

Holly Tate:

Hey guys, it's Holly here. And before we jump into today's episode, wanted you to hear a quick message from David Fletcher, the founder of XPastor. He hosts the XPastor seminar every February in Dallas, Texas, and William Vanderbloemen will be speaking there this coming February. So hear what David has to say about this coming XPastor seminar.

Holly Tate:

Well, David, we've been talking about XPastor seminar the last couple of weeks on our podcast, and you've got a discount code. So tell everybody about the discount code so they can go sign up.

David Fletcher:

Well, we love the folks at Vanderbloemen and all that you do for churches, staffing, transitions, salary issues, just coming out, just great stuff. So we want to offer 10% off. And this is in November, maybe the first week of December, because the broadcast could go past that, and use this very unique promo code of Vander, V-A-N-D-E-R.

Holly Tate:

Well, I'm grateful. That's easy to remember; Vander, V-A-N-D-E-R. Awesome and they can go to xpastor.org to sign up for the seminar using promo code Vander to save 10%. Well, awesome. Thanks so much, David. We appreciate the promo code.

Holly Tate:

Welcome to the Vanderbloemen Leadership Podcast. I'm your host, Holly Tate. And today I have our marketing manager here with me, Anna Baker. Hey, Anna.

Anna Baker:

Hey guys. I'm so excited to be here with you today.

Holly Tate:

Well, thanks for joining me, Anna. As you might have heard, if you follow our newsletter or on our email list here at Vanderbloemen, which if you're not, you totally should be, by the way. You might've heard that I am actually launching my own marketing consulting company and it is with a wonderful support, overwhelming support from William and Sutton and the whole team here at Vanderbloemen.

Holly Tate:

After eight and a half years I'm so excited to be able to launch into this next venture with the support of this team. But it's bittersweet Anna, because I've been here for eight and a half years. But with this podcast too, Anna, I mean, it's been about five years that we've had this podcast. We've done... You would probably know better than I would. A couple of hundred-

Anna Baker:

A couple hundred, yeah.

Holly Tate:

And so, thank you guys to those who have listened and heard my voice each week, but I am so excited to hand over the reins to Anna Baker as we make this transition. So, Anna, yeah. Thank you for all the work that you do behind the scenes. What you guys who listen don't see, is Anna's hard work each and every week, editing these episodes, putting it all together, making sure we're planning awesome episodes coming up each and every week. So thank you so much for that, Anna, and I can't wait for your voice to be on this podcast.

Anna Baker:

Well, it's an honor to follow you and to continue this exciting podcast. You guys, we have a lot of exciting episodes coming up to close out the year. So make sure you keep tuning in every week. And Holly, we are going to miss your voice and we're going to miss your leadership at Vanderbloemen, but we are so excited to see what you're going to do with your new company. Congratulations.

Holly Tate:

Thank you. Thank you so much, Anna. Well, on today's episode, I got to interview Carl Barnhill and he's the founder and CEO of Twelve:Thirty Media. They are an amazing organization that helps churches get ready for Sunday. So whether that's tech or audio or graphics, they've got you covered. And so, I interviewed Carl about what he's seeing in this post. Well, I mean, we're still, oh my goodness. We're still very much in the midst of COVID, but as churches are figuring out this physical and digital worship experience. So I learned a ton from him. I can't wait for you guys to hear that.

Holly Tate:

All right, guys, without further ado, here's my conversation with Carl Barnhill. Well, Carl, thanks so much for joining us on the Vanderbloemen Leadership Podcast today. I can't wait to hear what you guys have been up to at Twelve:Thirty Media. So, that's where I'd love to start is for those who haven't heard of Twelve:Thirty Media, which I hope everyone listening has because we partnered with you guys on you producing our podcast for a while, which we're so grateful for. So they got to hear the Twelve:Thirty Media name a lot, but yeah, fill everybody in on who you are and what you guys do at Twelve:Thirty Media.

Carl Barnhill:

Yeah. Thanks so much for having me. So we serve the church in three main areas. Really the overarching kind of umbrella of what we do is we help churches with their worship experience. Okay? So whether that's physical or online, we help you create amazing worship experiences. Now we know that the experience is not salvation. It's not the church. We all get that, but it is the launching pad for life change, or can be one of the tools that we use in our tool belt to see life change happen at our churches. So we help churches do that through media content and training. The media content is either ready-made, kind of off the shelf, ready to go, series, kits and coordinated packs of media, sermon illustration videos, that sort of thing. And then custom media. And that is custom bumpers, trailers, promo videos, sermon series, graphics, announcement videos, and graphics, all that kind of stuff.

