

COMMUNICATIONS:
TRIED, TRUE, &
NEW

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Communication Tune- Up

BY ROBERT WILLIAMS

Try teamwork in 8 easy steps

Do your congregation's communication tools need sharpening? Maybe you'd like to get on track for fall and the new program year? Here are suggestions from the Media in Ministry class at Bloy House, the Episcopal Theological School at Claremont, California.

Step 1: Gather your team, starting with the cleric-in-charge, church secretary, a warden, and a volunteer or staff communication specialist as a core group of change-makers. Meet regularly, and consider your work a spiritual discipline in a "community of practice." Begin every meeting with prayer and reflection, and hear what the Spirit is saying to your congregation.

Step 2: Match your skills and needs. Think about your congregation: Who on your team is best at messaging? Technology?

Who meets deadlines and keeps the e-newsletter moving? Is more than one language spoken in your congregation? Who else needs to be invited to the table? Are there volunteer photographers who can supply stills and video? Do any parishioners work in local media? Who are the greeters? Unite these persons as the communication working group, and the synergy can be a gift to all participants.

Step 3: Put your smart phones on the table, and discuss the reasons why mobile technology is the wave of the present. If your congregation does not have a web site or social media presence, it needs both fast. Granted, some parishioners are not online, but statistics show that most newcomers to congregations visit their web sites first. Thus, a homepage is in many ways a congregation's front door. Don't have a web site? Instant solutions are provided by Google, Word Press,

the Episcopal Church Center's affordable website program, or DigitalFaith.org. Read on for social media options.

Step 4: Don't wait for a crisis to forge a communication plan.

Bottom line, every congregation needs a skilled, empowered layperson (perhaps a warden) who is willing to join the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge in taking "media training" sessions offered by a qualified professional. (The lay spokesperson's role is clearly essential when a clergyperson dies unexpectedly or faces allegations of misconduct.) Crisis management is a key component in any congregation's comprehensive communication plan. That overall plan should also identify target audiences, "publics," and neighborhood demographics (see Percept Link2Lead.com, or MissionInSite.com); measurable goals for the year; practical steps for meeting those goals; budget; and long-lead calendar to identify specific tasks leading up to major events. Both the Diocese of Southern Ohio (diosohio.org) and the Diocese of Texas (epicenter.org) offer online resources for communication planning.

Step 5: Plan the work; work the plan, and evaluate. Start with manageable, practical tasks as basic as updating calendar items on the congregation's web site. Set

reasonable goals for sending uniform messages across platforms: Sunday bulletin and announcement time, weekly e-newsletter, web site, social media, etc. Look ahead and strategize for pitching story ideas to local media representatives, remembering some of the best seasonal photo opportunities for print and television: blessing animals, hanging greens, Lenten "ashes to go," etc. As your communication working group meets, build accountability to assure that each member – staff and volunteer alike – meets goals consistently as assigned. Customize your work and make it fit with the size of your congregation. Consult with your diocesan communication officer for idea-sharing and collaboration. Don't forget to evaluate regularly: keep what is working, drop what is not.

Step 6: Balance print and online media. Most non-profits continue to wrestle with decisions of what to publish online and on paper. When saving trees and money, a church must avoid losing touch with key constituents, especially donors. One "best practice" combines a weekly email newsletter (sent via Constant Contact), a daily Facebook post, and printed Sunday leaflets with pdf announcements pages suitable for emailing and posting online. Occasional letters and/or cards by postal mail can also add value. For

congregations not yet experienced with posting online video and photos, set goals for learning how to use YouTube and implement these technologies. Youth groups are great resources for moving this process along.

Step 7: Seek consistency with branding and themes. Do your congregation's web site, printed materials, and signage have the same "look and feel"? If not, it is time to invest some energy and expertise in consistent use of a simple logo, tag line, and graphic style. For example, visit Trinity Wall Street (trinitywallstreet.org) and notice the display of arched logo, type treatment, and tag line: "for a world of good." See also what All Saints', Beverly Hills (allsaintsbh.org), has achieved with consistency across platforms with the tagline "a year of compassion."

Step 8: Succeed in social media and digital ministry. Yes, a congregation is well served by a Facebook fan page and a Twitter feed. Our Bloy House class recently learned from digital expert Elizabeth Drescher that success in social media begins with developing and maintaining relationships – relationships made so interesting and attractive that participants return regularly to continue the conversation. Start with simple posts such as "join in contemplative prayer this evening

at 7pm” or “walk the labyrinth this Sunday.” Avoid “us-them” distance created by “join us” or “read our newsletter” kinds of messages; try to be invitational without striking an unintended “you-are-not-really-us” tone. On Facebook, visit “St. John Chrysostom Church, Rancho Santa Margarita, California,” for examples of lively posting. And do read all of Elizabeth Drescher’s fine books and articles.

To recap, teamwork makes all the difference at each step. Kudos to those dioceses and seminaries that are collaborating to teach new skills to achieve the time-honored goals of all church communication: building community and making meaning.

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Resources

Affordable Websites

- Episcopal Church Affordable website resource: <http://www.epicenter.org/article/episcopal-church-offers-affordable-website-services/>

- Digital Faith: <http://www.digitalfaith.org/>
- The Episcopal Church’s website challenge: <http://churchtoolsorg.wordpress.com/>
- Wordpress websites and blogs: <http://wordpress.org/>

Creating a Communications Plan

- Demographic Data from PerceptLink2Lead.com <http://www.link2lead.com/GettingStarted/Home.aspx>
- Church Data: MissionInsite.com <http://www.missioninsite.com/>
- Episcopal Communicators Manual: <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/episcopal-communicators-manual/>

Email Marketing and Social Media

- Getting Started with Facebook: <http://mashable.com/guide-book/facebook/>
- Making Social Media Easy: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/making-social-media-easy/>
- Redesigning Your Website: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/redesigning-your-website/>
- Social Media and the Episcopal Church: <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/social-media-and-the->

[episcopal-church/](http://www.episcopal-church/)

- To Print or Not to Print: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/to-print-or-not-to-print-2/>
- Website Tools – Analytics: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/website-tools-analytics/>

Examples from Article

- Ashes to Go: <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/ashes-to-go-tips-for-liturgical-outreach/>
- Creating a Consistent Look – All Saints’, Beverly Hills <http://www.allsaintsbh.org> and Trinity Wall Street: <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org>
- Diocese of Southern Ohio Communication Resources: <http://www.diosohio.org/Congregations/communicationsmedia.html>
- Elizabeth Drescher: <http://www.faithandleadership.com/qa/elizabeth-drescher-digital-ministry-made-for-the-mainline>
- St. John Chrysostom Church, Rancho Santa Margarita, California,” <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnchrysostom.church?sk=wall>

Editor's Letter

Greetings.

While the 'where and how' of communications has changed dramatically since Vestry Papers' 2008 issue Parish Communications, the 'who, what, when, and why' has not. During the summer, we'll look at ways congregations are successfully merging the tried, true, and the new in communications.

Central to each of our July and August articles is a strong focus on the practical: how to incorporate an effective communications strategy into the congregation. This includes specifics related to the time commitment required and how staff and/or volunteer roles and responsibilities have been shaped to provide for this communications activity.

Included in our July content:

- "Communication Tune-Up" by Robert Williams offers an eight-step process for getting your congregation on track for fall and the new program year. Available in English & Spanish.
- Sharon Richey Turner's "The Promised Land?" explores the

new frontier in communications - the Internet - offering concrete examples and resources that share how small, rural congregations are using these tools as part of their overall communications mix.

