

Church Leaders Event 2017 “Effective Social Media for Church”

Facebook for Churches

Creating a Facebook Account

Facebook accounts are for personal use, but having an account is required in order to create a Facebook Page for your church. If you don't have a Facebook account, you can create one in a few steps:

1. Go to www.facebook.com
2. If you see the signup form, fill out your name, email address or mobile phone number, password, date of birth and gender. If you don't see the form, click **Sign Up**, then fill out the form.
3. Click **Sign Up**.
4. To finish creating your account, you'll need to confirm your email or mobile phone number.

If you already have a Facebook account, you can log into your account by entering your email or mobile phone number and password and clicking **Log In**.

Note: You must be at least 13 years old to create a Facebook account.

Creating a Facebook Page

Pages are for businesses, brands, organizations and public figures to share their stories and connect with people. Like profiles, Pages can be customized with stories, events and more. People who like a Page can get updates in News Feed.

To create a Page:

1. Go to www.facebook.com/pages/create
2. Click to choose a Page category
3. Select a more specific category from the dropdown menu and fill out the required information
4. Click **Get Started** and follow the on-screen instructions

Note: Anyone can create a Page, but only official representatives can create a Page for an organization, business, brand or public figure.

Setting Up Your Facebook Page

Page name: Your Page name should be your church's name (with no abbreviations)

Cover photo: The cover photo explains the character of your congregation in a five-second glance.

- If using a photo, make sure it is high resolution and sends a clear message about your church
- If using text, make it large, short and to the point
- Correct sizing: At least 399 pixels wide, 150 pixels tall
- Change cover photo every 1-3 months to avoid making your Page appear stagnant

Profile picture: This is a great place for your church logo.

- Do not use detailed images or text
- Profile pictures will be cropped to fit a square

The "About" section: Keep a current "About" section with keywords and phrases that will describe the "experience" of your church.

- At minimum, make sure to include in the "About" section:
 - A link to your church webpage
 - Church office and service hours
 - Contact information
- Other information to include in the "About" section (optional):
 - Something you want to highlight (special worship style, Open and Affirming congregation, etc.)
 - Name of pastor(s)
 - Mission statement

Page Administrators: When you create a Page, you automatically become the Page's admin, which means only you can change how the Page looks and publish as the Page. Only an admin can assign roles (e.g. grant admin status to other people).

- You should have at least two Page admins (in case someone gets sick or otherwise cannot post)
 - Admins should either be church staff or a lay leader who reports directly to church staff
 - Visit <http://tinyurl.com/zkjcsac> for step-by-step instructions for adding a Page admin.
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How to Write for Facebook

Once you have set up a Facebook Page for your church, you are ready to begin posting content. Below are best practices to follow.

Write conversationally (informal). Don't write as if you're writing for your church bulletin or newsletter. Avoid using long sentences, uncommon words and uncommon acronyms.

Shorten URLs. Always use a shortened version of links in your posts using URL shortening services such as <https://bitly.com/> or <http://www.tinyurl.com>.

Use videos and pictures. Maintain a healthy balance of text posts, links, and multimedia content. Posts containing pictures and videos generate at least twice the interactions. Create your own videos or share videos from the UCC's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/user/uccvideos/featured>. A gallery of 36 free, downloadable graphics for churches can be found in the Stillspeaking 2.0 Toolkit at http://www.ucc.org/stillspeaking_toolkit.

Vary your text posts. Ask questions, give interesting facts, provide commentary on breaking news, etc.

Don't talk about yourself all the time! People come to your Page to learn about the personality of your church, not to hear verbatim versions of church announcements. Post some content that relates to your followers but is not about your church (e.g. trending news, social justice issues that matter to your church).

Join the conversation. If everyone on your timeline is talking about a popular topic, join the conversation, and add your church's spin to it.

The 80/20 rule. Out of 100% of content, 80 percent should be “fun social media content” and the other 20% can be news, announcements, or donation requests. This balance helps maintain user interest.

Three to four posts weekly. The United Church of Christ recommends that churches on Facebook post content three to four times per week. The more you put into social media, you more you get out of it.

Do not use hashtags (#). These are appropriate for Twitter and Instagram, but not for Facebook.

Tag influencers. Find people who have a lot of followers, repost their content, and tag them in it. If that person posts something using your username or content, you are guaranteed more followers.

Establish a posting schedule. When possible, schedule your posts days or weeks in advance, optimizing for peak performance. Use page analytics to evaluate what types of posts perform best and what times of day are ideal to post content.

Pin special posts. If you have a special post that you want to highlight after it is no longer the newest post, use the “pin” option to keep that post at the top of your Page for as long as you choose.