Carl Barnhill:

We help you enhance your screen content. And then the training piece is we help you with the audio visual elements, volunteers, sermon helps, all that kind of stuff. Help you with your worship experience with blog, podcast, books, other resources, stuff like that.

Holly Tate:

That's awesome.

Carl Barnhill:

Obviously it's been quite a ride this summer.

Holly Tate:

Yeah, I was about to say, you have not been bored at all.

Carl Barnhill:

No, not at all. If I seem tired or look tired, that's probably why, because it's true. So yeah, we've helped a lot of churches either get online, with churches who might not have any type of streaming or online presence at all, and then churches who already had it, helped them enhance that more.

Holly Tate:

Yeah. Well, and Carl, we didn't talk about this before, but we did a survey and over 50% of the churches, I think it was over 900 churches took the... Well, it was Christian organizations, but mostly churches, took the survey and they told us that over 50% of them did not have any sort of online service experience before COVID-19, which was really surprising to me. So yeah, I'd love to hear kind of what you saw initially with all of it.

Carl Barnhill:

That's been the most exciting thing that I've seen is that this has accelerated churches that probably needed to be online. They definitely needed to be. And so this has accelerated that. I think of my dad, who's a retired pastor of a small church, under a hundred people that they did not have any online presence and they had to figure out, "Okay, what do we do? We're not great at website stuff." So he just did some Facebook Lives and taught through that venue. And so, we've seen churches that are like that and then churches that have purchased equipment to create a livestream environment or online presence and how to enhance that. So what does the team do that I need to build out? What live streaming provider do I need? All those types of elements. So yeah, we've seen the gamut over the course of the last few months.

Holly Tate:

You've seen it all. That's amazing. Well, that's really what I wanted to dive in and talk to you about because, let's see, we are recording this in September. This is going to go live a couple of months after we're recording this. So, I'm sure that everybody is going to be thinking about, "Okay, if we weren't online before we've transitioned. [crosstalk 00:07:22] We're online, right? In some capacity. And one thing we're seeing that only about 20%... For churches that have reopened, only about 20% of attendance pre-COVID is actually attending in person. And I think it's going to be that way for a while. So, what I would love to dive in with you is this concept of really building online community, because there's a difference between just putting content out there and building online community into an experience. And that's what you guys really think about all day, every day, over at Twelve:Thirty Media. So what do you feel like are the biggest needs that churches need to be thinking about as they transition into building truly an online community experience?"

Carl Barnhill:

Well, I think you bring up a good point in that it's not an experience, or it's not a community, it's not interactive, when it's just a camera in the back of the room. Now, if that's all you can do, I'm a firm believer in start where you can start with. Okay? Step one is better than step none. I'm totally with that. Okay? But, in order to continue to grow, we need to create an experience. We need to be interactive. And what I'm really encouraging churches to do is especially right now, pour either the same amount of energy or very similar amount of energy into creating a great physical environment, and also a great online environment. Whether COVID goes away or not, when it goes away, whatever you feel about that, the comfort level is still not going to be 100% of physical gathering for the foreseeable future.

Carl Barnhill:

So, I definitely agree with our premise here, that we need to produce an experience, both physical and online that people can interact with and grow with each other and have community with each other with. So, a camera in the back of the room might not be that, unless you have a whole lot of other tools that you're going to bring out to interact with people online. So that's what I'm going to encourage churches with first, is create an experience where people can have community online.

Holly Tate:

Absolutely.

Carl Barnhill:

So that being said, I would say my first kind of point is to know the tools available to us. So, there's a lot of people that we have partnered with over the last few months, especially. So I'll just list out a few and these are great tools just to have in your toolbox to know where to go, to build your online presence and enhance your online community. Okay? So Church Online Platform is number one. So you definitely need a way to get your stream, your experience out to your audience. So I would suggest either Church Online Platform or outreachesfreeonlinechurch.com, both are great solutions for that. Both are completely free.

Holly Tate:

Now Carl, let me interrupt you right there.

Carl Barnhill:

Yeah, please.

Holly Tate:

So why should a church use a platform like that rather than just stream directly to Facebook or YouTube? Let's talk through the differences of why you recommend that.

