A picture tells a thousand words and research shows social media posts with images are seen by more people than those without, so it's important that every new update on your Facebook page or Twitter account has an image with it. But it can be hard sometimes to find suitable images. Below are just a few suggestions of how to increase your image library:

Hold a photography competition

This is a great way to get your whole church involved. Hold a competition with different themes and age categories to ensure all the congregation are encouraged to get involved. Maybe you could ask a local photography club to come and judge the entries? Once it's over, you'll have a new collection of church photos to use.

Find your church's amateur photographers

With top digital cameras falling in price, photography has become a popular hobby. Is there anyone in your church that likes to take photos? Why not get them involved? It also might be something that the young people in the church could be tasked with doing.

Hire a photographer

While this will cost money, the results are worth it as the photos will be of a high quality. Photography students may be a little bit cheaper to book and may appreciate the chance to add to their portfolio. Can you get in touch with a nearby college or university?

Use public domain images

There are plenty of websites that offer images that can be used without any credit or cost. Read our photography tips blog to see some of the websites we suggest to use.

Set up a hashtag or email address

Another way to get the whole church involved is to create avenues to encourage all the church to be taking photos and sending them your way, especially if there are events happening at the church that you're unable to attend. Establish a process for these images to be sent to you, such as a dedicated email address or a hashtag on social media.

Things to remember when collecting images:

- Don't forget about permissions of people in the photos, especially if there are under 18's or vulnerable adults. Keep an eye out for the consent form template available for churches soon.

- It's important to credit any photos with the name of the photographer wherever requested.

- Avoid using Google image search, even when you've filtered the results to show images marked as available for reuse. You don't know where these images have come from and could be fined if the image was labelled for reuse by mistake.

- If you hire a photographer, make sure you are clear about what kind of things you want images of and how you want them to work during a service. (Where can they stand? Can they move around?)

- Collecting images is a constant process as it's important not to use outdated images.

- While stock photography can be useful when you don't have anything else to use, authentic photos of people in your church will always be more engaging.

- Think about how you are going to store these collected photos. Who else needs access to them? Are the folders and images clearly labelled and could someone else take over managing of the library easily?

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Source URL: *https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/digital-labs/blogs/building-your-photography-library*