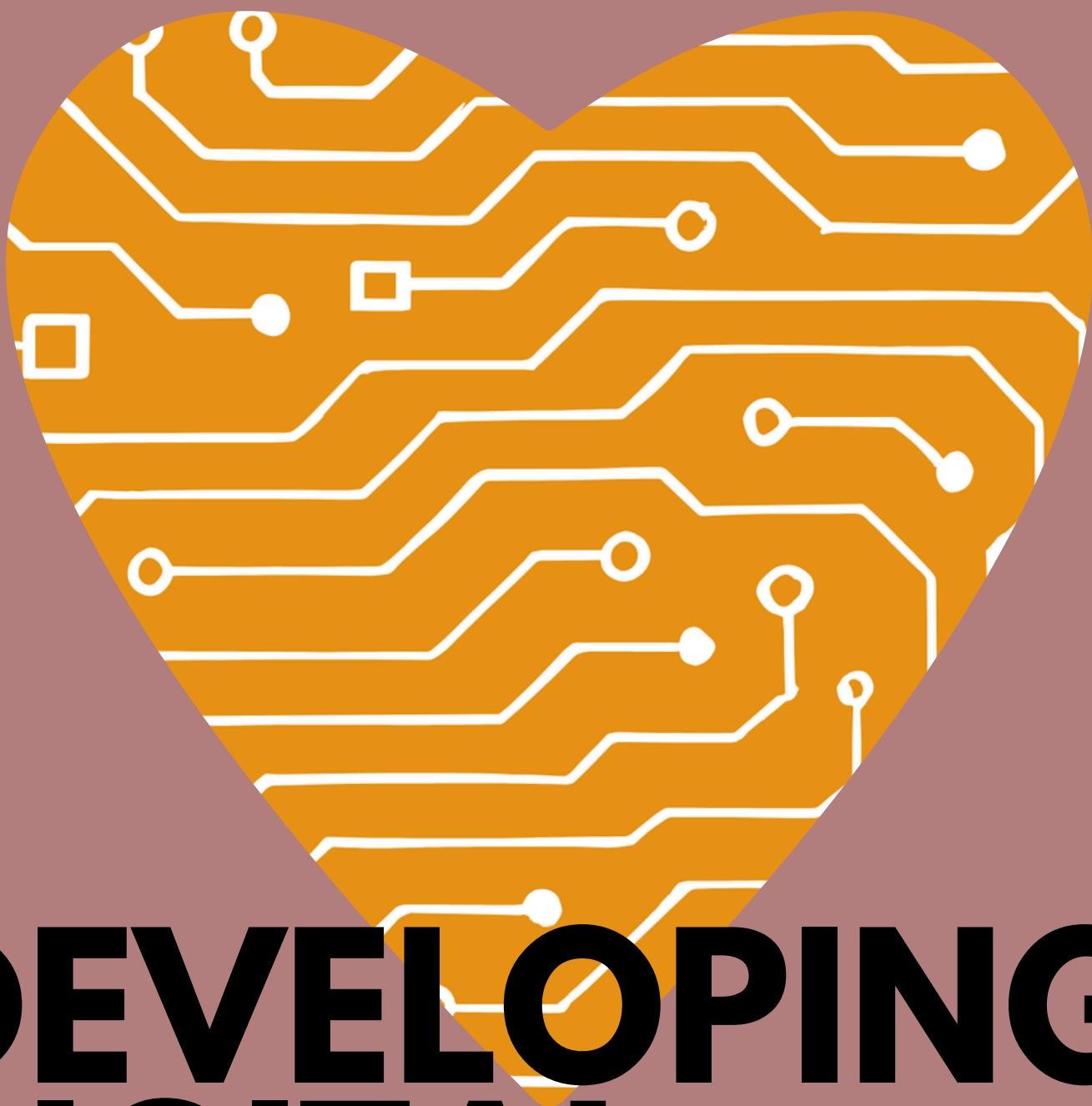




The Church of Scotland

3



# DEVELOPING DIGITAL MINISTRY

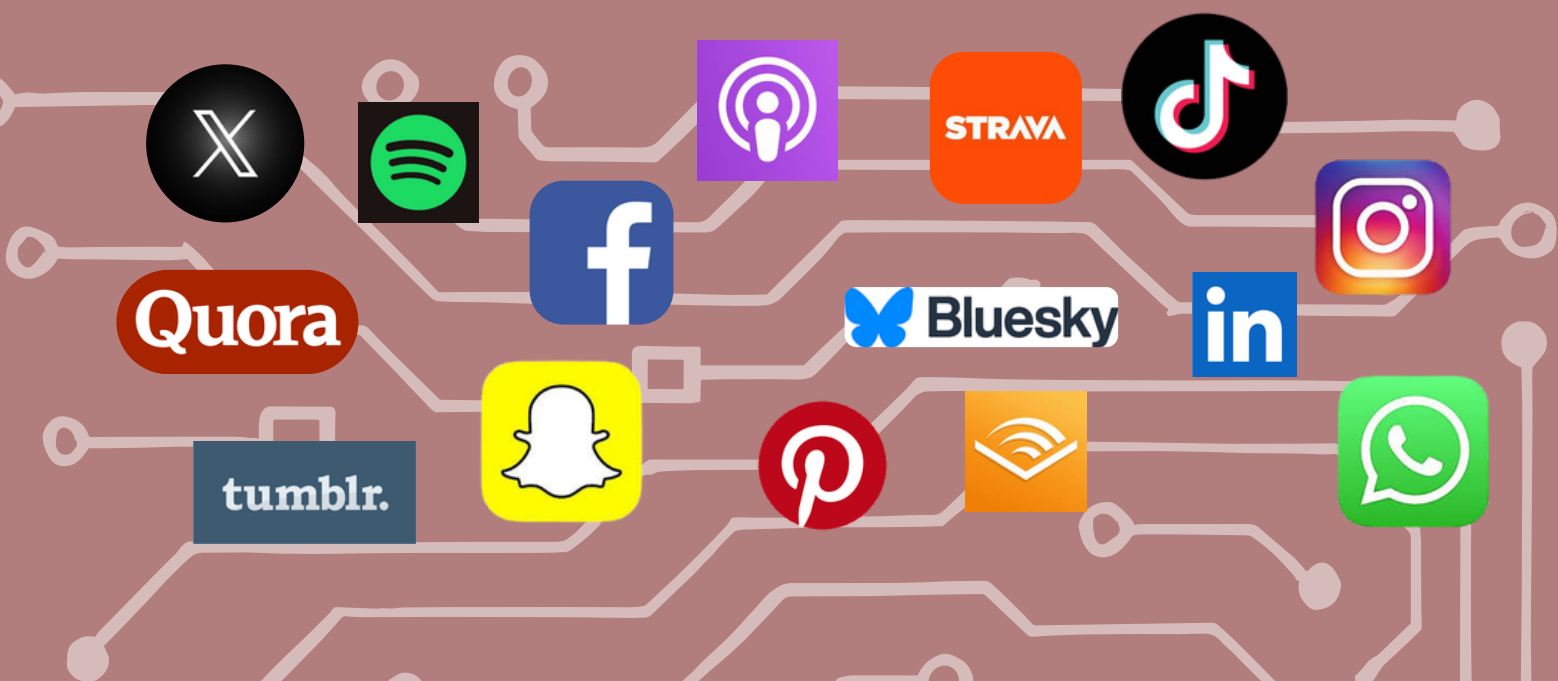
# INTRODUCTION

This is the last of three resources designed to help churches, groups or individuals who are thinking about what it might mean to do digital ministry in their context.

This resource offers practical advice for launching your digital ministry. We focus on six popular types of digital ministry work:

- Video Content
- Photos and Graphics
- Podcasts and Audio Recordings
- Blogs
- Livestreaming and Digital Worship
- Webinars

For each of these, you'll find helpful apps and equipment, and a guide to creating content. We've also pulled together some top tips from some of our favourite digital creators working in Scotland. These tips and guides are here to help you get started on your digital ministry journey!



# HELPFUL APPS AND EQUIPMENT

Before we begin, the most important thing to know is that you do not need expensive equipment to do digital ministry! Digital Ministry is about sharing the gospel, not creating the most slick and professional graphics, video or audio content. The most important tool you need is a heart for Jesus. The recommendations here are designed to help make creating content easier, and many of them are free or low cost.

## APPS and WEBSITES

If you're only going to use one tool, Canva might be one of the most useful when it comes to creating social media content. It allows you to edit videos and photos as well as design graphics, and is very user friendly. There are lots of resources online to help you make the most of its features. Churches can access



Canva Pro for free through their Canva for Non Profits scheme which allows you to make full use of all of Canva's features. More info here: <https://www.canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits/>



Instagram and Tiktok have video editing software built into their apps which is easy to use and has lots of options for adding your own text and filters, but if you want more options then try CapCut.. Like Canva, it is user friendly and you can share directly to social

media from the app. There is a free version, or a paid subscription that offers more services

There are a growing number of resources aimed at churches and ministers that are AI powered. One of these is Pastors.AI which can take a video of a sermon and turn it into study guides, shareable content for social media and other materials.