How to Increase Your Facebook Following

Below are some tips for increasing your Facebook following.

Patience: Building a strong social media following does not happen overnight. Do not get discouraged.

The ask: Ask people at worship on Sunday to “follow us on Facebook” or put an announcement in the weekly bulletin.

“Like” other Pages (best place to find shares): Suggested Pages to “Like” include:

- United Church of Christ
- Hawaii Conference UCC
- Church of the Holy Cross
- Church of the Crossroads, Hawaii

- Sojourners
- Unitarian Universalist Association
- Presbyterian Church (USA)

Tag other Pages in your updates when possible: It will increase your post’s reach because of Facebook’s algorithm, Edgerank. If you tag another Page in your posts, Facebook may show you post to both your followers and followers of the Page you tagged.

Tag influencers: Find people who have a lot of followers, repost their content, and tag them in it. If that person posts something using your username or content, you are guaranteed more followers.

Join trending conversations: If everyone on your timeline is talking about a popular topic, join the conversation, and add your church’s spin to it.

Establish a posting schedule: When possible, schedule your posts in advance, optimizing for peak performance. Use page analytics to evaluate what types of posts perform best and what times of day are ideal to post content. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/hjx6thv> for instructions.

Use Facebook during worship (this may not suit every congregation or leader): Encourage your congregation to tag themselves when they are at church. They could also post something interesting they learned from the sermon or something that excites them in the life of the church. Develop a church hashtag, and encourage all church leaders and members to use it in all social media posts about your church.

Follow best practices for writing on Facebook: Refer to the “How to Write for Facebook” resource in this packet.

How to “Go Live” on Facebook

Facebook Live allows you to livestream video right from your phone and post it to your Page or profile for people to watch at a later time. You can only go live using the Facebook for Android app or the Facebook for iOS app.

To go live using Facebook for iOS:

1. Tap **What’s on your mind?** at the top of your News Feed
2. Tap **Live Video**

3. Write an optional description for your broadcast
4. Tap **Go Live** to begin your broadcast
5. Tap **Finish** when you want to end your broadcast

To go live using Facebook for Android:

1. Tap **What's on your mind?** at the top of your News Feed
2. Tap **Go Live**
3. Write an optional description for your broadcast
4. Tap **Go Live** to begin your broadcast
5. Tap **Finish** when you want to end your broadcast

You can also go live in a group or event by tapping **Write Something** or **Say Something** and then tapping the **Live** icon.

Note: You can block viewers during a live broadcast by tapping the profile picture next to a viewer's comment and then tapping **Block**. You can also unblock someone that you've previously blocked.

Twitter for Churches

Creating a Twitter Account

To create an account on the web:

1. Go to <http://twitter.com> and find the sign up box, or go directly to <https://twitter.com/signup>
2. Enter your full name, phone number, and a password
3. Click **Sign up for Twitter**
4. In order to verify your phone number, Twitter will send you an SMS text message with a code. Enter the verification code in the box provided.
5. Once you've clicked **Sign up for Twitter**, you can select a username (usernames are unique identifiers on Twitter) – type your own or choose one Twitter suggests. Twitter will tell you if the username you want is available.
6. Double-check your name, phone number, password, and username.
7. Click **Create my account**. You may be asked to complete a Captcha to let Twitter know that you're human.

Note: If you'd like to sign up with Twitter using an email address, you can do so via the "Use email instead" link at the bottom of the sign up page.

How to Write for Twitter

140 characters per tweet: Each post, or tweet, that you write is limited to 140 characters. URLs of any length automatically take up 23 characters. Photos do not subtract from your character count.

Tweet often: Make sure to tweet regularly, at least once to three times daily. People are inclined to "unfollow" your account if they perceive it to be dead or stagnant. You cannot tweet too much.

Tweet content more than once: Do not be afraid to tweet the same content more than once, or to reword content. Twitter is so fast-moving that tweets can easily go unseen by your followers if only posted once.

Tweet pictures and videos: Your followers will react more to visuals. Potential followers will find you because of your photo and video content. Use tools such as Canva (<http://www.canva.com>) to create professional graphics using amateur skills.

Use topical hashtags: Organizations should avoid using statement hashtags (#KnowWhatIMean)? Stick to trending and/or common hashtags to generate the most new followers or retweets. People will find your Twitter account because you use popular hashtags (e.g. #BlackLivesMatter, #LovesLove), which helps build your network.

Keep hashtags short: Hashtags are usually not long, especially on Twitter, which limits each post to 140 characters. If your hashtag is too long, people will not use it.

