



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI

SECTION TWO MEDIA RELATIONS HANDBOOK

How to Share Your Stories

with the Media and
Your Community



This handbook was developed by your Diocesan Communications Committee. It is designed to help your parish develop a process to promote the church and its activities to the community through the media.

The content of this handbook was derived from various sources, including the Communications Manual published by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI
MEDIA RELATIONS HANDBOOK

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Notes

The Media Relations Handbook is brought to you by the Communications Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri. Our goal is to help parishes grow their membership and more fully communicate the benefits and experiences of being an Episcopalian to their communities. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please forward any comments to the Reverend Lauren Lyon, Chair, Communications Committee, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1307 Holmes Rd., Kansas City, MO. 64106. 816/842-0975.

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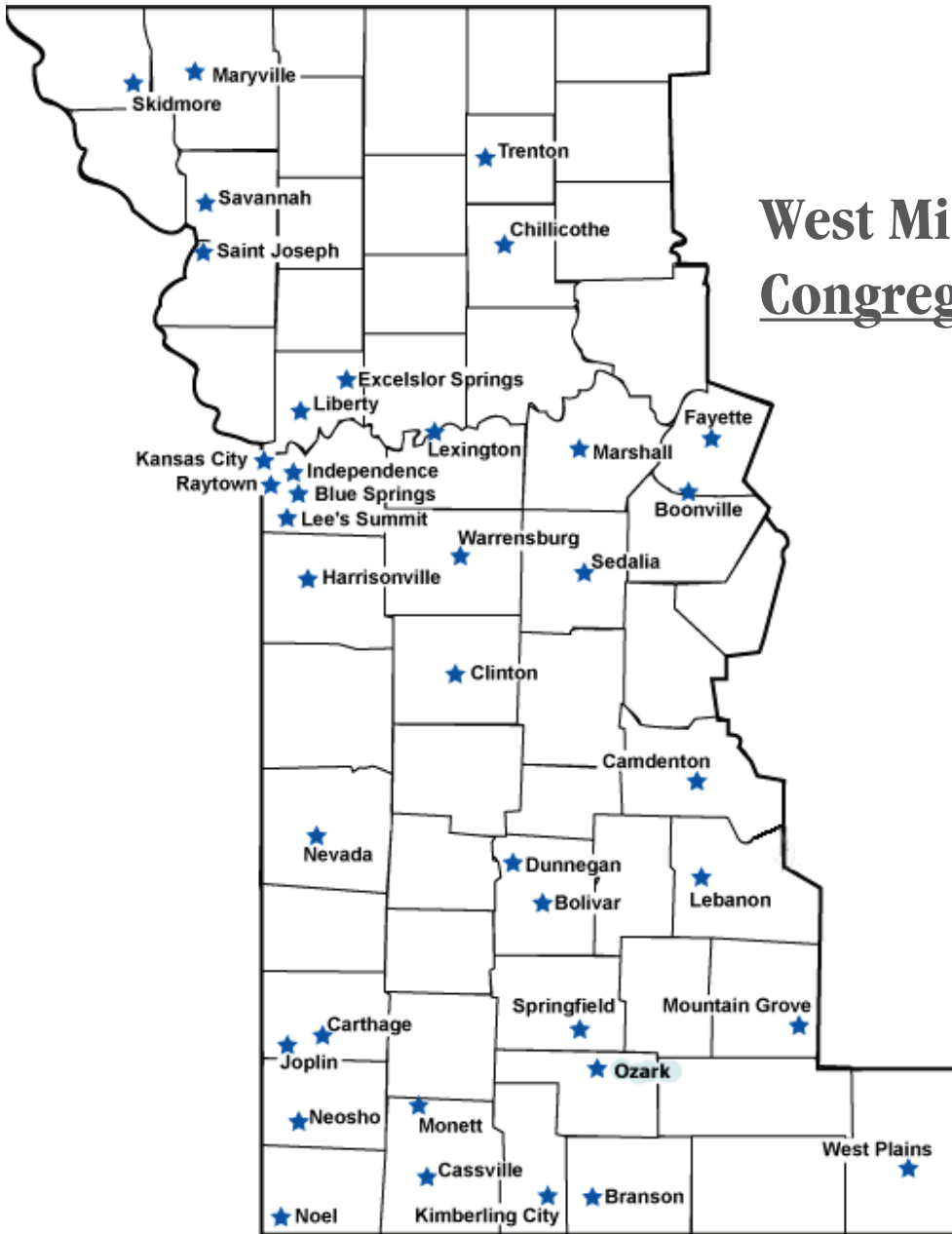
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West Missouri Congregations 2007

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820 Howard St.
PO Box 596
Carthage MO 64836-0596
Phone: 417/358-4631
Email: gracechcar@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.gracecarthage.org

Grace Church
421 Elm St.
Chillicothe MO 64601-2610
Phone: 660/646-4288
Email: gracechurch@cmuonline.net
Website: www.graceepiscopal-chillicothe.org

St. Paul's Church
181 E. Hwy. 7
P.O. Box 453
Clinton MO 64735-0453
Phone: 660/885-8008
Website: www.orgsites.com/mo/stpaulsepisc/

St. Luke's Church
PO Box 551
Excelsior Springs MO 64024-0551
Phone: 816/630-2309
Email:
Website:

St. Mary's Church
104 W. Davis
PO Box 57
Fayette MO 65248-0057
Phone:
Website: www.nerm.org/fayette

St. Peter's Church
402 W. Wall
PO Box 425
Harrisonville MO 64701-0425
Phone: 816/380-5666
Email:
Website:

