

DIGITAL STORYTELLING:

***HOW TO USE DIGITAL CHANNELS TO
TELL THE STORIES OF YOUR FAITH,
CHURCH AND COMMUNITY***

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- To consider ministry in an age of social media
- To consider ways to positively tell the stories of your church through digital channels
- To consider ministry in an age of digital journalism



SURVEYING THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

- The average amount people spend online every day is **6 hours and 41 minutes** (this includes being online for work)
- **84.4% of UK** population use some form of social media
- The average person will spend nearly 2 hours (approximately 116 minutes) on **social media** everyday, which translates to a total of **5 years and 4 months** spent over a lifetime.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CHURCH?



33% of church attendees first found their church online



40% of church adults streamed services from their regular church



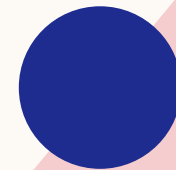
In just a single year, over \$2.2 billion in church donations were given online



Although they don't go to church on a regular basis, 17 million still visit church websites

EXERCISE – YOUR DIGITAL SOCIAL LIFE

- What social media platforms are you on? And what about your church?
- Who do you follow and why?
- What Christian digital media platforms/accounts/content do you like?
- What does this tell you about how you want to interact with social media as a clergy person and as a church?



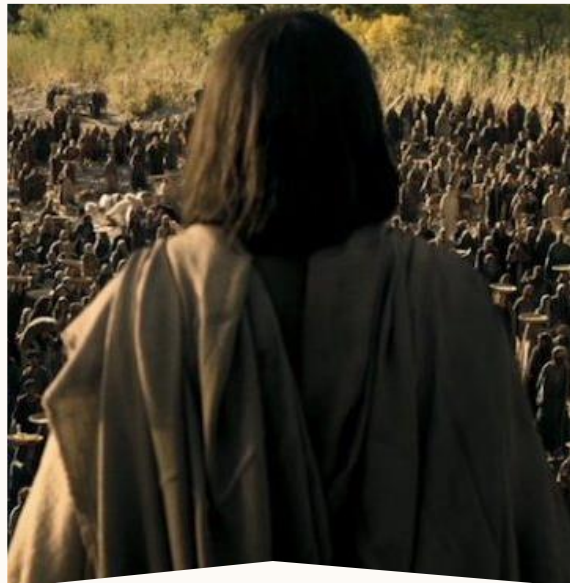
THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH



- "All over the world Christians are using digital tools in imaginative ways: from websites, to chatbots, blogspots, to online churches, podcasts, video content, apps, video games and memes, to share faith and address issues of poverty and social needs..." (*Mission Dei in a Digital Age*, Jonas Kurlberg)
- A big difference between Anglican Twitter and having an engaged digital Christian presence.
- **For current generations it is all about CONTENT and STORIES, building trust, not advertising – which is good news for us clergy!**

STORIES NOT SALES

- According to the Ipsos Mori poll, almost 70% of British people aged 16 years upwards say they distrust advertising.
- According to Gallup poll, 65% of adults in the 1970s said that they had a “great deal of trust” in organized religion, while this number has fallen to just 31% today.
- Organisations, including the church, needs to inspire, persuade and build trust.



- Jesus was a story-teller! Finding ways to connect and convey authentic (not aspirational) experiences in a way people could relate to.
- The Gospel is the best story ever told!
- Digital engagement can be an overflow of our worship & witness

More examples of wider Christian digital content...



Evangelism chatbot

Lectio Prayer app



Digital journalism

"We must recognise the unique value of digital culture, especially to younger generations, understanding it as a whole other nation and tribe with its own dialect and customs – remembering we are called to bring to every tribe and every nation."

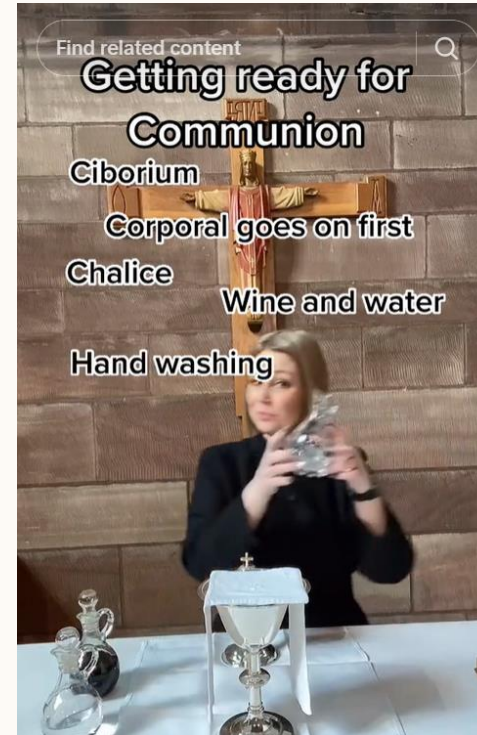
Toby Beresford, Director of Digital Strategy at The Bible Society



