



FREE GUIDE · SOCIAL MEDIA

Church Social Media Starter Checklist

A step-by-step guide to launching your church on social media with platform advice, content ideas and a 7-day plan.

We try hard to get everything here right, and every guide and template shows when it was last reviewed. But they are free, they are general and things change: the law, prices and the tools themselves. We cannot guarantee they are complete, current or right for your church, so check anything you rely on and take professional advice where a decision matters.

Church Social Media Starter Checklist

Who this is for: the volunteer or minister who has been asked to do the church's social media and is not sure where to begin.

You don't need to be a tech expert. You don't need to be on every platform. You just need a phone, a willingness to share what your church is doing and about an hour a week.

Before you post anything, two jobs belong to the church, not to you

1. Safeguarding and photo consent. You cannot post pictures of people – especially children – without the right permissions in place, and there are rules about contact with under-18s. **We do not write safeguarding policy and you should not take it from us.** Your denomination's safeguarding policy governs this, and it takes precedence over anything on this site. If your church has no policy or you are not sure how to read it, [thirtyone:eight](#) is the independent Christian safeguarding charity most UK churches use, and its helpline is **0303 003 1111**.

2. Data protection. Photographs of identifiable people are personal data. My [GDPR Compliance Checklist](#) explains what your church needs to have in place.

And get the role agreed and minuted. Ask your leadership team to record who is doing this, what they are authorised to post, who covers holidays and who they escalate to. That protects *you* as much as anyone. **Any spending – even a few pounds a month for a design tool – goes to whoever holds the budget first, not on a volunteer's own card.** Churches have real problems reclaiming money spent with good intentions and no authorisation.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Where this guide says your leadership team or your trustees, it means whatever body governs your church: the PCC in the Church of England, the Kirk Session in the Church of Scotland and in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Vestry in the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Select Vestry in the Church of Ireland, the Ministry Area Council in most of the Church in Wales. Nothing else here changes by nation. In Wales, the Welsh language standards are aimed at public bodies and do not reach churches; if your congregation is bilingual, post bilingually anyway, because that is how the people you want to reach speak, and the Welsh Language Commissioner's Cynnig Cymraeg scheme will recognise a charity that makes the offer.

Which Platforms and Why

You don't need to be everywhere. Here's an honest look at each platform and what it's good for.

Facebook

Best for: Community, events, reaching people aged 35+ **Why it works for churches:** Most UK adults still use Facebook. It's where people look for local groups and events. Facebook Groups are excellent for church community – members can share prayer requests, organise lifts to church and stay connected during the week. Facebook Events are genuinely useful for promoting church activities to the wider community.

Start here if: Your congregation is mostly over 35, or you want to promote events to your local community.

Instagram

Best for: Visual storytelling, reaching people aged 18–45 **Why it works for churches:** Beautiful photos of your building, your community and your events tell a story that words alone can't. Instagram Reels (short videos) can reach people well beyond your existing followers. Instagram Stories are great for informal, behind-the-scenes content that disappears after 24 hours.

Start here if: You have someone who enjoys taking photos, or you want to reach a younger audience.

YouTube

Best for: Sermon recordings, worship, longer video content **Why it works for churches:** If you record sermons or services, YouTube is the natural home for them. People search YouTube for church content – sermon series, worship music and church tours. It's also the second largest search engine in the world.

Consider this if: You already record services or have someone willing to create video content. It requires more effort than Facebook or Instagram.

X (formerly Twitter)

Best for: News, public comment, real-time conversation **Honest assessment:** X has declined significantly as a platform for churches. Engagement is lower, the tone is often combative and most church members aren't there. Unless your minister or a key leader is already active and enjoys using it, your time is better spent elsewhere.

Skip this unless: You already have an active presence and it's working for you.

TikTok

Best for: Short, creative video content, reaching under-30s **Honest assessment:** Some churches are doing brilliant things on TikTok – particularly those with a younger congregation or a minister who's comfortable on camera. But it requires regular video content, a willingness to experiment and time. If you're just starting out on social media, this isn't the place to begin.

Consider this later if: You've got Facebook or Instagram running smoothly and want to reach a younger audience.

WhatsApp

Best for: Internal communication, not public social media **Why it works for churches:** WhatsApp Groups are how many church communities actually stay connected day-to-day. Prayer groups, leadership teams, youth groups and social committees all work well on WhatsApp. Broadcast Lists let you send updates to people who've opted in without creating a group.

