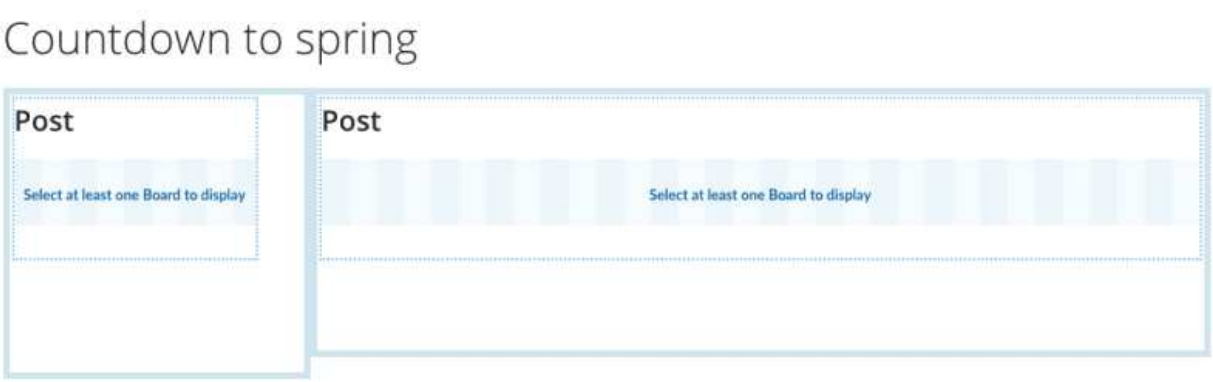

In the settings for the left-hand Post element, I choose the Grid format, and then I choose my collection under Content Filters. I don't want my cover photo to show in this element, so I choose to show "Only Non-Featured" posts. I choose only the Thumbnail and "Link titles to post details" for my Content Details, and under Link To I choose "Element" and select the other Post element on the page.

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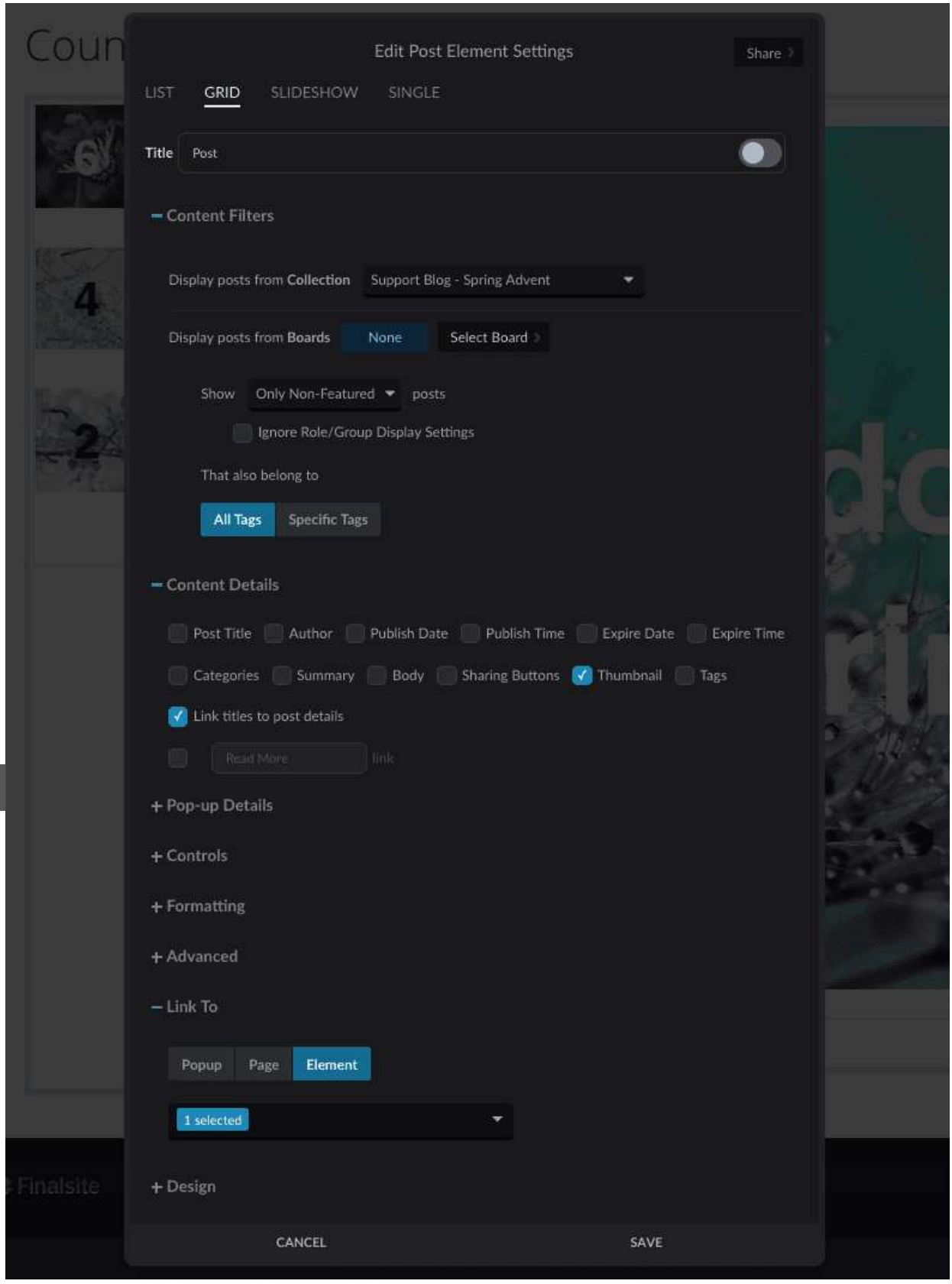

Now my grid is showing the black-and-white images I have added to my collection so far. It's not showing the cover image, though, because that post is

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The other Post element is where my colorful images will display, along with the quote. So I select the Single format, choose my collection, and set the Body and Thumbnail to display. There is no featured/non-featured option for the Single Post element, so my cover post will display in this element when you first load the page.