Carl Barnhill:

Great question. Great question. So, I would say get your content out there. I would say it needs to be on all platforms. Do you need to stream on Facebook? Yes. Do you need to stream on YouTube? Yes. But here's the reason why I believe that you need a web page presence that is kind of the anchor for your experience. The reason why is, Facebook's algorithms, especially... Let's hit on Facebook first. Facebook's algorithms are going to encourage you to continue to scroll. Okay? YouTube, the same way.

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They're going to put things in front of you to make you click over to something else. So it's going to be easier for people to get distracted to go over to the cat video and not stay on your sermon or your online experience. Now, if you have a YouTube presence and they go to the channel, they certainly might stay there, but they're more apt to be distracted on those platforms.

Carl Barnhill:

And also, you have less control of what tools you're giving them. So if you send them to firstbaptist.com/live, now you have the stream there, plus you have a chat that you can interact with people. You can have a hospitality team online there. You can have tools available that they can go deeper with the sermon content. You're going to get them plugged into a small group. You're going to get them... And the list goes on. So, you're creating an environment where you're putting things in front of your people where they can grow. Whereas the platform of Facebook or YouTube, you have less control over what you... Can you have a comment feed on Facebook? Yes. Should you? Sure. I'm just saying that having an anchor point on your website, you can create and control that space a little bit more.

Holly Tate:

Absolutely.

Carl Barnhill:

Make sense?

Holly Tate:

Yes. And one way I think people can think about it is renting versus owning. So with the social platforms, we're renting that space. Facebook... And exactly what you said. They want us to click over because they have advertisers and that's how they make money. Whereas on your website, exactly what you said, you can control that experience a bit more because you own your own website. So great point, Carl. Thanks for helping us think through that.

Carl Barnhill:

Yeah. Okay. So you want to go onto the kind of similar tools?

Holly Tate:

Yeah. More tools. Yes.

Carl Barnhill:

Okay. All right. So here's a great one that I've found recently. In fact, I just had a conversation with these guys last week and that is Alterlive. So alterlive.com and what they are doing is they are combining, they're doing a hybrid physical and digital experience.

Holly Tate:

Interesting.

Carl Barnhill:

And honestly, I'm just learning about it but it's a great tool that you can do things like your streaming, your stream is going to come into their app and their web portal. So it's kind of like a Zoom meeting, but you're all watching one thing and you can talk with each other and interact. So you're basically all in a Zoom call, but it can also work the other way. So you can be in the tech booth, in your live environment, and you can put someone from the Zoom meeting up on your screen and have them pray, have them share an announcement, have them share a testimony.

Carl Barnhill:

So, it can go back and forth, and so you really have a hybrid experience. Now, the only thing that I encouraged them with is, we got to get the volunteer training right because that could derail very quickly if we're not doing that right. If the audio comes up at the wrong time or something like that, but if we can get that piece right, I think that this solution might be a very interesting hybrid experience. And my friend, Jeff Reed, over at Stadia Church Planting, he's talking about this kind of experience quite a lot. I think it's called phygital, so physical and digital.

Holly Tate:

That's creative.

Carl Barnhill:

And so, I think you might see a lot of these kinds of hybrid things.

Holly Tate:

Well, I had never heard of that tool before, but it sounds like that's what everyone's kind of looking for right now, as... I really feel like we're going to have to think of ministry as multi-channel ministry moving forward. It's got to be both/and, so that's a great tool for people to check out.

Carl Barnhill:

Yep.

Holly Tate:

What else? What else you got?

Carl Barnhill:

I would say a couple more. I would say a Vimeo Live stream. So, a couple of platforms... I might get in trouble for saying this. But a couple of platforms that I saw that were really, really stable through this, especially when COVID first hit, are Vimeo Live Stream and Resi, which was Living As One. They just changed their name to Resi. Both of those platforms were really stable, especially when we got hit with a lot of volume, a lot of traffic. So those are two very stable live stream providers. And then OBS. Most people know about OBS, but you can definitely incorporate that for some live streaming tools. And then Switcher Studio. So Switcher Studio is kind of similar to Alter. They're very similar in nature. Switcher Studio is more used for a remote shoot, so you can hook up, iPhones, iPads, and you connect it to an app, and you're basically... So instead of buying this thousands of dollar, \$10,000 switcher to \$50,000 switcher, you can actually switch between cameras on an iPad app.

Holly Tate:

That's amazing.

