

# WORLD WIDE WITNESSING



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# 1 WHERE

In our day and age, an individual has a staggering amount of opportunities for witnessing Christ through the World Wide Web. Some may say, "The internet isn't the best way to share the Gospel of Christ." Others may say, "The investment of our time is better spent, for example, going door to door or even street evangelism." There are some elements of truth to both of those statements. However, one may not be able to knock on every door in his city in the span of his lifetime or greet every person on the street corner. But that same one person through the internet, could be in almost all of his neighbors home at one time – with a message to share about the truths of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Carefully weigh the statistics. Out of the estimated seven billion people living today, in the last fifteen years the number of internet users has grown 675% and is already equivalent to 40% of the world's population.<sup>1</sup> With such an amazing worldwide growth, the question really is, "Where do we begin?"

<b>WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS</b>						
<b>December 31, 2013</b>						
<b>World Regions</b>	<b>Population ( 2014 Est.)</b>	<b>Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000</b>	<b>Internet Users Latest Data</b>	<b>Penetration (% Population)</b>	<b>Growth 2000-2014</b>	<b>Users % of Table</b>
<a href="#">Africa</a>	1,125,721,038	4,514,400	<b>240,146,482</b>	21.3 %	5,219.6 %	8.6 %
<a href="#">Asia</a>	3,996,408,007	114,304,000	<b>1,265,143,702</b>	31.7 %	1,006.8 %	45.1 %
<a href="#">Europe</a>	825,802,657	105,096,093	<b>566,261,317</b>	68.6 %	438.8 %	20.2 %
<a href="#">Middle East</a>	231,062,860	3,284,800	<b>103,829,614</b>	44.9 %	3,060.9 %	3.7 %
<a href="#">North America</a>	353,860,227	108,096,800	<b>300,287,577</b>	84.9 %	177.8 %	10.7 %
<a href="#">Latin America / Caribbean</a>	612,279,181	18,068,919	<b>302,006,016</b>	49.3 %	1,571.4 %	10.8 %
<a href="#">Oceania / Australia</a>	36,724,649	7,620,480	<b>24,804,226</b>	67.5 %	225.5 %	0.9 %
<b><a href="#">WORLD TOTAL</a></b>	<b>7,181,858,619</b>	<b>360,985,492</b>	<b>2,802,478,934</b>	<b>39.0 %</b>	<b>676.3 %</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

## Overseas

Even in Paul's day, he wrote to the Roman Christians about the prevalence of the Gospel saying, "But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: *"Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world"* (Romans 10:18). Consider this potential spread of the Gospel happening in the world today, "so that they are without excuse!" (Romans 1:20ff)

Individuals on every continent are searching for the answers to life's questions: Where did I come from? What is my purpose in life? Is there a heaven? And, if so, how do I get there? With today's rapid growth of World Wide Web access, how much more true is what Paul proclaimed to the men of Athens in the Areopagus, "That they [every nation of men] should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). In the last fifteen years, just think of how many foreign contacts the Lord has made with the CLC, bringing fellowship and witnessing blessings to us through the simple use of the World Wide Web!

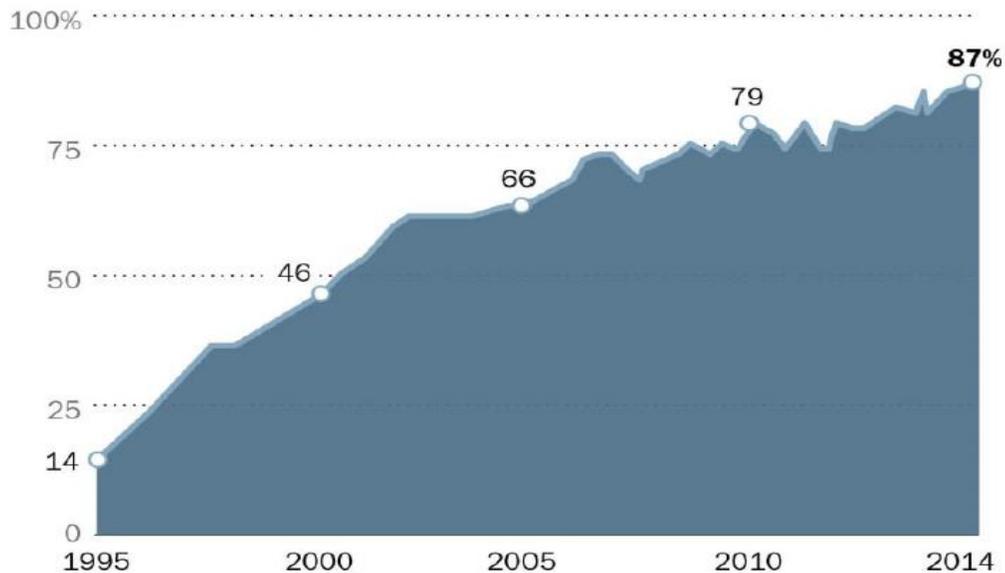
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

## Stateside

According to the 2014 United States Census, of the 320 million citizens in our country, it is now reported that 87% of the US population are regular internet users.<sup>2</sup> One might assume this 13% of the population may represent primarily infants and the elderly.

### Internet use, 1995-2014

*% of American adults who use the internet, over time*



Since we have known for some time how the media both greatly influences and can also shape a nation, we do well to hear the psalmist's declaration, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 33:12a). Therefore, in what ways do WE contribute to help shape our nation by stressing Godly morals and solid Biblical instruction? In our churches and schools? Yes! But how can we also make better use of the internet for this purpose?

## Community

Many congregations use the internet to make its community aware of special events or studies it has going on. For example, you can alert the local online newspapers (and printed for that matter) and radio stations of informational changes like service and special service times, new personnel, new building or property updates, or upcoming activities like VBS or an outdoor movie night. This fall, our congregation participated again in the Fond du Lac community "Fondue Fest." We handed out invite postcards with a message, our website and church address, and included a map. Over 10,000 people passed by our tents and are either alerted or directed to our website where they would be able to learn more about Jesus Christ and what we stand for when it comes to His Word.