St. Michael's Church
4000 Lee's Summit Rd.
Independence MO 64055-4005
Phone: 816/373-5333
Email: motherpat@stmichaelschurch.org
Website: www.stmichaelschurch.org

Trinity Church
409 N Liberty
Independence MO 64050-2701
Phone: 816/254-3644
Email: trinity101@comcast.net
Website: www.trinityindependence.org

Church of the Resurrection
1433 NW R.D. Mize Rd.
Blue Springs MO 64015-3666
Phone: 816/228-4220
Email: rector@episcopal-bluesprings.org
Website: www.episcopal-bluesprings.org

St. Alban's in the Ozarks
201 S Killingsworth
PO Box 844
Bolivar MO 65613
Phone: 417/777-2233
Website: www.stalbansozarks.org

St. Thomas O' Becket
Box 613
Cassville MO 65625
Phone: 417/847-3174

Christ Church
524 Fourth Street
Boonville MO 65233
Phone: 660/882-6444
Email: christchurch5244@netzero.net
Website: www.nerm.org/boonville

Shepherd of the Hills Church
107 Walnut Lane
Branson MO 65616
Phone: 417/334-3968
Email: shec1953@aol.com

St. George Church
443 State 5 Highway North
PO Box 1043
Camdenton MO 65020-1043
Phone: 573/346-4686
Email: stgeorge@zigs.net
Website:

Diocese of West Missouri

St. Philip's Church

706 Byers Ave.
Joplin MO 64801-4304
Phone: 417/623-6893
Email: stphiliprector@aol.com
Website: users.joplin.com/stphilip

All Saints' Church

9201 Wornall Road
Kansas City MO 64114
Phone: 816/363-2450
Email: allsaintskc@juno.com
Website: www.freeewebs.com/allsaintskc

Church of the Good Shepherd

4947 NE Chouteau Dr.
Kansas City MO 64119-4815
Phone: 816/452-0745
Email: home@goodsshepherdkc.org
Website: www.goodsshepherdkc.org

Church of the Redeemer

7110 N. State Route 9
Kansas City MO 64152-2930
Phone: 816/741-1136
Email: motherlouise@redeemerc.org
Website: www.redeemerc.org

Grace & Holy Trinity Cathedral

415 W. 13th Street
P.O. Box 412048
Kansas City MO 64141-2048
Phone: 816/474-8260
Email: twhite@ghc-kc.org
Website: www.ghc-kc.org

St. Andrew's Church

6401 Wornall Terr
Kansas City MO 64113-1755
Phone: 816/523-1602
Email: info@standrewkc.org
Website: www.standrewkc.org

St. Augustine's Church

2732 Benton Blvd.
Kansas City MO 64128-1130
Phone: 816/921-8534
Email: st_augustines_kcmo@yahoo.com

St. Mary Magdalene

400 East Red Bridge Road
Suite 305
Kansas City MO 64131
Phone: 816/941-6279
Email: jason@marymag.com
Website: www.marymag.com

St. Mary's Church

1307 Holmes
Kansas City MO 64106
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Email: stmarykcmo@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.stmaryskcmo.org

St. Paul's Church

11 E. 40th Street
Kansas City MO 64111-4909
Phone: 816/931-2850
Email: srunnels@stpauls-kcmo.org
Website: www.stpauls-kcmo.org

St. Peter's Church

100 E. Red Bridge Rd.
Kansas City MO 64114-5412
Phone: 816/942-1066
Website: www.stpetersepiscopal.net

St. Mark's Church

3 Northwoods Blvd.
PO Box 153
Kimberling City MO 65686-0153
Phone: 417-739-2460
Email: padrek@mchsi.com
Website: www.stmrks.org

Trinity Church

100 Harwood
PO Box 1615
Lebanon MO 65536-1615
Phone: 417/532-3433

St. Anne's Church

1815 NE Independence Ave
PO Box 6586
Lee's Summit MO 64086
Phone: 816/524-5552
Email:
Website: www.saintannesls.org

St. Paul's Church

416 SE Grand
PO Box 372
Lee's Summit MO 64063-0372
Phone: 816/524-3651
Email: stpaulslsmo@netzero.com
Website: www.saintpauls-lsmo.com

Christ Church

13th & Franklin
PO Box 307
Lexington MO 64067-0307
Phone: 660/259-3605

Grace Church

520 S. 291 Hwy.
Liberty MO 64068-1915
Phone: 816/781-6262
Email: gracechurchliberty@prodigy.net
Website: www.graceepiscopal-liberty.org

Trinity Church

104 E. Morgan
PO Box 779
Marshall MO 65340-0779
Phone: 660/886-4345
Website: www.nerm.org/marshall

St. Paul's Church

901 N. Main St.
PO Box 675
Maryville MO 64468-0675
Phone: 660/582-5832

St. Stephen's Church

601 E. Benton
PO Box 126
Monett MO 65708-0126
Phone: 417/235-3330

Christ Church

601 E. Walnut St.
Springfield MO 65806-2419
Phone: 417/866-5133
Website: www.christchurchepiscopal.com

Church of the Ascension

903 W. Katella St.
Springfield MO 65807-4431
Phone: 417/881-7065

St. James' Church

2645 E. Southern Hills Blvd.
Springfield MO 65804-3433
Phone: 417/881-3073
Email: stjamesmo@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.stjamesmo.com

St. John's Church

515 E. Division St.
Springfield MO 65803-2815
Phone: 417-869-6351
Email: stjohns-spgfld@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.saintjohnsparish.com

Christ Church

207 N. Seventh St.
St. Joseph MO 64501-1905
Phone: 816-279-6351
Email: christchurchsj@sbcglobal.net

St. Philip's Church

205 E. Ninth
PO Box 46
Trenton MO 64683-0046
Phone: 660/359-6483
Website: www.nerm.org/trenton

Christ Church

136 E. Gay St.
PO Box 3
Warrensburg MO 64093-0003
Phone: 660/429-1133
Email: christchurchwbrg@earthlink.net
Website: www.christchurchwarrensburg.org

All Saints' Church

107 S. Curry St.
PO Box 1012
West Plains MO 65775-1012
Phone: 417/256-2215

GET ORGANIZED

Centralize Responsibility

Appointing a Communications Minister

It is essential to centralize responsibility for church news under one person. The media need a contact point, a source, a person they can call quickly to get the information they seek, in a timely and consistent way. From the church's standpoint, this person should be someone able to speak with authority and knowledge about the church's varied activities.

