

Meagan Ranson ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to the church field podcast, insanely practical conversations with real pastors and real church leaders to equip you to lead healthy and growing churches. Before we get started, we have our partner glue here, hanging out with us today. So we wanted to take a moment to let them tell you what they're all about.

Gloo ([00:28](#)):

Thanks Megan, and Hey church leaders, super excited to be hanging out with you all on the podcast today.

Meagan Ranson ([00:34](#)):

So we've been working with glue for a little while now, can you tell us really quickly, like who glue is?

Gloo ([00:40](#)):

Absolutely. We're a tech company based in Boulder, Colorado, and our mission is to serve the champion above all else. So we call the churches and the organizations that we partner with champions because you champion the growth of others. So first of all, thank you so much for everything you do to serve our communities as leaders, especially during this time.

Meagan Ranson ([01:01](#)):

Awesome. How, how can church field podcast listeners learn more about that

Gloo ([01:05](#)):

Blue? For sure. Just head over to [glue.us](#). We have tons of free resources available, and plus, if you want to check out insights plus new church fuel users can use the code blue 10 CF for a 10% discount.

Meagan Ranson ([01:21](#)):

It's awesome. So once again, that code is glue 10 C.

Gloo ([01:26](#)):

Yep. That's correct. Looking forward to listening to the podcast.

Meagan Ranson ([01:34](#)):

What's up, everybody welcome to season two of the church field podcast. And this season, we are talking about how to reach people on mine. Now, online church, isn't going away. So as a church, we need to change our strategy to reflect the new landscape. And how do we do that? How do we one know who's connecting with us and to connect back with them? Well, today, Michael was with me to talk about how we can turn a digital viewer into a digital member was a Michael

Michael Lukaszewski ([02:03](#)):

What's what's up. What's that? It's good. How are you?

Meagan Ranson ([02:09](#)):

I am, I'm doing wonderful. You know, it's, it's a beauty, it's a beautiful day to save lives to beautiful.

Michael Lukaszewski ([02:16](#)):

I'm looking out my home office basement window, and it's like a blue sky. The leaves are kind of like fallish colors. It's nice outside today. And I'm inside talking to you. It's awesome.

Meagan Ranson ([02:26](#)):

Oh, lovely. We get to be inside. Well, it's so nice out here.

Michael Lukaszewski ([02:30](#)):

I know, but I am excited about our conversation today. I think this will be fun.

Meagan Ranson ([02:34](#)):

Talking about is really important. And I think of all of the, all of the topics that we're covering this season, this was probably one that feels the most confusing, complex, difficult, and just unclear. So I'm, I am glad that we're going to be addressing it and hopefully providing some clarity and practical steps to be able to take people as a total stranger online and to take them on a journey to an active member of our church.

Michael Lukaszewski ([03:01](#)):

Yeah, I think that's good. I think anytime there's a situation that's confusing. You know, what we try to do is look at that and go, Hey, I know we could dive off in a hundred different ways and you know, get lost in the weeds here, but what are some simple things that we can do to make this actionable, to make this now make it clear and get going? Because I think what you said is exactly right. Things have changed. Things will keep changing and we, as leaders need to, you know, respond and then lead the way forward.

Meagan Ranson ([03:29](#)):

So let's first talk about how we've looked at church members. What has growing our church looked like in the past?

Michael Lukaszewski ([03:37](#)):

Yeah. You know, so that's a good question. I think it, and do you think that frames like the whole conversation for today because you know, what it looks like in the past is probably what it is different than what it looks like today. But the way we've looked at church members, it's funny. I was even looking at a survey the other day that we were sending out and there were two different questions. Question number one was how many members does your church have? And then question number two is how many people attend, attend your church. And those are two different questions, right? Two very different questions. Yeah. So different. And it's hard sometimes to know, like right now we don't know how many people attend here. It's harder to know how many people attend. And the definition of a church member is changing based on, you know, culture or our denomination or whatever. So typically we've looked at church members as somebody who's raised their hand and said, I'm a part of this church. Right. And in some churches, that's a formal process. And some churches, they vote on members. Some you just sign a piece of paper and say, I'm a member, some have a covenant. I mean, so there's all different formats, but it's typically been viewed as a group of people who have raised their hand and said, I'm a part of, you know, of ABC church.