FRONT SIDE

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/am/us.htm>

It is important for the people in your community to be able to find you quickly since many use the internet rather than the yellow pages these days. It's a wonderful reminder and encouragement to hear Isaiah's words when he proclaimed, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!""

(Isaiah 52:7)

## BACK SIDE



## + Membership

Another way a website can be utilized is for your own members of your church and school. You can use your website to not only share upcoming calendar events and recent news, but also to provide spiritual resources such as Bible studies, devotions, or subscriptions like to the Spokesman and The Branches. It is an easy way to make the Word of God accessible to our brothers and sisters in view of the fast paced lives we are becoming more and more accustomed. Sharpening our website will be another great tool to help members be sharpened by God's Word. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

## + All the above

In many ways all of your ministry "eggs can be in one basket." In other words, when it comes to having your website properly up to date, it is one of the easiest ways to get the gospel and your church information out not just to your members, but to the world. So how do you set up a website for a congregation so that it is easy to keep up to date? Having explored how your website may be used to serve Christ throughout the world, specific examples may help to encourage even further why a well maintained website isn't just beneficial, but indispensable. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17).

# THE BREAD OF LIFE 2013



*The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;  
Yes, I have a good inheritance.*

PSALM 16:6

AN INSERT FROM THE  
**Lutheran Spokesman**

Online Version : [www.lutheranspokesman.org](http://www.lutheranspokesman.org)

## 2 WHY

It is important to consider in the ever increasing World Wide Web “Where” our websites may be used to have an impact on our church ministry. It is also beneficial to see a few brief examples along with some recent encouragement “Why” the Lord has used, and will use a website in such a broad and also very narrow way.

### + Gary

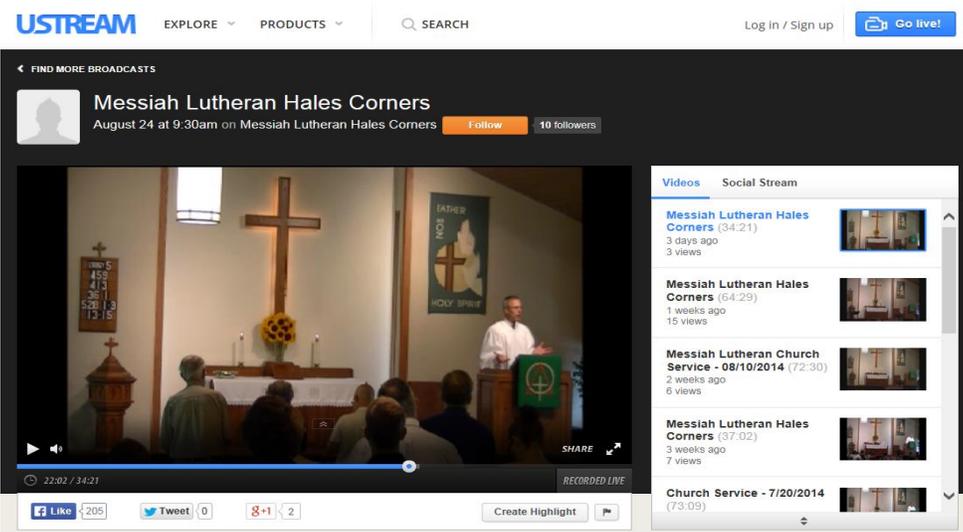
Gary contacted me early in my ministry after searching for churches that still use pipe organs and that still sing the good old traditional hymns from The Lutheran Hymnal. Because both churches I have served have audio and video services, Gary was able to watch the services and listen to the organ and organists. That’s how he found us and made contact. Gary lives in Winnipeg, Canada and is an avid organist. This contact lead to service discussions about some of his concerns with some of the practices he finds in the ELCIC Canadian Lutheran churches there (ELCA affiliation). He has routinely used our CLC websites to find the refreshing truths of God’s word taught without compromise for his own personal devotionals. The Lord links people to us through the internet in ways we would never have dreamed!



### + Michael

This past CLC Convention, President Eichstadt gave memorable encouragement,

*As the Gospel is for all people of all ages in all cultures, so we have wonderful freedom to express it in all kinds of ways, in order that, like Paul, we might plant the Word in many other hearts. While there is much to be said for traditions which have stood the test of time, it can also be refreshing to make use of modern technology and new orders of service in presenting the Word. For example, the internet is a useful, inexpensive tool to use in streaming worship services<sup>3</sup> to members at a distance and in communicating the news of Christ crucified and risen worldwide via well-maintained congregational websites.<sup>4</sup>*



**Question:**  
What does a “well-maintained” website look like?

<sup>3</sup> For a refresher on live streaming services and sermons... See Appendix 1 and 2

<sup>4</sup> Pastor Michael Eichstadt’s June 2014 President’s address: “Turning the World Upside Down” (pg. 4)

## Marie

A couple of years back, a local Fond du Lac mother of three was “church shopping” and came along our church website. She was excited to see and learn through our webpage the confessional stance we took on God’s Word.

*“I was looking for a Lutheran church in Fond du Lac to transfer to. I used the Internet to find all the churches in the area. Coming from the Missouri Synod, I naturally went to a Missouri Synod church first. I felt very uncomfortable at the Missouri Synod church. It was very progressive and I felt like they weren’t focusing on God as much as they should. I looked online again and came across Luther Memorial and I liked what I read on the website. So I went to a church service there and immediately felt comfortable. Since then I have continued to use the website on a regular basis. Besides the church calendar, I can also find church services and online sermons that I may have missed. Luther Memorial reminds me of the church I went to growing up.”*

Since that time, Marie has gone through information classes, along with her formerly Catholic husband, and hopes to send her children to our school. The ministry of our churches and schools alike have many arms and opportunities to share Christ, but what another great reminder that “a church website is like a welcome mat for visitors.” It is very likely they will see your website before they see the inside of your doors!