- "Find a Church" by Nancy Davidge introduces readers to the variety of free listings available to congregations and shows how to use these listings to tell your story.
- Terri Matthes shares how two different sized - and resourced - dioceses are "Using Video" to tell their stories. Regardless of where your congregation falls on the resource scale, she encourages you to consider the power of video as part of your communications plan.
- Mary Kay Thompson's "When Less is Enough," shares how Grace Episcopal Church in Bainbridge Island, Washington has re-imagined its award winning communications plan in response to a change in financial support, while maintaining its multichannel focus.
- "Newsletter Makeover" by

Susan Elliott invites congregations to take their 'tried and true' and perhaps somewhat worn-looking parish newsletter and give it a total makeover.

- Mary Ann Patterson's "How and Why of Press Releases" encourages congregations to get to know the staff at their local media and offers basic information on how to present your information and stories to the press.
- "Lights, Camera. Action" by Terri Matthes uses the principle of 'show don't tell' to share how congregations across are church are using video to tell their stories - without spending a dime.

Each of these articles includes a list of resources to help you with your communication plan and program. Additional resources may also be found elsewhere in ECF Vital Practices <http://www.ecfvp.org/topics/> - visit our 'Topics' page to find a complete content listing organized by subject.

I invite you to add to this content by sharing your stories and

resources related to congregational governance in the Your Turn section and by posting comments related to our articles, blog posts, or other content.

Faithfully,

Nancy

Nancy Davidge

PS: To make it easier for congregational leaders to find the resources offered through ECF Vital Practices, please consider adding a link to ECF Vital Practices to your website. Here's how: Using your websites 'add a link' tool, insert our full URL – <http://www.ecfvp.org/>

Poner las Comunicaciones a Punto

BY ROBERT WILLIAMS

¿Le hace falta afilar las herramientas de comunicación de su feligresía? ¿Tal vez le gustaría prepararse para el otoño y los programas del nuevo año? Aquí tiene sugerencias de la clase Media in Ministry (Medios en Ministerios) en Bloy House, la Escuela Teológica Episcopal en Claremont, California.

Paso 1: Reúna su equipo, empezando por el clérigo a cargo, el secretario de la iglesia, un coadjutor y un especialista en comunicaciones voluntario o del personal como un grupo central de encargados de realizar cambios. Reúnanse regularmente y consideren su labor como una disciplina espiritual en una “comunidad de práctica”. Inicien todas las reuniones con oración y reflexión y escuchen lo que el Espíritu esté diciendo a su feligresía.

Paso 2: Haga coincidir sus destrezas y necesidades. Piense en su feligresía: ¿Quién en su equipo es el mejor en mensajería? ¿Tecnología? ¿Quién cumple con las fechas límite y mantiene el boletín electrónico en movimiento? ¿A quién más hay que invitar a la mesa? ¿Hay fotógrafos voluntarios que pueden proporcionar fotos y

videos? ¿Hay feligreses que trabajan en los medios locales? ¿Quiénes son los encargados de relaciones públicas? Una a esas personas como el grupo de trabajo de comunicaciones y la sinergia resultante puede ser un verdadero don para todos los participantes.

Paso 3: Ponga sus teléfonos inteligentes sobre la mesa y hable acerca de los motivos por los que la tecnología móvil es la ola del presente. Si su feligresía no tiene un sitio web o una presencia en los medios sociales, necesita ambos urgentemente. Si bien es cierto que algunos feligreses no están en línea, las estadísticas demuestran que la mayoría de los recién llegados a las feligresías visitan sus sitios webs antes. Es por eso que de muchas maneras una página web es la puerta de entrada a la feligresía. ¿No tiene un sitio web? Google, Word Press, el programa de bajo costo de sitios web del Centro de la Iglesia Episcopal y DigitalFaith.org ofrecen soluciones instantáneas. (Nota: Digital Faith ofrece un sistema de manejo del contenido en español). Siga leyendo para obtener información sobre opciones de medios sociales.

Paso 4: No espere hasta que haya una crisis para crear un plan de comunicaciones. En resumidas cuentas, toda feligresía necesita contar con una persona dispuesta a asistir a sesiones de “capacitación de medios” impartidas por un profesional cualificado junto con el rector, el párroco o el sacerdote a cargo. El manejo de las crisis es un componente fundamental de todos los planes integrales de comunicación de las feligresías. El plan general también debe identificar los públicos a los que se dirige, así como la demografía del barrio (vea Percept Link2Lead.com o MissionInsite.com); contar con objetivos medibles para el año; elaborar pasos prácticos para alcanzar esos objetivos; tener un presupuesto; y, preparar un calendario a más largo plazo para identificar los próximos grandes eventos. La Diócesis del Sur de Ohio y la Diócesis de Texas ofrecen recursos en línea para la planificación de las comunicaciones.

Paso 5: Planifique la tarea, ponga el plan en práctica y evalúe. Empezar por tareas básicas y manejables, como poner al día ítems en el calendario en el sitio web de la feligresía. Fije objetivos razonables

para enviar mensajes uniformes por todas las plataformas: el boletín del domingo y los anuncios, el boletín electrónico semanal, el sitio web, los medios sociales, etc. Mire hacia el futuro y diseñe una estrategia para enviar ideas de notas a representantes de los medios locales, recordarles algunas de las mejores oportunidades para sacar fotos en diferentes temporadas para los medios impresos y la televisión, tales como la bendición de los animales, la decoración con ramas verdes, las “cenizas para llevar” en Cuaresma, etc. Cree responsabilidad verificando en las reuniones de su grupo que todos los miembros, tanto remunerados como voluntarios, cumplan con los objetivos que les asignaron. Adapta su trabajo al tamaño de su feligresía. Pida a su funcionario de comunicación diocesano que comparta ideas y colaboración. No olvide evaluar regularmente: retenga lo que esté funcionando y deshágase de lo que no funcione.

Paso 6: Equilibre los medios impresos y en línea. La mayoría de las organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro luchan con las decisiones sobre lo que se debe publicar en línea y en papel. Al intentar salvar árboles y dinero, las iglesias deben evitar perder el contacto con personas clave, especialmente con los donantes. Una “mejor práctica” combina un boletín semanal por correo electrónico (enviado por

medio de Constant Contact), poner algo todos los días en Facebook y folletos impresos los domingos con anuncios en pdf aptos para ser enviados por correo electrónico y para ponerlos en línea. Enviar ocasionalmente cartas o tarjetas por correo ordinario también añade valor. Para las feligresías que todavía no son expertas en poner videos y fotos en línea, fije objetivos para aprender a usar YouTube y aplicar estas tecnologías. Los grupos de jóvenes son un excelente recurso para impulsar este proceso.

Paso 7: Busque coherencia en las marcas y los temas. ¿Tienen los sitios web, los materiales impresos y los letreros de su feligresía la misma “apariencia y sensación”? Si no, es hora de que invierta un poco de energía y conocimientos en el uso coherente de un logotipo sencillo, un eslogan y un estilo gráfico. Por ejemplo, visite Trinity Wall Street y note el logotipo arqueado, el tipo de letra y el eslogan “for a world of good” (“para un mundo de bien”). Vea también lo que All Saints’, Beverly Hills, logró con la coherencia entre plataformas con el eslogan “a year of compassion” (“un año de compasión”).

Paso 8: Tenga éxito en los medios sociales y en el ministerio digital. Sí, una congregación está bien servida con una hoja de simpatizantes en Facebook y un

“feed” en Twitter. Nuestra clase en Bloy House aprendió recientemente de la experta en medios digitales Elizabeth Drescher que el éxito en los medios digitales comienza con el desarrollo y el mantenimiento de relaciones transformadas en algo tan interesante y atractivo que los participantes regresan regularmente a ellas para continuar la conversación. Empiece con cosas sencillas, como “únase a una oración contemplativa hoy a las 7 de la tarde” o “recorra el laberinto este domingo”. Evite el distanciamiento “ellos-nosotros” que crean los mensajes como “únase a nosotros” o “lea nuestro boletín”; pruebe ser invitador sin caer en un tono que transmita “usted no es realmente nosotros”.

