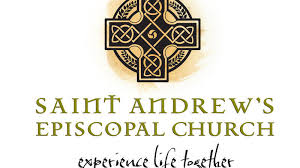
Determining the Best Social Media Platforms to Help Engage with and Build our Membership among Millennials and Generation Z

**Prepared for: Ms. Melissa Rigler & The Vestry of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church**

**Prepared by: Richard Burck**

**February 13, 2020**

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# Abstract

On January 30, the vestry approved my proposal to research social media usage by Millennials and Generation Z, and how churches effectively market themselves using social media. Because my research would be conducted almost entirely online, I decided to obtain my statistical data from information-literate researchers and organizations to ensure their credibility. My findings indicated that Facebook leads with the most daily visits among U.S. adults followed by Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. Moreover, Facebook maintains the largest percentage of active users among Millennials, followed by Snapchat and Instagram. While Facebook leads with the most daily visits among all U.S. adults, Instagram outranks other social media platforms in daily visits by Generation Z users. Moreover, over half of Christian Millennials and almost one third of all Millennials watch faith and spirituality videos online. In addition, I reviewed the social media sites of local churches with more Millennial and Generation Z Members to understand how they used social media. To confirm the Millennial and Generation Z populations of these churches, I contacted their secretaries and inquired about their demographics. Based on my findings, I recommend forming a social media ministry team with a focus on Facebook and Instagram and posting about upcoming and past events, pictures and videos of worship services at St. Andrew's , and testimonials from current Millennial and Generation Z members. To build a successful social media ministry team with no or minimal expenses, I recommend recruiting our members and local college students for an unpaid internship or volunteer opportunity.

# Executive Summary

A recent survey of the member population at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church revealed that over eighty percent of members are forty years old and older. The vestry discussed the survey at the meeting on January 9, 2020 and concluded that the church must grow its membership among Millennials and Generation Z to ensure its future. In order to reach more of the local Millennial and Generation Z population, Outreach Director Melissa Rigler recommended developing a strategy to use social media to engage more with the local community and market the church online. Ms. Rigler and the vestry asked me to research social media usage by Millennials and Generation Z to determine whether St. Andrew's should focus on using Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

To conduct online research that yielded accurate and trustworthy findings, I restricted my sources to information-literate researchers and research organizations. In addition, I reviewed the social media sites of local churches with more Millennial and Generation Z members to understand how they used social media. I also contacted the secretaries of these local churches to verify the size of their Millennial and Generation Z populations.

I found that Facebook leads with the most daily visits among U.S. adults followed by Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. Moreover, Facebook maintains the largest percentage of active users among Millennials, followed by Snapchat and Instagram. While Facebook leads with the most daily visits among all U.S. adults, Instagram outranks other social media platforms in daily visits among Generation Z users. I also learned that over half of Christian Millennials and almost one third of all Millennials watch faith and spirituality videos online. While viewing the social media pages of other churches with larger Millennial and Generation Z populations, I learned that they use Facebook and Instagram to share about their upcoming and past events, photos and videos of their worship services, and member testimonials.

I recommend forming a social media ministry team with a focus on Facebook and Instagram and posting about upcoming and past events, pictures and videos of worship services at St. Andrew's , and testimonials from current Millennial and Generation Z members. To build a successful social media ministry team with no or minimal expenses, I recommend recruiting our members and local college students for an unpaid internship or volunteer opportunity.

# Introduction

To determine the best strategy for engaging with and growing our membership among Millennials and Generation Z, Outreach Director and the vestry asked me to research social media usage by Millennials and Generation Z and recommend whether St. Andrew’s should focus on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

A recent survey of the member population at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church revealed that over eighty percent of members are forty years old and older. The vestry discussed the survey at the meeting on January 9, 2020 and concluded that the church must grow its membership among Millennials and Generation Z to ensure its future.

Therefore, the vestry and Ms. Rigler asked me to conduct research and determine whether St. Andrew’s should focus on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram for its social media strategy, and perform the following tasks:

* Compile data on and analyses of Millennial and Generation Z social media use, comparing which platforms they use most.
* Review social media pages of local churches with larger Millennial and Generation Z populations
* Make recommendations based on my findings.

I found that Facebook leads with the most daily visits among U.S. adults followed by Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. Moreover, Facebook maintains the largest percentage of active users among Millennials, followed by Snapchat and Instagram. While Facebook leads with the most daily visits among all U.S. adults, Instagram outranks other social media platforms in daily visits among Generation Z users. I also learned that over half of Christian Millennials and almost one third of all Millennials watch faith and spirituality videos online. While viewing the social media pages of other churches with larger Millennial and Generation Z populations, I learned that they use Facebook and Instagram to share about their upcoming and past events, photos and videos of their worship services, and member testimonials.