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**“A church website is like a welcome mat for visitors.”  
It is very likely they will see your website before they see the inside of your doors!**

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## Bruce

Three years ago at our fall pastoral conference, Pastor Bruce Naumann presented an Evangelism paper on the topic of “Modern Media Methods – An Avenue for Ministry.” He defined “Pre-evangelism” as “letting people know that your church exists and has an active interest in sharing God’s Word.”<sup>5</sup> Pastor Naumann went on to give more reasons “Why” a website is a “necessity” for a church.

*An “old-technology” example is a line or ad in the yellow pages, which typically provides too small a space to share the message of the Gospel by itself... a basic church web site, with an internet address that is easy to remember<sup>6</sup>, should be considered a necessity for every CLC congregation today. It is not difficult to set up, and can be done at little or no cost. Our CLC webmaster has offered to assist in web site authoring and publishing; contact [glenn.oster@askapro.net](mailto:glenn.oster@askapro.net). Google has a free service that is easy to use for the do-it-yourselfer: [sites.google.com](https://sites.google.com). ...Basic promotion of your website will enhance its pre-evangelistic benefit. Print advertising, fliers, etc. should prominently feature the web address of your site. Any video broadcast of your services should include the website address. Church signs, bulletins, and business cards should all include it.<sup>7</sup>*

It doesn’t take long to see how establishing a well maintained website can act as a central hub for many, if not all, of your congregation’s mission activities. As the congregation’s “digital welcome mat,” it is a wise reminder for us all to keep it dusted off and looking like the owners really do care what is happening there.

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<sup>5</sup> Pastor Bruce Naumann – “Modern Media Methods – An Avenue for Ministry” (pg.1) Sep. 27-29, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Avoid names like churchname.wordpress.org or <http://sites.google.com/a/AppsDomain.com/churchname>. (you can still use Google, just use it with an actual domain name). Primary contact email addresses should match site, i.e. [www.churchname.org](http://www.churchname.org) and [pastor@churchname.org](mailto:pastor@churchname.org). All of this helps portray a professional appearance, and not just some fly by night outfit.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. -For a refresher on live streaming services and sermons... See Appendix 1 and 2

## Jesus

"What Would Jesus Do" with the World Wide Web? I think we know... because we have given just a few of a multitude of examples of what we all have seen Him do in our own ministries. Similar to our preaching, a helpful question to ask ourselves with our congregation's web presence is, "Are we potentially hindering the Gospel in any way by what we are, or what we are not doing?" There are souls in our area who need to find Christ, who need to find Biblical truth, and who need to know there are still conservative churches to which they can turn. Having a website that engages these spiritual needs seems to be an ever growing ministry of our churches in these very digital days.

Jesus has blessed us with a tremendous opportunity to "Go" literally throughout the world, and we have seen synodically in the CLC just the beginning of how far He can take us! *"And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:14-16).*

## 3 WHAT

We have established the "Where" and have been motivated more on "Why" a proper church website is needed in making full use of God's blessing of the World Wide Web. But it is vitally important to spend some time on "What" content your website features.

## Christ

At our last fall Great Lakes Pastoral Conference, Pastor Kanzenbach heavily emphasized and stressed in his paper on evangelism "What" message we should always be sure to proclaim when he said...

*We do not want to "offend" where we need not. We do not want to point people to ourselves, but to the Savior from sin. We do not want to present a sanctification message at best, or a moralizing message at worst; we want to present a Gospel message, a Jesus-is-Savior-from-sin message. We do not just want to get people to enter our doors, but we want to present a message even for those who never enter our doors and drive by our signs only once or many times... I am convinced the best message for "advertising" the Gospel is presenting the Gospel message itself! ...There are plenty of outreach messages going around in our world—evangelism messages—that have no Gospel. Read the "religion page" in your newspaper around Christmas or Easter time. Our paper gags me. It is rare to find the Gospel—the pure Gospel—forgiveness of sins in Jesus by God's grace through faith. Rare.<sup>8</sup>*



<sup>8</sup> Pastor Richard Kanzenbach – "KNPUXATE TO EUANGELION" (p.8) Oct. 1-3, 2013

The Apostle Paul stressed for the believers in Corinth “What” message should have center stage in all they did, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

One of the updates I have been working on the last couple of months is a Christ-centered, apologetic menu on our website's homepage. The idea is to feature ten articles about what the world thinks about God and Jesus in comparison to what the Bible says who “Jesus is.”



## Church

With the focus rightly on Christ, there are a wide variety of other helpful items your church may display or direct people to on your webpage, including:

- **Audio/Video Services** - There is no substitute for being able to worship and pray with fellow believers in God's house together. However, when that is not always possible, one of God's great blessings and advantages with the web is the ability to be in a place without being able to physically be there. Whether it is streaming services as Pastor Eichstadt spoke of earlier in his paper “Turning the World Upside Down”, or recorded audio or audio/video services, these require minimal time commitment once you have it set up. A Pastor should find volunteers to do this (he could do it, but find help for the week to week work). Any teenager should be able to keep it updated on a weekly bases and would help bring them into the group of people actively helping the church.
- **Bulletins/Sermons** – Whether or not you have audio/video services, having printed bulletins and printed sermons is a great and easy resource to have for your website. I recently listened to Pastor Mike Roehl's sermon for Pastor Scott Schiermeister's funeral service while I read his manuscript. It was wonderful to be able to go to St. Paul's webpage on my own and “attend” the edifying service, even though I wasn't able to be there.
- **Calendar of Events** – This is a fast and easy way to alert people to times and schedules for your church's ministry. It also is a blessing in that it can save a lot of time for the pastor or whoever prints the bulletin. The calendar can be embedded into the website, as seen for example on ILC's website. This task can be accomplished very easily and very nicely with Google calendar [www.calendar.google.com](http://www.calendar.google.com).
- **Member Volunteers** - One idea we're hopeful to do down the road at Luther Memorial is have our membership be able to privately log into our website (Immanuel Mankato had been doing this not long ago using different members as project captains for updating various areas of the property). Our concept would be similar in allowing members to be able to see areas to volunteer for the church (such as signups for cleaning, mowing, or snow plowing), for the school (such as classroom and field trip help, wish list donations, or student grade logins for parents), or committees such as missions (with info and signups for what's coming up in opportunities to spread the gospel). In short, the website can be utilized as a one stop bulletin board, calendar, tract rack, worship archives, and help center for all kinds of questions and answers about the work and ministry at your congregation's church and/or school.

