



Facebook now has more than 1.94 billion monthly users, and 1.28 billion people log onto Facebook daily making it the number one social networking site.

Using Facebook as a church offers a way to engage more deeply with those connected to your church. It also offers the opportunity to introduce your church to the larger community and to those seeking connection and a faith home. By keeping up a vibrant and current Facebook Page, a church has the opportunity to extend its reach in the community.

Facebook should be a part of your church's communication strategy. It is a way to get the word out about what is going on at your church, but should not only be a direct copy of your weekly bulletin announcements. A good rule of thumb is 80/20: 80 percent of your content can and should be about your church, but at least 20 percent of your content should be about others--community partners, local events, things outside of your walls.

## Facebook Accounts

There are three primary account types:

- Personal Profiles – for individuals
  - Personal Profiles are the standard account for Facebook users.
  - Facebook policy requires each user to be at least 13 years old
  - Facebook policy also states no person should have more than one Personal Profile
- Page – for networking with the community at large
  - A Facebook Page is the primary way a church should be interacting on Facebook.
  - Pages are public for all on Facebook. Any Facebook user can “Like” a Page and subscribe to all updates from the page.
  - Use for contact information, church events and activities, regular reminders, closings due to weather, photos, sermon teasers, announcements, sharing of community partnerships, events, etc.
  - A church should have a single page that functions for the entirety of the church, including all ministry areas. This keeps all of your traffic and “likes” in one place and doesn’t split the audience.
  - Be sure to have claimed your Church Facebook Page URL by setting the page username. Click on About in the left-hand column and set your username under General.
- Group – for networking within the church, or within church groups
  - Public Group – searchable on Facebook. The information shared in Public Groups is viewable by all on Facebook, both members and non-members. Non-members must request to join the group. Entities such as Youth Ministry or other specific ministry areas may want to use a Group to manage conversation specific to that ministry instead of creating another conflicting Facebook Page.
  - Closed Groups – searchable on Facebook. The information shared in the group is restricted to members approved by an administrator. Non-members can see who is in the group and who the administrator is, and they can request to join the group.
  - Secret Groups – cannot be found by searching Facebook. A person can only join a Secret Group by personal invitation by someone else in the group.

## Using Facebook

- A church should plan to update its Facebook Page at minimum three times per week. Posting more often is recommended, but setting a goal of three updates a week is a good starting place. Before you panic, remember that your church does a lot of preparation each and every week for Sunday worship. Setting up a regular post using the Scripture text that will be preached on or a follow up question from Sunday's sermon

is an EASY way to have ready content each week.

- Posts should be a mix of different types of content and should invite followers to engage in conversation. Posts can be published immediately or can be scheduled for a later date by using the small triangle arrow next to the Publish button.
  - Posts: Posts are the simplest way to interact using Facebook. These are similar to 'status updates' in personal accounts. Some examples: Post a question about Sunday's sermon, post the Scripture verse that will be used this week, post a quick announcement or notification about something happening, post a prayer focus for the day. If you follow United Methodist Communication pages, you often can find thoughtful articles to share.
  - Photos: Photo posts have greater return than posts with just words. You should plan to post at least one photo a week. Some examples: photos of ministry in action, a photo of the worship space as you prepare for worship, a photo of the staff doing the work of the church, photos teasing upcoming ministry opportunities. Remember that pictures with people in them are more appealing; try to avoid "posed" photographs. Capture people in action.
  - Links: Links can be shared via Facebook to point folks to your church website or to your church ministry partners.
  - Events: Facebook offers the opportunity to create events to promote ministry opportunities. Events typically don't see as much traffic as the post types mentioned above, but they can be useful--especially for church related events taking place off-site.
  - Live: Facebook Live is a live video option that is done in real time. It can be used to broadcast a sermon, church event, do a Q&A and more. Viewers may comment and react to the event by hitting the like, love, angry, etc. icons. Once the video is complete, the video can be saved on Facebook for later viewing.

## Facebook Advertising

Facebook offers the opportunity to advertise in multiple ways. Facebook Ads are a simple way to reach a large number of people on a small budget.

- Boost Posts: You can pay to boost a post by using the 'boost post' button after posting. This can be useful if you have posted about an upcoming event or opportunity and want to get the word out.
- Boost Event: You can use the 'boost event' button after creating an event to advertise it publicly (to those outside of your regular Facebook Reach)
- Advertise Business: this feature allows you to create several different types of ads (such as those that will run in the right-hand column of Facebook Users feeds.)
- Targeting: Once you have chosen what type of add you'd like to use, be sure to set the targeting. You can choose a location (ie: 10 mile radius around your church building) or you can choose to target those who like your page and their friends, or you can choose to target people in a certain area that like different topics. Be sure to pay attention to the 'reach' tracker as you define your target

Pricing for Facebook Advertising varies and is determined by you. You can choose your ad budget by day or by the lifetime of the ad run. A little bit of money goes a LONG way in Facebook Ads. Boosting a post for \$5 for 3 days can yield great results.

An example: A church in Richmond spent a total of \$159 during Lent and Holy Week in 2017. Those funds were split between five ads--three were boosted posts, one was an ad set (sidebar ads), and one was an event boost. The church targeted a 10-mile radius around their address. The combined ad reach of this \$159 was 12,459 people resulting in 420 link clicks, 219 post engagements, and seven event responses.