



Outreach Ideas
English District
Evangelism Team
Newsletter

February 2024

Podcasting: Easy and Cheap

A podcast is an audio program that listeners can hear on your website or which they can receive on their smartphones with a free subscription. Why would you want to podcast? According to a [report](#) from Edison Research from last Spring ...

- 42% of Americans 12+ have listened to a podcast in the last month, a new all-time high and up from 38% in 2022
- The majority of Americans age 12-54 (53%) have listened to a podcast in the last month
- 31% of Americans 12+ have listened to a podcast in the last week, up significantly from 26% in 2022
- 39% percent of those Americans age 12-54 have listened to a podcast in the last week



In addition, according to a recent Pew Research [report](#) 15% of adults in the United States listen to religion-focused podcasts.

If you were thinking that podcasts appeal to only a niche audience, think again. Among those who listen to my own podcast regularly are students, workers young and old, retirees, shut-ins and tech-savvy octogenarians! It's an amazing audience. They listen to it on their phones, in their cars, on tablets, on television sets, and smart speakers like Alexa.

I'll be honest, when I was asked by a growing number of members, friends and family to start a podcast, I really didn't know what podcasts were all about. I also had no idea how to start one.

As with so many other things in life, there are YouTube videos and great online articles that explain well how podcasts function and how they are made.

Why should you consider having a podcast?

- 1) We have the best news the world has ever heard and it needs to be shared. As Lutherans we are able to do this in a way that is faithful to Scripture and which rightly divides Law and Gospel.
- 2) It's actually easy once you get the hang of it and it's remarkably cheap. (The podcast platform I have been using costs me only \$5 per month.)
- 3) You've already done the heavy lifting. You've written and delivered a sermon. Now it can continue to be heard locally, across the country and around the world! You will be amazed at the faithful listeners you have in places that you may never visit in person.

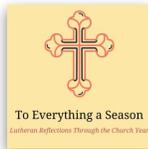
Here's an effective way for many more people to hear the message that is proclaimed fresh each week from your congregation's pulpit. It's also a great opportunity for our emeriti pastors who want to get more mileage out of some of their past sermons on file or who would enjoy preparing short devotions. You could also create a podcast to describe the readings for the upcoming Divine Service each week. There are all sorts of possibilities.

We are blessed with remarkable clergy, who have been gifted by God with all different styles of preaching and a message that is worth proclaiming far and wide. Should all of our congregations consider a podcast? Absolutely!

What is a Podcast?

Having a podcast is like having an on-demand radio program. Your podcast host creates an RSS feed.

The folks at [Castos](#) note, “A podcast RSS feed contains information about your show and its episodes. It then passes that information to podcast directories, like Apple Podcasts or Spotify, each time a new episode is published. The updated RSS feed allows your listeners to tune into each new episode as it premieres and access all back catalog content.”



Different Types of Podcasts to Consider

Sermon Podcasting is something that all of our congregations should consider. A sermon is already prepared and delivered each week. Here is a sample. The reviews here indicate that it even has a regular, and appreciative, listener in the Philippines. You may also be surprised at how often your members would like to hear the Sunday message again. Here is a [sample](#).

Devotional podcasts involve preparing short messages to be shared throughout the week. Devotions can be topical or follow the pericopes. A verse, a message and a prayer is all that's needed. It does involve the discipline of a regular schedule. Here is a [sample](#).

Discussion podcasts which may have one or two hosts, and even guests, are well-received. Discussions can cover a range of topics. Here is one that discusses the readings from the pericopes and the themes of the Church Year. Here is a [sample](#).

Do I need expensive software?

Expensive software is available for those who want to produce studio quality work. However, you'll be surprised at what can be accomplished with far less. If you have a Mac computer you already have [GarageBand](#) as a *free* part of the installed software that came with it. You can also use [this software](#) on your [iPad](#) or iPhone. [Online tutorials](#), although often homemade, can be helpful.



If you have a Windows computer, you can download [Audacity](#) software. It's a *free*, open source, cross-platform audio software which works great. Again, [online tutorials](#) will be useful.

Do I need expensive hardware?

Expensive hardware is available for those who, again, want to produce studio quality work. If you are simply looking to podcast your sermons, you need very little equipment. An mp3 recorder with you in the pulpit will get the job done quite well. The folks at Podbean point out that you can even use your [smartphone](#).



If you would like to record devotions, discuss liturgy, talk theology, or have a discussion, you can still do all this in a way that is quite affordable. However, it will involve additional equipment which will be described on the next page.

What is a Podcast Host?

A podcast host is the place where you upload and store your audio files. They distribute your podcast episodes to Podcast Directories using what's known as an RSS Feed. Here's a recent [article](#) which compares seven of the easiest to use podcast hosts for beginners (including [Pinecast](#) which I use).



What is a Podcast Directory?