- **Mission Statement** – A 2011 study found that the average internet user leaves a webpage in 10-20 seconds.<sup>9</sup> That is enough time to catch the name of your church and possibly your mission statement. Though it is unfortunate a soul might miss out on the Gospel your website gives, it would prove beneficial to have brief visitors at least go away with what your church is all about. For example, Luther Memorial's homepage looks like this...



- **Welcome Video** – Do you try to personally greet everyone each Sunday? Why? It's because you want them to know that you personally take interest in their lives. A church welcome video can add that personal touch and allows the pastor or member of the church to greet visitors on your webpage. Write a short greeting and description, record yourself on your computer or camera, maybe add some soft background music, and upload it to your webpage. You can have these videos start automatically or on click. For a couple of examples, go to...

<http://sslcwest.com/>  
<http://www.fdllutheran.com/>

## School

Some churches have a separate website that may be linked to from their church's homepage. Most of that depends on just how much content you have for your school. Here is a brief list of some of the content ideas a school could include:

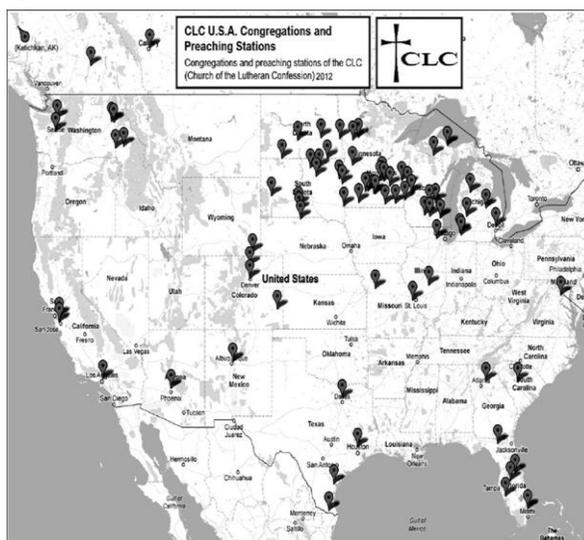
- **Academics** – It is very professional to display what your school has to offer for its studies and curriculum. As potential parents come across the website, many of their questions about what your school has to offer will immediately be answered. Other questions, such as transferring of student's records for example, can also be answered here.
- **Calendar of Events** – Depending on the size of the church and school, this calendar could simply be incorporated with the church calendar.
- **Forms** – Requests for more information, enrollment forms, permission slips, school handbooks, and other school policies can be nicely stored and easily accessible on a school website. This has helped us at Luther Memorial keep track of the latest updated versions of these forms. Our website login allows us to keep certain documents private.
- **Grades** – Many, if not most, public school systems today allow parents to access their children's grades online. Depending on teacher's grading software, this can be easily linked into the school website. We started using a free, but very powerful web program to keep track of school wide grades, records, attendance, quizzes, and more. I have enjoyed being able to make use of this for both day school and public school Catechism grades, email messages to students, and automatically graded online quizzes the students take in our computer lab. The free website that we are currently using may be found at [www.engage.com](http://www.engage.com).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-long-do-users-stay-on-web-pages/>

- **Media** – Videos or pictures of the school building or property, or special school activities like field trips or fun nights can be easily displayed and shared. It is important to remember to ask for permission from parents to upload their children's pictures online. This could also include parent or volunteer testimonials about your school's awesomeness.
- **School supply lists** – Teachers are able to distribute lists, Friday notes, and announcements easier than just sending it home with the children. Other notes can be posted here too.

## ✚ Synod

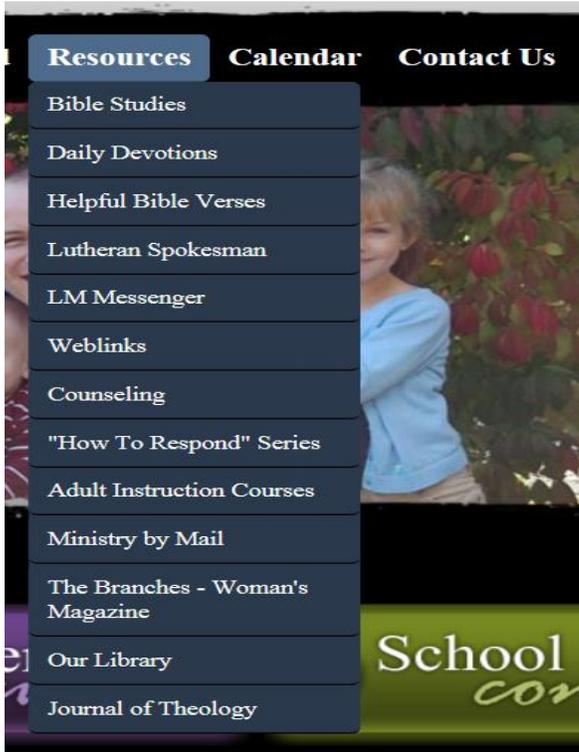
Because our synod's website is well maintained, it is easiest to simply link to those pages that a member or visitor might most commonly use. This is also important, especially if a visitor who does not live in your church's community needs to know (quickly, for example, before they think it's too far), where there may be other congregations closer to them.



