1. Why Podcasting

Why consider podcasting as a church? Who needs one more thing to do? (And this thing takes time.)

Acts 17:17, So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

A. THIS IS NOT Trend Jumping (One church does it, it works, everyone has to do it.) This is where people are spending time.

- Podcasting has been growing in America for nearly two decades. There have been occasional dips, but the long-term trajectory is unmistakably upward.
- In 2016, only 21% of Americans ages 12+ listened to podcasts monthly. By 2024, that had reached 47% for audio listening alone. In 2026, 58% consume podcasts monthly when video is included.
- In 2015, Americans spent about 170 million hours a week listening to podcasts. Ten years later, that number had grown to 773 million hours a week. (Edison Research, Pew Research)

B. THIS IS Time Trading (the practice of using time already committed to one activity to accomplish something else simultaneously)

We're living in a multitasking culture. People are busy. Their schedules are packed. Their attention is divided. People *who don't have time to sit down and watch a 30-minute video* often have time to listen to a 30-minute conversation. People *who don't commit to attending church* will listen to a podcast on a drive to a baseball tournament.

They're driving to work, mowing the lawn, walking the dog, exercising, cleaning the house, or working on a project. Podcasting allows us to step into those moments.

C. THIS IS Authentic (it can be, should be, better be)

A sermon is usually a one-directional form of communication. It's prepared, structured, and delivered. And that's good. That's what preaching is supposed to be.

But podcasting offers something different. It gives people an opportunity to hear a conversation rather than a presentation. They hear: people thinking through questions, sharing experiences, laughing, admitting uncertainty, and talking honestly about life and faith.

There can be a level of authenticity that comes through in those conversations. Podcasts let people get to know you. People begin to understand not just what their pastors/leaders believe, but how they think, how they approach difficult questions, and how their faith shapes everyday life.

Caution: authenticity doesn't mean carelessness. We're still responsible for what we communicate.

D. THIS IS Accessible for people

Barriers exist between people and our churches. Walking into a church building for the first time = intimidating. Attending a Bible study = commitment. Even watching a sermon online can feel like a significant step for someone who isn't connected to a church.

But listening to a conversations is a pretty low barrier. Someone might listen because they're curious about a topic. Or because a friend shared an episode. Or because they're searching for answers to something they're dealing with.

And for people already in our churches, it creates another opportunity to connect with biblical truth throughout the week. It can create **easy and additional** opportunities for connection and engagement.

E. THIS IS Accessible for churches

Good audio content can be produced with relatively modest equipment and cost and can be distributed through platforms churches already use.

You don't need: a professional studio, a big communications budget or a lot of skill. You do need a clear purpose, some basic tools, and a willingness to learn.

2. Podcasting as a Ministry Tool

Lead in – 1 Co 9:19-20.
Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

The principle is simple - Paul flexed his lifestyle and ministry strategy to gain the trust of people in order to gain an audience for the gospel.

What is true about our culture that may make podcast ministry an effective means of reaching people? Not only is our culture busy and multitasking. But our culture is also hesitant to go anywhere without research. Yet people are searching.

Podcasts present real people having real conversations.

Four Ministry Opportunities of Podcasting

1. Reaching the Lost: Evangelism

- Podcasts allow us to reach people where they are, including those who may never walk through the doors of our churches.
- Apologetics, testimonies, and conversations about real-life questions can introduce people to the gospel in an approachable way.
- Podcasts provide a low-pressure opportunity for people to explore faith and wrestle with questions.
- They give our people something easy and natural to share with friends, family, and coworkers. "Hey, I listened to this podcast and thought of you. What do you think?"
- They can help build familiarity and trust before someone ever attends a church service.

2. Deepening Discipleship

- Podcasts create opportunities for biblical truth to soak in beyond Sunday morning.
- There's something unique about conversations that allows God's truth to reach different parts of our lives, sometimes in ways a sermon doesn't have the time or format to explore.
- Podcasts don't replace preaching, teaching, or personal discipleship. They complement and reinforce them.
- They bring biblical teaching, equipping, and encouragement into people's everyday routines.
- Deeper discipleship becomes more accessible without requiring another meeting, class, or commitment on the calendar.
- They help people connect what they hear on Sunday with how they live on Monday.

3. Shaping Church Culture

- Podcasts give us an opportunity to intentionally reinforce the values, vision, and mission of our churches.
- What do we want to celebrate? What do we want to be known for? What kind of culture are we trying to create?
- Highlight people who are living out their faith in ways we want others to follow.
- Celebrate stories of life change, service, generosity, and faithfulness.
- Help people understand not just what we believe, but why we believe it and how it shapes the way we live.
- Model healthy conversations, biblical thinking, humility, and grace.
- Repeated conversations help reinforce what matters most to your church.