Meagan Ranson (04:44):

I would add to that too, that there in the past and in the past people, I think there are a lot of people that were a part of more than one church. So you're double counting members. And I think that's even more like, even more so happening now. Like I, I watch how many different church services, just as like a normal human being, not for research purposes. I know pastors will watch 10 different ones, but I'm a part of three churches right now. Technically.

Michael Lukaszewski (05:09):

Yeah. It, you know, it's funny, we're recording this, just coming out of kind of election season and, and church member is like a registered voter. You know, it's like, you don't know if they're actively voting, you don't, they may be, they may be out on the campaign trail. They may have it signed in the yard. They may not show up. And so a church member is, is somebody who's, who's on the list, they're on the list somewhere. And in many churches, there, there is a lot of meeting around that. But in most it's just a way to identify like it's a way to talk about how big our church is. I don't know that that's the ultimate goal. And I would say that that's your second question here is what is, how has that changing? You know, when I grew up in a church membership was like a, was like a goal.

Michael Lukaszewski (05:51):

I mean, it was something that you could go to a class, learn, some stuff, become a member, and now you're a member and it's, and maybe not been the ultimate goal, but it was definitely a visible, a visible goal. And yeah, it was just like a, yeah, it's a thing. And in a lot of churches, I'm seeing that now deemphasized in favor of either participation or engagement. And so it's great if you're a registered voter, but what we want you to do is actually show up vote. It's great. If you're a member of any city church, well, we actually like you to do is give or be in a small group or be a volunteer. And so I've seen a shift and I think this is a good shift because it moves us just from titles to actually to having something that has meaning. And so instead of emphasizing the title of member, a lot of churches today are lifting up the things that members do and making those more front and center, you know, we're, we want you to give, we want you to volunteer when she'd be in a small group, wants you to lead, you know, and those things are kind of becoming more important. Whereas the official title is becoming less important.

Meagan Ranson (06:58):

So the process to get those members though looked like running, like sending postcards or holding a community event or inviting people to your service, or you know, there were some pretty standard practices for getting somebody from just out and about in the community to get them to become a member of your church. But now that things are online and they're going to stay online, we have all of these ambiguous numbers out there. This aggregated data about who's watching and quote unquote attending our church. So I think the process was pretty clear, or at least, you know, we were still working out the kinks on how to do it well on growing our church. But now that we have all of these unknown people from across the country, potentially across the globe, how, what are the, what are the, what are the things that are changing to connect with that person? First of all, I just want to think about how that opens up the door of possibility, right? Like, Oh, so much opportunity is so much opportunity and it's something that is possible for everyone to be able to connect with those people. So what are the possibilities that go along with this?

Michael Lukaszewski (08:01):

Yeah, so, you know, so it used to be a way a church would attract people. And I've, I've, I've preached that's when I was pastoring, you know, the best way for our church to grow or the best way for us to accomplish our mission is people inviting people. So by somebody to come to church with you next week, here's an invite card. Here's the series. Here's the, you know, it's like going by inviting by. And that was the way we did it. Like come to the service, meet some people, and then you can kind of start down the path. And then everything we did online was like a prelude to that, you know, Hey, if you're not ready to come check it out online, or you can read about it or website, or, you know, watch this video or whatever. Well, now COVID again has accelerated the shift.

Michael Lukaszewski ([08:42](#)):

It's always been there, but it's just accelerated. And now online is the thing. I mean, it's, it's not, it's not just the prelude to the real thing. It is as much of a real thing. It's the thing. And then a lot of that's what they have. So we were talking about this before we hit record it. I think there is a mindset shift that has to happen, and there's a bunch of applications and action steps that come out of this. So, but if you get this mindset, I think the applications become a little more obvious in your setting. And it's this idea that digital experience, whatever it is is real. Right? So we, in our small group, the other night, we were talking about how a lot of us have teenage teenagers and they just talk on there. They just text and talk on their phone, not even talk, but they text on their phone on different apps or on whatever. And you know, those of us who are middle aged adults are like, that's not a real show. And, and, but it is, I mean, if you ask them, it's like, that's how we communicate. And so we're like, well, why don't you just call and work it out? I'm like, yeah, that's not, you know, you don't mind. That's not what we do.