Whom to choose

In many cases, there may be a person with particular expertise in journalism, advertising or public relations in the congregation who would be willing to take up the communications ministry of the church. Failing that, someone with enthusiasm and people skills is a good second. The newsletter editor or clergy-person shouldn't have to handle this task unassisted.

Setting goals

The clergy, vestry and evangelism committee should meet with the appointed communications minister and set objectives and goals (see sidebar) for the church. They should brainstorm ideas, identify people of interest in the congregation and decide how they want to be perceived in light of the Diocesan Vision Statement and the congregation's vision and mission statement.

Communicators should have permission to place stories without getting approval each time from either the vestry or the clergy. In other words, everyone first gets on the same page; then the communications minister is given the mandate to do the job.

A communicator's job can be as focused or as broad as each clergy/vestry decide. The goal is to build a relationship with city and neighborhood newspaper editors, as well as television and radio assignment editors. Then they will be more likely to use your church or people from your church in stories they do and also use the story ideas you provide.

Access to the news

In placing news and feature stories in the secular media, a communications minister will provide an important piece of the congregation's evangelism. As such, they should have access to the vestry, clergy and various organizational leaders to receive ongoing news of events, program and people of interest in the congregation. These church leaders can be instrumental in information being timely and therefore more newsworthy.

Objectives *(short term)*

- Set the congregation's communications goals for reaching both the parish and the unchurched
- Establish a line item in the budget
- Identify programs, people and activities to profile and promote
- Coordinate press kits and identify media prospects
- Establish an ongoing relationship with media

Goals *(long term)*

- To make the Episcopal Church more visible and valued in the community
- To raise the public's understanding and awareness of the Episcopal Church
- To attract visitors and new members to the Church by sharing the benefits through the media

Training

Training is being provided at regional workshops, and later training sessions will build further skills. During the meetings there is opportunity to discuss local initiatives, critique publications and assist in establishing a strong communications ministry in your congregation.

Responsibilities of Communications Minister

- Meet with vestry/clergy to set objectives, goals and priorities.
- Touch base with internal groups (Altar Guild, Episcopal Church Women, Scouts, Christian formation director, liturgy, events, youth, etc.) to let them know what your job is—encourage submissions from them, establish guidelines.
- Discuss funding for communications with the vestry (this effort can't happen in a financial vacuum).
- Build a press kit about the congregation and the Church to use when meeting with media representatives.
- Make personal contact with local media—editors, reporters. Introduce yourself, find out what their deadlines are, what kind of stories they are looking for, how you can help them. (Give them a coffee mug with the church logo on it, full of chocolate, along with your press kit.)
- When appropriate, write a press release—be succinct, include a fact sheet, send a photo opportunities calendar. Make presentations in a timely and professional manner.
- Write thank you notes.
- Write thank you notes.
- *Write thank you notes.*

OUR DIOCESE:

ONE CHURCH, ENGAGING THE WORLD, LIVING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Diocese of West Missouri is one church that engages the world, proclaiming the Good News to those around us and serving the world in Christ's Name. Our Baptismal Covenant guides us to become a servant people living in Christian community with transformed lives, miraculous expectations and missionary passion.

Internal Communications

Letting people in your congregation know what is happening should be a priority of any church communicator.

This means finding news and following up. It means getting to know your congregation, its leaders, its programs, its vision. This vision will help define and focus your news. Internal church publications should inform and help people network, inviting them into a fuller life of faith. Church publications should be well laid out and written to “speak” in the visual language our members are used to seeing beyond the church. Publications should be designed as a group, but more about this later.

Keep your parishioners in the know

It is very important to inform the parishioners about your efforts. They are the lifeblood of the church. Without their support, you will be a one-person band. Let people know what you are doing through your parish newsletter, announcements during the service or in the bulletin and through pew sheets. Ask for story ideas.

Make sure visitors are welcome

A strong welcoming program should be in place. All your hard work getting the unchurched in the door will go right back out the door if visitors feel unwelcome. (See the diocesan “Hospitality Handbook.”) The communicator’s role, once the visitor has come to church, continues through publications the visitor sees in church.

Do your publications communicate?

Assemble all the publications your church produces. These include newsletters, bulletins, visitor’s cards in the pew and brochures about different ministries. With your communications committee, evaluate them with the following criteria:

- Is the message clearly communicated?
- Is the church language easy to understand?
- Are phone numbers, addresses, web address, email and the name of your church on every piece?
- Are they attractive?
- Do they look like a “family,” i.e., do they all “go” together?
- Are they printed or copied well?

These pieces speak for your church when a person cannot. They must represent you in your absence.

Quality graphics

Creating quality graphics does not always require a professional graphic artist. Computers are in most churches and homes these days. There may be a person in your church who enjoys doing layouts. Many software programs and templates exist to make this job easy.