Para recapitular, el trabajo en equipo es fundamental en todos los pasos. Felicitaciones a las diócesis y seminarios que están colaborando para enseñar nuevas destrezas para alcanzar los objetivos consagrados de todas las comunicaciones eclesásticas: formar comunidad y crear significado.

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The Promised Land?

BY SHARON RICHY TURNER

So when they came to the edge of the Promised Land Moses sent out scouts. But they returned declaring, "We can't go there: There're sneaky Trojans and slithering scams and even monsters that sneak up and snatch away your identity!"

Or maybe it happened this way: The scouts came back and reported that there was enough rich land there for everyone—just for the taking. Yes, there were dangers but the benefits appeared greater. They called the place "Internet."

Both attitudes toward the Internet are often found in one church and can make it difficult for churches to decide what to do about this new frontier in communications. When asked to write this article I went straight to my Facebook "colleagues"—a group of people dedicated to the ministry of the small church (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/241592609198266/>). Our group is a mix of people who play various roles in that ministry and bring to the group a broad range of experience and knowledge. I asked them how their churches were using (or not) newer media: What channels of

communication do their churches use to communicate within the congregation and with their larger community? This article is an effort to tag some kind of summary to a conversation that continues online past its publication date.

Some people in our congregations have heard the frightening stories or are intimidated by the technology. Many don't use e-mail or even have a message recorder on their phones. At the same time others are twittering—eagerly awaiting the next technological innovation. These differences can make communications complicated and even burdensome.

Our movement forward, then, is awkward and slow. In order to convey a single message our churches will make Sunday announcements, send e-mails, post notes on Facebook, print notices to send via regular mail and make phone calls. It's just for this "transitional period," we tell ourselves. Admittedly, sometimes our Facebook group becomes an outlet for bemoaning our difficulties, but such a string always recovers through a

helpful response that pushes the conversation in a positive direction. Group members might offer ideas for helping people befriend newer communication channels. One suggestion was to offer "teasers" whenever the church gathers, such as projecting on a screen the church's web site or Facebook page. Or making up a game, such as having people pose questions while someone on a computer demonstrates how quickly one can find possible answers. Many small opportunities abound to entice and encourage the more reluctant to venture into the new territory.

Older communication media can still be effective. Newspaper advertising remains a good option. In small towns, where everyone reads the paper from front to back, it can be a very effective way to be in the public eye. Newspapers often offer package deals which make advertising less expensive than individual ads. In addition, most newspapers are now online and post ads with links to a church's web site and Facebook page.

So there we are, back to the our

Internet. Unavoidable and essential if one's church is going to have any kind of visibility in today's world. At some level the web site now replaces the red doors as entrance to our churches. Lots of resources are available to help churches set up their web site or renovate old ones. Far too many ideas and resources emerged in our Facebook group to fit into this article, but basically the best place to start might be to contact one's diocesan office. The Church at large recognizes that having a web site is now critical. Therefore most dioceses now have staff or volunteers who can steer congregations in the right direction. Episcopal Web Hosting provides another place to begin.

Each church needs to figure out what their needs are, as well as who they are in order to present themselves honestly. There are free and inexpensive resources that could work well for smaller churches while larger ones might need to spend more money to support a more complex platform to accommodate a greater range of options. (For blogs see <http://wordpress.org> and www.blogger.com, and for web hosting <http://www.weebly.com> and Google: <http://sites.google.com>.) One of the greatest challenges is finding the people to maintain the web site and keep it current and interesting.

Facebook is now very popular among our churches. One very good reason is that it is free and user friendly. Churches who choose to use Facebook usually start with setting up a group for their church. If enough parishioners are on Facebook, the group can function in a practical sense, such as posting the need for more side dishes for the parish supper; but more exciting is how others become attracted to the group—relatives, neighbors, parishioners who have moved away. In addition, some are beginning to use the newer Facebook option of a page. Originally designed for businesses, the page functions more like an interactive ad and provides the administrator with detailed reports of page activity.

In summary, general use at this time seems to be to use the Facebook group for parish interactions and the page as a public relations vehicle. Facebook offers churches a free and unlimited potential for expanding the configuration of the church beyond those who physically gather each Sunday morning.

Navigating all the communication channels now available to churches can be confusing and sometimes overwhelming, but we recognize the need to go where the people are if we are to spread the Kingdom. Today's "scouts" report

that that's where the people are. The new land beckons.

Thanks to my Facebook colleagues for their contributions toward these thoughts. Some of the specific ideas and resources were from group administrator, Jim McFerrin; Jeff Fisher; Bruce Cory; John Hollingsworth; Michele Keppen and Aldric Tinker; with particularly informative and detailed contributions from Jan Anderson and Linda Grenz.

Sharon Richy Turner serves St. John's, Columbus, in the Diocese of Texas. Before ordination in 1987 Sharon was involved in the fields of art, education and advertising. Since retiring from full time ministry at Saint Michael and All Angels in Dallas in 2002 she has been dedicated to small church ministry.

Resources

- Anglican/Episcopal Rural Churches Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/241592609198266/>
- Blogs: <http://wordpress.org> and www.blogger.com
- Episcopal Church Web Hosting: <http://ecwh.org/>
- Getting Started with Facebook: <http://mashable.com/guide-book/facebook/>

- Guidelines for Posting on Facebook: <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/guidlines-for-posting-to-facebook/>
- Lesson One: What Makes a Good Facebook Post?:
- Web hosting: \ <http://www.weebly.com> and Google: <http://sites.google.com>
- Your Facebook Profile:
Targeted Update: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/your-facebook-profile-targeted-updates/>

Find a Church

BY NANCY DAVIDGE

Pat and Barbara were looking for a church. Running a local coffee shop/cafe, their lives were full with work, family, and friends. Yet, they found themselves spiritually hungry.

Pat and Barbara thought about and talked about what was important to them in a faith community. They began to ask friends and acquaintances about their church experience. They looked online. And, they began to visit churches.

During their search, they discovered they felt comfortable with the Episcopal theology and liturgy and eventually found a spiritual home in an Episcopal church with a wonderful music program. Pat and Barbara were active in the congregation for several years until their lives took a different turn and they moved out of the area.

Are there seekers in your community? How would you know? How would they know about you? Put another way, what are you doing to attract 'the people you don't know yet' to your church?

There is a 'tried and true' method of finding the people you don't

know yet: Advertising. And, with the advent of the Internet, what used to be a costly endeavor is now almost free given the variety of listing services available online. I say 'almost free' for, although there is no charge for the listings, to use these tools effectively, an investment of time is required.

This investment can be easily divided into stages: research, planning, posting information, and regular updates.

Research

Research includes more than just where can I find a free listing. For each listing service you consider, you should look at the full range of what you can include in a listing. Most church listings that I find include only the basics: address, phone number, website, perhaps information about worship times, and office hours. Many listing services offer the opportunity to offer much more, including space for descriptive information, photos and/or videos, calendar of upcoming events, etc. Some even include space for visitors to include comments.