Carl Barnhill:

So, if you're a small church and you can't afford \$100,000-\$200,000 upgrade, Switcher Studio and Alter, these are great solutions to put phones on tripods throughout your worship experience to get really cool angles. And then a volunteer in the back is just switching the camera shots and putting up your proresenter feed or whatever. So both of those are really interesting solutions for churches that maybe can't afford a big, huge upgrade yet, or maybe it's a step in that direction.

Holly Tate:

Or is just somebody like me who loves content, but is not trained in, like you are, to do a really high quality, video production. So something like Switcher sounds perfect for somebody like me that can definitely push some buttons on an iPhone, but not necessarily run a soundboard.

Carl Barnhill:

Right, right. So, Switcher is more for kind of remote shoots or kind of you're doing a testimony video or something like that. It can work in the worship experience. Alter is, they're fresh. I mean, they started right after COVID, and they're built for the worship experience. So, I would check both of those tools out and see which one is good for you.

Holly Tate:

That's awesome. And you guys have, is it a resource page on your website where people can check out all of this information and maybe even some additional tools?

Carl Barnhill:

Yeah. So we wrote about a hundred page guide to church online, and we wrote it a few months ago. So, there are a lot of tools that have popped up that are not in the book and things like that, but we've really tried to put that book together and this webpage together. It's [1230.media/church online](https://1230.media/church-online). We did a complete web series on just, "Hey, here are some very short, practical tips that you can use to enhance your online worship experience." So the whole, I think the book is 15 bucks. So for 15 bucks you can get the book and the whole series and all that is, is helping you craft tools and practical ideas for helping you craft your online worship experience.

Holly Tate:

That's awesome. Well, I appreciate you pulling out some of your favorites because it can be really overwhelming, especially to a church that doesn't have... And we're saying church, but we have a lot of Christian schools that listen to our podcast, or even small values-based businesses or nonprofits that don't have a full production team.

Carl Barnhill:

Where do I start?

Holly Tate:

Yes. And so these are really great starting places for an organization of any size, to really dive in and figure out what works best for them. Okay. So that was a deep dive on some tools that are available to

us as we migrate to this online experience. What else do we need to be thinking about as we migrate to an online community experience?

Carl Barnhill:

I would say, and we talked about this a little bit, but I would say an up-to-date functional web presence. Now I know this sounds like a no brainer. Yeah, I need a website. I need a page that can do it. So, when COVID first kind of started and hit, I took one Sunday and I hit 50 different churches' live streams and their pages. I looked at their online presence and their online experience. One thing I found that was really glaring, was your website's not up-to-date, and your page is not accessible to a visitor. I might go to a page, but if I hit it at the wrong time, there is, "Offline, error, this isn't working now, come back later," whatever. Where I'm like, you've missed this opportunity. You could have given me a video that told me about your church.

Carl Barnhill:

You could have said, "Hey, hate that we missed you. Watch this video. This says about our church. We'll see you at 11." Something. You could have given me the schedule, but the video portion just said offline. And in the chat window it said, "Error," or "Offline." I'm like, I won't come back. I'm not coming back. I'm going somewhere else. So, an up-to-date functional web presence is key. You have to pour time, money, energy, staff, volunteers, all of that into your web presence.

Carl Barnhill:

Your website is where people, it is your first impression. So, a year ago, when we were talking about, "Hey, when people walk in the door, what is the first impression?" Or when they come into your parking lot, "What is the first impression?" And even a year ago, it was website. If I'm going to check out a church, I'm going to check out their website first, but especially now. Your website is your front door. It is not the... I did a podcast recently on this, where I talked about a playroom in my house that is a complete disaster. We just kind of close the door and maybe-

Holly Tate:

[crosstalk 00:21:17] Pretend it doesn't exist.

Carl Barnhill:

Right. And you might have a closet in your house that's the same way. Your website cannot be that. It cannot be the closet that we just forget is over there, and hope that people find it, and hope that people have a good experience. No, no. This has got to be something that we pour energy into. It is really, really key to both the first impression that people get and for people to just have a great experience with our church.

Holly Tate:

Absolutely. And I think it's so important that church leaders get feedback from their congregation. Or if you're a school, get feedback from your parents and students. Ask them, "Is it easy to find what you're looking for?" I was always so surprised pre-COVID, I would go to a website and the address wouldn't even be on there. It's like, how can you expect people to find your church if the address isn't on there, or your service times are not on the homepage. And so, similar to that, we need to be thinking about, okay,

what is our user actually looking for when they go to our website on that Sunday morning during live stream?