Choose a typeface or logo to represent your church. Select one or two typefaces to use for text. Pick one color that you can use for printed materials, in addition to black. Keep these three elements in mind when you create the newsletter and/or brochures. Design your pieces so they can be copied, if the budget does not allow for printing.

The Morehouse Group offers a variety of supply items used by churches and individuals for church-related activities. To request a free copy of a Church Supplies Catalog or to place an order, call toll-free at 800/877-0012 or check the Morehouse Publishing Web site: <http://www.morehousegroup.com>.

A Few Ideas for Communicating In-House

- Get everyone in the congregation to display Episcopal Church shields on their cars. (Order from Church Pension Fund at 800/223-6602, ext. 369)
- Include in-house publications in visitors' bags.
- Hang a bulletin board or buy an easel to use for posters advertising church events.
- Write articles for the newsletter informing parishioners of specific communication efforts.
- Create attractive pew sheets or bulletin inserts.
- Create a rack for ministry brochures.
- Make sure parishioners have nametags they are willing to wear.
- Preprint color shells for your newsletter and your Sunday bulletins.
- Use one style of clip art in your publications.

External Communications

Communicating with the community in which a congregation ministers is critical to evangelism.

The secular media

Making and maintaining contact with local media should be an integral part of any church's activity, and that begins with the appointment of a designated communications person. The communications ministry will help you reach new members as well as raise awareness of the Episcopal Church's role in programs and activities throughout your community. It will also provide a source of pride for current members.

Like all good business relationships, one with the news media must be built on a personal level between the communications person and a reporter or editor. One individual should be named spokesperson for your church, and all news media contact should be with and through that designated person.

It is the news media's business to cover the activities of their community. These activities include religion, outreach programs, feature stories and much more. Editors, television and radio assignment editors all understand their audiences. You and the unchurched people you seek to reach are part of that audience.

There is a convergence of interests between those looking for material to inform their audiences and sources who can supply that material. The media are happy to have your input, although they will not use everything you offer or apply the same criteria in discerning significance as you do.

What then, is news? How do you recognize it, develop it and present it? We prepared this handbook to help you do just that. We used various industry guides and manuals, added some specifics for the church and are confident that, with this information, you will be well prepared to position *your* story in the local media.

You need the media so you can be informed and so you can inform. The time to have your first encounter with the media is before you need them. They need you as a consumer *and* as a source of information.

Official Artwork

Episcopal Church signs

may be ordered from:

Episcopal Parish Services

P.O. Box 1321

Harrisburg, PA 17105

800/903-5544

online at: www.episcopalparishservices.org

Official Episcopal shield

is available at: www.episcopalchurch.org/imageshop

Car window decal and bumper stickers

are available from the Church Pension Group at 800/223-6602, ext. 369, or www.cpg.org.

Press Kits

When working with media, you want to make their job as easy as possible. One way to do that is to provide them with background information.

Information

A press kit is a folder of information that provides a comprehensive picture of your church. Once developed, this kit need only be updated with a new fact sheet and biographical information on the rector/vicar and/or senior warden. Any new services, programs or activities should be added as well.

Begin with your basic visitor's information packet. Add a few things to make it specific for the media. This will be your public relations tool. It doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive, but should consolidate all the facts about your congregation.

A press kit should include:

- Introductory letter. See page 16.
- Fact sheet about your church (when established, how many families attend, etc.; see sample on page 14.)
- Brief history of the church and programs it has conducted that touched the community, with a photo of the church.
- A brochure about the Episcopal Church.
- Bio and photo of the current rector/vicar and the communicator's name and phone number (include home phone.) Note: include a paragraph on how to address clergy: i.e. *the* Rev. Margaret Smith (not Rev. Margaret Smith). See page 7.

- Calendar of time-sensitive photo opportunities (like Blessing of the Animals, Burning of the Greens, live re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross or an Easter Egg hunt for preschoolers.) All these give editors ideas for seasonal photos. See page 18.
- Copies of the most recent two bulletins or newsletters (include the youth information).
- Any publication you prepared when searching for a new rector.
- Reprints of any newspaper coverage you have received (i.e., a photo of the Blessing of the Animals or an article about a parishioner.)
- A list of parishioners and their phone numbers who have expertise in certain areas **and have agreed to be available for comment.** (This could include a company executive, doctor, mother of triplets, city government official, etc.)

Story ideas

A press kit without story possibilities is seldom enough to generate much interest. Propose a few interesting topics that show the church's and congregation's relationship with the community. Suggest several parishioners with interesting backgrounds to profile.

Design and distribution

Your press kit is a reporter's first opportunity to meet your congregation. Make it visually appealing and well organized. Put the church name on the front of the folder. Contact name, address and phone number should appear on all the enclosed materials. Include a cover letter with it that introduces you and explains why stories about the church are of interest to the public. The cover letter also identifies you as the resource person if the reporter has further questions. Establish a working relationship with the reporter by following up with a phone call or an invitation to lunch.

Press Kits *continued*

Frequently asked questions

Q: *Do you need to send a press kit every time you send out a news release?*

A: No. News releases should stand alone. A press kit should be provided on your first encounter with the reporter. It gives them background information and a starting place. You may also make one available when a reporter wants to do a story on some aspect of your ministry.

Q: *How often should I update the press kit?*

A: Assuming your visitor's information is up to date, changes need only be made when there is a change in personnel or programs.

Q: *How many press kits do I need?*

A: Only a few, unless you are planning an event and anticipate inquiries, then as many as 10 may be needed for media people.