I recommend forming a social media ministry team with a focus on Facebook and Instagram and posting about upcoming and past events, pictures and videos of worship services at St. Andrew's , and testimonials from current Millennial and Generation Z members. To build a successful social media ministry team with no or minimal expenses, I recommend recruiting our members and local college students for an unpaid internship or volunteer opportunity.

In the following sections, I provide additional details about my research methods, the results I obtained, and my recommendations.

# Research Methods

To perform my research and make the recommendations requested by Ms. Rigler and the vestry, I performed the following tasks:

1. Establish standards to ensure the credibility of consulted sources
2. Compile data on the use of social media by Millennials and Generation Z
3. Review social media pages of local churches with larger Millennial and Generation Z populations
4. Contact churches to confirm Millennial and Generation Z demographic
5. Analyze data and prepare recommendation report

## **Task 1: Establish standards to ensure the credibility of consulted sources**

To ensure that accuracy of this report’s findings and ultimately the success of the church’s social media marketing strategy, I decided to limit my sources to those produced by information-literate researchers and research organizations. I allowed myself to consult business and marketing media sites with articles written by authors with relevant research and social media expertise. In addition to gathering well-researched data and analyses on the use of social media, I also decided to review the social media pages of local churches with more Millennial and Generation Z members to learn how those churches made social media work for them.

## **Task 2: Compile data on Millennial and Generation Z use of social media**

After setting standards for the sources I would consult, I proceeded to browse the internet for reputable sources on which social media platforms were most popular among Millennials and Generation Z. I found sources from researchers, research organizations and business media on which sites each generation used daily, were most active, and used at all. I then compiled and compared the data.

## **Task 3: Review social media pages of local churches with larger Millennial and Generation Z populations**

I accessed the social media pages of local churches with larger Millennial and Generation Z populations and reviewed the kinds of content they posted on their pages. I compared each church’s social media content to try and determine how their social media helped them engage well with Millennials and Generation Z.

## **Task 4: Contact churches to confirm Millennial and Generation Z demographic**

By visiting the social media pages of local churches, I felt that I could made reasonable guesses about whether each church had a larger percentage of MIllennial and Generation Z members than St. Andrew’s, I contacted some of these churches by phone and email to verify the size of their Millennial and Generation Z populations.

## **Task 5: Analyze data and prepare recommendation report**

After compiling all of my data, I analyzed my findings and prepared this recommendation report.

# Results

According to data gathered by Pew Research Center, 91% of 18- to 29-year-old Americans are YouTube users, while 79% of the demographic uses Facebook and 67% use Instagram. The same study reports that 87% of 30- to 49-year-old Americans use Youtube, while 79% use Facebook and 47% used Instagram (Anderson and Perrin, 2019). An article by Business Insider reports between 85% and 89% of Millennials actively use Facebook, and places Snapchat in second place and Instagram in third place with 54% among active Millennial users (Fuscaldo, 2019). Moreover, esearch by the Barna Group shows that 54% of Christian Millennials and 31% of all Millennials watch spiritual videos online (2019). Generation Z, however, 65% reports using Instagram daily, 62% reports using Youtube, 51% reports using Snapchat, and 34% reports Facebook on a daily basis (Green, 2019). These findings lead me to conclude that Facebook and Instagram would be the best sites for reaching our target demographic

When I viewed the Facebook and Instagram pages of Vantage Point Church, Eastside Christian Church, and St. Juliana Falconieri Catholic Church, I made a reasonable guess that their Millenial and Generation Z populations were larger than those of St. Andrew;s Episocpal Church. I was able to confirm this through phone calls and emails with their church secretaries. Upon reviewing the social media pages of these churches, I noticed that they post content related to past and upcoming events, member testimonials, and worship services. .

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**Recommendations**

I recommend forming a social media ministry team with a focus on Instagram and Facebook. The team should consist of experienced Facebook and Instagram users proficient in the use of hashtags and knowledgeable about how to use the sites to effectively market and grow organizations among target demographics.

To build an effective social media team, I recommend recruiting interested members of our church. Members with social media expertise would be ideal since they are already familiar with the mission, vision, values, and overall character of St. Andrew’s. I also recommend reaching out to marketing students at local colleges, such as Fullerton Community College and California State University, Fullerton to develop an unpaid internship opportunity for students. While current church members know our church better, outside students may know the most current research findings on effective marketing with social media and offer an outside perspective of who we are. (And we might even acquire new members among the interns. If efforts fail to recruit our own members and local college students, I recommend posting unpaid internship or volunteer opportunities on recruitment sites such as indeed.com or idealist.org.

# Schedule & Cost

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Research Task** | **Schedule** | **Cost** |
| Establish standards to ensure the credibility of consulted sources | January 30, 2020 | $0 |
| Compile data on Millennial and Generation Z use of Social Media | January 30, 2020-February 7, 2020 | $0 |
| Review social media pages of local churches | $0 |
| Contact churches to confirm demographics | $0 |
| Analyze data and prepare recommendation report | February 8, 2020-February 13, 2020 | $0 |

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