

A Visitor-Attracting Facebook Plan For Churches

A Facebook plan that is straightforward, authentic and informative **will yield results, guaranteed.** The biggest results, however, will come from consistency. You don't have to do much in social media. Just do something... and do it regularly.



What It's All About: The Purpose Of Your Church Facebook Page

The purpose of your church Facebook Page is to facilitate a physical visit to your church services. As a matter of fact, any piece of your web presence, including your web site, should exist for that purpose. Sure, your Facebook page and web site can offer information that is member-centric, but in most cases, the content should speak to those you are trying to reach. They should create an appeal to folks "checking you out" and watching you at a safe digital distance. Make the most of it with this in mind.

Why Facebook?

Because Facebook (and social media in general) is a blessing from God for ministry in a day when ministry is difficult – **a real advantage...**

Facebook Has A Total Of 1.23b Monthly Active Users (Source: Facebook)

829 Million People Use Facebook On A Daily Basis (Source: Facebook Q2 2014 Earnings Call)

20:00 --- Number of hours the average American user spends on Facebook each month (Source: Facebook Q2 2014 Earnings Call)

The Average American Facebook User Spends 40 Minutes A Day On The Platform (Source: Facebook Q2 2014 Earnings Call)

So it's BIG and people are LIVING on this platform. Facebook still trumps every other social media platform by a wide margin. Even for those who don't log in every day, they're still getting message and notifications to their email in most cases. In light of all this, note the following stats...

Ad Clicks Are Increasing 70% Year Over Year, And Ad Click-through Rates Are Increasing 160% (Source: Adobe Digital Q1 2014 Social Intelligence Report)

What does this mean? When you boost posts that promote an event or lead to an announcement/event/sermon/article page on YOUR web site, it's getting much more engagement these days.

1 Billion Video Views A Day In September 2014 (Source: Facebook Q3 2014 Earnings Report)

Communicating through video connects more effectively, so do it. And know that Facebook users love them some videos!

51% of consumers say they are more likely to purchase a product after liking the brand's page on Facebook (Source: Facebook - Sharing new data and stories about U.S. small businesses on Facebook)

What? Yep. So... get likes on your church page... then warm them up for a visit. When you read Facebook stats and see the word "customers," think: "church visitors." When you read "purchase," think "visit the church."

62 Percent Of Businesses With 10 Or Fewer Employees Agreed Social Media Reduced Marketing Expenses (Source: Social Media Examiner State of the Industry Report 2013)

For churches, we are seeing vastly more impactful advertising at prices far below what you'd spend on a billboard or even a newspaper ad. When you figure in the amount of FREE publicity you can get just by mobilizing your membership, it's getting cheaper all the time.

You know you should be maximizing Facebook. That's said, let's dive in.

Setting Up Your Church Facebook Page The RIGHT Way

- Bear in mind first and foremost, your Facebook PAGE is for prospects and visitors – designed for outreach and attraction. (Use Facebook GROUPS if you want something more geared toward communicating with members).
- Fill out the **About > Page Info** section as ENTIRELY as possible. On your "short description" just answer the basics... who, what, where and why. On the "long description," you can put in your mission statement, a few testimonials, and even core values or an abbreviated gospel presentation. There's plenty of room so use it. Include a list of your ministries: children, teen, family, singles, men's, women's, prayer, missions, etc. Definitely add service times in here, too.

TIP: If your church doesn't have its own permanent location, use the "located inside another place" option in the address box area.

- YES, it's a good idea to put the actual church office email address into the email field.
- Change the "start date" of your page to the date of its founding. More on why later...

- Make sure to include a link to your Facebook page ON your website! (Not just a like button but an actual button/link that will take people there.) So, you're not just linking from Facebook to your church site, you're linking from your church site to Facebook!

- On the Facebook page's **About > Page Info** page make sure that you list ALL service times including Wednesday nights as well as the address for your location(s). List also any "hours" that apply such as office hours. Include service times here as well!



- **BIG TIP!** Utilize the Timeline Cover – it's prime viewing real estate! Whatever you want to be the "main attraction" to your prospective visitor, make THAT your timeline cover image. *Examples: current sermon series, upcoming big event.*