Meagan Ranson ([09:52](#)):

Right. That's super weird. Don't ask me to talk on the phone. That's not what phones are for.

Michael Lukaszewski ([09:59](#)):

So it's this idea that there's, and that's a generational gap obviously, but like this digital relationship is not as real as in-person relationship or the service online that it's not as good. I know it's different. It is different, but better is a perspective.

Meagan Ranson ([10:17](#)):

Well, that's an interesting thought too, is that on the other side of it, the person that's connecting with your church, it is real to them.

Michael Lukaszewski ([10:24](#)):

Yeah, exactly. So there's, here's somebody that finds your church online. They see a Facebook post or whatever, you know, and so again, what we used to do is go out and tell our people, tell our members, go invite, invite, invite, invite. Well, that's harder to do. And so we, now we don't know what to tell him what to do, and it's a little bit, it's a little harder to figure out. And so with that, and that that'll still be a piece of our strategy. It still should be a piece of our strategy, but we have all this online stuff that's happening. And when somebody takes a step toward that, we have to view it as real. We can't go, well, that's just a, that's those just emails flying around. That's not a real relationship. You know, two people exchanging a bunch of emails that are like discipleship related.

Michael Lukaszewski ([11:06](#)):

We got to put that on par with meeting it at Starbucks, with the Bible and having a one-on-one discipleship conversation. Like those are methods. That thing is that thing. And so a digital thing is just as much a real thing as a physical thing. And we just have to get over that the fact that, that that is not real because it is real. And so I know that's kind of philosophical. Yeah, yeah. That, and that's the little anti, you know, church fuel emo is that we're talking about theory and philosophy. But I think that, I think that colors all of this, if we see we can go online on whether it's on social media or our website or a chat or a live stream where people are talking, we have to feel good about that and not just go it's well, it's not the same and it's not discipleship and it's not relationship like we have to get over that. Yeah.

Meagan Ranson ([11:56](#)):

Yeah. For sure. So I think one thing that we're all wanting to hear and figure out is how do we get there? Where do we start when we have all of these anonymous names and handles, handles, and people coming to us, how do we connect with them? Where do we start?

Michael Lukaszewski ([12:12](#)):

Yeah. So you have to give people the opportunity to identify themselves, right? So th th th the biggest challenge, what digital is this anonymous, you know, so you've got a hundred people watching your live stream, but you can't see them, you know, they can see you, but you can't see them. And so it is different, right? So I'm not, I'm not saying it's not different. And so what you have to do is create simple steps for people to raise their hand and say, I'm here.

Meagan Ranson ([12:36](#)):

How you using other churches do that. Yeah.

Michael Lukaszewski ([12:38](#)):

So you can do it in a chat. So on a live stream, it's, it's watching. And so this is, this is I see some churches do this now. You know, we used to just take our regular service and just put it online. And we're just, we're just preaching at the internet. Well, now it's like ask a question and ask people to type in their answer in the chat. That's, that's a form of engagement that you wouldn't normally do if you're just preaching on Sunday from the stage or the pulpit. But now that things have changed, it's like we have to, we have to ask, we can ask people questions. There can be interaction and you get like, well, I don't want them distracted. I want them to focus on the message. Well, they're distracted anyway. So distract them with your stuff instead of it, instead of other people's stuff.

Michael Lukaszewski ([13:18](#)):

So you can ask questions. How can we pray for you? Would you like would you like to submit a private prayer request? Here's a, here's a, you know, click this link in it's a forum and you can send in your prayer request. Do you want some more information, you know, clicked it, you know, email, this person type, text this number. And there's a lot of tools that allow you to do this, rather than just blasting out one way information. I would find every single opportunity to ask a question. Let people answer it, you know, have them kind of virtually raise their hand, digital connect cards. You know, a lot of churches are doing that now. You know, you got to find, you have to look for those ways and when you start to look for them, you'll realize, yeah, there's a lot there.

Meagan Ranson ([14:01](#)):

Yeah. That's a, there's an easy, they're easy ways to get people's information. And once you have it, then you can kind of start that digital journey to connect with them and move them. And you should have that planned out. Like, what does it look like? They submit their information. What's the next step. And then what's the next step after that? And what's the goal where do we want to lead them to?

