



As of the end of 2018, Facebook boasted over 2.32 billion monthly active users. 74% of them log in daily for an average of 35 minutes daily making it the most popular social networking site.

Using Facebook as a church offers a way to engage more deeply with those connected to your church and the local community. It also offers the opportunity to introduce your church to a larger community and to those seeking connection or church home.

By keeping up a vibrant and current Facebook Page, a church has the opportunity to extend its reach into 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. Posts should not *ONLY* be a direct copy of your weekly bulletin announcements. Mix it up. Have fun. Show fun!

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 or have a community/church/business act as a page.
- 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/activities, regular reminders, closings due to weather, photos, sermon teasers, scripture, 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 your audience.
 - i. Be sure to claim your Church Facebook Page URL by setting the page username. Got to Page. Click “About” in the left-hand column. Under General, edit your username. Username should be the same or as close as possible on all social media.
- Group – for communicating within the church
 - Public Group – searchable on Facebook. The information shared in Public Groups is viewable by all on Facebook, members and non-members. Non-members must request to join the group to post.
 - Closed Groups – searchable on Facebook. The posts shared in the group is restricted to members only. Non-members can see which of their friends are in the group and who the administrator(s) is/are. Non members can request to join the group and are approved by an administrator only.
 - Secret Groups – cannot be found by searching Facebook. A person can only join a

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Secret Group by personal invitation by someone else already 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 invites followers to engage in conversation. Posts can be published immediately or can be scheduled for a later date changing the "Share now" to "Schedule", using the drop down menu.
 - **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, a Scripture verse to be used that week, 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: ministry in action, worship space as you prepare for worship, staff working, teasers of upcoming ministry opportunities. Remember that pictures with people are more appealing than empty spaces; try to avoid "posed" photographs. Capture people in action. If possible create a gallery. Galleries get more interaction than single images.
 - **Links:** Links are currently being ignored by Facebook. Avoid linking elsewhere if possible. The only exception is tickets for events.
 - **Events:** Facebook offers the opportunity to create events to promote ministry opportunities. Events typically see slightly more traffic than the post types mentioned above, and can be useful--especially for church related events where the neighboring communities are invited..
 - **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.
 - **Stories:** Stories are the small circle at the top of Facebook. Pages and Profile accounts and events all allow stories to increase reach.

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 expand your reach.

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- **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.