Facebook for the church

Facebook is one of the most popular social media channels for the church due to the diverse reach across age groups and genders.

But how do you know whether to set up a Facebook profile, Facebook page and/or Facebook group for your church? It is likely that you currently have you own personal profile where you can connect with friends. Facebook pages are for businesses, brands, groups or clubs that want to showcase products or services, reach more people, and connect with people in their community. A Facebook group enables conversation between people that have joined the group due to their interest in a topic that the group covers.

How to create a Facebook page

To create a new Facebook page, visit https://www.facebook.com/pages/create

If your church currently uses a personal profile, it can be changed to a brand page by visiting https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/migrate. By migrating from a profile to a page, you'll be able to share with a wider audience, and gain insights into audience demographic and engagement. The process of migrating is set up so that you will not lose your existing audience as you can select from friends, followers and pending friend requests to add them as the new page's followers.

If there are two pages that both represent you church and you are an admin of both, you can merge them by visiting https://www.facebook.com/pages/merge/

Facebook events

Creating a Facebook event is more beneficial then a post about an upcoming event for the following reasons:

- You can create a either a public event that anyone can view or a private event that only invited guest can view.
- Public events are discoverable based on location, category and popularity with friends.
- You can view the number of guests that have responded (going, interested, not going).
- The people that have responded to the event will receive a reminder alert before the event start time.
- You can view event insights.

When creating a Facebook event, you can add a cover image, location (online or physical location), description, category (e.g. religion, music, games, causes), start and end date and times, co-hosts, event frequency, an event schedule, and ticket link.

Similar to a Facebook post you can boost a Facebook event, if you have the budget, to reach a larger audience and receive more responses (going, interested, not going).

Hashtags

A hashtag is a keyword or phrase following the # symbol with no spaces between the words. Hashtags can be included within the text or after the message.

Hashtags are a way for people to search or join conversations around a specific topic, event, disaster or emergency, and national holidays or celebrations. They can also be used to build community. For example, the Synod of NSW & ACT use #AllOfThisIsUs and Newlife Church use #morepeoplemorelikejesus.

Tagging

A tag will create a link within the post to the profile, page or group. For example, @unitingchurch.queensland will tag the Queensland Synod. When you tag a profile, page or group it will send them a notification often resulting in a like, share and/or comment. In your page settings make sure that the option for others tagging your page is set to "people and other pages can tag my page".

Content ideas

- Good news stories
- Nicely edited photographs of church worship, baptisms, speakers, events and more. Do not post photographs or videos of people without their permission, particularly children.
- Pre-recorded videos of the service, short clips from the sermon, or videos that promote an event or the church.
- Facebook live videos of services, devotions or events.
- Well-designed and copyright free graphics of Bible verses and sermon quotes that followers will want to share.
- Share graphics and campaigns from:
  - Uniting Church in Australia @UnitingChurchAu
    - UnitingWorld @unitingworld
    - Uniting Justice Australia @unitingjusticeaustralia
    - UnitingWomen @UnitingWomen2020
  - Uniting Church Queensland @unitingchurch.queensland
    - Multi Cross Cultural Reference Group @mccrgqld
    - UCA Queensland Synod Interfaith Relationships @ucaqldinterfaith
    - Trinity College Queensland @TrinityCollegeQueensland
    - Next Gen Arise @nextgenarise
    - Easter Madness @MadnessAu
    - Unite @UniteYoungAdultsRetreat
  - Queensland Synod Presbyteries
    - Moreton Rivers Presbytery @moretonrivers
    - Mary Burnett Presbytery, UCA @maryburnettpres
    - South Moreton Presbytery @southmoreton
    - Carpentaria Presbytery @ucacarpentariapresbytery
  - UnitingCare Queensland @unitingcare
    - Lifeline Queensland @lifelineshopsqld
    - BlueCare @BlueCareAustralia
    - Australian Regional & Remote Community Service @ARRCSAustralia
    - The Wesley Hospital @wesleyhospital
    - Buderim Private Hospital @buderimprivatehospital
    - St Stephen's Hospital @ststephensfrasercoast
    - St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital @StAndrewsWarMemorialHospital
  - Wesley Mission Queensland @wesleymissionqueensland

Banning, hiding and deleting

Contributions that contain offensive, defamatory or other inappropriate content can be hidden, deleted or reported by clicking the ellipse (…) button. Hidden comments will still be visible to the person who wrote it and their friends. Whereas, a deleted comment will be permanently removed. Contributions by trolls that are off-topic or repetitive should be hidden to ensure conversation remains genuine.

If criticism, negative comments or complaints are received the appropriate person within the church or Queensland Synod should be notified. These people should be responded to, not ignored or banned from the page. Instead let the appropriate person within the church give them a call or send a private Facebook message.