Michael Lukaszewski ([14:20](#)):

Yeah. And just like in just like with a physical, you know, connection card or connect card or whatever, whatever you call it, you know, you don't want to, you don't need to ask for everything. Right. You know, sometimes just having somebody's name and email address is fine, or a phone number is fine. You don't need to ask all kinds of personal information and make it creepy sounding. Right. But let them, let them raise their hand, let them say, I'm here. I'm participating. I have a question. I have a comment I want to, I'd like some more information, get the, the minimum amount of information possible from a new person. And then, you know, it's a journey at that point and exactly what you said, plan it out.

Meagan Ranson ([14:57](#)):

Yeah. And another thing you could do is have a pop-up on your website for them to get connected with you. You could, we've talked about this in our previous episode where we talked about the front, your front door have helpful content out there. And they put in an email address to download the content. And then now you have their email address and you can tell them about something fun that you guys are doing and they can attend. And then they get to know people because they've attended. Yeah.

Michael Lukaszewski ([15:23](#)):

And when you're doing in that Megan is you're, you're stringing out the relationship, right. You're not meeting somebody online and, and going, let's get married. Right. It's like, you're stringing it out intentionally on purpose, giving time in there that works the same way as it doesn't rely. Yep. You know, when somebody comes to a live stream or service or a zoom call or whatever, whatever that looks like, you know, they, they need to take the appropriate next step. Not like all the next steps once.

Meagan Ranson ([15:52](#)):

And you have that same experience when it's in person, because somebody drives by your church a million times before they walk through your front door, they get your postcard for six years before they go to your Christmas service. Yeah.

Michael Lukaszewski ([16:06](#)):

And you're good with that because you recognize that that's how, how it works. Yeah.

Meagan Ranson ([16:10](#)):

Yeah. And so understanding that even when it's online, just because it's more, it's easier to connect with that individual. Doesn't make it, doesn't need to make it automatic.

Michael Lukaszewski ([16:20](#)):

Yeah. I'd really challenge you to not let the D the parent's speed of digital force you into trying to speed up a relationship. Right. We think digital is instant. You know, I'm searching, I'm asking Syria. I like instant, instant, instant. Everything should be the, every sink should be the same, you know, give it to me now. But a digital relationship takes just as much time to develop as a, as a physical one. And so be

patient. And really, I, you know, I wrote this down in my notes. This is really this is a weird term is a weird term for church people, but really it's looking at this, like the customer journey. And so if you've, you've experienced this as a customer, like what you just said, driving by something, a bunch of times seeing a bunch of ads, you know, I, you know, there's all kinds of different studies that say how many times we need to be exposed to something before we take a step. But it's a lot, it's not one and done. It's a lot. I think it's 11. It sounds good. We should just

Meagan Ranson ([17:19](#)):

Sounds right. That's right. According to Megan, 11, 11 exposures, she would take an action on something that I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna call it a fact.

Michael Lukaszewski ([17:31](#)):

So, but it's definitely that, you know, it's a lot. And so this idea of viewing these people that are coming to your digital experiences, again, whether it's a zoom call, a live stream, commenting on Facebook posts, whatever it is, right. They've taken us a small step. You've got to look at that like a customer journey and the customer journey is it's. They go, people go through phases of where they're just aware. Awareness is a big phase. It's like, there's a church in our town that exists you know, to, to, I'm intrigued to, I'd like to learn more too. I think I'll, I will watch her on a visit, you know, and each step along the way, you know, and you could, you could map this out, right. Each step, along the way, there are both opportunities. And then there were barriers. So, you know, a lot in in so many churches, like you're brand new come to the new member class, well, that's a giant step, right?

Michael Lukaszewski ([18:26](#)):

And your, your new member class, that may be an opportunity, but it could also be a barrier and you'll see it. Well, a lot of people don't come to that. So it's, it's mapped. I would encourage you to map this out, literally create it's called a journey map, customer journey. You can Google it and see all kinds of examples. Almost every company that sells anything has one of these. It's like, what's the typical journey of a person finding out about us, interacting with us, buying something, and then ultimately telling a friend about us. That's something we should map out.