## ✚ Resources

In my opinion, the content under the "resource" tab is where your congregation is allowed to shine and provide all you can for members or visitors. Over the last year or two I've been trying to work on a "How to respond" series, similar to the WELS and LCMS has, but written or adapted from CLC pastors. I am hopeful in the future to upload a series on encouragement in roles for men and women whether married or not. Some of the other ideas for resources could simply be other links to helpful sites or materials. You really want to make the most out of your website. Put Bible study materials and anything you think would encourage a blood bought soul of Christ!

*"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..." (Ephesians 4:11-12)*



## 4 HOW

### Backend

The “Backend” of the website is best described as where you “work under the hood” of your church’s website domain (the domain name is your internet address). You can register new domain names at the following website [www.askapro.net](http://www.askapro.net). The CMS or “Content Management System” contains all of the code where the formatting to the website is done. The CMS is where the web hosting company provides the servers that will host your site and provide service and help to your webpage. Examples of different CMS programs include Wordpress (which is probably the most popular for beginner do-it-yourself designers), Joomla, Mediawiki, Drupal, or Textpattern. All of these use different script languages such as Javascript or PHP that run the code for the website.

We have updated our website at Luther Memorial twice in the four years I’ve been here. The first time was more of a cosmetic lift (change of template) with the addition of a little more content. The second time was a complete change to a Joomla hosted site and new template. We did this to try to allow more people to be involved in making changes to content and keeping the website updated and fresh. However, we noticed there was a learning curve to the backend administration.

***Joomla - Social Networking** – This is perhaps the biggest benefit of Joomla. Joomla makes it easy to create social networks. Social networks can be a powerful asset for many sites, and with Joomla, you can have one up and running extremely quickly and easily.<sup>10</sup>*

Therefore, when choosing a CMS application, this should be one of your top considerations when designing or updating your webpage! Spend some time or find a volunteer to research the backend of the program if you’re going to have multiple people making changes. Wordpress probably has the easiest administrator functions, though you will be more limited to what you can do and change on the site’s appearance. If you’d like to research a little more on a comparison between Wordpress, Drupal, and Joomla, follow this link.

<http://websitesetup.org/cms-comparison-wordpress-vs-joomla-drupal/>

### Frontend

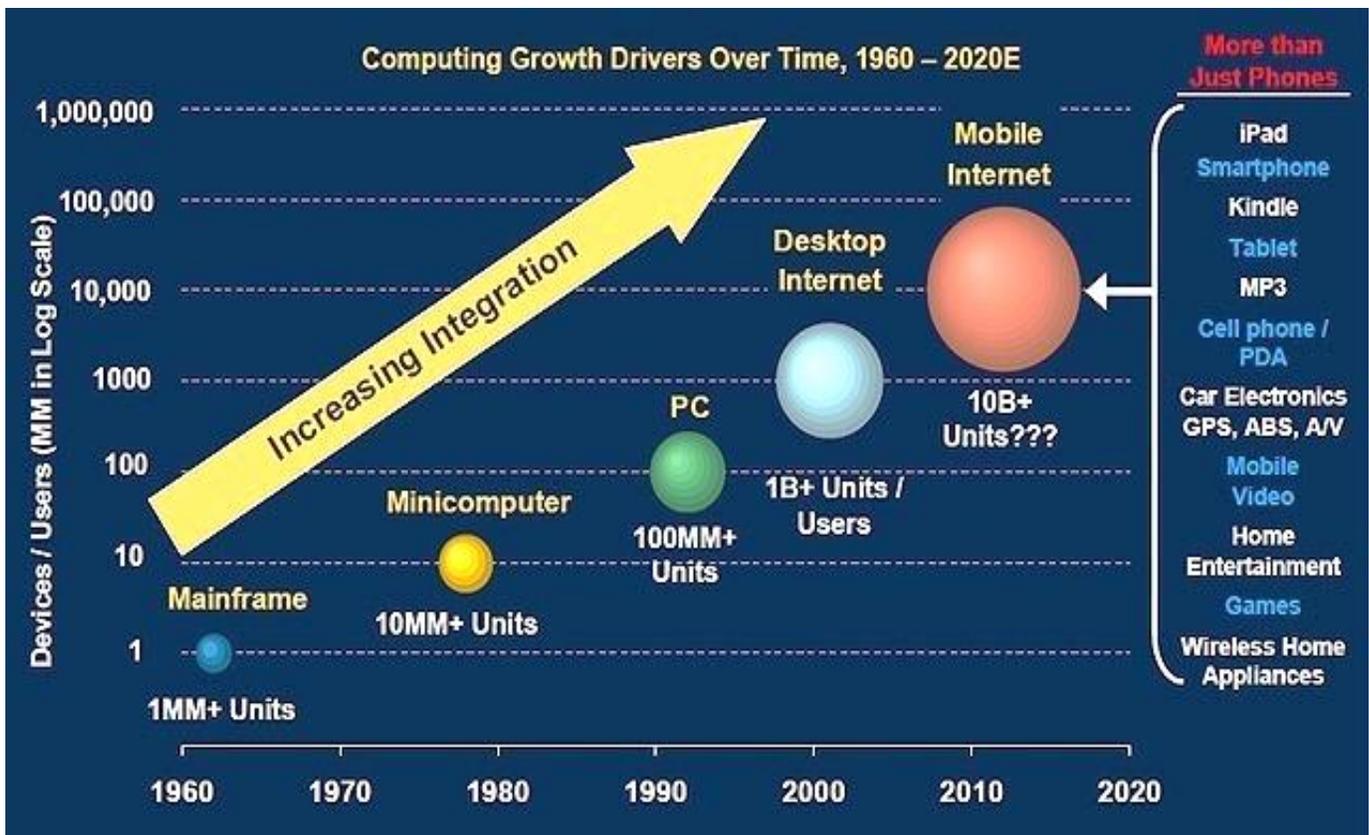
The “Frontend” of the website is what internet users actually see when they visit your website. This is also where users may be classified as “administrators” and make content changes right on the frontend such as uploading bulletins, videos, or articles. Know who your website super administrator is and have regular discussions with him or her about the best way to collectively maintain your website. This could be a normal agenda item on a Missions or Outreach Committee, or even a small, special committee designated to Web Media outreach. I believe they have recently started this concept at Peace Thru Christ in Middleton, WI.