The fact sheet

The first page of your press kit is your fact sheet. Preferably no more than one page, the fact sheet is a concise review of your church's important data. It should include:

- Name of church, address, phone, fax, e-mail and website
- Number of members
- Summary of mission (3-4 sentences)
- List of clergy and senior or bishop's warden with titles
- Year founded
- Any honors received from community

- Tell how it is connected with the wider Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion
- Name and title of person for reporter to contact

Give a brief history of the church, mentioning major programs and ministries that have affected the immediate community.

You may add a form of the paragraphs below at the end of your Fact Sheet or any Press Release to help reporters with some of the Episcopal jargon.

Editor's Note: When writing about the bishop it is proper on first reference to use "The Right Rev. Barry Howe" and on subsequent references, "Bishop Howe."

When referring to a clergy person, man or woman, first reference should be "the Rev. Kelly Smith." The adjective "Rev.," short for Reverend, should not be used alone. "The" always precedes "Rev." When referring to members of this church, please know "Episcopal" is an adjective, "Episcopalian" is a noun. It is incorrect to refer to Episcopalians as "Episcopals" or to refer to the Episcopal Church as "the Episcopalian Church." Thank you.

Have a plan . . .

Pick the three most important benefits you wish to achieve. These will be your goals.

Decide who is your target audience. For most congregations it will be those people in their neighborhood who do not already attend church. This includes many segments of the population:

- Young families
- Seniors
- Families with teenagers
- Singles
- Young adults
- Business community
- Medical community
- University community

There are many more. A quick look outside your door will help define your potential members.

Create awareness

Ways in which you can create awareness are as varied as your imagination. They include:

- Word of mouth and personal invitation
- Special events, speakers or programs
- Christian education opportunities
- Newsletter
- Direct mail
- News releases
- Signs, billboards, posters
- Videos
- Small groups
- Church services

Fact Sheets: An Example

Contact: Sally Walters, Communications Minister
417/555-1212 (office)
417/555-1346 (home)
417/555-3100 (fax)
swalters@neocom.net

Fact Sheet

St. Morris' Episcopal Church [Add address, phone, fax and web]

Founded: 1904
Members: 250 members
Ministries: Food pantry, after-school program, Meals on Wheels
Clergy: The Rev. Stacy Warden, rector
The Rev. Annabell Starr, associate rector
Sr. Warden: Bob Buford

Brief History

St. Morris' was the first Episcopal church founded in Buffalo after the turn of the century. Among its founding members were State Senator Wallace Turnbill and Mayor Allen Swinson. The founding vicar was the Rev. Elias Gregg. He began meeting with nine members in the living room of his home at 214 Main St. before the current church was constructed in 1907. The Rev. Stacy Warden is the fifth clergyperson called to St. Morris' and arrived in 1991.

The windows behind the altar were made in the Tiffany studio and shipped overland by coach. The altar was designed and hand carved by Walter Buckwalter, known nationwide for his fine craftsmanship.

For 95 years, the congregation of St. Morris' has been involved in the community, giving aid during natural disasters and providing social services to the needy and to the local jail population.

St. Morris' has been honored on several occasions by the State of Missouri for its help in tornado relief efforts and by the local Chamber of Commerce for service to the local food pantry.

Ed. note: When referring to a member of the clergy, man or woman, first reference should be "the Rev. Kelly Smith." The adjective "Rev.," short for Reverend, should not be used alone. Referring to members of this church, please know "Episcopal" is an adjective, "Episcopalian" is a noun. It is incorrect to refer to Episcopalians as "Episcopals" or to refer to the Episcopal Church as "the Episcopalian Church." Thank you.

Parishioners List for Reference

St. Morris', Buffalo

2435 Main St.
Buffalo, MO
417/345-9878

Mabel Scott
anthropologist (ret.)
800.555.1345
mscott@aol.com

Thomas Bradley
poll watcher, teacher
417.390.5678
bradpoll@aol.com

Candy Cooper, PhD
Astronomy professor, A&M
417.576.9987
star@sbc.net

Richard Reeves
CPA, Attorney
417.345.2356
cpa@pdq.net

Kurt Knapp
potter, 86 years old
417.342.5676
pot@yahoo.com

Gen. Travis Smith
US Army, (ret.)
417.234.1212
tscol@webmail.com

... add others



(These people can provide voices of faith for other, secular articles. This helps reporters have a list of potential people to call to localize an otherwise national or international story they might receive from wire services.)

Cover Letter for Press Kits: An Example

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI

Date

Mike Rider
Religion Editor
Raytown Banner
123 Main St.
Raytown, MO 64502

Dear Mr. Rider,

Enclosed please find a press kit on the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri with information about our upcoming bishop's election. I have included the background information, bios of the six persons standing for election, an explanation of the election process as well as the history of our Cathedral where the election will be held.

One of the nominees is a member of your community. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss possible story ideas around this election and provide you any other information you might need. The Episcopal Diocese has thousands of members in the Kansas City area alone.

We have two churches in your city, several more in the surrounding communities. All are involved in a number of ministries that touch many people in the Raytown area, either through their financial support of a program, their volunteer status or as a recipient of a program.

Recently, a parishioner of one of the churches left her job to become a full-time missionary near the Mexican border, providing medical attention to a large group of people who previously had none.

There are many similar stories and I would like the opportunity to discuss things in which you might be interested. Please call at any time. My direct number is 800/212-0800.

Sincerely,

Wm. Hilton
Communications Director

3203 Chestnut St.

Raytown, MO 64052

800/212-0800

Bio Sketch: An Example

St. Morris' Episcopal Church

St. Morris' Episcopal Church
2435 Main St.
Buffalo, MO
417/345-9878

The Rev. David Bond is a native of Janesville, Wis, and is the rector at St. Morris', Buffalo, Mo. He received his BS in physical education from the University of Illinois. He was an All-American swimmer and still participates in swimming events whenever possible. Before entering seminary, Bond coached high school sports.