PASTORS.AI

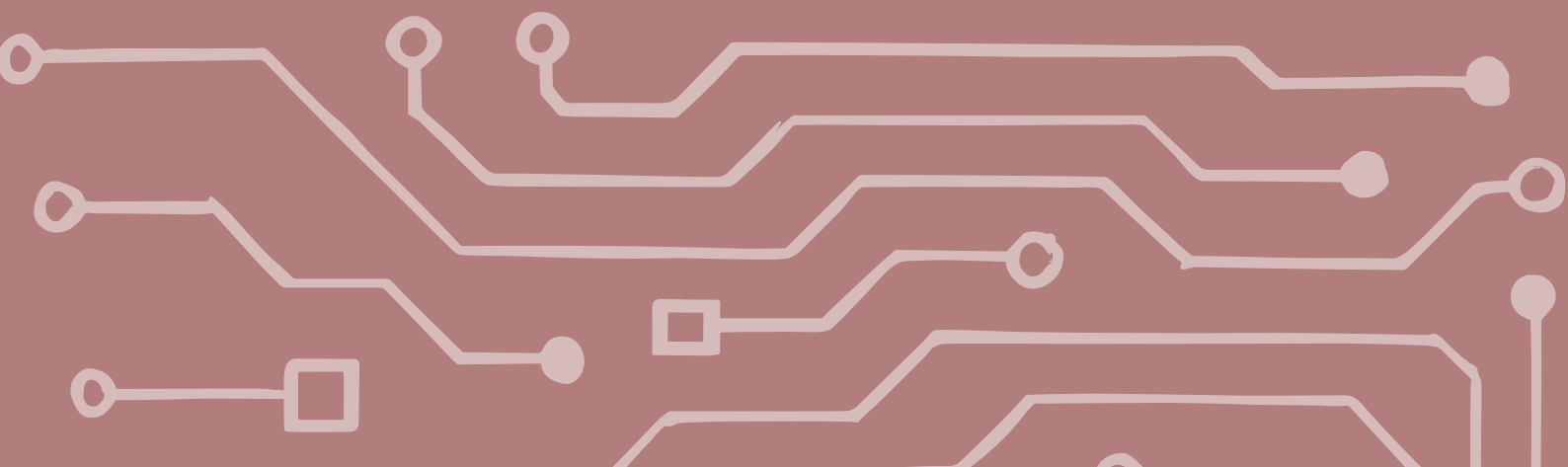


Adobe have a wide range of resources but 'Creative Cloud' perhaps offers one of the best selections for creating social media content and editing photos. Adobe also offer discounted rates for non-profits which you can find here: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/nonprofits.html>

If you are posting to Facebook and Instagram, the Meta Business Suite is a free app which allows you to schedule and post to social media easily from one place. You can also respond to messages and comments through the app and see detailed insights into how your content is performing.



Garage Band allows you to edit audio content. If you're looking to create a podcast or other audio recordings, you can do all the basic editing this would require in this one app.



# EQUIPMENT

For basic video recording and photography, the average smartphone will have everything you need. If you're looking to elevate your content, the following equipment might be useful:

**Microphones:** Small, wireless microphones can be bought quite cheaply and plugged directly into your phone. These improve the audio quality of your videos, which is especially important if you're filming outside or in a space with other people.

**Tripod:** A tripod can help you stabilise your phone or camera when filming or taking photos. It also allows you to film handsfree videos.

**Ring light:** If you find there's a lack of natural light in your church, home or wherever you're trying to create content, you may benefit from a ring light. These can be clipped onto your phone or stand alone, and also brighten up your footage and photos.



# RECORDING VIDEO CONTENT

Video content can be either short form (typically under three minutes) or longer form. Short form content is best suited to Instagram, Tiktok and Facebook reels. If you're looking to post longer content, this would be better posted on Youtube or Vimeo.

## BEFORE YOU START

- Go through the three Ps for each piece of content you are creating (see Understanding Digital Ministry for more details on these).
- Write a script! It is really hard to jump into filming and speaking “off the cuff”. It is easier (especially if it is your first time) to have a script that you can follow. You should try, however, to memorise your script as much as you can so that you can look directly into the camera when filming.
- When writing your script, include both a “hook” and a “call to action”
  - **HOOK:** This is the promise you make to your viewers [if you watch this, this is what you are going to get]. It introduces your video and the topic.
  - **CALL TO ACTION:** What is the next step for the audience to take? Try asking a question which encourages a response action like “leave a comment” or “subscribe”. You can also encourage viewers to connect with their local church or click the link in bio for more info.
- If you plan to film multiple clips, make a “shot list” ahead of time so you can see what needs to be filmed. This avoids you getting to the editing stage and realising you don't have the right footage!

## WHILE FILMING

- If you are filming a simple video with one person talking to camera, position them in the centre or middle third of the screen. Make sure you are well lit and can be clearly seen and heard (either by using a microphone or filming in a quiet place).
- If you are filming group shots, make sure you have permission from everyone in shot.
- Take a test shot first to make sure your audio and video are working. Otherwise you can get a perfect take then realise it hasn't recorded properly!
- Rather than trying to do everything in one take, it is sometimes easier to break your script down into shorter sections. Filming one section at a time means you don't need to restart every time you make a mistake!

## EDITING

- On screen captions can be easily added to your videos. This is possible through the apps and websites mentioned above, or on Instagram or Tiktok. Captions are really important not just for those who are hard of hearing, but also because most people watch online video content with sound off when in public.
- There are loads of options for filters, on-screen image and text, and effects when video editing. Have fun with it! Experimenting will help you find what feels right for your content, so take some time to play around with video editing tools.
- Background music that matches the tone of the video really elevates the content. You can find royalty free music on Canva and other platforms online. If there's no speaking in your video, you can add a more popular (worship or secular) song over the video when uploading to Instagram or Tiktok.