Here's a short list of places to look

for listing opportunities:

- The Episcopal Church's "Find a Church" <http://www.episcopal-church.org/find-a-church>
- Your diocesan website
- Your provincial website
- Google Places <http://www.google.com/places/>
- Yahoo <http://local.yahoo.com/>
- Yelp <http://www.yelp.com/>
- Foursquare <https://foursquare.com/business/>
- YellowPages <http://www.yellowpages.com/>
- SuperPages <http://www.superpages.com/>
- Does your community have a webpage? Does it list places of worship?
- Does your local Council of Churches maintain an online directory?
- Is there a college in your area

that might have an online directory on their website? (See Gordon College's 'Find a Church' resource <http://www.gordon.edu/chapel/directory>) webpage? Does it list places of worship?

Tips:

- As you review each listing service, take the time to look at the full range of listing options available. Look at some membership organizations or restaurants in your area to see how they use these listings.
- Look online or at your local community college or other educational provider for free webinars or classes in how to use these 'finding places' listings

Planning

The planning stage is a critical step – and one that seemingly is often skipped. When congregations use these free listing services to list only the basics, they missing the opportunity to tell their story – for free – to the people we don't know yet who may be seeking a new spiritual home.

Consider:

- As you review each listing service What is it that you want people to know about your congregation? How would you describe

your theology or liturgy to someone who may be new to your faith tradition?

- Ask people who are newer to your congregation what attracted them to your faith community and then include that in your listing.
- Ask people who do not attend your church what they know about your congregation. Talking to people outside of your organization is one of the best ways I know to get beyond our own understanding of what others know and/or think about our congregation.
- Does your congregation have community-based programs that might be of interest to people outside of your congregation? Let people know about your organ concerts, community garden, or Thursday evening book club.
- Writing a first draft of the information to be posted. Then, ask someone unfamiliar with your congregation to read it, and flag anything that is unclear or missing. This is the best way I know to minimize the use of 'church jargon' and to identify those things that are so obvious to parishioners that it may not enter your mind to include it,

such as letting visitors know that the grocery store across the street lets people attending church services use their lot on Sunday morning or that there is a second entrance around the corner from the main one that doesn't have as many stairs...

- If the listing service includes a comment field, invite people you know to make a comment. Think about establishing a process where participants are invited to share comments on the listing service.

Once you have an idea of what you want to include in your listing, the next step is to consider and plan for keeping the site current. Your goal should be to develop a workable calendar of when the listing sites will be updated and to designate a responsible person. Consider timing your schedule changes based on:

- Church programming: does it change monthly? Seasonally?
- Is someone in your congregation always taking photos of church events or programs? Including updated photos on your listing helps to keep it fresh.

Posting

Before posting, it is helpful to

take one final look at what you plan to post. This time, think like someone completely unfamiliar with your denomination, your location, etc; that is think like the person you don't know yet but hope to meet. Is your language clear and welcoming?

Tips:

- Set aside an hour of time and if possible, close your door to minimize interruptions.
- Have all of the material you plan to post in electronic format and gathered in one file.
- If you are using photos, do you have signed releases – especially if they show children?
- Once posted, ask someone to check the posting. Ask for overall impression and, most importantly, to let you know if there are any spelling errors or mistakes.

Regular Updates

It is important to maintain a schedule of regular updates for your listing(s). As editor of ECF Vital Practices, I'm aware that people visit the site at their convenience and I want to be sure that the site always looks fresh and current. How do you feel when you visit a site and it's clear that the site hadn't been updated in

months. For me, whether that is a church or a restaurant, an outdated site signals to me a disinterest in attracting new people. The time spent keeping a site up-to-date is time well spent (this goes for a church website as well as church listings).

Ongoing Evaluation

How will you know if using listing services is working for your congregation? One of the best is to ask people who join you for worship or participate in programs or events how they learned about it. Asking can be face to face or included as part of a registration form or visitor card.

Consider:

- Taking time regularly to look at the listing service to see if there are any comments, build time into a vestry or communications committee meeting to review comments and incorporate them into your overall strategy.
- Some listing services offer analytics that tell you how many people visited your site. Become familiar with how these work – and ask the person who looks at the analytics for your congregation's website if they can tell you how many visitors to your site are coming from one of the listing sites.

Reaching the People We Don't Know Yet

Taking full advantage of the many free, online directory services available to congregations allows congregations to share their story 24/7 (that is around the clock, every day of the week, every day of the year). This is the best way I know for people of faith to share the Good News of how they are serving Jesus Christ with 'the people we don't know yet' who may be looking for a spiritual home in your community.

Nancy Davidge is the editor of ECF Vital Practices and former director of communications and marketing at Episcopal Divinity School where she taught "Religion and the Media." She also runs The Davidge Group, a marketing communication firm specializing in the development of audience centered marketing and communication plans.

Resources

- Claim Your Place
<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/claim-your-place/>
- Claiming Your Place: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/claiming-your-place/>

- Holy Week Challenge: <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/holy-week-challenge/>
- The Episcopal Church's "Find a Church" <http://www.episcopal-church.org/find-a-church>
- Your diocesan website
- Your provincial website
- Google Places <http://www.google.com/places/>
- Yahoo <http://local.yahoo.com/>
- Yelp <http://www.yelp.com/>
- Foursquare <https://foursquare.com/business/>
- YellowPages <http://www.yellowpages.com/>
- SuperPages <http://www.yellowpages.com/> ■ Your provincial website

Using Video

BY TERESA S. MATTHES

Do you need a video for your capital campaign? Maybe you've had your heart strings pulled by glowing shots and the stirring soundtrack of your alma mater's video or the local hospital's. But is something that flashy appropriate for a church institution? And aren't those videos expensive?

It depends on what you need to do.

When the Diocese of Chicago began an \$8 million campaign for renovations to the diocesan center, most of their donors had never visited the building. Just blocks off Michigan Avenue, the limited parking and urban traffic kept attendance at informational tours to a trickle. So Director of Networking Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows decided to "take the mountain to Mohammed." She used a tech-savvy production house in Seattle to develop a Pixar-like video that blended donor interviews with animated architectural drawings to give people a virtual tour of the building before construction was completed.

"We had a bit of sticker shock at first," Baskerville-Burrows says about the cost. "We spent four

months looking for a more affordable option but in the end, we decided nothing else was nearly as effective." To get the most for their money, she had the videographers shoot two days' worth of interviews with clergy, volunteers, donors and staffers. "We'll use excerpts throughout the campaign in newsletters, on the website, and after the renovations are complete."

Because of that initial delay, the final product wasn't ready when the diocese began its next round of informational gatherings. Undeterred, Baskerville-Burrows showed rough cuts at the earliest events and asked donor prospects for input toward the final video. "I think people paid closer attention at those early screenings precisely because we were asking for suggestions," she says.

Was it worth the expense? "Oh yes! The first time the animated footage appeared on the screen, people literally moved to the edge of their seats."

The Diocese of Western North Carolina needed to look good for less. Flashy graphics would have

sent the wrong message for their \$1.5 million debt reduction campaign. But they still needed video to reach remote parishes scattered throughout the Appalachians.

They assembled a team of volunteers to manage the campaign's communications with support from the diocesan staff. One member drafted a script and another recruited ministry leaders for on-camera roles. Pooling their contacts and their creativity, they managed to find a young videographer who would work quickly and cheaply in exchange for the exposure his budding business would get at diocesan convention.

Within seven days of script approval, they had a final cut.

And how has their work paid off? In a diocese of 66 congregations, 45 have already requested DVDs according to Communications Team Chair Alice Keenan, and the video has received hundreds of hits on YouTube. As the campaign shifted to the parish fundraiser phase, diocesan employees set up a display in their lobby where campaign workers can pick up a video, flyers,

and other materials. With the summer season just beginning in the North Carolina mountains, the campaign has raised 80% of their goal.