He received his M.Div. from Virginia Theological Seminary in May 1984 and was ordained to the diaconate in June 1984. He was a member of Holy Spirit, Chicago during his youth, and as an adult was a member of St. John the Divine, Houston where he worked in youth ministry.

Bond likes to write about culture and religion when he's not swimming, running or windsurfing. Bond and his wife, Bea, have two children and have been married for 27 years.

Bond is available for interviews and comments on current events.

Event Calendars: An Example

Annual Event Calendar St. Morris' Episcopal Church

2435 Main St.
Buffalo, MO
417/345-9878

JANUARY

6 Epiphany – Three Kings make an appearance during the service

Burning of the Christmas Greens takes place outside the church building as candles are lighted in the dark by each parishioner from a main candle.

Youth group making sub sandwiches for sale for Super Bowl Sunday-fundraiser for mission trip

MARCH

Ash Wednesday

Speaking series features Archbishop Desmond Tutu

APRIL

Earth Sunday – A celebration of the environment and God's creation

Holy Week

- Maundy Thursday – Altar is stripped and service includes foot washing
- Good Friday – Stations of the Cross where choir and congregation walk in the steps of Jesus as he went to the Cross.
- Saturday – Easter Vigil service begins at 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday – 6:00 a.m. Sunrise service, Festival Eucharist
9:00 a.m. egg hunt for children on church lawn
9:30 a.m. family service

JUNE

6-9 Vacation Bible School – An ancient marketplace is created in which children will interact to learn Bible stories

Youth mission trip to Navaholand, Utah. Return on 15th and will be available for interviews

SEPTEMBER

Rally day – All ministries are featured, everyone wears Hawaiian shirts

Annual AIDS awareness dinner and auction

OCTOBER

St Francis Day – Blessing of the Animals, hearing and sight-impaired service dogs and police and fire department service animals are invited. Local vet gives vaccinations at no charge

NOVEMBER

Chili festival and bazaar, benefits homeless ministry

DECEMBER

Advent wreath making-families make the wreaths that mark the weeks leading to Christmas.

Wrapping party for gifts to children with parents in prison.

Christmas Eve service times

HOW TO WORK WITH THE MEDIA

Identifying the Media

Begin by compiling a list of daily newspapers, television and radio stations (specific shows), suburban and college newspapers and newspaper supplements in your area.

Do your homework

Become familiar with the publication before you set up a meeting. Names of the editorial staff are listed on the newspaper's masthead, and you may call the paper to ask who customarily deals with church news. At radio and television stations, ask for the news director or whoever deals with church news or community events. Note all deadlines and editorial requirements from publications. Make a list of the contacts' names, phone numbers, addresses and e-mails. This will be the list for your future press releases.

Weeklies

When making contact with local media, it is most important to pay attention to the local, neighborhood newspapers—usually the weeklies, circulated free in many communities or in the neighborhood sections of a larger newspaper. With small editorial resources of their own, they are particularly happy to have good stories of interest to their community.

College radio and cable television stations

may have talk shows in which your clergy, or others from your congregation, may participate. Local cable systems sometimes use church items in community service announcements.

TYPES OF MEDIA

Newspapers

Know who writes about religion or community interest items. Call the city editor or news editor and ask if you are not sure.

Television

Note reporters (as opposed to anchors) who typically cover religion or community news. Call the assignment editor if you are in doubt.

Radio

Call the station's assignment or news editor if you have a story idea or want to meet with a reporter. Many radio stations have talk shows or public affairs programs and might consider an interview if they think you have something interesting to say to their audience.

Community publications

An effective avenue for communication is community-focused publications because they are so local. These include special interest magazines, neighborhood newspapers, and neighborhood editions of the city paper.

Approaching the Media

Face-to-face meetings are important in gaining mutual confidence. Much will be gained if you ask their interests and their needs. So, when the press kit is ready, call the media contact and ask for a brief appointment to introduce yourself and deliver your press kit.

If you can't get an appointment, mail the kit with a friendly, straightforward cover letter. Then follow up by phone and ask for an appointment to discuss ways in which you might be of help to the media contact.

Even when you don't get an appointment, it is critical that you follow up periodically.

What to ask

Learn how they treat church news, how much advance notice of events they need, what kind of things they are interested in covering themselves, how they handle photos, etc. Ask how they like to receive news releases or stories (fax, e-mail). Take notes. When you leave, tell them you will be in touch when you have something newsworthy.

Follow up

Write a follow up thank you note saying you enjoyed meeting them, and thank them for all the information — or drop off a mug with the church logo, full of Hershey's Kisses or M&Ms, with your name and number.

Contact tips

- Identify yourself by full name, organization, title and a quick explanation of why you are calling.
- Be courteous and attentive.
- Have all your facts at hand. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell them you will find out and get back to them. Follow through.
- Highlight the new and unusual.
- Be brief.
- Don't talk "off the record," and keep in mind that what you say may be interpreted as "official policy."
- Don't thank a reporter for running your story; compliment the presentation.
- Never question why your story wasn't run; there will be other opportunities.
- Never bypass reporters by seeking coverage through their advertising department or other sections.
- The best time for reporters at dailies and broadcast stations is at the start of their day, before deadline pressures begin to build. With weeklies, it is the day after publication.

RECOGNIZING A GOOD THING

What's News?

The ultimate question to ask yourself when trying to interest the news media in a story: “Who cares?” followed by “So what?” If your answers to these two questions meet at least two of the characteristics and considerations listed below, you may be able to interest a reporter in your story. Think about who is the beneficiary of your event/program, who is the audience, what does it offer to the unchurched, how it furthers your church’s vision.