## POSTING

- Try to create a caption that links back to the hook and call to action in your caption.
- Using hashtags will allow your video to reach a wider audience, so choose hashtags that are relevant to the people you are trying to reach.
- When planning, assign someone to monitor comments and messages related to the post.
- If you want to share a link (to your church website, for example), you cannot currently do this on an Instagram caption. You can post a link in your bio and direct people there to access more information. It is also sometimes useful to post links to your stories.

## NOT SURE WHERE TO START? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:

- Post sound bites from your Sunday service.
- Ask members to post videos of them lip-syncing a specific worship song.
- Create videos about social justice issues.
- Post a daily prayer or Scripture reading.
- Use TikTok content as part of a sermon/lesson series.
- Create inspiring content that motivates people to lead better lives.
- Share church events to advertise and promote them.
- Highlight church members and the community service they are engaged in.
- Dancing videos



# PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS

Photos typically perform well on Facebook and Instagram. You may also choose to post quotes, Bible verses or other graphics on your social media. You can either find these on websites like Pinterest, or create your own on sites like Canva and Adobe.

## PHOTOS

### BEFORE YOU START

- Go through the three Ps for each piece of content you are creating (see *Introducing Digital Ministry* for more details on these).
- Make sure you get consent from anyone who will feature in the photos. Speak to your church Safeguarding Coordinator for advice about under 18s and vulnerable adults.
- If you are looking to post photos regularly, you might find it easiest to have a dedicated Sunday or two where you capture a lot of photos in bulk. This then gives you a library to pull from for various posts as and when you need them. Bookmarking a particular Sunday allows you to warn everyone in advance that it's happening, and means you can relax on the other Sundays without thinking about content.
- As with a video, if you're photographing a specific event or for a specific purpose, you might find it useful to make a "shot list" in advance.

- **Photography can be a great way to include people in digital ministry work who might not know much about social media. Look out for older members of the congregation who enjoy photography, or young people studying the subject at school!**

## **WHILE SHOOTING**

- **Pay attention to lighting. If your building doesn't have good natural light, you may want to use ring lights (see helpful equipment).**
- **If you are moving around the room during the service to take photos from different angles, be mindful of when you are doing so. You might want to pause photography during prayers and Bible readings.**
- **Think about how to capture the full diversity of your church family. You want to make sure you aren't just taking photos of one particular gender, race or age group.**

## **EDITING AND POSTING**

- **You don't need to be an expert at editing. Content that is authentic will perform well! Apps like Canva and Adobe will allow basic editing that is easy and doesn't take too long.**
- **When posting, pay attention to everyone in the photo, not just the person in focus. Check the background to make sure you haven't accidentally captured someone without permission.**
- **When captioning, you might want to think about including a call to action (e.g. "comment below" or "like" and "follow"). Hashtags are important on Instagram, but less effective on Facebook.**

# GRAPHICS

It can be difficult to create content with photos alone, so other types of graphics can be a great way to give you additional material. You can either make your own using sites like Canva or find ready made ones on sites like Pinterest.

## MAKING YOUR OWN

Graphics can be a great way to share sermon quotes. If you take notes during the service (or ask the minister to pull some key quotes) you can easily turn these into eye catching images. There are hundreds of templates on Canva. Keep these simple and limit to short quotes or prayers. Too many words on the screen makes it difficult to read and people are more likely to scroll past.



## PRE-MADE CONTENT

Pre-made content can be a real time saver and can help you while you build confidence in making your own images. Try searching specific keywords on Instagram or Pinterest to find relevant content. That being said, make sure to double check the content as sometimes details like Bible verses can be inaccurate. Be mindful of watermarks and giving appropriate credit when using content that is not your own!

# TOP TIPS (from Katie Hart)

I ran the social media for Baljaffray Parish Church until October 2025. I find that setting aside a wee bit of time on a Sunday straight after church to bulk edit, post and schedule makes posting every day feel manageable.

I have a set rhythm for our posts - two sermon quotes, one prayer point, a “can we pray for you?” post, and one church invite per week. This schedule helps to keep momentum with our posts. Of course, there will be one off events or particular things we want to post instead of, or in addition to, these but that weekly rhythm is what I so often fall back on.

I decided to use blue as our main church colour, as this was the colour of our logo so almost all our posts feature at least a little blue. It helps that the church carpet is also blue, which lets the photos follow the colour scheme! Using different shades of blue makes our overall profile look quite cohesive, and also eliminates some decision making for me as the number of design choices can sometimes be overwhelming! Similarly, I repeat a lot of the same fonts in designs. My hope is that it makes it easier for folk to see our content and think - “that’s Baljaffray!”



# PODCASTS AND AUDIO RECORDING

Podcasts are an increasingly popular medium and the possibilities are pretty much endless when it comes to what they might involve. Additionally, many churches are also providing audio recordings of sermons on their website or streaming platforms. This can compliment live streamed videos or provide an alternative option.

## PODCASTS

The three Ps are all important, but in particular it's important to consider the purpose of a podcast before setting it up. As mentioned, the increasing popularity of podcasts means there is already a lot of content out there - is your podcast doing something new? If not, it might not be the best use of your time and resources.

If you decide to create a podcast, Zoom and Teams both have recording features which makes it easy to record a conversation between multiple people. Simply record the meeting and then save the audio file. This can then be imported into apps like Garage Band for editing. You can also record in person, but microphones are typically required to ensure high quality audio.