Note: WhatsApp is a communication tool, not a social media platform. It's brilliant for keeping your existing community connected but won't help you reach new people. Use it alongside (not instead of) a public platform.

Data protection note: Be careful with WhatsApp groups. Members can see each other's phone numbers. For sensitive groups (e.g. pastoral care), consider whether this is appropriate. Always get consent before adding someone to a group.

⚠️ Youth groups are different – read this before you set one up

A WhatsApp group with young people in it is a safeguarding activity, not a comms channel, which means **your denomination's safeguarding and youth work policy governs it and this guide does not**. That policy will say who must be in the group, who may post, at what hours and how the group is registered with your safeguarding lead. Ask your safeguarding lead to check the group against it before it starts, not after.

Two things this guide can say. Everyone in a WhatsApp group can see everyone else's phone number, so make sure the parents know that. And if anything in the group raises a concern about a young person, the routes are your safeguarding lead, the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000, thirtyone:eight on 0303 003 1111, or 999 if someone is in immediate danger.

How Many Platforms Should You Start With?

One or two. That's it.

A church Facebook page updated three times a week is infinitely more valuable than accounts on five platforms that are all neglected.

My recommendation:

- **If you're starting from scratch:** Start with Facebook. It's the most forgiving platform for beginners, has the broadest reach in most UK communities and is the easiest to maintain.
- **If you want two platforms:** Facebook + Instagram. They can be linked so that some content posts to both simultaneously (via Meta Business Suite).

- **Add more later** only when you're consistently posting on your existing platforms and have the capacity.
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Setting Up Your Church Account Properly

This matters more than you might think. Get the foundations right and everything else is easier.

Use a Church Account, Not a Personal One

- ☐ Create a dedicated account for the church – never run it from someone's personal profile
- ☐ On Facebook: Create a **Page** (not a personal profile or group) for public-facing content
- ☐ On Instagram: Set up a **Business** or **Creator** account (this gives you access to analytics)
- ☐ Use a shared church email address (e.g. socialmedia@yourchurch.org.uk) as the login, not someone's personal email

Set Up Admin Access for Multiple People

- ☐ At least two people should have admin access to every account
- ☐ This prevents the "one person leaves and we're locked out" problem
- ☐ On Facebook, give people access through the Page's own settings rather than by sharing a password. Meta calls the top level **Facebook access with full control**; at least two people should hold it, because that is the level that can add and remove everyone else
- ☐ Store login details securely – consider a password manager like Bitwarden (free for basic use)

Lock the Accounts Down Before You Post

The account that gets taken over is nearly always the one with a shared password and no second check. Do these on day one, before the first post, while it is still ten minutes' work.

- ☐ **Turn on two-factor authentication (2FA) on every church account:** Facebook, Instagram, YouTube (through its Google account), X, TikTok and the shared mailbox the accounts are registered to. Use an authenticator app rather than a text message where the platform allows it. A stolen password on its own then gets nobody in
- ☐ **Protect the email first.** The mailbox the accounts are registered to is the master key: whoever controls it can reset every other password. The NCSC's advice is to put 2FA on email precisely for that reason, so do that mailbox before any platform
- ☐ **Name a backup admin, and minute the name.** Not "the minister knows the password" but a named second person who holds full control on each account today, before anyone leaves

- ☐ **Write the recovery route down** for the day the volunteer who set everything up moves away: where the passwords live (the password manager), who holds full control on each account, which phone number and email address each account's 2FA codes and recovery emails go to, and where the printed backup codes are kept. Register those to a church mailbox and, where you can, a church-controlled phone rather than one volunteer's personal mobile
- ☐ **Add passkeys where they are offered.** Meta introduced passkeys on Facebook in 2025 and Google has made them the default sign-in for personal Google accounts: a passkey is tied to your phone or computer and is resistant to phishing. They sit alongside 2FA and a backup admin, not instead of them

Profile and Bio

- ☐ **Profile photo:** Your church logo, or a clear, well-lit photo of your church building. Not a blurry photo taken on a phone in 2015.
- ☐ **Cover photo (Facebook):** A warm, welcoming photo of your community – people, not just the building
- ☐ **Bio/About:** Keep it short and clear. Include:
 - What you are (e.g. "A welcoming Methodist church in the heart of Lewisham")
 - Service times
 - Location
 - Website link
- ☐ **Link to your website** in the profile (if you have one)
- ☐ **Contact information:** Make sure there's a way for people to get in touch

Example bio: "St Mark's Church, Chelmsford. Sunday services at 10:30am. A warm welcome for everyone. linktr.ee/stmarkschelmsford"

What to Post: A 7-Day Starter Plan

Don't overthink this. Here's a simple week of content to get you started. You won't post every day – this is a menu to pick from, not a requirement.