Teresa S. Matthes is the program director for financial resources at the Episcopal Church Foundation. An experienced capital campaign consultant, Terri assists congregations, dioceses, and organizations with their development campaigns. She also serves as a key architect in the Episcopal Church's Rebuild Our Church in Haiti campaign.

Resources

- Using Video to Tell Your Story:
http://episcopalfoundation.smugmug.com/Other/July-2012/23846471_qkjhQm
- Video from the Diocese of Chicago: <http://www.youtube.com/>
- Video from the Diocese of Western North Carolina:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPHHjjgVR6owatch?v=DfJ0zEwIZB0&feature=em-share_video_user

When Less is Enough

BY MARY KAY THOMPSON

Just over a month ago, Grace Episcopal Church bravely reincarnated “A Grace Home Companion,” a mock radio show something like “A Prairie Home Companion.” Together we laughed out loud at the local commentary and highlights from the congregation’s early days, while balancing sticky cake plates and coffee cups on our knees. Together we celebrated twenty years as a church.

In the weeks prior to the cake slicing, I dug through folders and scrapbooks and poked around old computer files, getting a first-hand glimpse of how various publications evolved with time. As the economy grew, as Grace grew, communications blossomed. And then as the economy suffered, so did our budget. Reductions in color copies and general belt tightening morphed into radical cuts.

What we are now, visually, is an accumulation of many steps, countless meetings, too many hours and a great deal of love. Our website reflects who we are. Our eNews reaches into members’ lives, keeping them up-to-date. Our printed bulletin insert and fliers do the same for visitors and for members

who may not be electronically inclined. Our brochures give voice to the wonderful ministries thriving within our community. I have been given much to work with and I am continually grateful.

When budget dictated that the communications position be cut in half, the director who had grown the position and given so much stepped down. The position was intentionally left vacant for a few months as staff and leadership adjusted to the change and sought to redefine the role and its priorities.

In January, I stepped in, cognizant of the challenges. Strangely, amid all the loss, I saw opportunity in the questions. *How does Grace keep shining in half the time? Is it possible to maintain the quality and reach of our communications with fewer hours?*

Simplicity Through Streamlining

As a graphic artist with an unlikely knack for organization, my first step was to look at the specific tasks and see where they could be simplified. A good example is our Constant Contact Newsletter.

For the sake of time, our eNews now only has 1 – 2 graphics per week. One sets the tone at the opening and the other highlights what’s currently showing at The Gallery at Grace. Despite our fondness for poetry, that, too, has been reduced. Our eNews is what it says it is –electronically delivered news with a splash of color. Perhaps not as elaborate as in prior days, but still highly effective.

Shining in the Details

Years of magazine work taught me the efficiency of templates, style sheets, and a good proofreader. Corporate design drilled in the value of sticking to a set of fonts, colors, and graphic styles across different mediums – especially during times of change. My personal experience as an artist reminded me and continues to remind me of the transformative power of creating something beautiful, even in the mundane. Sometimes, it’s as simple as searching for the right photo.

Converting for the Greater “We”

Building on my prior experience, I next needed to look at the current processes and workflow. To allow

others to fill some gaps, and to encourage a smooth process with our volunteers, I have begun converting basic inserts and fliers from Adobe InDesign to Microsoft Word. Don't get me wrong, I personally would choose InDesign in a heartbeat – but by creating basic templates in a common program, we achieve a consistent look and feel no matter who creates the document.

Encouraging Leadership

For any project, sticking to deadlines and word counts is the best way to reduce the time it takes to edit and lay out content. For the printed bulletin insert and eNews, that means copy needs to arrive by noon Tuesday in order to make it to our volunteer for proofing on Wednesday. In an ideal world, everything wraps by Thursday at 2:00pm.

As for “special projects,” Bill, our rector, is asking everyone to limit requests to what is truly essential and to what has been clearly defined in my job description. This is tough. To help with expectations and workflow, the staff and leaders are creating larger planning windows and developing the understanding that even the “little” projects take a minimum of 2 - 3 hours.

Changing expectations has

proven over and over again to be one of the greatest challenges. This comes as no surprise. After all, we are just being ourselves. Grace is creative, lively and loves artful details! Although the budget and time have been reduced, the need to communicate has not.

To date, we have yet to expand online as envisioned, our new annual magazine is but an infant, and our website needs a little updating and TLC. As I continue my quest for time, I remind myself that change comes in baby steps. At 15 hours a week progress is slow but steady. Along the way I treasure the chance encounters with beauty: a poem here, a picture there, a scripture passage that says just the right thing, a member who stops by to say hello or thank you.

At Grace, we believe opportunity lies dormant in every nook and cranny – even a dramatic budget cut. In understanding that, we give way to the divine wisdom that blooms with age – even at a mere twenty years.

***Mary Kay Thompson** is communications coordinator at Grace Episcopal Church, Bainbridge Island, Washington.*

Resources

- Episcopal logos and shields: http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/Imageshop_345_ENG_HTML.htm
- Grace Episcopal Church website: <http://www.gracehere.org/index.php>
- Grace Episcopal Church bulletin inserts: http://www.gracehere.org/pubs_bulletin.php
- Grace Episcopal Church eNews archives: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs070/1101470781846/archive/1106185905980.html>
- Grace Episcopal Church program brochures: http://www.gracehere.org/pubs_archives.php
- Microsoft Word Templates: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/word-templates-FX102825522.aspx>
- Weekly bulletin inserts from The Episcopal Church: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/bulletin-inserts>

Newsletter Makeover

BY SUSAN ELLIOTT

We're all familiar with Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, where every curious critter has its own take on logic and language. It's not a lot different from the current environment for communications. A little more than a decade into this 21st century, we face a communications wonderland, where social media's the rage and everyone's atwitter over, yes, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs, e-zines, Internet advertising, streaming and mobile technology. It may not be Lewis Carroll's Wonderland, but church leaders and communicators can feel like the White Rabbit, Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!

Incorporating new technologies challenges us to rethink and refresh some "tried and true" venues like one of my favorites — the parish newsletter.

What Use Is A Parish Newsletter These Days?

Not so long ago, the newsletter was the main way to make sure your congregation knew when you switched to the summer schedule, where volunteer help was needed, when Sunday School resumed, and how to sign up for the latest adult education class. Published weekly,

twice a month, or monthly, its main purpose was information, supplemented with a little teaching and inspiration from the rector and maybe a few photos for interest.

These days, websites, e-news, mobile apps, and Facebook, working together, relieve a good deal of that pressure, freeing the newsletter to share more of the stories and life of the congregation. And the life we share in our churches should be shared to help build up the community and draw others in. Additionally, a church newsletter with well-written stories and photos creates a vibrant record of a congregation's history-in-the-making.

Freeing the newsletter from the demands of the calendar means that you can go for quality over quantity. Some churches, like All Saints' Beverly Hills, St. Stephen's Richmond, and the New River Regional Ministry in southeast Florida have moved to vibrant quarterly publications packed with stories that are widely read and enjoyed by the members of their congregations.

A Few Things That Matter

■ **Start with a plan** Gather a group of people to brainstorm each issue. You need input from staff and a few people with wide knowledge and involvement in the parish. Consider what's coming up that needs fuller explanation and what has happened that would make a good story. Look at each aspect of your church's life — worship, children and youth, adult education and formation, outreach, music, community life, groups, new member welcome, stewardship. Something significant is going on in every one of those areas. It can be as big as a new program for adult education or as simple as one person's story about finding her way to the church or an interview with a volunteer.

Create a list of stories for the upcoming issue. Include notices and other brief announcements. Leave room for the last-minute items forgotten in this planning go-round. Counting back from the date you want the issue to mail or post online, figure out deadlines — one for writers, one the editing/layout process, and one for production.

