

# New Media Project

CASE STUDY BY JAMYE WOOTEN, KINETICS

## TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CHICAGO

"Unashamedly Black and Unapologetically Christian," is the mantra of Trinity United Church of Christ. A predominantly Black congregation founded in 1961 on the south side of Chicago and the largest church affiliated with the predominantly White United Church of Christ denomination. With a long history of social justice and activism under the 36 year leadership of Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Jr., Trinity UCC continues their rich legacy with the tools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III.

### Empowering Voices

TUCC, a church that knows from first-hand experience the corporate media biases against black bodies has taken matters into their own hand. Launching their own weekly web series, Empowering Voices. Empowering Voices is produced and hosted by Rev. Joan R. Harrell, a public theologian and a graduate of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York City. Each week, Rev. Harrell leads thought provoking conversations with world-renowned preachers, scholars, and community leaders. The weekly broadcast can be viewed online on Trinity UCC website and KineticsLive.com.

### ON ANY GIVEN SUNDAY

Every Sunday morning viewers from across the globe are welcomed by their *Digi-Pastor* to the livestream and the digital bulletin is posted via their mobile app and livestreaming platform. Jasmin E. Taylor - *the Digi-Pastor*, is not your normal social media manager, she is a digital shepherd. Using platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Tumblr, Pinterest, Linkedin and managing Trinity's mobile app - the Digi-Pastor:

- leads daily devotions
- hosts a 60 Second Sermon Series that can be viewed on Trinity's YouTube channel
- wishes members happy birthday

- communicates with them through difficult and joyous moments of their lives
- Answers prayer requests.
- Offers classes on how use social media and Trinity's mobile app.

The Digi-Pastor, who live tweets on Sunday talked to us about the importance of engaging the community online, "Social media is a relationship platform. It's not a broadcast platform. People expect interaction." She also addressed the learning curve and the need to educate older members.

"We had a special responsibility to educate our older members. We've had ushers say [to congregants] 'Put down your phone,' when we first started, and we had a younger person say, 'I'm reading the Bible.' We had to [let] our ushers know that when you see a person with their phone, they are not necessarily talking, playing a game or sending a text, but they are taking notes. They're reading the Bible," and they're tweeting the message."

"Our church has embraced social media, we see the benefits in taking God digital."