

*Social Media Quick Guide*

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# Pinterest



## About ChurchTechToday

[ChurchTechToday](#) was born out of the need to find a place to discuss how technology can truly impact the Church in positive ways, whether it be reducing administration with a church office, allowing para church organizations to connect with their members online, or simply to share the Gospel message through non-traditional channels.

## About Lauren Hunter

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Pinterest is a social media network that has broken the social network mold in so many different ways that many businesses, ministries, and individuals are not sure how to best use it. For some, they see a network that is only a place for women to pin recipes, clothing, and DIY projects; others want to use images well but do not know where to begin with the network.

Professional social media and Pinterest users see Pinterest as a viral social media network where pinning, repining, commenting, and favoriting is the way to double or triple their total social media traffic to their website or blog. Others see a place to find people with common interests within niche markets or interests. Finally, many people find this network to be a place to not only inspire them, but push them to make their website and blog a richer experience for users and viewers.

### **The Network's Persona**

Pinterest, within in our social media town, is the downtown mall where people can go window-shopping, and if they like what they see, they can go inside. Some see this place as a girls only haven for ideas, but businesses have the opportunity to sell their products if it fits in this setting. Many are missing out because they are not giving it a chance.

In this social media town, Pinterest is more than the public perception and you will always find something new and amazing. Yet, it is truly a network focused on consumption. In many ways, the goal of Pinterest is to provide a way for people to invest in your brand or consume your ideas. How does this fit into the realm of a church? Can this be a good medium for churches to engage with their congregation or are we limiting our scope of social networks too much?

*80% of all posts are repins.*

*There are over 70 million registered users, with over 20 million of them active in the last month.*

*The average Pinterest user spends 98 minutes a month pinning.*

## The Network's Lingo

- **Pin** – Posting an image onto your board with a description
- **Repin** – Sharing someone else's pin onto your own board
- **Boards** – A set of pins that are categorized by topics.
- **Followers** – People that subscribe to your individual boards
- **Follow All** – Subscribe to all of your boards
- **Comments** – Leaving a quick message on an individual pin
- **Like** – Marking a pin that you enjoyed

## The Network's Downside

The downside of Pinterest is more on the potential users and their inability to engage with the social network. There is a stereotype within Pinterest that it is not for brands, men, or bloggers. Yet, if you find your niche and are able to capitalize on this unique medium with creativity and visual inspiration, this network can be a traffic and networking goldmine. But it takes a complete reorientation of your social networking strategy to think in a creative, visual medium rather than text conversations.

Because of the emphasis on visuals, unless you are a visually creative wizard, best utilizing this network might mean copious amounts of time to find the right image or photograph, then using Photoshop to edit these images, or come up with great graphics that visually communicate your intended goal. This is not a simple “iPhone photo taken last minute” kind of social network. Pinterest users are looking for stunning photographs, inspiring graphics, and pins that convey an amazing story.

## **Pinterest, a Visually Oriented Network**

Pinterest is a great social network for a church that wants to go to the next level with your online presence. Yet everything that is introduced in Pinterest is not unique. Because visuals are the main focus with this social network, it requires that users use photography appropriately to maximize impact on Pinterest.

On Facebook, images make a post more eye catching; however, they go hand-in-hand with text updates and links. Twitter has more engagements with photos but most users spend more time on hashtags and verbiage. Google+ is now geared to graphics and photography, but users do not yet engage via visuals as much as they could. Successful engagement on Pinterest is reliant on the use of high quality imagery. Improving the skills of selecting or creating visually expressive media will improve an organization's ability to connect over social media across all networks.

Whether you are posting a blog article about the latest sermon podcast, uploading photos from the youth ministry service project from the weekend, or creating an event for the Easter or Christmas services, shift your thinking from what you will write to how you will visually tell the story. This change will make it easier to use images as part of the story telling process. Those images will speak volumes to your followers and fans.