Meagan Ranson ([18:55](#)):

Right. And I know this feels very like business-y and, you know, cold and, and, and, you know, not super spiritual, but this works because it's how God wired us like this member or customer journey, which I think we should just call our member journey. That was the works because God wired us to work like this. We don't jump right into the first social group that we see. We get exposure. We test the water. We see if it's safe. Is it comfortable? Does that work for us? Is that connect with where we are and who we are like, it's all psychology. And it's just, it's how God wired us. So the more, the more, the less we buck against it, the better we're going to be able to connect with people. And the more that we, you know, have this intentional and planned out, and we are aware of what each of those steps look like in our church. And we have something specifically to speak to each of those steps, the more people we're going to be able to connect with, because it, it works with what, how they,

Michael Lukaszewski ([19:51](#)):

And you do this intrinsically when it comes to a physical gathering, right? You see why, you know, that you're, you know, pre preschoolers go to the preschool environment because they're getting appropriate information. And, you know, we, we view like life as this journey, right? And so this is what

a kid needs to learn when they're in preschool. And then when they get out of high school, they needed it. And so we, we, we kind of do this naturally. We bucket people into groups and stages in life phases and all that kind of stuff naturally. And I'm just encouraging you, encouraging you to do the same thing when it comes to a digital relationship to just kind of map and people, some people will go really fast. Some people go slow, but when you map it all out and you can do this on a sheet of paper, you can do this on a whiteboard.

Michael Lukaszewski ([20:30](#)):

You can do this, you know, with a software tool. It doesn't matter to just think through, from somebody not knowing about Jesus and not knowing about our church to the end goal, how many steps are involved in that? What are the phases? And everybody's not going to go through every step. I mean, everybody's different. Right. But mapping it out like that. It allows you to say, all right, here's where we need to put opportunities. Here's where we need to put pieces of content. Here's where we need to put, you know, steps and events. And, you know, you got, you got, you just have to look at it like this. Yeah,

Meagan Ranson ([21:00](#)):

Yeah. For sure. Well, as we wrap up, is there any other last things or big picture thoughts, or minute details that you want to throw in about what this looks like and how we can make it happen in our church?

Michael Lukaszewski ([21:10](#)):

Yeah. So the biggest, the biggest barrier that I see when we talk about this, Megan, you and I talk about this all the time is when things seem complicated, we just don't do anything. It's like digital engagement sounds hard. I got went up to app. Do I download? It's not, you know, it's, it's complicated, it's confusing. I listen to seven different experts. They told me seven different things. And even if you would consider like church field, one of those experts, let me see, let me say this. Relax, take a big deep breath and just do the next best thing. That's it? You know, you've got people on your Facebook page, start talking to them. That's, that's a step in the journey. If you've got people coming to a live stream your church is on zoom or whatever, ask a question and pause awkwardly and let people type it in and try to facilitate some conversation.

Michael Lukaszewski ([21:59](#)):

Find simple things that you can do right now that you don't have to sign up for a whole bunch of new services or have a big, giant strategy meeting, but start looking for ways to just string out the relationship, engage people digitally and make it feel more real right. As we get over the fact that this is not real, it's not the same. It's not good enough back to normal. I'll get that out of here and vocabulary and just take a little step. And there is a step that everybody listening to this can take that will help in this area. And as you take steps, we get better.

Meagan Ranson ([22:31](#)):

The whole mindset, you know, goes to many different areas of our life. And when you go to work out, you don't go run a marathon. You maybe take a jog down your street and that's, that's better than what you did yesterday would walk down the street. I walked down the street. Yeah. Right.

Michael Lukaszewski ([22:46](#)):

Get out of your basement office because it's nice outside, you know,

Meagan Ranson ([22:50](#)):

Are you speaking to anyone else? I'll try there.

Michael Lukaszewski ([22:52](#)):

No, like a soft talk. A little softer.

Meagan Ranson ([22:56](#)):

Awesome. Well, thanks for chatting about all of this. You have a lot of wisdom here. It's like, you know, things I know, thanks.

Michael Lukaszewski ([23:05](#)):

I don't know which things, but get out and enjoy the weather. I'll do my best.

Gloo ([23:14](#)):

[Inaudible]

Meagan Ranson ([23:14](#)):

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