The **Template**, or theme, is also a part of the frontend. The template is the actual design of your website. You can think of this as the “layout” similar to that of a liturgy you might print in the bulletin. The parts of the template are usually the same, but they can be arranged in different placements on the webpage itself. This is often called ‘mapping.’ In picking out and setting up a template there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://websitesetup.org/cms-comparison-wordpress-vs-joomla-drupal/>

1. **Template Search** - We wanted our website to look as professional and modern as possible, but without spending hundreds of dollars on hiring a professional designer. Simply searching for templates (through Wordpress, for example) will allow you to begin this process. The average cost to buy rights to use a template is anywhere between \$25-100. You can even buyout a template so no one else will have it, but that is often over \$1000. However, there are plenty of good, professional templates that exist for free.
2. **Adapt templates** – Keep in mind that when looking for a template, you are usually able to adjust some of the features (where various images, fonts, colors, and content ends up) but not as much liberty with the mapping or layout. The mapping or layout is usually run from the backend as mentioned a moment ago by a CMS program host such as Joomla. The only way to remap the template is knowing the system or code well enough to do so.
3. **Responsive templates** – There are currently 2.1 billion mobile users in the world.<sup>11</sup> And it is expected that in the year 2015 that the amount of handheld internet device users will have finally surpassed the desktop internet users.<sup>12</sup> The following chart shows this trend.



Responsive sites automatically adjust the website to the size of whatever device you are using (such as a phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop). It takes the different regions of the template “map” and stacks them in a logical way. The difference is quite amazing. You don't have to zoom in or zoom out on your phone to see the webpage, or try to clumsily click on a small button or icon with this kind of page. Once you've seen the difference between a website with a responsive template and one without, you'll wish everyone had responsive templates. The following pictures show the difference...

<sup>11</sup> <http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/b>

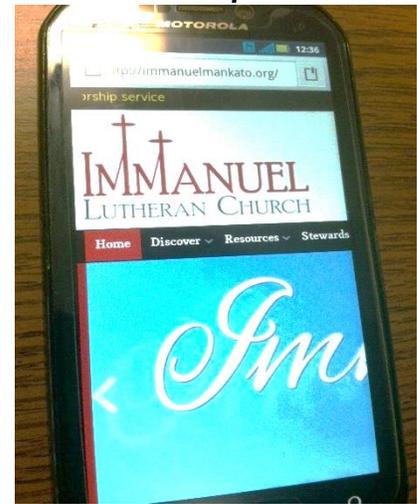
<sup>12</sup> <http://mashable.com/2010/04/13/mobile-web-stats/>

# Pictures of WITHOUT and WITH a "Responsive" website template

## Normal Websites



## WITHOUT Responsive



**TOO BIG...**



too small...

## Normal Website



## WITH Responsive



**Just right.**

## Facebook

These days, business or church websites and Facebook seem to go almost hand in hand. Facebook sites take much less time to set up than a website, because the backend is controlled by Facebook's own in-house proprietary program and management team. Messiah in Eau Claire has been experimenting more and more with advertising their church, school, and website through media like Facebook. One of Messiah's members, Marty Rosendahl, who owns his own business and is constantly looking into advertising, shared his recent work and the potential impact a strong web presence can make with little to no cost.

*I started the church's Facebook page to try to promote the "What would Jesus say about today's Lutherans" seminar. I started the page too late for it to really do anything, and I tried to convince our outreach committee to put a couple dollars to paid advertising on Facebook, but it didn't go anywhere right away. So all I started doing was posting the daily bible readings for home devotions. Below is a copy of a report I sent out to Pastor Naumann in July when I looked at the Facebook insights to see where these daily posts were reaching. The Daily Devotion on Facebook (and I have it on our google+ page too, and I would encourage pastors on LinkedIn to put these as daily posts as well) has the commentary on the bible text, and a link to the bible text on [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).*

*Here's some other stats to consider: If Facebook were a nation measured by population, it would be the 4th largest nation in the world (and growing.) Have you ever heard of the concept of "6 degrees of separation"? Basically this concept says if you gave a person a piece of paper and said "give it to so-and-so in Berlin Germany" that person could get it there with no more than 6 total transfers to other people. Facebook has discovered that each person on Facebook is connected to every other person on Facebook by an average of 4.2 connections between them. Our daily bible readings for home devotions posts have not been promoted by paid ads in any way. Our page has 169 page likes, and it reaches over 6000 people every 4 weeks in about 40 countries and is translated into 10 languages simply because people that see the posts click on "like" or "share." This doesn't translate into butts in the pews on Sunday. Pastor Walt Schaller told me once that he did his minute meditations on the radio in Hecla SD and never got a new member out of it, but that you never know when someone is going to hear that nugget of Gospel truth and recall it on their deathbed and receive the salvation of their soul. Facebook allows us to take that exact same concept and put it in nearly every country in the world for free.*