- **Let many voices be heard — and edited** Story list in hand, identify parishioners who are willing to write about their experiences teaching Sunday School, cooking for people who are homeless, figuring out a stewardship pledge, receiving the prayer and care of the community, growing up in the parish, sharing their faith. (Let the rector's voice be heard, too, of course.) Parish life is rich and never lacks for stories.

Talk with your writers about what you want and give them a word count. Make sure they understand that pieces will be edited for length and clarity. Today's readers are extremely busy, often distracted, and maybe not quite engaged. It's important give your volunteer or staff editor time to make sure each article is lively, welcoming, clear, and relatively brief.

- **Tell the truth with simplicity** Like all disciplines, the church has it's own vocabulary. Words like narthex, west end, the PB, confuse newcomers and can make them feel unwelcome. Complex theological language is likewise perplexing and can be off-putting. We all need to find ways to talk about faith and our life together that are accessible to seekers and skeptics, and to

avoid the insider talk that says, "If you don't get this, you don't belong."

- **Design and production matter**

The invention of movable type and development of typefaces in the centuries following, to say nothing of the recent explosion in digital typefaces, means that the type toolbox is overflowing. Good design, however, is always about simplicity, readability, and space. Like editing, it's about whether the eye and the mind are encouraged to linger or sent away in search of something more inviting.

So as with language, keep design simple — one or at most two typefaces, some white space to let the page breathe, a little color here and there but not too much, good photos large enough to have some impact, a standard layout that's flexible enough to permit some interest. (I'm fond of a three-columns for that reason.)

Whether you do a full print run or publish mainly online with a short supplemental printing, use a paper with some heft and a finish that enhances the layout and design. Many people — staff and volunteer writers, editors and photographers — have a hand in your newsletter.

Doing it well honors their contributions and reflects our mission to do all things for nothing less than the glory of God.

- **Print or digital — why not both?** In the lean times many churches face, it's tempting to whack away at print production and mailing costs. But a nicely written, well-designed and produced newsletter with articles and photos reflecting a church's shared faith and life is almost as good as a letter (remember letters?). A welcome sight amidst the catalogues, bills, and solicitations that make up the rest of the week's mail, it will wait patiently for time to read it. Visitors and friends stopping by may see it, extending its reach beyond the member's household.

Once the print piece is finished and mailed, it's simple to create a PDF of the issue and post it on the website for parishioners who prefer that to paper and visitors exploring church via the web, making it doubly useful. Extra copies in the parish office, library, and welcome table extend its reach further.

It Should be Fun

If creating each issue of your newsletter is just another grim task, it will fail its mission to reflect the meaning and joy of

life together as Christians. That doesn't mean that producing it is a laugh a minute. It's work. But finding ways to give people time for their task, to thank them, to take delight in collaboration and the finished piece are important. We're publishing glad tidings, and there is joy in that.

Time and Money

In a time when members are struggling and your church may be confronting reduced pledging, communications is more important than ever. Up-to-date, accurate, welcoming communications in all areas — from signage to bulletin, newsletter, website, and other web-based media — encourage and strengthen your community and invite others into your life and faith.

A strong parish newsletter plays an important role in both parishes with simple communications and places that have leaped headlong into our 21st-century wonderland. No other regular publication captures the flow of the church's life with as much breadth and care. It takes a good deal of staff and volunteer time to produce even four issues a year, and it may seem impossible. But as the White Queen told Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Go for it.

Susan Elliott is a writer, editor, and graphic designer, working mainly in faith-based communications. Director of Communications at St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC, for 21 years, she has been a freelance consultant since 2008. She collaborates with the Rev. Jay Sidebotham on "Slow down. Quiet. It's Advent!" published annually by Church Publishing, Inc.

Resources

- 5 Tools Church Designers Need: Teamwork <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2010/04/5-tools-church-designers-need-teamwork/>
- Michael Cina Creativity Catch Up Clip Art <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2011/02/michael-cina-creativity-catch-up-clip-art>
- Who Should do your Writing <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/03/who-should-do-your-writing/>
- Copy Matters: Benefits not features <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/03/copy-matters-benefits-not-features/>
- Reaching the Unplugged <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/06/reaching-the-unplugged/#comment-34202>

www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/06/reaching-the-unplugged/#comment-34202

- For downloadable PDFs of the newsletters mentioned in the article, please see:
*Seasons of the Spirit, published by St. Stephen's, Richmond, Virginia: <http://saintstephensrichmond.net/communication#PDFSpirit>
*All Saints' Life, published by All Saints', Beverly Hills: <http://www.allsaintsbh.org/publications.html>
*New River Current, published by All Saints Episcopal Church, Saint Ambrose Episcopal Church and Centro Hispano de Todos los Santos, Fort Lauderdale: <http://www.allsaintsfl.org/>

Transformación del Boletín

POR SUSAN ELLIOTT

Todos estamos familiarizados con Las Aventuras de Alicia en el País de las Maravillas, donde cada criatura tiene su propia lógica. A sólo un poco más de una década del siglo XXI, enfrentamos comunicaciones al estilo del País de las Maravillas, en las que los medios sociales son el último grito de la moda y todos están fascinados con Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs, e-zines, publicidad en Internet, streaming y tecnología móvil. Puede no ser el Alicia en el País de las Maravillas de Lewis Carroll, pero los líderes y los comunicadores de las iglesias se pueden sentir como el Conejo Blanco, ¡Ay, ay, voy a llegar tarde!

Incorporar nuevas tecnologías nos obliga a volver a pensar y a renovar algunas cosas de probada confianza como una de mis favoritas: el boletín de la parroquia.

¿Para qué sirve hoy en día el boletín de la parroquia?

No hace mucho tiempo, el boletín era la manera principal de asegurar que la feligresía supiera cuando cambiaba el programa de verano y cómo inscribirse en la última clase de educación de adultos. Ya sea si se publicaba semanal, quincenal o

mensualmente, su propósito principal era divulgar información, suplementada con un poco de enseñanza e inspiración del rector y tal vez alguna que otra foto de interés.

Hoy en día, los sitios web, las e-noticias, las apps móviles y Facebook alivian mucho esa presión, permitiendo que el boletín comparta más sobre la vida y las historias de la feligresía. Y la vida que compartimos en nuestras iglesias se debe compartir para ayudar a formar la comunidad y atraer a otros a ella. Además, un boletín de la iglesia con historias bien redactadas y buenas fotos crea datos vibrantes de la historia en formación de una feligresía.

Liberar el boletín de las exigencias del calendario significa que se puede optar por la calidad en lugar de la cantidad. Algunas iglesias, como All Saints' Beverly Hills, St. Stephen's Richmond y la nueva New River Regional Ministry del sudeste de la Florida están produciendo publicaciones trimestrales vibrantes con artículos que un gran número de sus feligreses lee y disfruta.

Algunas cosas que cuentan

Empiece por un plan Necesita tener aportes del personal y de un grupo de personas con amplios conocimientos y participación en la parroquia. Considere lo que esté por ocurrir que requiera una explicación más completa y las cosas que hayan ocurrido que sean una buena narración. Fíjese en todos aspectos de la vida de la iglesia: culto, niños y jóvenes, educación y formación de adultos, extensión, música, vida comunitaria, grupos, bienvenida a nuevos miembros, mayordomía. Algo significativo está ocurriendo en cada uno de esos aspectos. Puede ser algo de peso, como un nuevo programa de educación de adultos o algo tan simple como la historia de una persona sobre cómo encontró su camino hacia la iglesia o una entrevista de un voluntario. Cree una lista de historias para el próximo número. Incluya notificaciones y otros anuncios breves. Deje espacio para las cosas de último momento olvidadas en la sesión de planificación. Contado hacia atrás desde la fecha en que desee que el boletín se envíe por correo o se publique en línea, calcule las fechas límite: una para los redactores, otra para el proceso de corrección y diagramación, una para producción y una para

producción.

