

"Show Don't Tell" - Taking Pictures for Social Media and Church Websites

Why does your church need a church website in 2022?

1. We are living in the biggest communication shift in the last 500 years.
 - The Gutenberg printing press was created in 1452 by Johannes Gutenberg and was the single most important factor in the protestant reformation.
 - We must leverage internet tools and social media platforms to spread the Gospel.
 - COVID taught us that digital ministry is possible and necessary for churches of all sizes.
2. Discovery happens online
 - 97% of consumers search for local organizations online¹
 - 46% of all searches on Google are local²
 - 89% of surveyed participants admitted to searching for a local business on their smartphone once a week or more with 58% searching at least daily³
3. First impressions happen only once
 - How people perceive your church's website is how many will perceive your entire church as a whole.

Biblical Support for having a strong web presence.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling **among us**. - John 1:14

- God with us, Emmanuel. Jesus is the capital W word. God's communication in human flesh.
- The word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood - The Message
- The incarnation compels us as Christ followers to **dwel among people** and inhabit every space for Christ and his Kingdom - even digital spaces.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." - Acts 1:8

- to be a witness means to testify of what you have seen and heard ...
- We should want to share about how Jesus has changed our lives and what better way to do that than online using your church website or social media.

- Your church website has the potential to tell the story of the Gospel and be a witness to Jesus.
- Your church website is how you let the people who live in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria know you exist.

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. ¹⁷ He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and **he spoke daily in the public square** to all who happened to be there. - Acts 17:16-33, NLT

- The internet is the new public square where ideas are shared. (ie. social media).
- How is your church adding to the conversation? ;
- Your church website is one of your best evangelists, working 24/7 to communicate the story of Jesus to your community.

Every single day people in your community are searching for a church. But instead of checking out your service, they're first checking out your website.

- Your church's website is the **frontline** for your entire ministry. - Brady Shearer, Pro Church Tools
- The church website has become the new front lobby of your ministry. - Thomas Rainer, Church Answers

Links:

<https://www.nucleus.church/blog/every-church-needs-a-website/>

<https://www.nucleus.church/blog/church-website-design/>

What are the essential photos needed for every church website?

Church Website Photography Checklist (Adapted from Clearpath).

Pre + Post Service:

- Greeters + ushers in action
- People shaking hands + hugging
- People getting coffee + snacks
- People arriving in parking lot

The Worship Service

- Worship team (distance + close-up)
- Preacher (distance + close-up)

- Announcements + scripture reader(s)
- People sitting + standing
- Greeting time
- People filling out connection cards
- Baptism + communion + offering

Artistic Shots:

- Attractive facility shots
- Landscaping / Church Grounds
- Neighborhood
- Staff working together

Ministry Shots:

- Children + Nursery*
- Students
- Small Groups
- Women's + Men's Ministry
- Outreach- Trips (mission + youth + retreat)
- Any other ministry not listed

Leadership Shots:

- Updated Staff Photos (Headshots)
- Leadership Meeting
- Leadership in Action

Why Photos?

"A simple photo of your church can provide more information to [a visitor](#) than paragraphs of text." - Brady Shearer

- Etsy is the largest online market for handmade items in the world – millions of shoppers use Etsy every single day
- According to their research, the most important factor in deciding to buy a product on Etsy is product photos (not item cost, shipping cost, or product reviews)

Paying a seasoned photographer to come to your church and capture professional photos is one of the best ways to spend your church's money. - Brady Shearer

What makes a good quality, effective photo?

The absolute best church photos you can take and add to your church website design are photos of people smiling. - Brady Shearer

- The most important church pictures you can capture are photos of **real people in your church smiling and laughing**
- University of Bradford researchers found initial trust was boosted on websites with photos of human faces
- University College London found adding happy photos of people to websites with low-trust increased perceived trustworthiness
- Instagram photos with human faces are 38% more likely to receive likes than pictures with no faces
- Big photos of smiling customers work. The same principle applies to your church.

Content.

Technology.

- gear used, lenses, etc.

Skill

How can I take great pictures with a basic smart phone?

Step #1: Gain access to a phone with a camera that has portrait mode

Gimme that blurred out background

Known in the photography world as “bokeh”, a shallow depth of field is one of the hallmarks of professional photography – once reserved only for higher quality cameras with capable lenses. Not anymore.

Step #2: Find the best light at your church and start shooting your photos

Lighting is the single biggest contributing factor to the overall look of your photos. Knowing this, finding the best available light is key. Here are a few lighting scenarios to look for that will help produce great-looking images:

- Creative stage/auditorium lighting
- Natural light from larger windows
- Light through stained glass windows
- Outdoor light at golden hour (use an app like [Rizon](#) to learn the precise time of day golden hour occurs in your location)

Step #3: Edit your photos with a free app

The final step before your photos are ready to use is the editing process.

Using a free mobile app like VSCO, you can add creative looks to your photos to give them a bit more personality or vibrancy.

Below you'll see side-by-side comparisons of what a number of my church pictures looked like originally versus how they looked after applying coloring in VSCO.

Link:

<https://www.nucleus.church/blog/church-website-design/>

How can I get "action" photos of the worship team, congregation, and community events without interfering with what is going on?

"Action" photos of the worship team are very important for your website and social media presence.

- Getting action photos can be tricky because you don't want to be distracting or taking away from what the Lord is doing in the room.

Here are three steps to getting action photos of the worship team without interfering with what's going on.

1. **Communicate** with your leadership team about your plan to take photos on a given Sunday.
 - make an announcement at the start of service...
 - communicate on your weekly newsletter
 - Let people know so that they can come prepared.
2. **Be discreet.** Wear clothes that blend in with the background (black, grays, neutrals). Nothing flashy, distracting, or items that make a lot of noise.
3. **Worship** while you take photos. Raise your hands. Pause for a moment and worship while you work to capture what God is doing in the room.

Are there specific tips for getting people to look good in posed photos?

1. Ask people in the lobby of your church if they would like to pose for a photo.
Remind them to smile!

2. Position them with good lighting.
3. Frame them properly.
 1. tall people in the back
 2. close together (Not separate)
 3. rule of 3rds VS centered

How can I use photos to effectively communicate who we are as a church?

How do I effectively choose stock photos?

You don't want to be deceptive. But you do want to be authentic.

A good rule of thumb is to only use stock photos that do not include people's faces.

Example.

<https://northcountryalliance.com>

1. Choose stock photos that reflect the culture of your church.
2. Choose stock photos that match what your church looks like.
3. Choose stock photos that are creative and zoomed in. (ie. Bibles, crosses, chairs, etc).
4. Choose stock photos that do not include people's faces.

Brady Shearer's Stock Photo Replacement Creative Shot List

- Smiling/laughing photos of people (by far most important/useful)
- Staff headshots
- Groups of people talking/hanging out together
- Prayer hands
- Hands lifted in worship
- Office items like keyboards, phones, calendars, computer monitors, etc.
- Kids toys
- Exterior building shots
- Bibles
- Empty seats
- Full Seats
- Crosses
- Instruments being played
- Pastor speaking from stage
- Abstract photos with creative lighting