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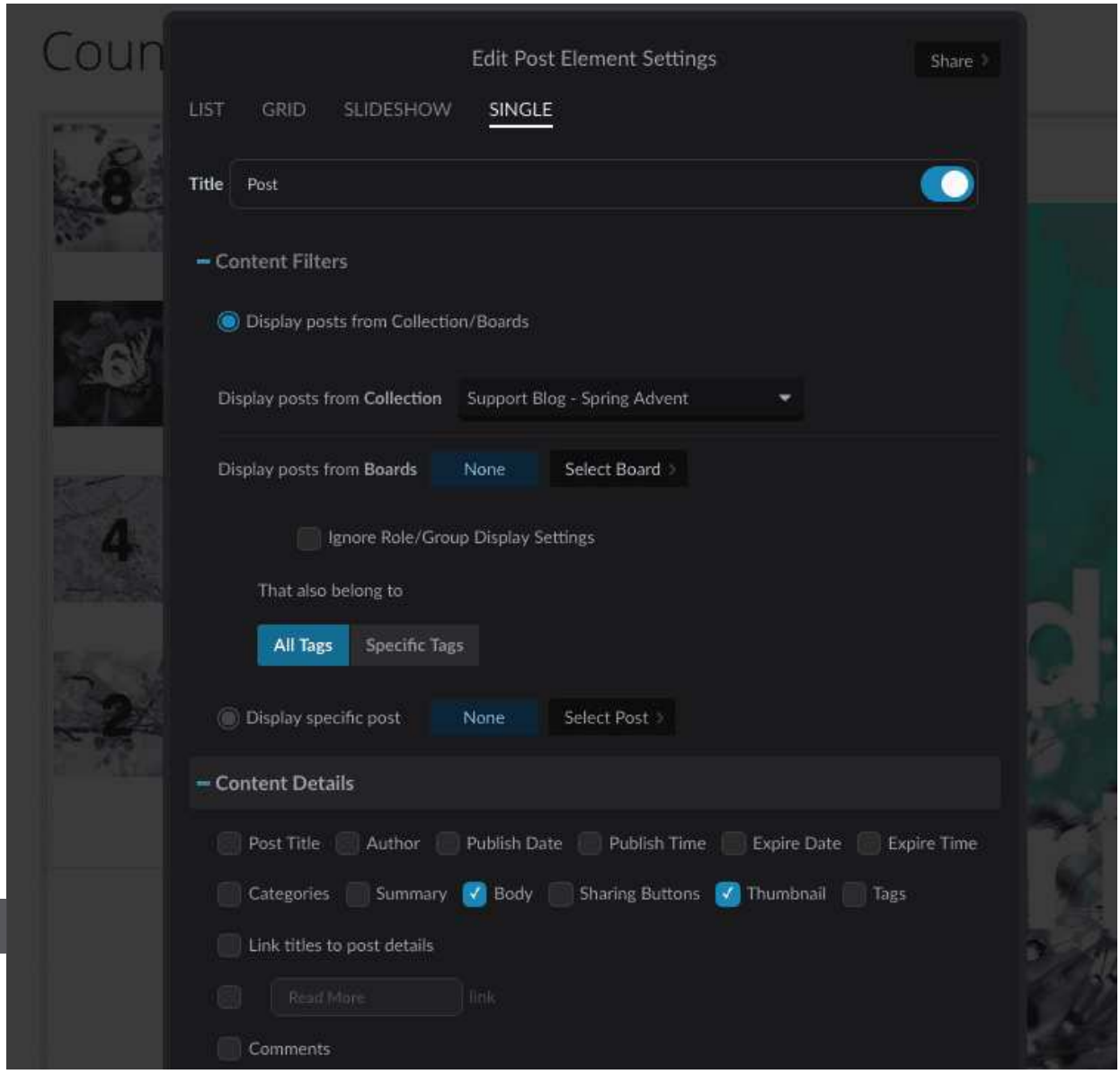

That's it! I've added all my posts to my collection, and as the colorful ones become available, you can click on them to load the full-size image on the right and read an inspirational quote below it. My advent calendar is ready to go live and welcome the new season.

Conclusion

This project took a little while to set up, but it wasn't hard. Most of the effort went into editing the images, adding alt text to the resources, and creating the posts. The page itself only took a few minutes.

I really did build this advent calendar. If you're looking forward to spring as

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Mia Major | MAY 28 2020

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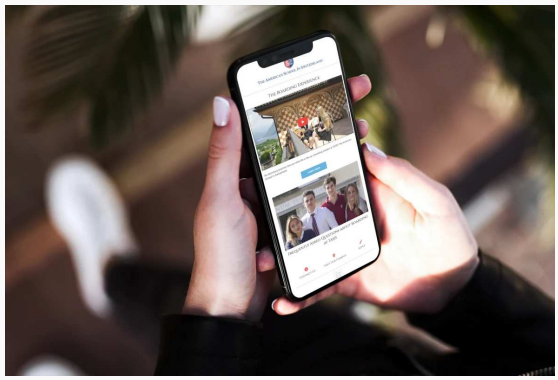

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Andrew Martin | NOV 14 2019

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