Sunday: Service Recap

A photo from today's service with a brief caption. What was the sermon about? What happened? Share one moment.

Example: "A wonderful morning at St Mark's. Rev. Sarah spoke about the parable of the sower and what it means to be good soil. Lovely to welcome three new families today. See you next Sunday at 10:30am."

Monday: Verse or Encouragement

Share a Bible verse, a short prayer or an encouraging thought to start the week.

Example: "'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' Psalm 23:1. Whatever this week holds, you're not walking through it alone."

Tuesday: Community Story

Highlight something from your church community. A volunteer, a regular event, a tradition, a memory.

Example: "Every Tuesday morning, our knitting group meets in the church hall. They've been going for 14 years and have knitted over 2,000 items for charity. New knitters always welcome - 10am, no experience needed."

Wednesday: Midweek Group or Activity

Promote something happening during the week. Home group, choir practice, youth group, coffee morning.

Example: "Our Wednesday evening home group is starting a new series on the book of Ruth. All welcome - we meet at 7:30pm at various homes. Message us for details."

Thursday: Behind the Scenes

Show something people don't normally see. Setting up for Sunday, the flower rota in action, the boiler room (every church has a boiler story), the back room.

Example: "Ever wondered what happens before Sunday morning? Here's Dave setting up the chairs at 8am. Unsung heroes of church life."

Friday: Weekend Events

Promote anything happening over the weekend. Saturday coffee morning, Sunday service, special events.

Example: "This Saturday: Church clean-up morning, 10am-12pm. Many hands make light work. Tea and biscuits provided (obviously). All welcome."

Saturday: Invitation

A simple, warm invitation to come along on Sunday. No pressure, no jargon.

Example: "If you've been thinking about trying church, tomorrow might be the day. 10:30am, St Mark's. Come as you are. We'll save you a seat."

How Often Should You Post?

Three to four times a week is plenty.

Seriously. Consistency matters far more than frequency. A church that posts three good-quality posts a week, every week, will build a much stronger presence than one that posts every day for a month and then goes silent for three months.

A realistic schedule for a volunteer:

- Sunday: Service photo + caption (5 minutes after the service)
- Tuesday or Wednesday: One midweek post (10 minutes)
- Friday or Saturday: Weekend invitation/event promo (10 minutes)

Total time commitment: about an hour a week once you add replying to comments and messages. That's manageable alongside everything else you're doing.

Tip: Batch your content. Spend 20 minutes on a Monday planning and scheduling the week's posts using Meta Business Suite (free) or a tool like Buffer (free tier available). Then you're done for the week.

Who Should Manage It?

Role Description: Church Social Media Volunteer

Time commitment: about an hour a week **Skills needed:** Basic smartphone skills, willingness to take photos, ability to write a short caption **Skills NOT needed:** Graphic design, marketing qualifications, youth (anyone can do this – some of the best church social media is run by retired volunteers)

Responsibilities:

- Post 3–4 times a week on agreed platforms
- Respond to comments and messages within 24 hours (see below)
- Take photos at church events (with consent)
- Flag any concerning messages or comments to the minister or safeguarding lead **the same day** – never leave one sitting over a weekend
- Read your **denomination's** safeguarding policy and social media guidance before starting, and complete whatever safeguarding training it requires for the role

Safeguarding:

- ☐ **Ask your safeguarding lead what checks this role needs – do not assume, and do not take the answer from us.** DBS eligibility is set by law and turns on whether a role is regulated activity; posting about children's activities often is not, and requesting a check you are not entitled to is its own problem. The equivalent schemes are **PVG in Scotland** and **AccessNI in Northern Ireland**
- ☐ Follow your church's photo consent policy (see below)
- ☐ Never share identifying information about vulnerable adults or children without explicit consent

Accountability:

- The social media volunteer should report to someone (minister, church officer, communications committee)
- Content should reflect the church's values and voice, not the volunteer's personal views
- If in doubt about whether something is appropriate to post, don't post it – ask first

Photos: Getting Them Right

Consent

- ☐ Have a clear photo consent policy. A simple form at the start of each year or event asking: "We'd like to take photos today for our church social media and website. Are you happy to be included?"
- ☐ **Children:** Always get written consent from a parent or guardian before photographing children. Your denomination's safeguarding guidance will have templates for this.
- ☐ **Display a notice** at events: "Photos may be taken at this event for church social media. Please speak to [Name] if you'd prefer not to be included."
- ☐ Keep a record of who has and hasn't given consent

