

Doing a wellness check on your congregation's online presence

Two things you need to have: website and Facebook page. Distinct purposes.

Might also have: Facebook Group, Instagram account.

A. Website:

Basic info for visitors or seekers, snapshot of your parish, also reference info for parishioners. It needs to be updated but not daily. Design with prospective visitors as your primary audience. Make resources for your parishioners less prominent. It's passive: people have to seek it out, so not as good for breaking news or updates.

Guidelines for website:

MUST HAVES:

- worship times (correct for season, upcoming holy days, etc.)
- physical address
- current events, with nothing outdated
- name and photos of key staff
- information about parking, child care,
- contact info: phone, email or contact-us form
- be mobile responsive [Mobile-Friendly Test - Google Search Console](<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>)
- welcoming tone
- lots of images of your church members looking happy and doing things together. No gratuitous clip art or graphics or stock photos. Not as many photos of your building as you might think. (though one of the front so they can recognize it from the street is helpful).
- information about beliefs, worship style

Should have:

- info about handicapped access
- sermons
- links to social media sites
- newsletter sign-up and archive

Scott Gunn's series on websites:

Thirteen Commandments for your website (church websites, part 1)

<https://www.sevenwholedays.org/2017/02/15/church-websites-1/>

Make great websites for cheap! (church websites, part 2)

<https://www.sevenwholedays.org/2017/02/18/church-websites-2/>

Some websites to look at: Most done for < \$500

Trinity Episcopal Church, Lawrence, KS <http://trinitylawrence.org>

St. George's, Ardmore, PA <http://www.stgeorgeschurch.org/>

Grace Episcopal Church, Brunswick, MD <http://www.gracebrunswick.org>

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Utah <https://ststephensut.com>

St. Thomas, Hamilton, NY <https://www.stthomashamilton.org>

St. Cornelius, Dodge City, KS <https://www.stcorneliuschurch.org/>

B. Facebook Page

Shows day to day life of your parish for parishioners and maybe visitors, friends. Can keep folks up to date on information, events, etc. Easier to do quick updates than on website. Can also include event promotion, quick polls, etc. Is interactive rather than passive. That's why it's called *social* media. Can also use for Facebook Live to livestream worship, presentations, chats.

- How often do you post?
- Do you respond to people who make comments?
- Do you post things which are interactive or are you using it just as an event promotion firehose? The less interaction there is the fewer people will see your posts.
- Do you use it to give your folks useful information: spiritual inspiration, links to articles, other resources? Things they can only get there, not replicating secular materials?
- Do you use it to inspire discussion ?
- How do you moderate comments people may make on posts?
- Do your folks "Like" your page and prioritize it in their feed?
- Are you aware of best policies for social media regarding Safe-Church, etc.

C. Facebook Groups:

Internal community building in parish.

Can restrict membership and visibility , so can be somewhat "safer" space. Can use for reflection groups, etc.

D. Social media channels to make lower priorities unless you have a specific use case or real gifts and commitment:

Instagram (this would be the next one to work on after Facebook)

YouTube

Twitter