*But we can pay to promote certain things. The outreach committee took a little notice of how many people our Facebook posts were reaching and asked me to run an ad for \$50 promoting the school. They came up with the creative for the ad, I ran it for 1 week, and Principal Schaller reported that the school has never had so many inquiries for new students in a summer. Whether that's attributed to flyers in the community or to Facebook clicks, I don't know, but I know nearly 70 people clicked on that ad to go to the marketing web page the outreach committee designed for the campaign. So, you can use it to spread the Gospel to all nations, and you can use it to promote your school, church, or event. The outreach committee just contacted me to design an ad campaign (\$100 in allotted funds this time) around Dr. Menton's seminar coming up.*

*I also started a google+ page. I use a website called hootsuite to post the daily bible readings for home devotions in advance (so I do them all in one day but each post gets posted on a day and time that I specify.) It also posts to the Google+ page and the Facebook page from one post in hootsuite. The google+ thing is good because google wants businesses, individuals, and organizations to use THEIR social media tool instead of*

Facebook's. They won't admit it, but being active on Google+ is probably factored into the google algorithm for search engine results. We're trying to get more people to add our google+ page into their "circles" on their google+ page. I KNOW that interaction on google+ from the community boost search engine ranking results. I can also tell you that in the last 30 days, our google+ page has been seen by 1,159 people. They could be viewing the daily bible readings, they could be looking for a school for their kids, they could be looking for a church home. I don't know what specifically they're looking at, just that they're looking (there have been 44 clicks to the Messiah website because of the Google+ page.) I specifically want the Google+ effort to improve our search engine rankings. Currently if you are in Eau Claire and search for "church eau claire wi" we are the last result on page 5. We might as well not even have a website if that's where we sit. If someone searches for "lutheran church eau claire wi" we fare a little better, position 6 on page 2. Most searches don't go past page 1, and 34% of the people that do searches click on the top organic result, 18% click on the second organic result, and 12% click on the third organic result. So having a good quality SEO campaign by someone that really understands how to do SEO can have a major impact on the church's visibility in the community. "Lutheran Church Eau Claire" averages 2060 searches a month from people living in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls. It generated 44 clicks to the website from our google+ page, being the #3 organic spot would generate 247 clicks to the website, position 2 generates 371 clicks per month, and the #1 organic spot generates 700 clicks per month by people living in Eau Claire or Chippewa Falls and searching for "Lutheran Church Eau Claire".

A good quality SEO campaign generally runs about \$300 a month from a professional company, and nobody will promise top spot placement, but most churches don't have aggressive SEO and Social Media strategies and getting to those top spots shouldn't take much of an SEO effort (the top 3 spots get about 65% of the clicks on any given search and less than 1% of searches go past the first page). If you need a referral to a company to try for SEO, let me know I have a couple suggestions, and they generally require 6 month contracts. In short, if an outreach committee has a budget, the first priority (in my opinion) should be search engine optimization. Paid ads on Google and Facebook come second.

Lastly, Rachel and I were discussing the "Ice Bucket Challenge" going around on Facebook. I mused on a post "I wonder how many people realize it's the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and they're supposed to donate \$10 to the ALS Association after they dump the bucket of ice on their head." My feeling is that people got so caught up in the craze that they were doing it just because they had been challenged to do it without realizing that it was supposed to be a fundraiser for a nonprofit medical research group. She said it's all Facebook's fault because it makes these fads become so immediate to so many people. I argued it wasn't Facebook's fault, but human nature's fault. When the pony express, telegraph line, and telephone started it probably seemed like such an immediate form of communication to the people at the time (and I've heard stories that people were extremely concerned about how that new telephone fad was going to warp and twist dating/courtship in our country). The same goes for Email, pages, car phones, cell phones, text messaging, etc. Each time a new technology advances the speed of communication, the people that live in that time see it from their perspective. In 200 years, people are going to laugh at how we ever thought communication through Facebook and twitter was fast or could be considered "immediate." It's not Facebook's fault, it's our perspective and our human (sinful) nature. Facebook is just a tool for communication. It's new technology. It can be used to help spread the Gospel the same way radio, TV, newspapers, or a chat over coffee does.

Does the World Wide Web give us the same concerns about warping and twisting various moral issues in our society, churches, and homes? Social media continues to change it seems on a yearly basis.<sup>13</sup> We remember what Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, *“That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.”* Is the internet and similar media simply a highway, like the Romans and Eisenhower built, in which the Lord has provided us to quickly and readily engage “with the weapons of our warfare” in the war for souls? How are we making use of these already paved roads? Part of the intimidation of upgrading a website or Facebook page, or even taking them both on is a big question. Maybe it is just too overwhelming?

### **Support**

The process of creating a new website, Facebook page, or even updating an old one is something that shouldn't be tackled alone. Find a willing member or two, or three, to help get this project going or to overhaul your existing sites. Meet every quarter, or every month, or even every week (until it is up and running smoothly) and continue to meet to discuss updating or adding other content or changes that can be made to improve it. It may even be worth investing a little money in taking a local internet, website, and social media class.

Know that there is external help that exists! These days you can find just about any “how to” information on the internet or actual video tutorials on youtube.com. Glenn Oster was mentioned earlier as a human resource to help guide and answer questions you may be stuck on. Also, Nathan Ude (Batavia, IL) and Matthew Schaser (Middleton, WI) have volunteered to be consultants for congregations with website questions. There are many others out there. We should find them. The words of our Savior ring true when it comes to the abilities and talents He's provided our small church body, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened”* (Luke 11:9).

### **Prayer**

I remember during a vicarage that the church's mission committee had decided to pull an outreach activity that didn't seem to make sense anymore with the amount of time, resources, and effort currently being put into it. The pastor wouldn't let the meeting end without the group coming up with another idea. I remember him saying quite emphatically something to the tune of...