One way to get off to the right start is to begin with the image as the kick-off point. Have an amazing image of a child serving a hot meal to a homeless person? Tell the story beginning with the image in mind. Have a graphic to use as an announcement? Build off the image, tell the story, include a great quote, and let the image do the hard work for you.

## How to Use the Network Effectively

Using the network effectively begins before you even log into Pinterest. Be intentional with your images in order to push your ministry further than it has gone with social media. When you take a picture of your church congregation, get faces and smiles, but don't be afraid to capture the hard moments as well. Nothing says Christ's love more than authentic joy in the middle of serving others or learning more about Him. Be sure the images are authentic. Be intentional about how you tell the story of your ministry and the impact you currently make or hope to make in your community.

Make sure that the environment is conducive to great images. That means more images, better content with great visuals in the picture, and a less distracting background (whether you blur it out with a manual focus or clear it out so that it simply is not there).

This may require that you find key congregation members that have photography background/experience, digital photo editing, or graphic art abilities. Consider investing in the current volunteers and staff that would be willing to grow in these areas. A holistic approach to how your ministry's branding reflects across social media, not just Pinterest, is required.

Developing a network of people that are pinning and repining like-minded content on your boards is also important. This requires that you properly describe your pins, and create well-crafted boards. Overall, be consistent in posting your pins.

Pinterest is not a second-class social network. If used effectively, it has the potential to generate more traffic to your website and blog than any other social media network. Make sure your images are not cluttered with text and let each image speak for itself. Go outside the box by using infographics that are related to your Sunday sermon. Allow your images to be directive. Call the viewer to action to worship God more authentically, serve others more fully, or dive into Scripture further and deeper.

*43% of Pinterest users associate themselves with brands, compared to only 24% of Facebook users.*

*80% of all Pinterest users are women and 50% of users have children.*

*The most popular age group on Pinterest is 25-34 year olds.*

## 5 Pinterest Ideas for Churches

We want to set you up for success on Pinterest, so we have come up with some great Pinterest ideas for your church. Note that some of these ideas are perfect for large churches while others are ideal for small churches.

### 1. Gear your Blog or Website to Visual Incorporation

Every website needs to have a visual element and if your images are optimized for Pinterest, then you are most likely improving your site that much more. That being said, the image is not merely a “cherry on top,” but nearly a primary focus of the article that deserves your time and energy. It is not uncommon for a blogger to spend as much as 40% of their time on the image. Make it big, prominent, and a key part of your story. A great image can drive content and reach readers effectively.

### 2. Find How-To's for Improving Your Church's Visual Identity

Pinterest is the perfect place to improve your stage's designs, make your children's ministry a warmer place for the kids, and give you the perfect vacation bible school set design that will wow all participants. Even better, it is more than just design inspiration as Pinterest is full of Do-It-Yourself projects and how-to tips. Get creative and be open to new ideas.

### 3. Embrace Creativity, Make it a Ministry

You have so many different pockets of creativity and inspiration within your church, why not share that with everyone on Pinterest and brand it with your church? Your church loves potlucks? Post the end product of your food, share the recipe on a blog post, and engage with your congregation and other churches. Have an artist that designed parts of your church, the stage, or visual elements of the tech portion of Sunday morning? Post that too. In fact, you have the ability to have a creative ministry for those that have the

experience or desire to become a little more creative, all for the purpose of sharing the beauty of God and glorifying Him.

#### **4. Repin Others Frequently**

Developing a network of people is more than just following their boards to show that you are engaging with your followers. While comments and likes are appreciated, consider developing a stronger sense of online community by sharing pins from people or organizations on your follow list. Go beyond expectations of pinning once a week and take 10-15 minutes of skimming through your feeds to repin different pins that you love and show your appreciation for their work.

#### **5. Share your Sunday Slides and Announcements**

If your church takes technology seriously, then you are probably using announcement slides or video announcements before your service and you may be sharing those on YouTube. With the high frequency of repins on Pinterest, in addition to a carefully curated network of followers from your congregation and community, a single post can get put in front of numerous faces instantly via your Pinterest network.