SOCIAL MEDIA (CHURCHES)



Christ Church Wesham on Tiktok



St Anne's Hoxton on Instagram



SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES (INDIVIDUALS)



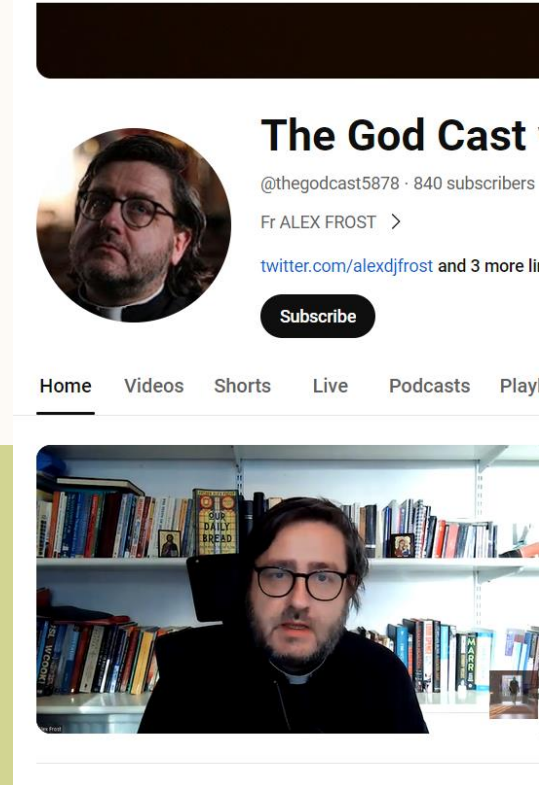
Meet the insta-vicar bringing faith to your inbox

Reverend Chris Lee is on a mission to bring God into the homes of those who are self-isolating from the coronavirus