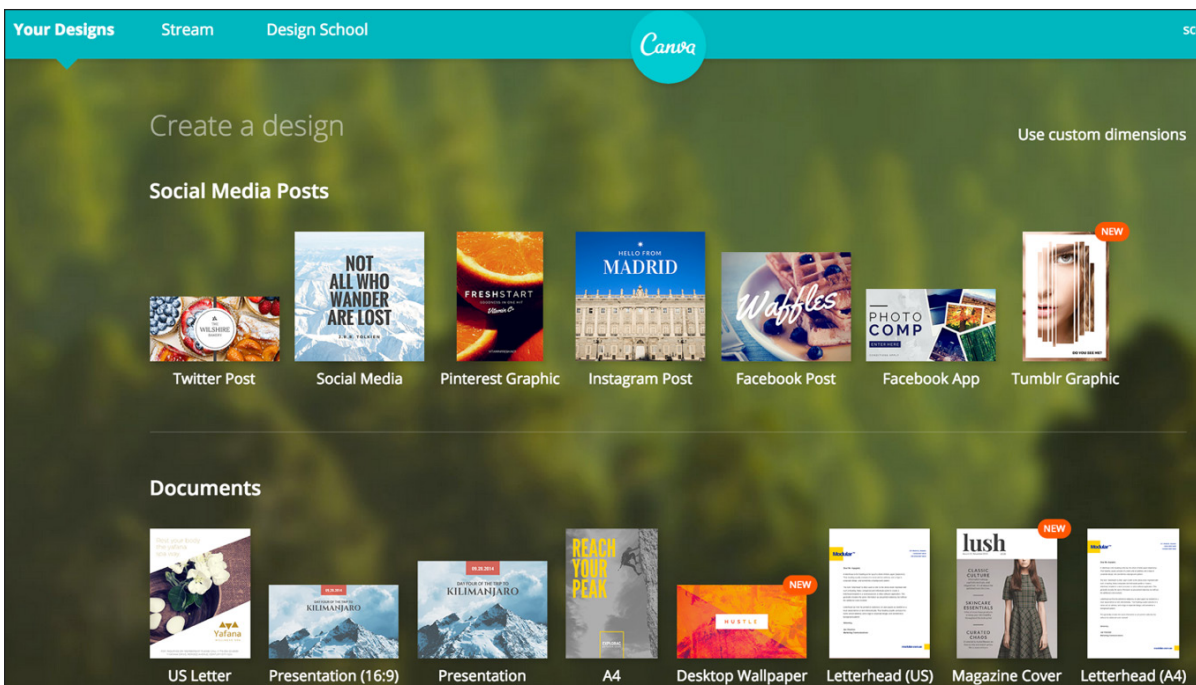
- Make sure that you also say that anyone is welcome to join you for any of the service times, no judgments/requirements (except interest/faith in Jesus/God).
- Tell the history of your church using "milestones." *The earliest date a milestone can have is when your Page was created, unless you edit your Page's start info... so change the start date of your page to the date of your church's founding as I stated in an earlier bullet point. Thus, the reason!*
- Use the "call to action" button on your timeline cover. My suggestion: Use the "Watch Video" option and link to a singular landing page on your web site with a welcome video you're your pastor... that includes an invitation to come to church this Sunday!



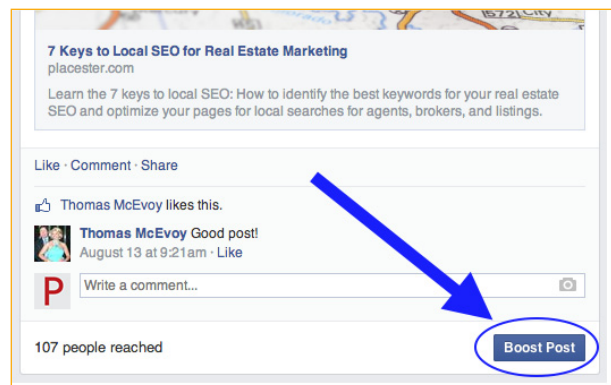
Best Practices For Posting

- We suggest planning your Facebook posts weekly and/or monthly. By writing as many as you can ahead of time, you'll only have to be on Facebook 10-15 minutes or so a day to post and reply to any postings from your page fans and interact with other local pages you interact with.
- Try to keep the posts between 1 and 3 sentences long. If they're too long people won't read them.
- Add an images sometimes and do text-only posts sometimes but not just one type all the time. Mix it up. Want to create your own professional looking images free or super-cheap?

BIG TIP: Check out Canva.com! We love it! (You can use it to create timeline cover images, PowerPoint backgrounds for sermons and more... FREE!)



- Try to only post once, maybe twice, per day, and don't do more than 20 per week if possible. Facebook isn't as "quick" as Twitter and you don't need to post nearly as often to reach the same, if not a greater, number of people. Normal is 5-7 per week. Think *quality*, not *quantity*.
- **Boost** important posts such as announcements. It's worth a few bucks for the incredible amount of visibility you get from boosting posts. Way cheaper than newspaper, much more targeted, and probably more often seen. How to boost? Look for the boost button on the bottom right of your post after posting to your page.



- If you're starting your page with a blank slate, just begin sharing the posts as suggested in the plan I'll be providing below. If you're switching over to my plan from what you had been doing, it would be proper to indicate that there are changes coming, and then introduce each post (and how it works if appropriate) the first time you share it. *i.e.* "This is our Ministries Mondays Post!"
- Encourage members to interact with you posts. Interaction on a post tends to increase its visibility on Facebook.

TIP: A good way to prompt interaction? *Ask a question.* Example: "What do you think is the biggest challenge for today's parents of who want to raise godly kids?"

- With the way that Facebook pages work, you can comment on pages WITH your page, that is, AS your page – and in your case, you're posting AS your church! It's a great way to connect with other (local) business owners, local business/organization pages and raise awareness about your church.