Limit two hashtags per post: Statistics show that using three or more hashtags in a single post lessens your chances of getting good engagement.

Instagram for Churches

Creating an Instagram Account

Instagram is a mobile app that you can download on iOS and Android phones and tablets as well as Windows Phone 8 and later. Keep in mind that you can only share photos and videos from the mobile app.

To create an Instagram account from the app:

1. Download the Instagram app for iOS from the App Store, Android from Google Play Store or Windows Phone from the Windows Phone Store.
2. Once the app is installed, tap  to open it.
3. Tap **Sign Up**, then enter your email address and tap **Next**. You can also tap **Log in with Facebook** to sign up with your Facebook account.
4. If you register with email, create a username and password, fill out your profile info and then tap **Done**. If you register with Facebook, you'll be prompted to log into your Facebook account if you're currently logged out.

To create an Instagram account from a computer:

1. Go to www.instagram.com
2. Enter your email address, create a username and password or click **Log in with Facebook** to sign up with your Facebook account.
3. If you register with an email, click **Sign up**. If you register with Facebook, you'll be prompted to log into your Facebook account if you're currently logged out.

If you sign up with email, make sure you enter your email address correctly and choose an email address that only you can access. If you log out and forget your password, you'll need to be able to access your email to get back into your Instagram account.

Instagram Fundamentals

Varied content: If you're going to start an Instagram account, your account should feature more than pictures of your congregation. Does someone in your congregation know how to create Instagram graphics, using apps like InstaQuote? It is important to have a variety of

content, and knowing how to produce Instagram graphics before you start an account will help you diversify your portfolio.

High quality photos: Instagram may be an amateur photo app, but pictures on the site are usually visually interesting and high quality. If your church is going to post on Instagram, you should post more than portraits and group shots. Study the types of content on Instagram as you decide what to post.

The “Search & Explore” feature: Instagram’s “search & explore” feature is one of its most underutilized tools. You use this feature every time you click on the magnifying glass and browse through the posts Instagram suggests based on who you follow and what you like. Use this feature to find accounts similar to your church’s account. Like, comment on, and follow these accounts. The more you interact with similar accounts, the greater your chances for engagement and an increase in followers.

Instagram video: Instagram video is a key way to attract attention to your feed. The videos are short (a minute or less) and easy to shoot because people expect them to be informal. Capture a moving moment during worship, tell a funny joke to your followers, or post a picture slideshow of a lively event as a video. Using Instagram video will increase your chances of appearing in another account’s “search & explore” page.

Post sermon quotables: If ministers at your church use brief, uplifting quotes in their sermons, turn them into graphics for your Instagram page. Use apps like Canva to make Instagram quotes in minutes.

Helpful Websites and Resources

Stillspeaking 2.0 Toolkit (<http://tinyurl.com/zb8wrt6>): As part of an initiative to energize its brand, the UCC offers to churches the Stillspeaking 2.0 Toolkit to communicate more effectively via social and traditional media. The toolkit contains directions, suggestions and resources for managing social media, as well as free graphics that can be used in social media, websites or print.

Get Social UCC (<http://tinyurl.com/gw72yuv>): The UCC has created a weekly newsletter called “Get Social” to help church leaders and faith-based social media managers get a better idea of how to improve their social channels. There is something for everyone, from beginners to advanced social media users, including tips for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

“Best Practices for Social Media in Churches” (<http://tinyurl.com/hmumae4>): This document from the UCC national office explains social media fundamentals for churches. It covers a range of topics including multimedia, setup and posting, page management, Twitter basics and Facebook basics.

“Social Media Tips for Churches, Pastors and Lay Leaders” (<http://tinyurl.com/jm7xx7w>): Are you unsure how to start a social media policy for your church, ministerial staff, or lay leaders? This slideshow, from the communications department of the United Church of Christ, will have you ready to run your church’s social media in no time.

Content managers

Hootsuite (<https://hootsuite.com>): Save time on social media by managing all of your accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) from a single dashboard. With Hootsuite’s platform, you get the tools to manage all your social profiles and automatically find and schedule effective social content.

TweetDeck (www.tweetdeck.twitter.com): TweetDeck gives the Twitter user more flexibility by letting you view multiple timelines in one easy interface. It includes a host of features to help advanced users get the most out of Twitter: manage multiple Twitter accounts, schedule Tweets for posting in the future, build Tweet collections, and more. Simply sign in with your personal Twitter account.

Helpful websites to stay in the social media loop

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com> (the world's largest social media marketing resource)

<http://www.socialmediatoday.com> (provides breaking insights into the world of social media marketing)

<https://www.postplanner.com/blog> (a popular social media blog with latest news, tips and strategies)