Publicity is a four-letter word

Publicity implies free advertising — someone wanting something for nothing. There is a warning posted in many newsrooms, “What they want you to print is publicity; what they don’t, is news.” The communicator’s job should be considered one aspect of reaching the unchurched through publishing newsworthy information about church activities and programs in which others might take interest.

Names are important to use in reporting any of the above. An old newspaper maxim still holds true: “names make news.”

All church appointments merit being reported to the local news media, especially major appointments such as a new rector or new assistant. Don’t overlook appointments such as a new organist, ECW president, senior or junior warden, etc. A brief paragraph listing new vestry members following the annual meeting is warranted when these are community members. If they don’t publish the information, don’t be discouraged.

If a building program might have meaning to a larger audience, use it. The dedication of a new youth building is more than the bishop coming to say a prayer. It means that you are doing something so well that you needed a whole new building just to hold it! Tell that story!

Don’t report meetings and programs that are only for church membership. In writing about events or programs of broader interest, time is of the essence. The reporting will run close to the event or not at all — and remember, publication remains at the discretion of the editor.

Feature stories are not so time sensitive and may be filed for future use.

What is newsworthy?

A newsworthy story must have one or more of the following characteristics:

- New (rector, building, youth program)
- Timely (i.e. seasonal stories or relief efforts following natural disaster)
- High emotion (response to human suffering)
- Controversy (Pandora’s box)
- Extraordinary (use your imagination)
- Useful (seminars, Vacation Bible School, community programs, etc.)

Add to these characteristics the following considerations:

- Your story must be of interest to a large group of local readers, viewers or listeners.
- Television demands a “visual,” something that lends itself to colorful or attractive video footage to accompany the story (think: Blessing of the Animals, Palm Sunday processions, live Nativities or Stations of the Cross, volunteers reading with children in after-school program or packing up relief supplies).
- Most print publications want a photo or the opportunity to take a picture to accompany the story (see examples above).
- Radio likes to be able to interview someone, either live or on tape.

What's News? *continued*

A news hook

Every news story needs a news “hook.” It is what the story hangs on — the justification for running or airing the story now and not some other time.

Example: Several years ago in the Diocese of Texas, a priest ran in the Houston Marathon and took pledges for the victims of Hurricane Mitch. The local television station was notified and asked if they would like an interview. Woman priest, largest storm of the century, new angle for a marathon story...hook, line and sinker! Houston's Channel 13 interviewed the priest as she was preparing to begin the race. She had been prepared with some interview tips, and when all was said and done, she had a spot on the 5, 6 and 10 p.m. news — a cool woman priest, Episcopal Relief and Development—the Church couldn't have paid for that much advertising.

When an issue is an ongoing debate in your community, your rector can make a public statement about what the Christian Church, yours specifically, feels about it. You can send a statement as a news release. The war in Iraq, hate crimes, reality TV, etc. — all provide an opportunity to declare your own church's particular concern with current situations and questions.

Occasions for news coverage

- Sponsoring an event or program
- New church programs or new approaches to worship
- Providing social services to the community
- Holding an open house (rally day) or health fair
- Announcing a seminar or speaker
- Celebrations on major holidays such as Christmas and Easter
- New construction, church improvements

- New appointments-brief
- Visits by well known or unusual outside personalities
- Recognition for unusual congregational service (50 years in the choir, for instance)
- Ecumenical cooperation in local programs, both religious and secular
- Church activities intended to meet specific community needs
- Local angles to national religious issues of current interest
- Ministry within the community

Tips

- Localize your news. Point out the relationship between your church, the community and the news item.
- Mail news releases at least seven days before each publication's or station's deadline. Fax them again three days before deadlines.
- With print media, contact the reporter, the news editor, the religion editor or the features editor.
- With the broadcast media, contact the assignment desk for news/features; for talk shows contact the program producer.
- Phone print reporters or editors between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Do not phone broadcast stations within 30 minutes of a news program.

Op-Ed Opportunities

Some papers run opinion pieces opposite the letters to the editor and other editorials. These are done by prearrangement. An editor will call someone qualified to speak to the subject at hand and commission a 500-700-word commentary. Or a suggestion will be offered, and the editor will take it up.

There is no compensation for this other than the chance to be heard and provide a voice of faith in the news.

One thing you might do for local editors and broadcast assignment editors is to make a list of those persons in your congregation with expertise in particular subjects with their phone numbers. Prior permission to pass their names along should be sought. This list is a great help to editors when they are looking for a quote on a timely subject and will allow parishioners to be the ones quoted when different stories arise. . . just one more piece in the network.

A communicator might also telephone his or her contact at the newspaper, offering a contribution or outlining a viewpoint to be presented. Once published, a person is likely to be called back, since the writer's credentials are established. This is the person to whom the media returns when informed commentary is sought quickly, as so often happens.

Another venue is broadcast editorials that are occasionally run on some stations. It is possible to suggest a subject to the station when you know you have someone with something to say. If the station agrees, you have the chance to shape its approach.

Television and radio talk shows are also outlets for opinion. Serious, roundtable-type programs are available in nearly every community and offer appropriate forums in which to appear. Local cable programming may also offer these types of shows. It may be easier than you think to get the clergy on a talk show. Guests cancel at the last minute all the time, and having suggested a subject of current interest and a speaker can get you a call back when you least expect it. The only caution is that your speaker must be prepared on the subject. The rewards of exposing a Christian view on any subject usually outweigh the perils of broadcasting.

Provide a voice of faith in the news

Reality shows provide a great opportunity for op-ed pieces. For example, "The Bachelor/Bachelorette" is a great opening to address our need for one another and discuss the "Sacrament" of marriage - a great teaching opportunity.