Deje que se oigan – y publiquen – muchas voces Con la lista de historias en mano, identifique feligreses dispuestos a escribir sobre sus experiencias enseñando en la escuela dominical, cocinando para los sin hogar, determinando una promesa de mayordomía, recibiendo la oración y el cuidado de la comunidad, creciendo en la parroquia, compartiendo la fe. (Por supuesto, deje que también se oiga la voz del rector). La vida parroquial es rica y nunca faltan historias.

Hable con sus redactores sobre lo que desea y dígales cuántas palabras necesita que tenga cada artículo. Verifique que entiendan que los artículos serán corregidos para acortarlos y hacer que sean más claros. Los lectores de hoy en día están muy atareados y tienen muchas distracciones, y es posible que no estén muy concentrados en lo que leen. Es importante darles suficiente tiempo al corrector de planta o a los voluntarios para hacer que todos los artículos sean animados, cálidos, claros y relativamente cortos.

Diga la verdad con sencillez Al igual que todas las disciplinas, la iglesia tiene su propio vocabulario. Cierta terminología eclesiástica poco conocida, como ábside, confunde a los recién llegados y puede hacer que no se sientan bienveni-

dos. El lenguaje teológico complejo también es desconcertante y puede ser perturbador. Todos tenemos que encontrar maneras de hablar sobre la fe y nuestra vida juntos que sean accesibles tanto para los que están en búsqueda como los escépticos, y evitar decir cosas como “Si no lo captas, no perteneces aquí”.

El diseño y la producción cuentan La invención de los tipos móviles y el desarrollo de tipos de letra en los siglos posteriores, por no mencionar la explosión reciente de los tipos de letra digitales, significa que la caja de herramientas está repleta. Sin embargo, el buen diseño siempre es sobre simplicidad, facilidad de lectura y espacio. Al igual que la corrección, es sobre si se estimula que el ojo y la mente se detengan o si se los envía a buscar algo más atrayente.

Así que al igual que con el vocabulario, mantenga el diseño simple: uno o dos tipos de letra, algo de espacio en blanco para dejar que respire la página, un poco de color en algunos lugares, pero no demasiado, buenas fotos suficientemente grandes como para que tengan impacto, una diagramación estándar suficientemente flexible como para permitir un grado de interés. (Me gustan las columnas por ese motivo).

Ya sea si desea publicar en papel o principalmente en línea con un suplemento impreso corto, use papel con un cierto peso y con una terminación que realce la diagramación y el diseño. Mucha gente – redactores de planta y voluntarios, correctores y fotógrafos – participan en la creación de su boletín. Hacerlo bien honra sus aportes y refleja nuestra misión de hacer las cosas por nada menos que la gloria de Dios.

Impreso o digital — ¿por qué no ambos? En la época de vacas flacas que enfrentan muchas iglesias, es tentador dejar de imprimir y enviar por correo para reducir costos de impresión y de franqueo. Pero un boletín bien redactado, bien diseñado, con artículos y fotos que reflejen la fe y la vida compartida de la iglesia es algo casi tan bueno como una carta (¿recuerda las cartas?). Algo apreciado entre los catálogos, las cuentas y pedidos que componen la correspondencia de la semana, esperará pacientemente hasta que haya tiempo para leerlo. Visitantes y amigos podrán verlo, extendiendo su alcance más allá del domicilio del feligrés.

Una vez que el boletín se imprime y envía por correo, es sencillo crear un PDF del número y ponerlo en el sitio web para los

feligreses que prefieren leerlo en línea y para los visitantes que exploren la iglesia en línea, lo que lo hace doblemente útil. Copias adicionales en la oficina de la parroquia, en la biblioteca y en la mesa de bienvenida extienden su alcance todavía más.

Debe ser divertido

Si la creación de cada número de su boletín es una tarea engorrosa más, no cumplirá su misión de reflejar el significado y la alegría de nuestra vida juntos como cristianos. Eso no significa que producirla no sea trabajoso. Pero encontrar maneras de dar tiempo a la gente para que realice sus tareas, así como para agradecerles y deleitarse en la colaboración y el trabajo finalizado, es importante. Estamos publicando noticias felices y hay deleite en ello.

Tiempo y dinero

En un momento en que los miembros están luchando y su iglesia puede estar enfrentando menos contribuciones, las comunicaciones son más importantes que nunca. Las comunicaciones actualizadas, precisas y cálidas en todos los aspectos, desde los letreros hasta el boletín, el sitio web y otros medios en la red, estimulan a nuestra comunidad y la fortalecen, e invitan a otros a su vida y su fe.

Un buen boletín parroquial desempeña un papel importante

tanto en las parroquias con comunicaciones sencillas como en los lugares que han entrado de lleno a nuestro país de las maravillas del siglo XXI. Ninguna otra publicación periódica capta el fluir de la vida de la iglesia con tanta amplitud y dedicación. Requiere mucho tiempo del personal y de los voluntarios crear incluso cuatro números por año y puede parecer imposible. Pero como le dijo la reina blanca a Alicia en Alicia en el País del Espejo, “Muchas veces llegué a creer hasta seis cosas imposibles antes del desayuno”.

¡Manos a la obra!

***Susan Elliott** es una redactora, correctora y diseñadora gráfica que trabaja principalmente con comunidades de fe. Ha sido directora de comunicaciones de la Iglesia Episcopal St. Columba's en Washington, DC, por 21 años y consultora independiente desde 2008.*

Resources

- 5 Tools Church Designers Need: Teamwork <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2010/04/5-tools-church-designers-need-teamwork/>
- Michael Cina Creativity Catch Up Clip Art <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2011/02/michael-cina-creativity-catch-up-clip-art>

<http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/03/who-should-do-your-writing/>

- Who Should do your Writing <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/03/who-should-do-your-writing/>
- Copy Matters: Benefits not features <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/03/copy-matters-benefits-not-features/>
- Reaching the Unplugged <http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2012/06/reaching-the-unplugged/#comment-34202>
- For downloadable PDFs of the newsletters mentioned in the article, please see:
*Seasons of the Spirit, published by St. Stephen's, Richmond, Virginia: <http://saintstephensrichmond.net/communication#PDFSpirit>
*All Saints' Life, published by All Saints', Beverly Hills: <http://www.allsaintsbh.org/publications.html>
*New River Current, published by All Saints Episcopal Church, Saint Ambrose Episcopal Church and Centro Hispano de Todos los Santos, Fort Lauderdale: <http://www.allsaintsfl.org/>

The How and Why of Press Releases

BY MARY ANN PATTERSON

You have a wonderful church community. You know it, the members of your congregation know it, but how do you let others know about it? Sending a press release to your local paper, online event calendars, community website, or TV station can help. Here are some ideas of what to promote:

■ **Your latest accomplishment**

Did you recently complete a home or home renovations for Habitat for Humanity? Did parishioners work in the local soup kitchen? Raise money for a new homeless shelter? This may not be news to your church family but it is news that needs to get out to the greater community.

■ **Share an inspirational story**

Your congregation is comprised of many wonderful people, each with a story to tell. Share one with the community at large.

■ **Offer useful, free, or educational resources**

Does your adult Bible class meet regularly? Youth group? Do you offer camps or instruction for children? Singles? Elder care? Let the community at large know

these programs are available to them.