## AUDIO RECORDING

If you are looking to record sermon audio, there are a few ways to do this. If you live stream your service, you will be able to download the audio from your live stream on Youtube. From there, you can edit the file on apps like Garage Band.

If you don't live stream but want to live record the audio, you can do this using the voice record feature on your phone or by using a recording device (these can be purchased quite cheaply).

The last option is for the minister to record the sermon at a different time. This creates extra work, but does improve sound quality if the acoustics in the church building aren't great or if there is background noise during the service.

## TOP TIPS (from Stuart Finlayson)

Stuart is a Pioneer Minister who planted Forres Community Church and is part of a ministry team at West Moray church. As part of his pioneering work, Stuart runs the Forres Community Teaching Podcast which you can find by clicking [here](#). Here are his top tips for podcasting:



**“My top tips for creating digital content are all about working smarter, not harder.**

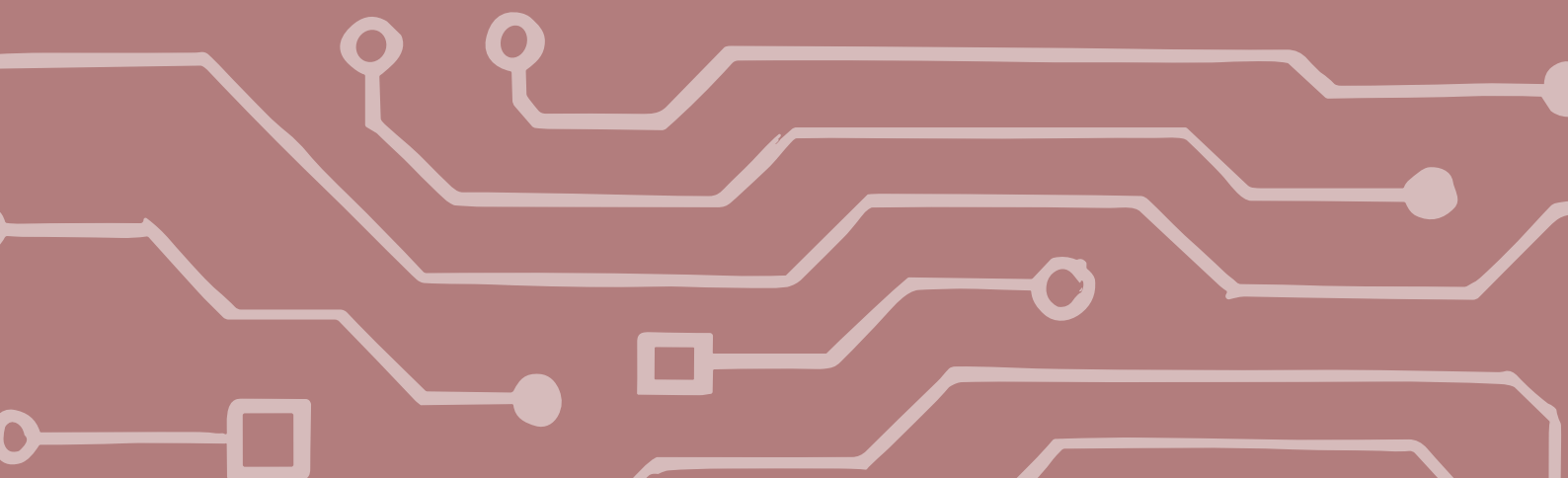
**I've invested in a monthly subscription to an online podcasting platform called Podcastle. It's very easy to navigate — I can record audio directly into a project, and with one click of a button (literally labelled “Magic AI Dust”) it automatically levels the sound, reduces background noise, and tidies everything up.**

**It costs around £12 a month, but it's well worth it. It offers generous storage, sound effects, royalty-free music, transcription, AI voice generators, and a whole range of other helpful features.**

**I also make use of AI language tools like ChatGPT to transform sermons and written reflections into podcast scripts or conversational segments. I always make sure everything stays true to what I originally said, and I find the resulting scripts simple and easy to record.**

**The final thing I've invested in is good-quality visual production tools such as Canva or Adobe Express. Both can create visually engaging thumbnails and social media graphics, which is incredibly important these days — visuals can often determine whether someone chooses to click on your content or scroll past.**

**Using these tools allows me to focus on the hard work of preparing a message/teaching itself and not worry about the production. Even without much technical experience, I'm still able to produce content that looks and sounds professional”**



# BLOGS

Blogs are some of the earliest forms of social media but they've seen a resurgence in popularity recently through platforms like Substack. Blogs offer longer form writing than other platforms and so are good for sharing sermons, bible study notes and other pieces of writing.

## TOP TIPS (from Fiona Stewart)

Fiona Stewart is a writer, performer and broadcaster based in Glasgow. She is the Creative Director of Foolproof Creative Arts and a regular contributor to BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio 4 and Premier Christian Radio. Fiona hosts a number of podcasts including Hollow+Substantial, an inter-generational podcast about life and faith, and The Outspoken Bible, a podcast for the Scottish Bible Society.



