

Suncrest Media Ministry: *Building a Framework for Growth and Grace-filled Impact*

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Introduction:

The media ministry at Suncrest Church plays a vital role in communicating the church's mission and engaging both in-person and online communities. However, the ministry faces several ongoing challenges. A key issue is the limited number of trained volunteers, making it difficult to maintain high production quality and meet the growing demand for content across platforms. Additionally, financial restraints limit access to updated equipment, software, and resources necessary for creative growth and technical excellence. These constraints often lead to over-reliance on a small group of dedicated individuals, increasing burnout and reducing long-term sustainability. Despite these obstacles, the ministry remains committed to its mission by exploring creative workarounds and seeking new strategies for recruitment, training, and stewardship.

Case Study: Suncrest Christian Church Media Ministry

The media ministry at Suncrest Church faces several critical challenges that hinder its growth and effectiveness. Key issues include a lack of trained volunteers, limited availability of skilled media personnel, and no formal work-study or internship programs to develop new talent. A restrictive budget and time constraints further strain the ministry, limiting opportunities for training, content creation, and investment in essential equipment. Additionally, the ministry must work with selective, often outdated gear, making it difficult to keep up with modern production standards and audience expectations. According to Media Pastor, Mitch Wright, anywhere the ministry has a need for personnel or a task to be done, it falls to him to fill in the blanks.

Despite its challenges, the media ministry at Suncrest Church continues to operate in excellence, consistently meeting the media demands of church leadership. The team remains committed and resourceful. They creatively overcome limitations by maximizing what they have and staying mission focused. **This case study reveals that, even under pressure, the media ministry uses today's tools to communicate the most important truths in the most inspiring and receivable ways to all generations.**

Suncrest Christian Church, located in the thriving community of St. John, Indiana, serves a vibrant congregation of approximately 1,500 individuals, including children and families from primarily middle to high income households. Under the leadership of Lead Pastor Greg Lee, the church is deeply rooted in both local engagement and global mission. Suncrest is widely recognized not only for its commitment to spiritual growth and community connection but also for its strong emphasis on outreach beyond its walls. The church partners with numerous charitable organizations outside of its immediate community; supporting initiatives that address poverty, education, housing, and crisis relief across regional and national lines. Furthermore, Suncrest has played a key role in church planting efforts, helping to launch and support several new churches throughout the United States and in international locations. These efforts reflect the church's broader vision of multiplying its impact by empowering leaders, sharing resources, and investing in communities far beyond Northwest Indiana.

Within this dynamic ministry environment, the media team plays a crucial part. Led by Media Pastor Mitch Wright and Media Coordinator Gena Lauridsen, the department's only paid staff, the media ministry relies heavily on a passionate and talented group of volunteers. This team includes photographers, videographers, sound mixers, video switchers, screen operators, and

other A/V specialists who work diligently to bring services and outreach efforts to life through compelling visuals and clear communication. Though modest in size, the media ministry is driven by a big mission: to creatively, efficiently, and consistently deliver the church's core message to its congregation and the broader world. Their work ensures that the truth of the gospel is not only heard but experienced through video, recorded sermons, graphics, and digital content, by all generations, both near and far.

Media at Suncrest Christian Church enhances the worship experience by creating an immersive and engaging environment through visuals, sound, lighting, and live video. Sermon slides, worship lyrics, video testimonies, and online sermons all help to reinforce the message and make the service more accessible and impactful for both in-person and remote audiences. However, while media is a powerful tool that supports the message, it is never meant to replace the importance of in-person connection, per Lead Pastor Greg Lee. Face-to-face fellowship, prayer, and relational engagement remain at the heart of the church's ministry, with media serving as a supplemental bridge, not a substitute, for authentic community and spiritual growth.

For a church the size of Suncrest, with a congregation of approximately 1,500 and an expanding influence in the broader community, operating with a small media team presents significant challenges. The demand for high-quality content across Sunday services, online platforms, promotional materials, and outreach efforts far exceeds the capacity of the current team. With only two paid staff members, Media Pastor Mitch Wright and Media Coordinator Gena Lauridsen, the ministry relies heavily on a dedicated volunteer base. However, there is a shortage of trained individuals, and the pace of church life leaves little time to properly onboard or develop new team members. Gena Lauridsen, the Media Coordinator, expressed her desire to

acquire more media training to enhance her contributions. While paid internships and work-study programs could greatly support the ministry's growth, the church must make strategic decisions within its current budget, focusing on what is most essential to the mission. Similarly, investing in new equipment is only possible through sponsorships or donor support, requiring careful planning and prioritization.

These challenges are magnified by the fact that today's younger generation, an essential audience for Suncrest, relies on media as their primary channel for engagement, learning, and connection. From faith to friendships, media is how they receive and process much of life's content, making the media ministry not simply a support role but a central one in advancing the church's mission.

