

Stuck for content but want to keep your church's social media up to date? There may be a whole bank of content, tailored to your church, ready and available for you to use. Read on to find out how to make the most of user-generated content.

If you see a photo or video that you wish to upload from your account, it is essential to get permission from the person or organisation who posted originally. This is not the same as retweeting on Twitter or sharing a post on Facebook, which doesn't usually require approval.

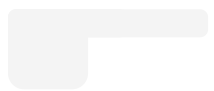
Commenting or sending a direct message to gain consent ensures that you won't be asked to remove a post and helps you to engage with your church's community.

Location

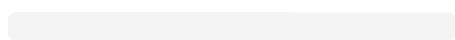
Search by location on Instagram to find your church or local area. Visitors and regular members of your congregation may have posted images of your church throughout the year or at special events, such as weddings, tagging the location of your church. Tagging locations is also possible on Facebook and Twitter, so see what you can find across all platforms.

Tip: On Instagram, search for a location by pressing the magnifying glass, and then select 'places'. You can search your current location, or type one in.

Here, we have shared a photo from another account and tagged the location as York Minster.



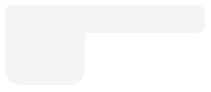
[View this post on Instagram](#)



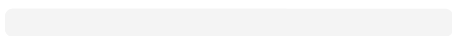
Hashtag

Searching by hashtag or keyword on Twitter or Instagram can reveal hoards of content! If social media users have been unable to find your handle (@HolyTrinity for example), they may have used a hashtag instead. Try a few variations of your church's name, for example, #HolyTrinity #HolyTrinityChurch #HolyTrinityWestbury etc.

Tip: Use the search function on Instagram and Twitter to search a hashtag. On Instagram, you can 'follow' a hashtag once you've searched for it, and the posts using this hashtag will appear in your feed.



[View this post on Instagram](#)



Shared by The Church of England (@thechurchof

Tagged

When users tag your church in posts and photos, make sure to engage and respond, and remember to ask if you can use and credit their material on your own channels. Tagging accounts is popular, as it is a guaranteed way of ensuring that your content reaches a wider audience, so this method of finding user-generated content is likely to be successful. All social media platforms have the ability to tag other users, so search across all the platforms that your church uses.

Tip: Find content that you've been tagged in by looking in your notifications.

Here, the @churchofengland was tagged in a tweet on twitter, which we shared by retweeting.

Three easy ways to share content

1. On Instagram, use an app called 'Repost' to save and reshare photos from other users. Alternatively, screenshot the post and crop the image to remove details around the original photo. Don't forget that it is essential to ask permission, and credit the account that it originated from.
2. On Instagram, you can share posts in your feed straight to your Instagram stories by clicking the share button found under each post.
3. On Twitter use the 'Retweet' function found underneath every tweet, and on Facebook click 'share' on posts from pages. Adding your own comment to a shared post is good practise as it personalises the post for your audience, and they are more likely to pay attention to it.

Found too much user-generated content to use in one go? Save it for later by tapping the right-hand-side save ribbon underneath each Instagram photo, clicking the three dots then 'save' on each Facebook post, and by liking Twitter posts then visiting your 'liked tweets' section.

Remember that the content you find and obtain permission for can be repurposed for all social media channels, so don't feel limited to the original platform that the material was posted to.

How are you using social media to reach your community? We'd love to hear from you, tweet us at @churchofengland and tag us in your posts on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter.

Iso Neville

Social Media Officer

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