■ **Broadcast your upcoming event**

At Christmas and Easter, people are looking for a place to go to church. Let them know what services you offer and why they need to be there.

■ **Respond to what's in the news**

Being up on current events links the leadership in your church to potential members. What are the topics being discussed in the secular media? What is your church's position on these issues?

Types of Press Releases

There are many types of press release. Be sure and post the specific type at the top of your release. This will help ensure that it gets to the right person and placed in the correct media vehicle.

■ **General News Release**

A general press release is the most common type of press release and the type of press release that come to the most people's mind. This type of press release simply includes

news that must be disseminated to the media people.

The goal of this type of press release is to secure an editorial story that will generate interest, coverage, and exposure for your church.

■ **Launch Press Release**

A launch press release is similar to a general news release in terms of format, but it's intent is much more specific. A launch press release is more urgent or timely, and its main purpose is to create a buzz regarding a launch. Church launches could include a new program or type of service.

■ **Executive or Staff**

Announcement News Release

An executive or staff announcement news release is what you send out if there are staff changes at your church. This type of press release is different from a general news release in the sense that it can contain biographical information to support the information and will often include a photo.

■ **Expert Positioning Press Release**

You would create and distribute an expert positioning press release if you want to show an individual's expertise in a subject area with the goal of building him or her up as the person media people would go to in the future for information or a quote. This would be useful if your priest had a particular field of expertise that reporters could tap into if they had a question while covering another story.

■ **Event Press Release**

An event press release has a different format than a general news release primarily because it needs to clearly lay out to members of the media the five Ws — who, what, when, where and why. An event press release typically looks like a list or outline instead of having paragraphs. The goal with this type is that the media will make your event known to the public.

■ **Media Advisory or Alert**

Similar to an event release, but it is aimed towards getting the media people to attend an event and includes why they would want to do this. This would be applicable if your church was hosting a big event on a Saturday, but you were staging a media event on Friday

so they could film and show footage, or write articles with pictures, in advance of the event.

Tips for Getting Your Editorial Story Published

Aside from event notices for calendar sections, sometimes you have an editorial story that you want published by your local newspaper, either in print and online. Local reporters get hundreds of releases each day. What can you do to make sure your release will get noticed, read, and published? Here are some suggestions.

■ **Get to know your local media contacts.** A cold call will suffice if all you want to learn is: who should get your releases and what is their preferred method of receipt (email, fax, letter, etc.)

■ **The personal touch is still the most effective.** Invite your local reporter out to lunch. Find out what kind of stories they are looking for.

■ **Find out about their frequency policy.** For example, some papers limit stories about a particular organization or person to once every six months. If you know that, be sure and filter your releases so that you send the one you really want

published.

Sharing your Story

Why send press releases? Sharing your congregation's stories and photos in your local media is one of the most effective ways people can learn about your congregation. In the same way that Jesus sent the disciples into the world to share the Good News, by building relationships with local media, congregational communicators create opportunities to share the Good News of their faith community with the community at large.

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Resources

- Press Release Template <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/press-release-template/>
- Press Release Tip Sheet <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/press-release-tips/>
- Press Release Writing FAQs: <http://www.press-release-writing.com/press-release-distribution-frequently-asked-questions/>

- Writer's Resources from Press Release Writing.com: <http://www.press-release-writing.com/writers-resources-from-press-release-writing-com/>

Lights, Camera, Action

BY TERRI MATTHES

Last month we ran a story about using video to enhance diocesan campaigns. But what if you're not running a capital campaign? What if you're a small congregation with limited resources? Does video make sense for you?

Probably. Check out the links below for some of the advantages of video with none of the cost.

Involve Your Youth

It's an old joke but true; if you want free tech consulting, ask a teen. When the Episcopal Church held a video contest on the Five Marks of Mission, the winner came from Agape House, a campus ministry in San Diego. According to Jackie Bray, who spearheaded the project, they shot the video for free using a Canon video camera, doing the editing on their computers using Windows Movie Maker and File Lab Video Editor. They embraced the homemade look by wearing coordinated T-shirts and giving all the "newscasters" alliterative screen names.

St. Mark's, Glenn Ellyn, Illinois took a similar approach. They drafted a college student who'd returned home to pursue a dream in film-

making. His mother wrote the script, he checked out the film school's equipment, and a host of parishioners made their small-screen debut.

Spread the Story

With fewer than 100 families, St. Elisabeth's, Bartlett, Tenn. asked their parishioners, "What makes St. E's feel like home?" to make this video using only a flip cam and a Mac to edit the footage.

Sometimes a video's most important audience is the people actually on camera. When Holy Nativity in Clarendon Hills, Illinois wanted to build support for proposed capital projects, they asked parishioners to discuss how each project might affect their mission. On camera. Using Camtasia, a video software that offers a 30-day free trial, they recorded people's thoughts on accessibility, roof repair, and expanding the kitchen. The very act of explaining themselves to the neutral camera helped build commitment and awareness.

Raise the "Fun Quotient."

No one likes to discuss deferred maintenance and the leaky church

roof has become a cliché. So All Saints, Omaha, staged a mock service during which the rector preached on Noah's flood from beneath an umbrella and parishioners followed along using flashlights because of the dated lighting system.

And when it comes to discussing money, the Episcopal Church can sometimes have, well, issues. So Holy Nativity (where they've really embraced video) made this forty-second spot to emphasize that if they wanted to reach out to their community, everyone would need to "reach deep."

Expand Your Reach

In today's mobile society, you can no longer count on seeing your parishioners once a week. Video allows you to speak directly to people even when they're miles away. And it lets you put your key leaders right in their living room. Here's a simple message from The Bishop of Southern Virginia http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8EyrHALrss&feature=player_embedded and a brief conversation about a proposed fund for congregational development between the Bishop of San Diego

and the rector of St. Andrew's-by-the Sea. <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151911051280595&set=vb.132887643406742&type=2&theater>

Share the Wealth

Total cost of all the videos listed here? \$0.00. Total effect on stewardship, evangelism, and community? Priceless. If you have a video story to share, send us a link at editor@episcopalfoundation.org.

Teresa S. Matthes is the program director for financial resources at the Episcopal Church Foundation. An experienced capital campaign consultant, Terri assists congregations, dioceses, and organizations with their development campaigns. She also serves as a key architect in the Episcopal Church's Rebuild Our Church in Haiti campaign.

Resources

- How to make a high-quality video on a shoestring budget <http://tools.blog.globalgiving.org/2012/03/15/how-to-make-a-high-quality-video-on-a-shoestring-budget/>
- Video on a Shoestring Part 1: Getting Started http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T8CF_QopsM&feature=relmfu

- Video on a Shoestring Part 2: Writing the Script <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jsyn5XkssVc&feature=relmfu>
- Video on a Shoestring Part 3: Video Production http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E0Ty2l8i4k&feature=relmfu
- Video on a Shoestring Part 4: Distributing Video on the Web <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62oq8DpK5aE&feature=relmfu>

Featured Videos

- Make Your Mark video contest winner <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/make-your-mark-winner>
- St Mark's http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FeFmfBMdds
- What makes St. E's feel like home? http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOJ_9uiqHNU&feature=relmfu_in_order&list=UL
- Holy Nativity videos:
Accessibility: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gver9Ql22ao&feature=related>
Roof repair: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDXLd2Y96gA&feature=youtube_gdata
Expanding the kitchen: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSHhjHM_UZE

Reach deep: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFQQRczrREY>

- Message from the Bishop of Southern Virginia http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8EyrHAlrss&feature=player_embedded
- Conversation with the Bishop of San Diego <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151911051280595&set=vb.132887643406742&type=2&theater>