Despite the obstacles, the media ministry continues to thrive through creativity, collaboration, and a deep sense of purpose. What currently works is the team's ability to produce meaningful, high-quality content with limited resources by focusing on excellence, efficiency, and alignment with the church's core message. According to Mitch Wright, Media Pastor, a useful reminder slogan is "Helpful not Viral." The Suncrest media ministry aims at equipping people who attend Suncrest with the right tools for their spiritual journey and gives helpful insight into who Suncrest is for the people that don't attend. Media is mainly used to give snapshots of the life of the church. One of the ongoing organizational challenges is that media often functions as a parallel department rather than a central one. When media is positioned at the heart of ministry planning, it strengthens collaboration across departments and helps tell a unified story, but it also brings tension. With limited time and attention, determining which department's message takes priority can be difficult, and an overload of communication often results in none of it being truly received. On many days, this dynamic can feel like a losing battle. Yet the medium remains too

powerful and too necessary to set aside (Greg Lee, Lead Pastor, 2025). Suncrest's media team continues to press forward, believing that when used thoughtfully, media is one of the most effective tools in the church to quickly reach people of all generations with the truth and hope of Christ.

Solutions:

To address the growing needs and operational challenges of Suncrest Christian Church's media ministry, a multifaceted strategy is recommended. First, they could start by expanding the volunteer base through purpose driven recruitment. They would need to launch a targeted volunteer recruitment campaign that clearly communicates the impact and spiritual importance of media ministry. They can utilize testimonials, behind the scenes content, and ministry spotlights during services and in social media campaigns to attract those with creative, technical, or organizational gifts. According to research in volunteer engagement (Musick and Wilson, 2008), individuals are more likely to serve when they understand how their work contributes to a larger mission. Second, develop a dedicated donor campaign tied to tangible goals. Goals such as upgrading streaming equipment or expanding online reach. Leverage the church's storytelling strength to create short videos that show lives being impacted through the media ministry. They could even offer tiered sponsorship packages to local businesses that include brand visibility during live streams and social content, aligning with corporate social responsibility trends. Third, Suncrest could partner with local colleges and universities, especially those with communications, media, or ministry programs, to offer for credit internships or work study roles. These roles provide practical experience for students while also addressing staffing gaps. From personal experience, paid internships foster a deeper sense of accountability and results in higher

quality of work and continuity compared to unpaid volunteers. Fourth, to grow, the media ministry must expand beyond YouTube streams and Instagram posts. They must look to platforms like Instagram reels, TikTok, and regular podcasting platforms. Doing so requires intentional planning, content batching, and the addition of part time or contract staff to maintain a consistent and quality presence. As discussed in class, maintaining presence increases engagement, especially among Gen. Z and Millennial audiences who prefer short form mobile first content (Statista, 2023).

To support this vision, the Lead Pastor should serve as the spiritual anchor and visionary voice, ensuring the content produced aligns with the church's biblical values and primary mission. By regularly communicating sermon series themes and ministry goals in advance, the Lead Pastor empowers the media team to plan, design, and execute content that is both timely and theologically sound. The Lead Pastor can also champion the media ministry publicly, encouraging the congregation to engage and support its efforts.

The Media Pastor will provide day-to-day leadership over the media ministry, casting vision for innovative engagement strategies while also mentoring and developing the creative team. This includes overseeing content production, platform management, and tech infrastructure, as well as fostering spiritual growth within the team through discipleship and team-building initiatives. The Media Pastor will also work closely with youth leaders to ensure media reflects the voice and energy of younger generations, helping them feel seen and heard.

The Media Coordinator will be responsible for organizing production schedules, coordinating volunteers, managing media assets, and ensuring project timelines are met. This role bridges creative vision with administrative execution, allowing ideas to move from concept to

completion efficiently. The coordinator will also facilitate training opportunities and serve as the point person for collaboration between the media ministry and other departments.

To enhance collaboration, the media ministry will intentionally partner with other church ministries—including Worship, Youth, Children's, Outreach, and Small Groups. These ministries will contribute stories, testimonies, and ministry highlights to be shared through digital and print channels. For example, the Youth Ministry can provide student-led devotionals or event footage, while Outreach can supply impact stories and service opportunities that the media team can creatively present to the broader congregation. This cross-ministry approach not only enriches the content pipeline but also fosters unity and shared purpose across Suncrest's ministry teams.

Summary Conclusion:

Suncrest's media ministry will continue to thrive and gain influence by uniting leadership responsibilities, fostering strategic collaboration, and maintaining a shared commitment to excellence. Together, these solutions establish a sustainable framework for growth, engagement, and long-term impact. They align with the vision for expansion, particularly in youth culture, shared by both the Lead Pastor and Media Pastor. By combining strategic planning with intentional resource investment, Suncrest can ensure its media ministry remains a powerful tool for outreach and discipleship.