**Want to start a blog? Here are five things to consider before you type a word...**

**1. What do you want to talk about?**

**According to a very quick AI search, as of 2025 there are over 600 million blogs in the world. Does the world need another one? It's worth asking that question before you begin, and particularly to spend some time working out what specific knowledge and ideas you have to share.**

Try not to create a general opinion-based blog, but find your unique selling point and style. On some publishing platforms you can segment your blog so that, for example, you could keep your poetry separate from your novel, and your gardening tips separate from your sermon notes. That makes your work seem ordered and lets readers find what they like easily.

Spend some time looking at similar blogs in your genre - notice what you like reading and why. If this is the first time you've published online, make sure you leverage your existing skillset. So, for example, if you've never written a poem in your life but you have particular experience in writing articles for the local paper or community newsletter, start there rather than being a novice.

## **2. Who's your audience?**

Related to the question of what you have to say is the question of who. Who do you want to read this blog? You can't necessarily control who reads your work once you post it, and you probably want strangers to follow and enjoy your words, but it might help to start by getting people you know to read and give you feedback.

Start following other bloggers who write similar work - repost or restack their work and they might reciprocate when they read your posts. It can be helpful to think of one individual reader and write 'for them' as a means of finding your voice.

### 3. What platform is best for you?

Once you've thought about your content and your audience, it's useful to get to know the various publication platforms that are available. The blogging sands are always shifting, but the following are a good starting point:

**Wordpress** - traditional publication platform, can also be used to host a website

**Wix and Squarespace** - good if you want to incorporate design into your work, can also be used to create a website

**Substack** - lots of writers, journalist, poets etc are on here - it allows you to monetise your work, produce a newsletter and manage your mailing list. Also allows you to include audio if you want

**Medium** - similar to Substack

**Patreon** - this is a subscription site that lets you monetise, but seems increasingly to be being used by writers to publish and host workshops/events etc.

**Blogger** - free and straightforward

### 4. What's a realistic rhythm?

As you can probably already tell, this is a more time-consuming process than you might think. You need to put some time and effort into doing your research, and once you've designed your set-up you need to make sure you are publishing regularly, and possibly doing some marketing to get your work seen.

**Who's paying for your time while you do all this? How can you create a smooth workflow so you're not always trying to think of something to write at the last minute? How regularly do you want to publish? Daily? Weekly? Fortnightly? Making a commitment to write and publish regularly will give you a deadline and will allow you to plan your content. If you're vague you'll never get round to it!**

**And before you publish your first piece, have 2-3 other articles ready to go, or at least planned in your head. That deadline comes around faster than you think.**

