

Are hashtags useful for a church on social media? Perhaps you've asked this question and may have already searched the internet for an answer.

The answer is not always clear, especially when the advice is focused on business users and influencers. In this blog, we look at what hashtags are and how a church can use them effectively.



What are hashtags?

Hashtags are used on social media to group topics and conversations, and are searchable, enabling users to find a post that has used the hashtag, without following the account. Hashtags should be included in the caption of a post using the # symbol followed by a word or short phrase.

Here, the Church of England has used the hashtag #DayOfReflection in a post on Twitter to raise awareness of an upcoming day.



The Church of England  @ch... · 20h ...

"During this last year so many people have been unable to find comfort in their grief."

- @Sandierah9

We have published new research on the impact of the pandemic, ahead of the National [#DayOfReflection](#), available on our website. 



Majority of mourners during pandemic unable to say goodbye properly | The...
[churchofengland.org](https://www.churchofengland.org)

What do you need to know about hashtags?

- Any word or phrase can become a hashtag, just use the **#** symbol. For example, **#ChurchOnline**, **#Church** and **#ChurchAtHome** are all popular hashtags
- The hashtag needs to be written in the caption of the post
- They are widely used on **Instagram** and **Twitter**, however typically not used on Facebook
- Posts with hashtags typically gain **392% more comments** than those without (Agorapulse)
- Hashtags make it easier for others to find your content, even if they don't follow you

Hashtags help you find other content on a topic using the same hashtag

- Try it for yourself. Go to the Twitter or Instagram app, press the **magnifying glass** and use the search tool to look up a word. You'll discover posts from accounts you've never seen before.

Are hashtags helpful to churches?

Yes, as mentioned above, posts that use hashtags typically receive **70% more likes and 392% more comments** than posts without (Agorapulse).

This could enable a church to reach significantly more people using social media than if they didn't use any.

How to use hashtags strategically

Before we go on, it's important to say that hashtags are not a golden ticket - they won't guarantee large numbers of followers - but they will enable more people to **see** your posts. After that, it's up to your social media content to welcome, inspire and invite.

So, let's go on to talk about strategy. As a church, there are three main groups of hashtags that you could use on every post.

These are:

1. Location-based hashtags

These can be used with every post. Use the name of your town, village, borough, county and neighbouring areas too.

For example: #Norwich, #Norfolk, #NorfolkBroads and #NorfolkUK.

Alongside these, use local hashtags which are commonly used in the area.

By searching #Norfolk on Instagram, we discovered: #NorfolkLife, #NorfolkLiving and #NorwichUniversity which may help the post be seen by Norfolk residents and University students.

2. Topic-based hashtags

Next, choose hashtags that are relevant to the topic. For example, a post about an online service could include the hashtags #ChurchOnline, #SundayService or #ChurchAtHome.

3. Trending (popular) hashtags

Each day a hashtag may become trending (popular) as a large volume of posts use it. It's not possible to predict what these will be as they are often in response to current events, culture or news. For example, during BBC Question Time the hashtag #BBCQT will often trend on Twitter as many people share their views using the hashtag.

Frequently, days of the week become trending hashtags, such as #MondayMotivation #TuesdayTips #WednesdayWisdom #ThursdayThoughts #FridayFeeling #SaturdayVibes and #SundayFunday. These could inspire your social media throughout the week.

Take a look at what's trending:

- From the Twitter app, press the **magnifying glass** then **Trending**. Search for a topic or take a look at what is currently trending in the UK or around the world.
- From the Instagram app, press the **magnifying glass**, then tags and type in a keyword relating to your topic of interest. Instagram will suggest popular hashtags and show the number of posts currently using this hashtag.

When writing your hashtags, choose a mix from each of these groups. Create a note on your phone with relevant hashtags and copy and paste from here when writing your post.

Can I make a custom hashtag?

Any word can become a hashtag, just use the # before writing the word or phrase. It can be a fun way to engage your community in a particular project or discussion. For example, create a hashtag around a sermon series and invite your community to share their thoughts or questions using the hashtag. All the posts using the hashtag will be seen by searching the word or phrase on social media, making it easy to reply, comment and share the discussion. During Lent, the Church of England used the campaign hashtag [#LiveLent](#). Search through the posts engaging with the campaign [here](#).

Learn more about how to use hashtags on Twitter and Instagram

Instagram

Best practice for using hashtags on Instagram

- Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags in each post, but it's more important to choose relevant hashtags than use 30 for the sake of it. Choose a mix of location-based, topical and trending hashtags
- Hashtags can be used on posts, IGTV, Stories and Reels. However, on Stories and Reels you can only add one hashtag per post using the hashtag sticker
- Find the best hashtags for you by pressing the **magnifying glass** on the app home screen, then choose **tags** and type in the word you'd like to search. Instagram will make suggestions based on this.

ChurchAtHome



Cancel

Top

Accounts

Tags

Places

#

#churchathome

70.9k posts

#

#churchathometoday

420 posts

#

#churchathome ❤️

42 posts

#

#churchathome2020

14 posts

#

#churchathomeifc

6 posts

#

#churchathomekids

40 posts

#

#churchathomenz

39 posts

#

#churchathomethismorning

14 posts

#

#churchathomelpc

30 posts

When searching hashtags, the number listed underneath each shows how many posts are using it. If the hashtag has been used in the millions, your post may be less visible (think needle in a haystack). Use hashtags that have been used 100,000s or 1000s so that it's easier to stand out

- Hashtags should be written at the end of a caption so that the caption is easy to read, especially for those using screen readers
- Capitalise the first letter of each word in a hashtag to increase accessibility for those using screen readers. For example, #ChurchAtHome rather than #churchathome
- Don't use the same hashtags with every post. Rather, mix them up depending on the topic of your post
- Create a note on your phone with your frequently used hashtags so that you can copy and paste into the caption.



THECHURCHOFENGLAND

Posts



Liked by isoneville and **331 others**

thechurchofengland Join us in sharing today's Lenten prayer. 🙏 Amen.

A plain text and audio version of today's prayer is available via the link in our bio, @TheChurchOfEngland.

#LiveLent #PrayerIsTheKey #PrayerPower
#PrayingThroughTheProcess #PowerOfPrayer #PrayedUp
#PrayerChangesThings #PrayerWarrior #PrayerRequest
#PrayerForToday #PrayerChangesEverything
#PrayThroughTheProcess #PrayFor #PrayingTime

Best practice for using hashtags on Twitter

- Three hashtags are considered a good number to use without cluttering up the tweet
- Write the hashtags at the end of the tweet to improve readability
- Search for hashtags to use by pressing the **magnifying glass** on the app home screen, then use the search bar at the top to type in the word you'd like to search
- Take a look at what's trending by pressing the **magnifying glass**, then **trending**
- Capitalise the first letter of each word in a hashtag to increase accessibility for those using screen readers. For example, #ChurchAtHome rather than #churchathome
- Don't use the same hashtags with every post. Rather, mix them up depending on the topic of your post
- Create a note on your phone with your frequently used hashtags so that you can copy and paste into the caption.

We hope this guide will help you get to grips with hashtags in 2021 and how they can be used as a strategic tool to reach out and engage with your community.

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Church Digital Champion

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