What Makes a Good Church Photo

- **People, not empty rooms.** A photo of 15 people chatting over coffee is warmer and more inviting than a photo of 200 empty chairs. (This is what we call "empty-church syndrome" – avoid it.)
- **Natural light.** Church buildings can be dark. Take photos near windows or outside where possible.
- **Candid over posed.** People laughing, chatting, singing, serving – these are more engaging than everyone standing in a line looking at the camera.
- **Tell a story.** A photo of someone arranging flowers is more interesting than a photo of finished flowers.
- **Clean your lens.** Seriously. Wipe your phone camera lens before you take a photo. It makes a surprising difference.

What to Avoid

- ☐ Photos where the church looks empty (even if it wasn't – angles matter)

- ☐ Photos with legible car number plates
 - ☐ Photos of children without parental consent
 - ☐ Photos that could identify the home address of a vulnerable person
 - ☐ Blurry, dark or badly composed photos (take three, pick the best one)
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Responding to Comments and Messages

Who Responds?

Designate one or two people to monitor comments and messages. This should ideally be someone other than the minister (they have enough to do).

How Quickly?

- **Comments:** Respond within 24 hours. A simple "Thank you!" or "Glad you enjoyed it!" is fine.
- **Direct messages:** Respond within 24 hours. If someone is asking about service times or events, give a clear, friendly answer.
- **Urgent messages:** If someone discloses a safeguarding concern, expresses suicidal thoughts or shares something that needs immediate action, follow your church's safeguarding procedures straight away and do not try to handle it through social media. If someone is in immediate danger call 999; the Samaritans are on 116 123, any time.

If the person messaging you is under 18

The "reply within 24 hours" rule above is for adults. With a child or young person the rule is different, and it is the most important thing on this page.

Do not carry on a private back-and-forth with a young person from a church account. Tell your safeguarding lead the same day and follow your denomination's procedure from there – it, not this guide, sets out what you say and what happens next.

- **Never promise to keep it secret** – that much is common to all safeguarding training. What to say beyond it comes from your denomination's training, not from a digital guide.
- **Never answer them publicly on the page.** It tells everyone a named child is in contact with the church.
- **Never delete the conversation**, even if you're removing something offensive – screenshot it first, with the date, time and account name.
- **One exception to screenshotting:** if the content is, or might be, a sexual image of a child, do **not** screenshot, save or forward it – copying it is a criminal offence, with no exemption for good intentions. Don't delete it either. Call the police on **101 (999** if a child is at immediate risk) and tell your safeguarding lead.

You are not expected to handle this alone, and you are not expected to get it right from memory. Before you take the role on, get your denomination's safeguarding procedure from your safeguarding lead and keep the reporting numbers where you can find them in a hurry. For advice on a live concern: **thirtyone:eight 0303 003 1111**, or the **NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000**. Online child sexual abuse or exploitation is reported to [CEOP](#); indecent images to the [IWF](#). Note CEOP handles sexual abuse and exploitation – it does **not** deal with bullying, fake accounts or hacked accounts, which go to the platform and, if a crime has been committed, the police.

Negative Comments

They happen. Here's how to handle them:

- ☐ **Don't panic.** One negative comment doesn't define your church.
 - ☐ **Don't delete immediately** (unless it's abusive, spam or contains personal information). Deleting genuine criticism can look worse than addressing it.
 - ☐ **Respond calmly and kindly.** "Thank you for your feedback. We're sorry to hear about your experience. We'd love to chat further – please send us a direct message or call the church office on [number]."
 - ☐ **Take it offline.** Move the conversation to a private message, phone call or in-person meeting as quickly as possible.
 - ☐ **Do delete:** Spam, abusive language, anything that could cause harm, anything that breaches someone's privacy.
 - ☐ **If in doubt,** don't respond immediately. Talk to the minister or another leader first.
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Measuring Success

What NOT to Focus On

Follower counts. A church with 150 followers where 50 people regularly engage is doing far better than a church with 2,000 followers and no engagement. Don't chase numbers.

What to Focus On

- **Engagement:** Are people liking, commenting and sharing your posts? This means your content is resonating.
- **Reach:** How many people are seeing your posts? This tells you whether your content is getting beyond your existing followers.
- **Messages:** Are people contacting you through social media? This means the channel is working as a front door.