Facebook insights

The church's goals and vision will determine what social media metrics need to be monitored to discover if the social media strategy is achieving the church's goals. Does your church want to use social media as an opportunity to reach new members and/or engage with the current members?

The most useful metrics to monitor are reach (unique views of a post) and engagement (total likes, reactions, comments and shares).

The people tab under insights allows you to view the age, gender and locations of your fans, followers, people reached, and people engaged. This information gives you the ability to create posts that your pages largest audience demographic (e.g. women aged between 35–44) will engage with.

The posts tab shows graphs of the times and days your fans are online. You should schedule posts to be published on the days and times that match your fans' online presence. Under this tab you can also view the type of posts from your page that perform best and top posts from pages you watch.

Facebook page settings

Page roles allows you to add other people or Facebook Business Manager to manage the page. When adding a new page manager, they can be assigned one of the following roles:

- Admin: Can manage all aspects of the page including assigning page roles.
- Editor: Can publish content and send Messenger messages as the page, respond to and delete comments on the page, create ads, see who created a post or comment, and view insights. If an Instagram account is connected to the page, they can post to Instagram from Facebook, respond to and delete comments, send direct messages, sync business contact info and create ads.
- Moderator: Can send Messenger messages as the page, respond to and delete comments on the page, create ads, see who created a post or comment and view insights. If an Instagram account is connected to the page, they can respond to Instagram comments, send direct messages and create ads.
- Advertiser: Can create ads, see who created a post or comment and view insights. If an Instagram account is connected to the page, they can create Instagram ads.
- Analyst: Can see which admin created a post or comment and view insights.

It is important to ensure that the admin of the page is connected to a church email to prevent the church from losing access to the page if the admin using a personal profile leaves the church. If you require, the Queensland Synod office can arrange to be a page admin to prevent loss of access and/or act as part of your social media team to help increase your audience reach and engagement.

Page moderation and the profanity filter can be used to block posts or comments containing inappropriate words or phrases. If one or the words or phrases is used in a post it will automatically be marked as spam for an admin to approve or delete.

For multilingual congregations there is an option for **posts in multiple languages** written by admins or you can turn on the option for posts to t**ranslate automatically**.

Facebook Messenger settings enables you to set up automated responses for frequently asked questions, contact information, instant replies for when you are not online, and when someone recommends or reviews the page.

Using Facebook groups for church

When to start a Facebook group

Facebook groups are a great way to help church members stay connected and engage in conversations around specific ministries. Popular Facebook groups for churches include:

- Youth group: For ministry agents, youth group leaders and students to talk about upcoming youth group events and encourage church youth to ask tough questions about the Bible.
- Young adults' group: For ministry agents and young adults
- Families and children's ministry: For parents and those involves in children's ministry to encourage each other and provide resources.
- Worship team: For those on the worship ministry team to discuss new songs and the weekend's song list.
- Bible studies:

Connecting Facebook group to church Facebook page

If you are creating a new Facebook group, go to the groups tab on the church's Facebook page and select the "create group" button.

If you are connecting an existing group, go to the groups tab on the church's Facebook page and select the "link you group" button. You need to be an admin of the group for it to appear in the list of groups you can add to the page.

Connecting a church group to the Facebook page enable the group to be found from the church's page and gives access for the page to post or share posts in the group.

Joining a Facebook group as a page

You can join a group from your personal profile or as a page (if enabled in the group settings) by going into the group and clicking the join button, where you will have the option to join as a personal profile or a page you manage.

Groups you may be interested in joining as a page include presbyteries, as well as the Queensland Synod's Project Plenty group, One Church Connect community, and Reach out speak out.

Growing group members

Grow the number of group members by encourage members to invite others, sharing about the group on your church page, and in church announcements and newsletters.

Privacy

The group privacy can be set to either public or private. A public group allows anyone to see who is in the group and what they post. A private group only allows members to see who is in the group and what they post. Note: private groups cannot be later changed to public to protect the privacy of group members.

Groups can also be visible to for anyone to find the group or hidden so that only members can find the group.

Group membership approval

In the group settings, you have the option for only admins and moderators to accept membership requests or members to accept the requests.

To filter out unwanted members you can ask up to three questions that those requesting membership need to answer. These answers will only be seen by the group admins and moderators. You can also set up group rules that members need to agree to when requesting to join the group.

Adding group admins and moderators

To add an admin or moderator go to the members tab then click the ellipse (…) next to the person or page you want to become an admin or moderator.

Schedule posts

Similar to a Facebook page you can schedule posts to be published on popular days and times, as found in the group insights.

Banning, hiding and deleting posts

Similar to a Facebook page you can hide and delete comments by clicking the ellipse (…) button next to the comment. Additionally, you have the option to mute or remove the member. Since anyone can post within a group you also have the option to delete a post or turn off further commenting on a post by clicking the ellipse button in the top right of the post.

For more information or assistance, contact communications@ucaqld.com.au.