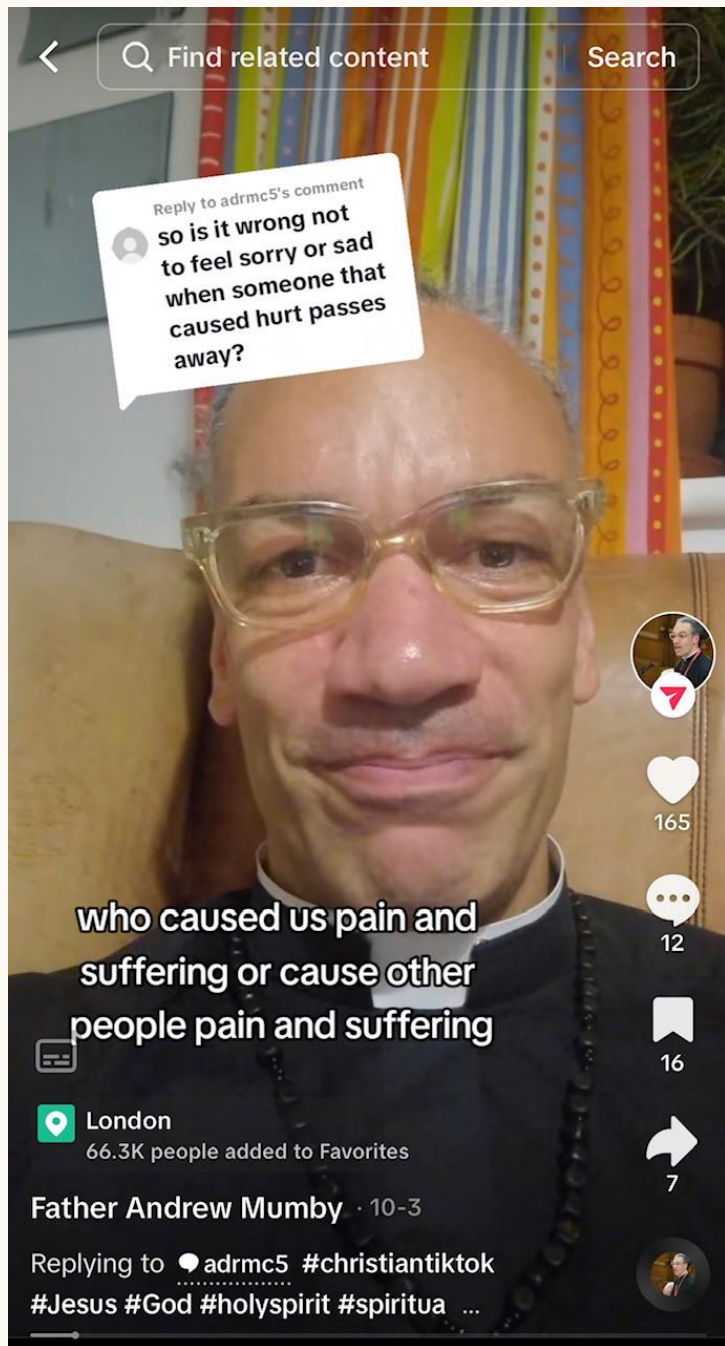
**REV CHRIS LEE
ON INSTAGRAM**



**REV DAVID SIMMS
ON TIKTOK**

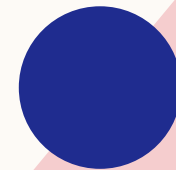


**FR ALEX FROST
PODCAST/YOUTUBE/
TWITTER**



“The communicator must adjust their message to the logic of the medium ... therefore the Church has to be attentively listening rather than blasting its message to passive media consumers of a bygone age”

(Mission Dei in a Digital Age, Jonas Kurlberg)



EXERCISE

- What's your response to these examples of Christians on social media?
- What are the principles for online conduct as a licensed clergyperson and as a parish?
- What are the steps you can take to be safe and confident online?

----- BREAKTIME -----

The Archbishops' Digital Charter and Social Media Guidelines:

Digital Charter

- **Truth** - we should hold ourselves to high ideals of checking that what we post online is fair and factual.
- **Kindness** - we are all different and that makes the world an interesting place – and at times a challenging one. Think the best of people, whether they share our views or are speaking against them and aim to be constructive in the way we engage.
- **Welcome** - in the language we use and the way we interact. It's easy for Christians to speak in another language using words that those outside the Church might not relate to.
- **Inspiration** - we are called to be witnesses of our faith and to use social media in a way that genuinely engages others.
- **Togetherness** - we are one Church and other members of this Church are our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is crucial we treat those around us in this way.
- **Safeguarding** - if you have any concerns about the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults, please contact the relevant diocesan safeguarding adviser.
- **Agree** to the Church's and Archbishops' social media guidelines.

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Set your own boundaries and your church's – what platform, what you share, how much time you spend
- Remember it's permanent
- Your digital footprint includes what you like and share
- Decide on the tone/ voice of the church's social media presence, being aware of unintentionally blending personal and professional voices
- Use controls and privacy settings – blocking, turn off replies/comments
- Be visible – identify who you are, especially when commenting on controversial issues or when they relate to Christian life. Own it!
- Be always aware of safeguarding – includes not speaking to people in private, ensuring all officers know who safeguarding officer is & when to contact them
- Be careful of images – ensure you have permissions, especially of under 18s
- If your parish officers share on social media accounts, it is the PCC who is ultimately responsible. Make sure your PCC has viewed a policy and understood this point.
- Do not cite or reference individuals without their approval. If you are telling a story about a third party, ask yourself, 'is this my story to tell?'
- Rather than adopting binary positions, think about how the church is uniquely positioned to add value, to contribute and serve in the specific situation.

St Mary's London

**life
course
podcast**



St Aldate's Oxford

UNSCRIPTED

WITH SIMON PONSONBY

All Saints Fulham



SHAPING FAITH

God, life & the Church of England



OTHER WAYS TO SHARE YOUR CHURCH STORIES

Remember to think beyond advertising to CONTENT. What can you share in addition to key info like service times/address.

WEBSITE

Values / Team / News page / Blog / Sermon Text - Audio or Video / Testimonies / Prayer Requests / History / Eco-Church / Donate / Livestream

NEWSLETTER

HTML software to enable GDPR compliance better design & use of images / include Event Write-ups linking to News page / Devotional/Theological content / Book Recommendations / Prayers / Photos of your community

PODCAST

Broadcast Sunday talks, but also courses/Alpha and conversation

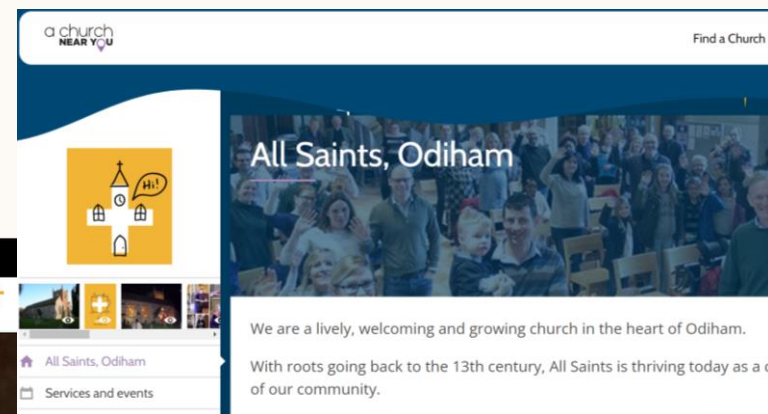
'THE HOLY TRINITY' OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Social media



REPURPOSE CONTENT
Link your social media to a website and social media with consistent simple messaging...