*“If we aren't going to be doing this project anymore, than we're going to come up with another idea to replace it before we leave. We can't do less for God's kingdom than we were doing before. I don't think the Savior would be pleased with that direction or attitude with all that He has blessed us with.”*

How true! With the blessings (and moral challenges) of the internet today, we need to continue to do more work to proclaim the truths of God's Word and the love of Christ our Savior! The World Wide Web provides a great foundation and spring board for your Mission outreach, as well as a hub for the Ministry of your congregation...

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<sup>13</sup> Facebook usage has topped off, meaning there are not many “new” users being added...  
<http://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/facebook-shows-signs-of-maturity-as-user-growth-tapers-off/>

Therefore, the purpose of this paper wasn't to answer every question about how to set up a webpage or Facebook page for your congregation. That couldn't possibly be done. The purpose of this paper was to motivate and encourage you in seeing the benefits a great webpage can serve for Christ's kingdom and the work of the Gospel Ministry through the World Wide Web.

<i>Is your website non-existent?</i>	<i>Get one!</i>
<i>Is your website outdated?</i>	<i>Update it!</i>
<i>Is your website empty?</i>	<i>Fill it!</i>

Fill it with:

1. Christ's ministry work in your midst (for your members, and for visitors).
2. Christ's message of the cross and His resurrection – the truth of our salvation!  
Because it may be the *first* thing they see.  
Because it may be the *only* thing they see!

*"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4:11*

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*in* Eau Claire, Wisconsin

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### **Let's close in the prayerful singing of TLH #507**

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|---|---|
| <b>1. Spread, oh, spread, thou mighty Word,<br/>Spread the kingdom of the Lord,<br/>Wheresoe'er His breath has giv'n<br/>Life to beings meant for heav'n.</b> | <b>4. Tell them of the Spirit giv'n<br/>Now to guide us up to heav'n,<br/>Strong and holy, just and true,<br/>Working both to will and do.</b>        |
| <b>2. Tell them how the Father's will<br/>Made the world and keeps it still,<br/>How His only Son He gave<br/>Man from sin and death to save.</b>             | <b>5. Up! The ripening fields ye see.<br/>Mighty shall the harvest be;<br/>But the reapers still are few,<br/>Great the work they have to do.</b>     |
| <b>3. Tell of our Redeemer's love,<br/>Who forever doth remove<br/>By His holy sacrifice<br/>All the guilt that on us lies.</b>                               | <b>6. Lord of Harvest, let there be<br/>Joy and strength to work for Thee<br/>Till the nations far and near<br/>See Thy light and learn Thy fear.</b> |

## **Appendix 1 – Broadcasting Internet Services on a Free Host, Method 1**

From Pastor Paul Naumann, Ascension, Tacoma WA

- 1) Go to [www.ustream.tv](http://www.ustream.tv) and click "sign up."  
Follow the prompts to set up a free account. It will give you a free web page to which people can go to watch your streaming broadcasts (ours is [www.ustream.tv/channel/tacomalutheran](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/tacomalutheran)). Also, this web page will not only display your streaming video in real time, it will automatically archive your past broadcasts as on-demand videos. From the web page, you can edit, rename and delete videos as you wish. So you can experiment with streaming video, and easily delete your experiments later.
- 2) In order to broadcast, do this - on your Ipod Touch, go to the app store and search for "ustream". It will be a free download. You will need a wireless broadband connection in your church. Once you have the app, all you have to do is open the Ustream app, press the button that says "Go Live," and you will be broadcasting live from the camera on your IPod. It's very easy.
- 3) Recipients need nothing but an internet connection. They go to your Ustream website and can watch either live broadcasts in real time, or archived past broadcasts on demand.

Obviously, you could get camera equipment that would enable you to broadcast higher-quality video, but the Ipod Touch is so easy, and it really works quite well. We just started streaming our worship services a month ago, and already we have shut-ins who never miss a service. It really is a gift from God.

## **Appendix 2 – Broadcasting Internet Services on a Free Host, Method 2**

From Pastor Bruce Naumann, Messiah, Eau Claire WI

- 1) Get a digital video camera that supports USB streaming. Ideally it will record on its own hard drive, though you can use miniDV or DVD-based camcorders, too.
- 2) Get to know "Windows Moviemaker," a video editing program that you already have, if you use Windows XP or Vista. If you later find that you want something with more features, check out [www.windvdpro.com](http://www.windvdpro.com).
- 3) Record a standard introduction and conclusion for your services, which you can use weekly, and store them on your hard disk. You can use still photos for this, and record a narration, with a mic connected to your computer (again, with Moviemaker).
- 4) Record the service, and then USB-stream it onto your hard drive. It helps a lot if you have a big, fat, dedicated second drive for videos (like 500 GB or larger).
- 5) Note that one important factor will be your camera's microphone situation. If your camera is in the back of the church and you're using the built-in mic, you'll get a lot of ambient noise and your preaching voice will be lost. You'll need to either plug an extension mic into the camcorder, or position the camcorder so that it is near one of your PA speakers.
- 6) Get someone to zoom in on the preacher during the sermon and back out for the hymns, etc.
- 7) Using Moviemaker, paste together your standard intro, the service, and the standard conclusion. Moviemaker will let you clip out certain portions of the service, and put in nice smooth transitions between clips.
- 8) Use Moviemaker to publish the movie to your computer, as a "wmv" file. Look for the setting "Windows Media Low Bandwidth" for a reasonable file size for uploading.
- 9) Go to [www.blip.tv](http://www.blip.tv). Sign up. Upload the file, and then fill in Blip's video info fields for subject, description, etc. Once it's online, you can copy the URL for your video, and add the link to your church's homepage. (BTW -- the reason to use Blip.tv and not YouTube is that YouTube limits you to 10 minutes.) For an example of how this looks, see:  
<http://blip.tv/grace-lutheran-sleepy-eye-mn-worship-services/grace-lutheran-services-october-25-2009-2786230>
- 10) Do your best to get a tech-type LAYMAN (or woman) to do all this for you -- you've got more important things to do!