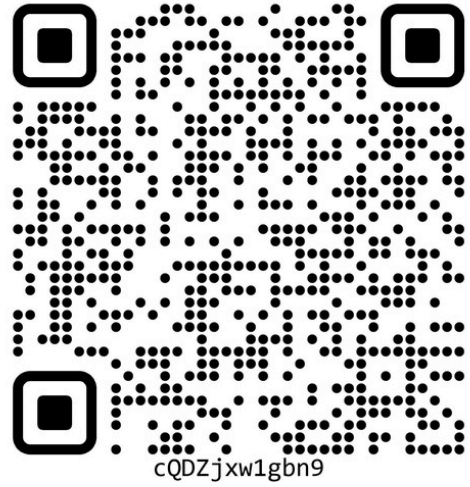


# Online Strategies: Leveraging Digital Spaces for Church Growth



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# Why Your Digital Strategy Matters

- ✓ The internet is the primary way people search for churches.
- ✓ Online platforms extend the church's reach beyond Sunday services.
- ✓ Digital tools foster community, discipleship, and engagement.
- ✓ A strong online presence helps churches connect with seekers who may never walk through the doors.

# What We'll Cover

- ◆ Part 1: Website & SEO – Making your church findable online
- ◆ Part 2: Social Media Engagement – Pros, cons, and best strategies for platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X
- ◆ Part 3: Internal Software and Resources – Using technology to improve discipleship, volunteer engagement, and supporting staff.
- ◆ Q&A & Next Steps

# Part 1: Website & SEO



# Your Website: The Digital Front Door

- ✓ Most visitors check a church's website before attending in person.
- ✓ Your website reflects your church's mission, values, and personality.
- ✓ A clear, engaging website makes visitors feel welcomed and informed.

# Why did they visit?

Rank	Desired Action on Church Websites	%	Corresponding Page
1	Check to see the times of services	43%	Services or Events page
2	Check what activities are offered	29%	Events or Ministries page
3	Look for a map or directions to the church's location	28%	Contact or Location page
4	Watch streaming video	26%	Media or Sermons page
5	Listen to streaming audio	26%	Media or Sermons page
6	Check to see what the church's religious beliefs are	22%	About Us or Beliefs page
7	Request prayer	18%	Contact or Prayer page
8	Downloading a podcast	15%	Media or Podcasts page
9	Checking what denomination or group the church belongs to	15%	About Us page
10	Send a message to the pastor or leader	12%	Contact page

*Data from Church Leader Insights*

# Get these pages right:

- ◆ Home page
  - Service times & location highly visible (above the fold/scroll)
- ◆ About/Visit page
  - Transportation/parking questions
  - Kids ministry processes
  - Affiliations/beliefs
- ◆ Sermons page
  - Keep it up to date!
- ◆ Team/Leadership Page
  - FRIENDLY pictures of leadership with short bios/roles



# Your Website Should Reflect Your Church's Personality

- 📌 Images and videos should reflect real people from your congregation not stock photos as much as possible.
- 📌 Use warm, welcoming language instead of formal or outdated text.
- 📌 Show the diversity and culture of your church community.
- 📌 Consistent branding (logos, colors, fonts) creates familiarity.  
(Create a brand guide to help ensure consistency)

# Mobile-Friendly Is A Must

- Over 60% of website traffic comes from mobile devices.
- A slow or difficult-to-navigate site causes visitors to leave.
- Ensure text is readable and buttons are easy to click.
- Test your website on different screen sizes.

# Engaging Content Makes a Difference

- ✓ Regularly update sermon videos, blog posts, and event pages.
- ✓ Use short videos and testimonies to keep the site engaging.
- ✓ Add a welcome video from the pastor or ministry leaders.
- ✓ Post real-life stories of transformation from your church community.

# Call to Action – Guide Visitors to the Next Step

Organize your home page and/or buttons around ACTIONS rather than INFORMATION to increase engagement

- ◆ “Plan a Visit” – Help new guests know what to expect.
- ◆ “Watch a Sermon” – Feature recent messages on the homepage.
- ◆ “Get Connected” – Small groups, ministries, or serving opportunities.
- ◆ “Give Online” – Provide easy and secure giving options.

# SEO - What Churches Need to Know

The search for most people starts online, even if a person is invited by an individual. Here's what you must do:

- ◆ Google My Business - Create/update your listing with accurate service times, photos, etc.
- ◆ Keywords, metatags, page titles, headers - Use clear, plain language like “English-speaking church in Palermo” in headers, page titles, and tags rather than catchy/internal language

# Part 2:

# Social Media



# Why Social Media Matters for Churches

- ✓ Social media extends the church's reach beyond Sunday services.
- ✓ Many people search for churches on social platforms before visiting. (Your website is like looking at a home from the street, social media is like peaking through the windows)
- ✓ Allows real-time engagement with members and seekers.
- ✓ Provides an opportunity for discipleship, encouragement, and community building.

# Choosing the Right Social Media Platform & Being Consistent

- ◆ Facebook – Best for community groups, livestreaming, and event promotion.
- ◆ Instagram – Great for storytelling, visual content, and younger audiences.
- ◆ YouTube – Ideal for sermons, Bible studies, and long-form content.
- ◆ X (Twitter) – Useful for quick updates, engagement, and sharing insights.