4. Navigating Difficult Conversations

- Podcasts create room for conversations that don't always fit naturally into a Sunday sermon.
- Some topics are too nuanced, complicated, or easily misunderstood to address in a brief sermon illustration or announcement.
- They allow us to explore gray areas where faithful Christians may disagree.
- Conversations provide space to ask questions, consider different perspectives, and work through difficult issues without rushing to simple answers.
- They give pastors and leaders an opportunity to model how to approach challenging cultural and theological questions with biblical conviction, humility, and grace.
- They help people learn how to think biblically about difficult issues, not just what to think.

3.Content Options

Why are you producing and distributing a podcast? Base your content on your "Why!"

Some Ideas

- Interviewing people from your community (audience cross-pollination, audience sharing)
- Ministry spotlight: Why this ministry is valuable to your people/community.
- Church value or vision piece
- Missionary interview
- Expert interviews
- Connection with someone else in the EFCA East District or local ministries.
- The stuff we didn't get to in the sermon
- Ask the Pastor (listener-submitted questions)
- Faith and Culture Conversations
- Tough Questions About Christianity
- Faith in the Workplace
- Parenting and Faith
- Marriage and Relationships
- Mental Health and Faith
- Leadership Lessons and Mistakes
- Meet the Elders/Team
- Volunteer Stories
- Ministry Wins and Lessons Learned
- Theology in Everyday Language
- Book Discussions and Reviews
- Stories of Life Change

- Spiritual Disciplines in Real Life
- Navigating Cultural Issues Biblically
- How to Share Your Faith Naturally
- Lessons From Ministry Failures
- Conversations With Former Skeptics
- Faith After a Difficult Season
- What's it (faith, sermon) look like Wednesday at work/home

How To Make Your Content Great

- Have a loose game plan (know where you are going).
- Don't preach (it's a conversation).
- Ask great leading questions (Also ask the obvious questions).
- Listen to understand (not to respond).
- Ask follow-up questions.
- Let the conversation breathe.
- Avoid insider language or church lingo.
- Disagree without being a jerk.
- Remember the listener. You are having a conversation for them.
- Don't be afraid of emotion or silence.
- The more curious you are, the better it is.
- Know when to move on.
- Know how to set your audience up for something emotionally.
- If you're bored, your audience really is bored.
- Be authentic.
- Be transparent.
- Use your real voice.
- End with a purpose.

4. Recording and Editing

Find a quiet space…and then realize it's not actually quiet

- Computers running
- Printer running
- Air Conditioners
- Fans
- Clocks
- Louder times of day.

Make a quiet space

- Add soundproof panels - Costco $60

- Watch repetitive noises you make without thinking - hmmm….wow…yeah…
- Good sound quality up front is your friend.
- AI is your friend at diagnosing issues with settings and sound
- Plugging iPad into an outlet created some sort of loop that made it incredibly fuzzy
- Mic chords or Mic Cables on top of electronics can create buzz.
- Use signs.

Apps/software

- Audacity: Free, available for Mac and Windows. Great for basic audio editing. Use the official site: audacityteam.org.
- Ferrite Recording Studio: Excellent for editing spoken-word audio on an iPad. Apple Pencil makes editing particularly intuitive.
- Final Cut Pro: Great for video podcasts and audio podcasts (just drop an image in as a placeholder). Especially good if you're already comfortable with Apple's system.
- GarageBand: Free on Apple devices. A good starting point for basic recording and editing.
- Descript: Edit audio and video by editing the transcript. Supposed to be great for beginners and removing filler words.
- Adobe Podcast: Useful for improving spoken-word audio, particularly recordings with background noise or inconsistent quality.
- DaVinci Resolve: Powerful free option for editing video podcasts.

Editing process

Good recording makes editing easier. You can fix a lot in postproduction, but you can't fix everything. Edit for the listener, not for perfection. A little imperfection can actually contribute to authenticity. Know when to stop editing. Spending three hours removing every breath from a 30-minute conversation probably isn't the best use of a ministry leader's time.

- **Learn your shortcuts.** A few keyboard shortcuts can dramatically speed up editing.
- **Learn to read audio waveforms and levels.** They help identify silence, loud sections, and potential problems.
- **Listen through the entire episode.** Don't rely exclusively on what you see on the screen.
- **Have someone else listen.** Ask them to note timestamps of mistakes, awkward transitions, or confusing sections.
- **Cut distractions, not personality.** Don't remove every pause, laugh, or imperfect sentence.
- **Watch your audio levels.** Keep volume consistent between speakers and avoid distortion.