- **Real-world impact:** Has someone visited your church because they saw you on social media? Has a community member found out about an event through your page? This is the metric that actually matters.

How to Check

- **Facebook:** Go to your Page, click "Insights" (or "Professional Dashboard"). You'll see reach, engagement and follower growth.
 - **Instagram:** Tap the three lines at the top right, then "Insights". You'll see similar data.
 - **Check monthly**, not daily. Social media analytics fluctuate wildly day to day. Monthly trends are what matter.
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Monthly Maintenance Checklist

Run through this list once a month to keep things ticking over:

- ☐ **Review the last month's posts.** Which ones got the most engagement? Do more of those.
 - ☐ **Check your profile information.** Are service times still correct? Is the website link working? Is the phone number right?
 - ☐ **Update your cover photo** if it's seasonal or out of date
 - ☐ **Respond to any unanswered messages or comments**
 - ☐ **Check admin access.** Do the right people still have access? Has anyone left who should be removed? Is 2FA still on for every account, and does the recovery route still name people who are around?
 - ☐ **Plan next month's key dates.** Any special services, events or holidays to promote?
 - ☐ **Take stock of your photo library.** Do you have enough recent photos, or do you need to take more at the next event?
 - ☐ **Review your consent records.** Is your photo consent list up to date?
 - ☐ **Check in with your volunteer.** How are they finding it? Do they need support, training or a break?
 - ☐ **Celebrate a win.** Share one positive thing that happened through social media this month with the church leadership. It keeps the momentum going.
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Getting Started: Your First Week

If you're reading this and feeling overwhelmed, here's your absolute minimum to-do list for week one:

- ☐ **Pick one platform** (we recommend Facebook)
- ☐ **Create a Page** using a shared church email

- ☐ **Add a profile photo and bio** with service times and location
- ☐ **Invite church members** to like/follow the page
- ☐ **Post one thing:** A photo of your church with a warm welcome message
- ☐ **Tell the congregation** about the new page on Sunday

That's it. You're on social media. Everything else can come later.

Further Resources

- **Church of England Digital Labs:** churchofengland.org/digital - free training and resources
- **CCLI Social Media guidance:** ccli.com - advice on sharing worship content online
- **Meta Business Suite:** business.facebook.com - free tool for scheduling posts to Facebook and Instagram
- **Canva:** canva.com - free graphic design tool (excellent for church graphics)
- **Unsplash / Pexels:** Free, high-quality stock photos (no attribution required)

Sources

The account security and nation-specific claims in this guide were checked against the pages below on 5 September 2026. Product names and settings change; the date at the top of the guide says when they were last confirmed. Claims that rest on pages we could not reach at the time of checking are not listed.

- **2FA on email:** [Setting up 2-Step Verification \(2SV\)](#). Confirms the NCSC's advice to use a second step on email because an inbox can be used to reset passwords on other accounts.
- **Passkeys on Facebook:** [Introducing passkeys on Facebook for an easier sign-in](#). Confirms Meta introduced passkeys on Facebook for mobile devices in June 2025.
- **Passkeys as Google's default:** [Passkeys are now the default sign-in for Google Accounts](#). Confirms passkeys became the default option across personal Google Accounts in October 2023 and that Google describes them as phishing resistant.
- **Google 2-Step Verification:** [Turn on 2-Step Verification](#). Confirms where 2FA is switched on for a Google account, which covers YouTube.
- **Welsh language standards:** [Public organisations](#). Confirms the standards apply to public organisations and to bodies providing public services in Wales.
- **Cynnig Cymraeg:** [Businesses and charities: Cynnig Cymraeg](#). Confirms the Commissioner's voluntary recognition for businesses and charities that make a Welsh-language offer.
- **Church of Scotland congregations:** [Charity trustees, liabilities and OSCR](#), a Church of Scotland circular republished by Pathhead Parish Church. Confirms the Kirk Session as the governing body of a congregation.

- **Scottish Episcopal Church vestries:** [Vestry responsibilities: governance, accounting and charity matters](#). Confirms the Vestry's governing role.
- **Church in Wales Ministry Areas:** [Structure](#) and a published Ministry Area privacy notice, [Merthyr Tydfil Ministry Area](#). Confirm the Ministry Area as the local unit and its Council as the responsible body.
- **Church of Ireland select vestries:** [Parish governance](#). Confirms every parish has a Select Vestry.
- **Presbyterian Church in Ireland:** [Presbyterian Church in Ireland](#). Confirms the Kirk Session governs each congregation.