Carl Barnhill:

Not only that, I would say visit your website as if you were a visitor, and go and hit it every Friday, every Sunday morning, because don't just assume this is what I do on the backend and so it's translating.

Holly Tate:

Yeah.

Carl Barnhill:

No, hit the actual website, make sure that everything's there, everything's working, buttons are working. And you might have somebody that you, a list of a group of volunteers that, "Hey, will you catch this for us? Hit it every Sunday morning and see if there's something wrong because we want the best experience for our guests that we can deliver."

Holly Tate:

That's awesome. Well, before we close today, I want to spend a little bit more time talking about the in-person versus online experience and how to migrate those together. You've touched on that a couple of times already today, but just wanted to allow you to leave any closing thoughts with us on this topic that's so important, because it's going to be this way for a while. Things are not going to... I'm so tired of people saying, "I can't wait for us to be able to go back to normal." It's like, "No, it's going to look different from here on out." And this is an amazing opportunity for Christian leaders to take advantage of this fire in our bellies to have to really create and innovate and move forward. So, yeah, any closing thoughts there?

Carl Barnhill:

Yeah. I know that the phrase, the new normal is definitely... It might be outdated already because we use it so much. But yes, I would say, again, pour energy into both experiences. So let me give you a couple of quick tips here. One, is address or acknowledge your online experience in your in-person gathering. So what do I mean by that? Instead of saying, "Welcome, hey everybody," be sure to say, "Hey everybody in the room, and if you're watching online, glad to have you here this morning." So, you're acknowledging both audiences. And so, when you announce something, make sure that you're not just announcing it for the people in the room. That, "Hey, if you're online today, how you sign up for the event that I just talked about is go to the right, this button over here," or whatever you need to do. "Click the signup button, go to this page." Give them instructions as well as you would the people in the room.

Carl Barnhill:

Another idea is to shoot closer. So, our camera shots, tend to be way back in the room for our live stream service. I would encourage to maybe get closer. Every time you see an interview like this online, I mean, it's not a way back interview. It's very up close and that's how people feel online. You're in their living room. You are closer to them. And so, I would encourage you to, if you can get the camera a little bit closer, get it closer. I think it will feel more intimate and you'll connect better.

Carl Barnhill:

Also prepare your team. So again, don't just throw up your stream on your website, pour energy into it. One idea here is to create a hospitality team for the online environment. One idea would be to take the parking greeters. Let's say you don't have as many people that need to be parked. Take your parking greeters, take your door greeters, take your coffee station people, first impressions, guest services, and turn them into online hospitality. So you're breaking your volunteer team up. Half of you are in-person, half of you are online. So those are just some really quick ideas for, "Hey, let's be intentional about in-person and online at the same time."

Holly Tate:

That's awesome, Carl. Well, I love how practical this episode has been. I feel like all of our listeners have a lot of clear action steps that they can take away from our conversation to start thinking about and implementing in their church or ministry. So thank you so much for spending time diving deep into the tools and creative ways that we can build online community experiences. Where can people find out more about you and Twelve:Thirty Media?

Carl Barnhill:

Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. So our website is 1230.media. And then you can find me online at Carl Barnhill, but yeah, if you check out our website, everything that we're doing is up there. So, thank you for what you guys are doing. You guys are awesome in the space, so thank you so much for having me and for hanging out.

Holly Tate:

Thanks for listening to today's episode with Carl Barnhill. I hope you guys learned as much as I did, and wanted to Anna to let you guys know what's coming up. We have some amazing episodes coming out for the rest of 2020. So Anna, take it away. What can we look forward to?

Anna Baker:

Yeah. Well, first of all, I did want to let you know that if you missed last week's episode, we had Lisa TerKeurst on. And that was an incredible conversation that you don't want to miss out on. It was part of our, How God Built This series. So be sure to go check that out, and in the coming weeks until the end of the year, we're going to have Karl Vaters, we're going to have Brian and Shannon Miles and Dan Reiland. And to close out the year, we get to speak with Larry Taylor, who's president of ACSI, one of our partners.

Holly Tate:

Yeah, it's amazing. All of the people who are being interviewed. I cannot wait to listen to these and hear your voice on this podcast, Anna. So thank you everyone for listening. Make sure you check out your show notes, where you can join our Facebook group to see behind the scenes content and giveaways. And thank you, all of you, for listening for all of these years and I can't wait to see what's next.