- **Use noise reduction carefully.** Too much processing can make voices sound unnatural. Natural is probably better when using fancy tools.
- **Edit for clarity and flow.** Remove unnecessary tangents, repetitive explanations, and sections that don't serve the conversation.
- **Check the beginning and ending.** Make sure the episode starts strong and ends intentionally.
- **Listen on different devices.** Something that sounds great through headphones might sound different through a phone speaker or car stereo.
- **Export in the appropriate format.** MP3 is a common choice for audio-only podcast distribution.
- **Create a repeatable workflow.** Use the same basic process for every episode so editing becomes more efficient.

GIVE DISCLAIMER UPFRONT

No time-specific stuff
Just because we say it doesn't mean it's included
Sticking within the framework of EFCA Statement of Faith

5. Equipment

Matt's $700 list of Equipment (Assuming you have an iPad or computer)

- $40 – 2 × Standard Black XLR Microphone Cables (length based on setup)
- $20 –1× USBC Cable
- $85 – 2 x Røde PodMic Dynamic Broadcast Microphone
- $65 – 2 x Shure Desktop Microphone Stand / Boom Arm x
- $420 – 1 x RØDECaster Duo Audio mixer (2 inputs)
- (or) $595 – Rode RODECaster Pro II Podcast Production Console (4 inputs)
- $20 – Editing App
- $50 – 2 x headphones

Josh's $1500 list of Equipment (Assuming you have a computer)

- $800 – 2 × Shure SM7B Dynamic Microphones ($400 each)
- $200 – 2 × Triton Audio FetHead Microphone Preamps ($100 each)
- $220 – 1 × Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 Audio Interface (2 inputs)
- $40 – 2 × XLR Microphone Cables ($20 each)
- $100 – 2 × Gator Frameworks Microphone Stands ($50 each)
- $100 – 2 × Audio-Technica Headphones ($50 each)
- $15 – 1 × Headphone Splitter (single to dual)
- Existing equipment – MacBook Pro for recording and editing
- Existing equipment – iPhones for video recording

6. Distribution and Promotion

The goal isn't just to produce a podcast. It's to get it into people's ears.

A. Podcast Hosting and Distribution

- You need a podcast hosting service. This is where your audio files live and where your podcast is distributed from.
- Your hosting service creates an RSS feed that podcast platforms use to access your episodes.
- You typically submit your podcast to major platforms once, and new episodes are delivered automatically through your feed.
- Two hosting services we've used: **Podbean** – User-friendly hosting, distribution, analytics, and monetization options. **Podomatic** – Podcast hosting and publishing with basic promotional tools. Other options include Buzzsprout and Spotify for Creators.
- Major listening platforms: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music / Audible, YouTube / YouTube Music (requires a separate video upload or supported RSS integration)
- Don't overcomplicate it. Choose a hosting service that fits your budget and needs.

B. Promoting Your Podcast - Publishing a podcast doesn't mean people will automatically find it.

- **Social Media:** Share episodes on Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms your audience already uses.
- **Short Video Clips:** Pull 30–60-second highlights from conversations and turn them into Reels, Shorts, or other social media content.
- **Audiograms:** Create short audio clips with captions or animated waveforms.
- **Church Communications:** Include new episodes in church emails, newsletters, websites, and church apps.
- **Sunday Mentions:** Occasionally highlight an episode that connects with a sermon series or church initiative.
- **Personal Sharing:** Encourage listeners to send specific episodes to friends and family.
- **Guest Promotion:** Ask guests to share their episodes with their own networks.
- **Cross-Pollination:** Collaborate with other pastors, churches, ministries, and podcasts to introduce your audiences to one another.
- **Searchability:** Use clear, descriptive episode titles. "How Do I Know God's Will?" is more discoverable than "Episode 37."
- **Consistency:** Establish a realistic publishing schedule. Weekly, biweekly, or monthly—whatever you can sustain.

C. Make Your Content Work Harder - Record once. Use it multiple ways.

- One 30-minute conversation can become multiple pieces of content.
- Pull several short clips for social media.
- Turn meaningful quotes into graphics.
- Use transcripts to create blog posts or discussion guides.
- Revisit older episodes when they become relevant again.
- Share individual episodes based on people's specific needs rather than always promoting the entire podcast.

D. Measure What Matters - Gospel Impact and Transformation/Growth

For churches, 7 people growing in their faith because of a podcast may be more meaningful than 2,000 downloads with no clear ministry impact.

7. Final Thoughts

- Start simple.
- Be consistent.
- Make it easy to find and share.
- Promote conversations, not just episodes.
- Don't be discouraged by small audiences.
- Remember why you're doing it.
- Have fun.

The goal isn't to build a successful podcast. The goal is to use podcasting to support successful ministry.