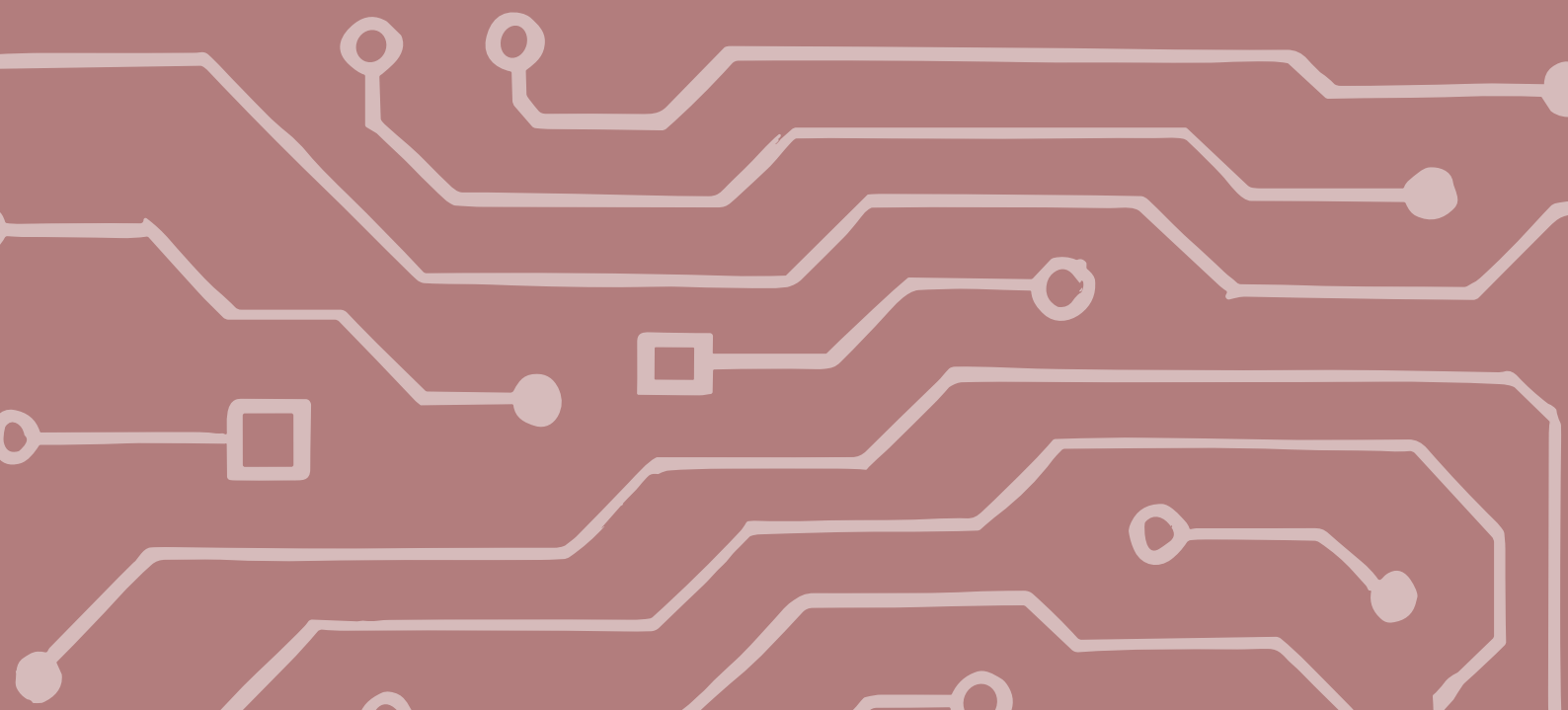
### **5. How can you be smart?**

**You might already be writing content for another context. Can you repurpose it? For example, I am a regular presenter on Thought for the Day, so I always republish my Thoughts on my Substack after they are broadcast. I've already put the effort into creating the piece, so it gives it a longer reach. Of course, you need to make sure that you own the intellectual property, but a quick win might be to republish sermons, articles or community newsletters that have appeared elsewhere. If you already have a social media following, make sure that you post about your work there, with an easy to click link for followers to find your work.**

**Substack supplies you with a set of assets that you can use on Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Facebook and X, so leverage your platform of choice to let your friends and acquaintances know what you're writing!**

**Finally, enjoy it! Work out what you want to say, find your people, think about how to do it, commit to a regular rhythm and be smart. I look forward to reading your thoughts!**

If you want to read more of Fiona's work, you'll find her on Substack. [Click here](#) for more!



# LIVESTREAMS AND DIGITAL WORSHIP

Most churches began live streaming during lockdown, and many have continued to do so since. This is a relatively straightforward means of reaching an online audience. A basic way of doing this is to use a smartphone to livestream your service via Facebook or Youtube. To improve the quality of livestream, you may want to invest in some audio-visual equipment such as a camera and microphone. There are various options depending on your church's budget and you do not need the most expensive equipment to get a good result.

As a digital ministry team, you will also need to think about getting permission from everyone involved in services (including people praying or doing Bible readings) to be livestreamed. Depending on your angle, you may also need to inform members sitting in the front rows of your sanctuary that they may be included in the video.

Whilst similar to livestreaming, digital worship is, in many ways, also quite different! Essentially, where livestreaming is intended to record a service ultimately focused on those in the room, digital worship is created specifically for an online audience. Digital Worship can be pre-recorded or live streamed, and can take the form of a traditional Sunday service or look entirely different. The main thing to consider when thinking about digital worship is your people, purpose and plan. Who are you trying to reach and what do you want them to know?

# TOP TIPS (from Stuart Forsyth)

Stuart Forsyth is Director of Limelight Media - a creative media agency - and a Mission Pioneer working in digital ministries. To find out more about Stuart's work, you can follow him on [instagram](#) or take a look at the Limelight [website](#). Here are his top tips for creating digital worship content:

Creating digital worship resources is a great way to get beyond the 4 walls of a church building, but getting started can feel overwhelming. With a few basics in place, you can build an engaging and accessible online presence.

Begin with the right equipment. **Contrary to belief, you don't need high-end gear.** Done is better than perfect. Many churches start successfully with a smartphone, a basic tripod, and an external microphone.

Good audio matters more than perfect video, so prioritise a clear mic. If your budget allows, consider a simple lighting kit or use natural light to help your space look warm and welcoming.

Next, choose the platform(s) that best suit your target audience. Facebook and YouTube are the most user-friendly for livestreams and recorded services. Both allow viewers to watch on phones, tablets, or smart TVs, and make it easy to share content. If you want a more interactive setup for Bible studies or prayer gatherings, Zoom is a great option.