A podcast directory distributes your podcast episodes to your subscribers' smartphones and devices. Many podcast hosting sites will help you submit your podcast to these directories. However, it's also quite easy if you have to do it yourself. Start with Apple Podcasts (the largest) and go from there. Many smaller directories will also draw from this listing. Here's a [useful list](#) of additional directories with instructions.



Equipment

If you are planning to podcast brief devotions or have topical discussions, you will need a few additional items. This equipment can be expensive if you choose but, as the folks at [BuzzSprout](#) point out, it doesn't have to be.

- A USB Microphone
There are many different USB microphones for podcasting available that plug directly into your computer.
- Microphone Stand
You can use a desktop microphone stand or use a boom microphone arm.



- Microphone Pop Filter
That's the little shield that clamps on to your microphone and prevents lip pops and other sounds. However, you can also get a [Microphone Ball](#). (This is larger than the usual foam microphone cover.) This combines a pop filter with a large foam shield which will block out external noises and the echos off your walls. It's very effective and cheaper than sound-proofing your room.



- Loudness Meters and True Peak Equalizers
Unless you're a professional sound engineer, getting your recording levels just right can be difficult work and the equipment needed can be expensive. You can download a [free Loudness Meter](#) from [Youlean](#) if you want to clean up your recording. It works with either GarageBand or Audacity. A [True Peak Equalizer](#) is a plugin which you can also get. (However, you may not even need this if your podcast host provides such tools already with your package.) I have been using [FinalLoud](#) which, for me, takes the guesswork out of getting my levels right for submission to my [Amazon Skill](#) for [Flash Briefings](#) on Alexa devices. You just punch in the number and it does the work. There are also others available. You may even wish to check out the new [AI podcasting editors](#), some of which are free.



- Music
Music is useful for your podcast's introduction and closing. There are a number of [free sources](#) to consider. However, you can also record your own organist playing a hymn in [public domain](#). CPH notes, "Please call our copyright department at 800-325-0191 or email at copyrights@cph.org for further information regarding the licensing of CPH owned materials. As we are able, CPH exercises lenient policies in granting permission for our copyright materials in audio and video recordings of worship services."

Handy Hint: You can embed a podcast player directly onto your church website for folks to hear your message there. You can get these [free](#) from a variety of sites such as [Apple](#) and [Radio Public](#). Here is a [sample](#). Promote it with email and social media.



If your podcast is brief you may wish to submit it to Amazon to become an [Alexa Skill](#). This enables your podcast to be added to a customer's daily "[Flash Briefing](#)." Here's a [sample](#).

Our Synod and District Programs

Materials and Workshops Available For You
(Do you have a workshop scheduled? Let us know.)

RELATIONAL, CONTEXTUAL WITNESSING

L LISTEN Be "quick to listen"

A ASK Ask questions to listen more

S SEEK Seek a point of connection

S SHARE Share God's Word: The only thing that can change people's hearts

I INVITE Keep the conversation about Jesus going

E ENCOURAGE Follow up and Follow through

EVERY ONE HIS WITNESS

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."
(1 Peter 2:9 ESV)

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Every One His Witness® (E1HW), the Synod's resource for equipping Lutherans to share the Gospel with the people they encounter in their everyday lives, is now available to everyone interested in strengthening their witness of Jesus Christ.

Access to the resources on the website was previously limited to people who had completed the core module workshop. Now all of the modules, including the newest module (witnessing to people influenced by critical theory), are available at no cost to anyone who requests and receives an access code.

To get a free access code to the video modules, please email support@everyonehiswitness.org

As Dr. Mark Wood noted in the Reporter, "The core module lays an excellent foundation that can be applied to any witnessing situation." The core module is available as a workshop kit from CPH and in a self-study version on the E1HW website.

Please Contact

Pastor David Tannahill of our Evangelism Team with your ideas and input.

Share details of what has worked for you for the upcoming topics below. The collegial sharing of tips and ideas is a blessing for our brothers and sisters in Christ.



Deaf Ministry
Training
Opportunities
and Materials
Available



Blind
Outreach
Excellent
Resources
and Ideas



Planning
Ahead
Christmas
and Easter
Outreach

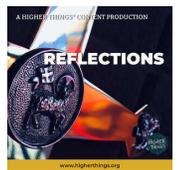
From The Field

Our Pastors and Congregations

The sermons of Pastor Mark Braden, of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan, are podcast each week. The congregation has a handy "subscribe" button with which you can link your podcast player directly to their RSS feed. You can also listen to each episode on their website.



Pastor Jonathan Lackey, of Grace Lutheran Church in Vine Grove, Kentucky, is the host for the podcast "Reflections" for Higher Things. Check it out and share it.



Articles, Books and Research

Current Research and Writings



"There is nothing that so attaches people to the church as good preaching." - Apology XXIV, 50

Here's a nice reminder that this remains true today. Check out this brief article from a study conducted by Gallup a few years ago.

Here's encouragement for all of our excellent English District pastors and congregations to take their Sunday message and podcast it to an even broader audience. It's something all of our congregations, from missions to megachurches, can do.