Website



You are welcome here

Come and discover there is more to life with our network of Churches.
We are more than just a Church - we are a family within a community and there's a place here for you.

SUNDAY SERVICES

We look forward to welcoming you to worship with us on Sunday! All our churches are now open for worship and you can find the details on our

Newsletter



All Saints Odiham Church Fete

Our traditional Church Fete is an event for the whole village. It is traditionally held on the second Saturday in July, but this year it was moved to Saturday 11th September because of the restrictions. Next year the Fete will be on Saturday 10th September 2022. Do put the date in your diaries!

Mar 29, 2021

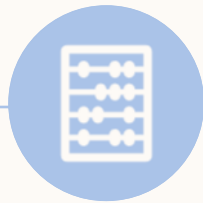


Holiday Club at Upton Grey

We held very successful Holiday Clubs in August 2018 and August 2019. Sadly we were unable to run a Club in 2020 because of COVID, but we had a great time at our Holiday Club in 2021.

Mar 29, 2021

TOP TIPS FOR POSITIVE DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



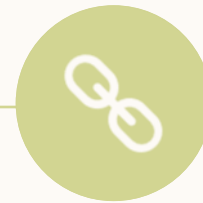
CREATE CONTENT & TELL STORIES

- Use blog posts, video, podcasts to tell stories – event write ups, testimonies, sermons.
- Create devotional graphics in Canva
- Share lots of authentic photos of your community



STAND UP FOR A CAUSE

- Publicly get behind a charity or good cause (local or international) and share their content online, talk about your fundraising activity, pray for them



ENGAGE WITH CIVIC LIFE

- Share content of local council, police, scouts/guides – from litter picking, to missing people, to community events
- Publicly pray for your local community and civic society

MORE TOP TIPS



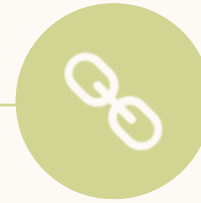
INFORM

- Advertise service times but also other interesting content about church seasons/history/practice
- 70/30 content/advertising rule
- Creative campaigns during Church seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter)



ENGAGE WITH BIG ISSUES

- Engage constructively with big social and political issues, thinking about the unique role the church can play as prophetic, as peacemaker, and always in line with social media guidelines.



USE HUMOUR & QUESTIONS

- Don't be afraid to have fun, use funny memes or lighthearted polls, as long as they aren't offensive
- Ask open questions to create dialogue
- Avoid Church-Speak!



ENGAGING WITH THE DIGITAL JOURNALISM

- An opportunity for positive public engagement – not something to be scared about, although carefully managed.
- Decline in media standards mirrors the decline in print media – online stories, littered with adverts, with ‘clickbait’ headlines. Younger journalists are less religiously literate.
- Local papers are desperate for CONTENT – fewer local journalists available to be on site to get the story so they will simply print press releases.
- Don’t forget opportunities with local radio (especially Sunday/faith programme) and even broadcast – include these editors in your press release.
- Speak to your diocesan comms team and prepare your key messages!

Southampton churchgoers repair broken organ with £30k repair bill

28th December 2022



By Timothy Edgley
Senior Reporter

Share



15 Comments

Church to finish Sunday service early so parishioners can watch World Cup final

St Luke's in Bournemouth among improvised venues across the country preparing to host fans keen to cheer on Lionesses

By Blathnaid Corless
16 August 2023 · 8:54pm



TIPS FOR SHARING PRESS RELEASES

1. Find the hook - is there anything "new" in my story? Does it link to a trend?
2. Make the headline count
3. Use data and do the journalist's research for them
4. Include 2 good quotes – for insight not just information. Not just “It was fantastic!”
5. Be concise – 400 words
6. Know your audience – especially if reaching the secular press
7. Include a ‘Notes to Editors’ with background information and contact details
8. Include 1 or 2 high-res photos
9. Send to local papers or nationals if a great story
10. Share on socials and tag local journalists



EXERCISE

“DO NOT TRY AND CALL THEM BACK TO WHERE THEY WERE, OR TO WHERE YOU ARE, AS BEAUTIFUL AS THAT PLACE MAY SEEM TO YOU.

RATHER, GO TO A PLACE WHERE NEITHER YOU OR THEY HAVE BEEN BEFORE. ”

(VINCENT DONOVAN, WRITING ON MISSION IN ‘CHRISTIANITY REDISCOVERED’)

What is your undiscovered territory and what one step could you take on the adventure?



THANK YOU

Any questions?

Contact me: Jemima.lewis@winchester.anglican.org