# Pros & Cons of Social Media Platforms

Platform	Pros	Cons
<b>Facebook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Largest audience</li><li>✓ Great for livestreaming &amp; groups</li><li>✓ Strong community features</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Organic reach is declining</li><li>✗ Paid ads often needed for visibility</li></ul>
<b>Instagram</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Highly visual &amp; engaging</li><li>✓ Great for younger audiences</li><li>✓ Stories &amp; reels boost reach</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Limited link sharing</li><li>✗ Requires consistent content creation</li></ul>
<b>YouTube</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Best for sermons &amp; teachings</li><li>✓ High searchability &amp; longevity</li><li>✓ Can generate new visitors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Video production takes time</li><li>✗ Requires optimization for discoverability</li></ul>
<b>X (Twitter)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Good for quick updates &amp; discussion</li><li>✓ Great for engaging with broader Christian communities</li><li>✓ Shares well across platforms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Requires frequent activity</li><li>✗ Shorter lifespan for posts</li></ul>

# Content Strategy – What Should Your Church Post?

- 📌 Inspirational Content – Bible verses, testimonies, devotionals
- 📌 Sermon Clips & Teaching Videos – Short insights from messages
- 📌 Behind-the-Scenes & Church Life – Show the community in action
- 📌 Announcements & Events – Share upcoming services, outreach events, and news
- 📌 Interactive Posts – Polls, questions, prayer requests

# Using Video & Livestreaming Effectively

🎥 Sermon Livestreams – Reach members who can't attend in person

🎥 Testimonies & Stories – Personal faith stories impact deeply

🎥 Behind-the-Scenes – Show ministries, small groups, or worship team moments





🎥 Short-Form Videos – Reels, YouTube Shorts, or TikToks for quick engagement -- Use a tool like Riverside.fm to Stream & automatically generate short-form content

# Engagement is Critical - Best Practices

- 💬 Respond to comments and messages promptly
- 💬 Use polls and questions to spark discussion
- 💬 Feature real stories from church members
- 💬 Create Facebook Groups for deeper community




# Posting Frequency - Best Practices by Platform

Platform	Frequency
Facebook	 3-5 posts per week
Instagram	 3-5 posts per week, 1-2 reels/stories per day
YouTube	 1-2 videos per week
X (Twitter)	 3-7 posts per day

✔ **These best practices can help inform which platforms you can best manage & be consistent in your posting. You don't have to do them all; choose one or two!**

# Measuring Social Media Impact

 Monitor Growth – Followers, reach, and impressions

 Engagement Metrics – Likes, shares, comments

 Click-Through Rates – Are people engaging with links and videos?

 Conversions – Are online efforts leading people to visit your church?

# Part 3:

## Internal Software and Resources

# What is Church Management Software (ChMS)?

- ✓ ChMS helps churches track members, events, giving, serving, and communication.
- ✓ It streamlines administrative tasks, allowing pastors to focus on ministry.
- ✓ A centralized system helps churches of any size stay organized.
- ✓ Many ChMS platforms now include online giving, messaging, and discipleship tools.

# Why Your Church Needs a ChMS

- 📌 Member Tracking & Engagement – Keep records of attendance, small groups, and pastoral care.
- 📌 Online & Text-Based Giving – Secure, automated giving options.
- 📌 Event & Volunteer Management – Organize church events, sign-ups, and volunteer schedules.
- 📌 Communication Tools – Send emails, texts, and notifications to members.
- 📌 Reporting & Analytics – Gain insights into attendance trends and financial health.

# Features to Look for in a ChMS

- ◆ **Cloud-Based Access** – Manage church records from anywhere.
- ◆ **Mobile App** – Easy access for staff, leaders, and members.
- ◆ **Scalability** – Grows with your church's needs.
- ◆ **Affordable Pricing** – Options for churches of all sizes.



# Recommended: Planning Center

- ✓ **Modular System** – Customize features based on your church's needs (Worship, People, Giving, Groups, Services).
- ✓ **User-Friendly Interface** – Accessible technology, even for non-tech-savvy users.
- ✓ **Great online support community and training.**
- ✓ **Seamless Integration** – Works with other tools--robust API
- ✓ **Automated Processes** – Schedule volunteers, plan worship services, and track attendance with minimal effort.
- ✓ **Detailed Reporting & Insights** – Track attendance, giving trends, and member engagement for better ministry planning.

# Introducing the Healthy Churches Toolkit

--> [HealthyChurchesGlobal.com](https://HealthyChurchesGlobal.com)

- ✓ All-in-One Platform – Training, resources, and coaching in one place.
- ✓ Live Monthly Workshops – Expert-led sessions on church leadership & strategy.
- ✓ 350+ Resources & Videos – Covers discipleship, leadership, and ministry effectiveness.
- ✓ AI-Powered Assistants – Automate sermon guides, marketing, and administrative tasks.
- ✓ Ready-to-Use Templates – Save time with 100+ downloadable ministry tools.



# Recap & Questions

# Key Takeaways

- ✓ A strong website is the foundation of your church's online presence.
- ✓ Social media is a tool for ministry, not just announcements.
- ✓ Engagement matters more than numbers—focus on community-building.
- ✓ Utilize software to better manage people and ministries.

# Common Questions

**? How can we improve our church website with limited resources?**

**? What's the best way to increase engagement on social media?**

**? Should we invest in paid ads for outreach?**

**? Who can help us implement Planning Center?**

# Other Questions?