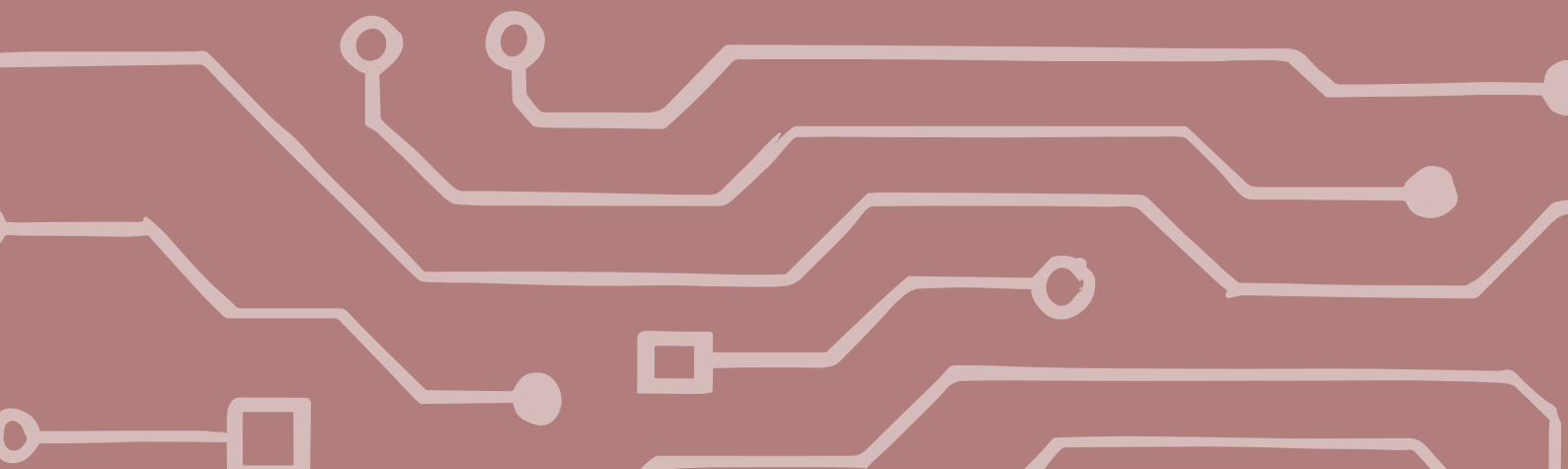
**Creating short-form content, like a daily Bible verse or segment of a worship song will be suited for platforms like Instagram & TikTok – especially if you are aiming to reach a younger audience.**

**Finally, think about engagement. Be intentional about engaging with your viewers by name in live chats, encourage comments, and ask reflective questions in your content. Social Media algorithms love engagement (likes, comments, shares, saves etc) – the more engagement you have, the wider your reach will be (beyond the followers of your page).**

**Consistency is key. Post regularly, keep your style familiar, and make people feel part of the community even from home. With simple tools and thoughtful planning, digital worship can become a natural extension of your ministry.**

**Stuart Forsyth**  
**@stuartforsyth**  
**LimelightMedia.co.uk**

**Limelight**



# WEBINARS AND ONLINE GROUPS

Like livestreaming, online groups and webinars became a regular part of many of our lives during the COVID lockdowns. These continue to be a useful tool for reaching a broad audience, particularly across wider geographical areas.

Webinars are typically either an online panel with a few speakers, or a lecture style solo presentation. They can be hosted on livestreaming sites like Youtube and Facebook, but also work well on platforms like Teams and Zoom. A Q&A can be facilitated either in the comments (Youtube and Facebook) or on Teams and Zoom through the chat function or by allowing multiple speakers.

Online groups are typically hosted on platforms like Teams and Zoom. These groups can take many forms, including small Bible study groups and prayer groups. The Church of Scotland has advice on how to download and install Zoom [here](#).

As a digital ministry team, you'll need to think about what groups would work best online. This will involve thinking about your individual congregational needs in terms of internet access and digital literacy. You may need to run a training session on how to use this technology.

There are also safety concerns. It is best to keep links to webinars and online groups private and only available upon request.

Posting publicly means anyone can access and you may find yourself targeted by “trolls” who leave irrelevant and, at times, abusive comments. In order to prevent this, simply have a sign up link or email address available and send the link to those who enquire.

During the webinar or group, it is best to have someone in charge of running the event. This might include sharing powerpoint slides, managing letting access to the meeting space, and keeping an eye on the chat function. This person should also have the ability to remove users in the event that you have the type of problems mentioned above.

## **TOP TIPS (from Mirella Yandoli)**

Mirella Yandoli is the Church of Scotland’s Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interfaith Manager. In her role, she regularly runs online meetings and webinars, and here are her top tips:

**Hosting a webinar is a powerful way to deepen understanding, spark conversation, and build confidence across the Church on countless subjects. Based on recent learning, one of the most important things you can do is create a clear sense of purpose: name the issue, explain why it matters for discipleship and mission, and articulate what participants will gain.**

**Balance expertise and lived experience, offering both theological framing and real stories; this combination helps people connect emotionally as well as intellectually.**

**Given you've now promised a clear purpose, make sure your speakers are well briefed and reflect back to you their understanding of what's being asked of them so you can course correct if needed. Keep the structure simple and accessible — short (!) presentations, clear signposting, and space for questions go a long way. If you're worried about speakers running over time then ask them to pre-record. Because time is limited, focus on a few strong insights rather than trying to cover everything. Ensure your speakers reflect the communities and experiences you are discussing, and be intentional about belonging and representation. This means thinking through all the ways in which people may feel a barrier to participation and mitigating where possible.**

**Provide links to resources, organisations, or follow-up pathways so learning can continue. Be honest about the Church's ongoing journey and invite participants to give feedback so that they know their insights are meaningful. Finally gather feedback and take time as organisers to reflect on what you learned — the appetite, the gaps, and the emerging questions. A well-designed webinar doesn't just inform; it builds community, confidence, and momentum for change.**