Here are 8 main ideas for content

Now, in a few minutes, we're going to give you a blueprint plan... but for now here are some ideas you'll want to think about.

1. **Share the sermon topic.** Each week share what the sermon topic is and ask fans a question about it. I would have this scheduled to be on Sunday, so you can share it after the services and ask a follow up or a discussion question related to what was shared in the services, or you can just ask a general question related to the topic. The idea is to get people...
 - talking about the sermon topic
 - talking about it outside church
 - talking about it after church
 - following up with those who did hear the sermon and may have thoughts or questions.

If you've got the sermon on podcast or can watch it live/recorded, remind "likers" of that once every 2 months and include a link to the page on the website.

2. **Share a ministry or event.** Each week either focus on a church ministry (youth, kids, life groups, missions) or encourage people to attend an event being held at the church. You can share a sentence or two about the ministry/event, what's going on, who should/could be involved, how to get involved and any relevant time/date/location information. Once every 2-3 months you should remind fans that you have a Wednesday evening family night. Try to rotate through the various ministries, not just focusing on 2-3 of them. Also don't share about an event more than 2 times, once when it's first announced and once the week before/of the event. Include your website link in

all posts for #2.

3. **Share Bible verses.** Each week share a different verse or set of verses. Share where it's found in the Bible as well as the version of Bible it's from. Don't repeat any, there are plenty to share. It can go with your sermon for the week or not.
4. **Share photos!** Often a photograph is just what people need to raise their spirits. There are photos on Flickr that you can use and share freely. They're under the [creative commons tag](#). You can share a little caption with the picture, a little quote that goes with it or just something like "here's a picture we found inspiring, what are your thoughts?" You can also share photos of church gatherings (check about any signed releases you may need first) but don't share church pictures every week.
5. **Share a word from the pastor.** Each week let one of the pastors write up a little encouragement, thought or reflection on life, ministry, family, spirituality etc. You can just have the 2-5 main pastors share this responsibility or you can open it up to all staff. Writing something personal on a weekly basis shows the fans that the pastors aren't just up there doing the sermon and that's it, but that they have lives and feelings and are real people too. Most of the time it should be an encouraging word, but Occasionally something of a more serious/sad tone is to be expected (the reality of life while on earth). TIP: Make it a video!
6. **Share local info and events, as well as discuss holidays, seasons and life.** This is how you can bring in some of the local traffic. By sharing about events, local news, things of importance related to people and the news in your area, you will share local town names and things in your target neighborhoods that those people would be interested in. In addition to highlighting specific gatherings (all town garage sales, honoring soldiers, fireworks, favorite restaurants etc) You can wish your fans a merry Christmas, ask what their favorite Christmas cookie is, ask if they're attending the tree lighting in their town, favorite Christmas traditions etc. Obviously December is the easiest month to think of things to talk about, so if you can't think of something fun, friendly, personal, seasonal, or holiday related to talk about, you can skip a week or two, but don't skip two weeks in a row, skip every other week. (Feel free to share your personal stories here too!). Some more winter related ideas are "What's your suggestions for winter fun in [insert name of your town]?" and "Valentine's Day is just around the corner! What will you do for your special Someone?" You can share articles, events, ask about events, discuss local stores or topics that are Relevant to your area. Make sure to share events approximately 2 weeks before they happen. (At least 2 posts should be questions each month).
7. **Discuss some of life's challenges.** You can base this on a topic that's in the news, a topic that a lot of people have been calling/praying about, or just a topic that you know a lot of people struggle with. You may be able to reuse topics yearly, but try to have new ones each week.
8. **Share videos of songs you sing at your church.** This actually helps disarm folks who may be thinking of visiting and are wondering what your church services are like. Grab a video off YouTube and put it on your church page telling folks that you'll be singing this song Sunday or that this is one of your church favorites you like to sing often.

A Daily Plan

Ok. Here it is. A daily plan for theming your posts and helping you brainstorm content.

Sunday: “Sermon Sharing” talk about the sermon on Sundays (#1)

Monday: “Ministry Mondays” talk about ministries on Mondays (#2)

Tuesday: “Challenges & Conversations” talk about life challenges on Tuesdays (#7)

Wednesday: “Our Prayer” share the word from the pastors on Wednesdays (#5)

Thursday: “Carolina Celebration” share about local and holiday things on Thursdays (#6)

Friday: “Bible Blessings” share Bible verses on Fridays (#3)

Saturday: “Weekly Inspiration” share photos on Saturdays (#4)

You can choose a catchy title for each posting and you should always post the same topic on the same day.

You can adjust the plan to include as many or few of the topics suggested, but the plan below includes all of them.

So on Mondays you could post *“Sermon Sharing: this week Pastor shared about forgiveness. What do you find hardest about forgiveness?”*

Outsourcing tip: Find someone in your church who’ll take a few of these and really own them. For instance, someone who is responsible for doing “Ministry Mondays” would handle picking the ministry, coming up with the idea for a post, getting the info and delivering everything needed for a great post (or post it themselves to the page).

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