Deadlines

If you want a good relationship with the media, you need to know and understand their deadlines. The goal is to be as responsive as possible. Be available when a reporter calls. Most often, if a reporter is looking for comment, their article or broadcast segment is scheduled for that day's deadline and the reporter doesn't have much time. If they are looking for comments, you may have them contact your clergyperson or have the clergy get right back with them.

Timeliness is all-important in dealing with print and broadcast media. If you can't be timely, don't waste your time or theirs. Deadlines are deadlines. Pass that line, and you have no story.

If you don't have an immediate answer to the reporter's question, say you will find out, ask the deadline and then do your best to make that deadline. If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to meet that deadline, call back and report that you have not been able to get the answer.

Be honest. Release only verified information. Do not speculate. Get facts straight. The reporter wants the correct story — do what you can to help. Meet their needs with courtesy, information and timeliness.

Lead times

Lead times are as important as deadlines. In your first meeting, find out what kind of lead time the media need. Magazines have the longest lead time, broadcast the shortest. Weekly supplements run by some newspapers are a good outlet for feature stories, but may need several weeks.

Mark everything "For Immediate Release." Do not put future release dates on anything you submit. Even if you have something that may cause a stir — a declaration your rector may make on a controversial local issue — inform your media contacts ahead of time, furnish an advance copy if it is available and then let them decide how and when to use it.

Don't nag or call to find out when an item will run, and don't complain if it isn't used at all. Just hope for better luck next time. It might be time to refill the mug with chocolate.

Newspapers

Many dailies have a 4 p.m. deadline, but features are typically printed ahead of national and local news.

Community publications

Deadlines for these publications are all over the calendar. Some are weekly, biweekly or monthly. These deadlines are not as critical as with a daily newspaper, radio or television station. Contact each one or look on the masthead (where the publisher, editor and address are listed) to get their deadlines. Community publications are great outlets for your news releases, especially since you will be sending them information specifically related to their readership. Again, know the publication, the type of stories it uses and its audience.

Think about how your story will benefit the reader.

HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORIES WITH THE MEDIA

Media Alerts

Once you have deemed something newsworthy, write it immediately. Media alerts should be typed, on one side of the paper only and with wide margins. Use church letterhead and date the release. The communicator's name should appear here too, with a telephone number to call for further information.

At the top of the alert, write a one or two-line sentence summarizing your news. Use newspaper headline style — a succinct summary (not cutesy). The newspaper will use its own headline anyway.

St. George's welcomes retired veterinarian as new rector

Some papers rewrite everything; others don't have enough staff. You should compose the text as if it were going directly into print. Every alert, however brief, should contain the Five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why (sometimes How is pertinent). Even the simplest of announcements should contain these essentials.

Remember this: 95 percent of readers do not read past the headline. Ninety-five percent of those who do, don't read past the first paragraph. Get the most important or most interesting material as high up in the story as you can.

Boiler plate

Create a paragraph about your church and the congregation that sums up your ministry and vision and that can be added to the end of every news release or feature story.

Example: St. Agnes Episcopal Church was established in 1874 near downtown Bolivar. A church home to 250 families, St. Agnes has after-school programs, senior citizen support ministries and outreach to those in prison. Traditional and contemporary services welcome a diverse community. For more information, call 417/312-2345 or visit our Web site at www.stagnes.org.

You can also add this:

Ed. note: When referring to a clergy person, man or woman, first reference should be "the Rev. Kelly Smith." The adjective "Rev.," short for Reverend, should not be used alone. Referring to members of this church, please know "Episcopal" is an adjective, "Episcopalian" is a noun. It is incorrect to refer to Episcopalians as "Episcopals" or to refer to the Episcopal Church as "the Episcopalian Church." Thank you.

Facts

Check your facts. Check your facts. Check your facts. Make sure your phone numbers, dates and times are correct. Be sure you quote sources correctly, verify spelling of names, give first names or both initials with men, and use women's given names (not their husbands'). Give exact times, with a.m. or p.m. indicated and the day of the week as well as the calendar date for coming events.

Quotes

The importance of using quotes in a news story cannot be emphasized too strongly! There are few stories that are not enhanced with direct quotes, even if only a single statement by someone involved. Obviously, the more lively and provocative the statement, the better. Don't editorialize in your news release. Let the quote carry the interest or color the details for you.

Submit photo possibilities with news release to broadcasters

Broadcast media regard news releases as source material or suggestions for stories the station might choose to cover. Keep in mind that television is looking for lively and colorful action. With your press release, submit a list of photo possibilities. You may do this with a separate memo clipped to the release. In case of radio, you may submit a suggested public service

Media Alerts

announcement with the press release. These should be no more than 75-100 written words — less if possible.

Tips for writing media alerts

- Get all the facts and report them in order of importance.
- Write in straightforward language; deliver your information quickly, simply and clearly.
- Omit superlatives, judgmental adjectives and jargon.
- Write as an observer — in the third person.
- Use quotes where possible.
- Keep it short.
- Review for errors; accuracy is paramount.
- Use full names and complete addresses.
- Don't be chatty or reflective.
- Use easy to understand church language.
- Don't preach.
- What's news? If you have an idea and don't know, call the reporter and ask.

Media Alert Example

ASSIGNMENT DESK

FEATURE OP ON “GRAY MATTERS”

EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY SERVICES ADDRESSES ISSUES ON AGING AT ANNUAL HEALTH MINISTRIES CONFERENCE THIS FRIDAY AT GRACE AND HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL. PUBLIC INVITED!

The Rev. Dr. Helen Appelberg from the University of Texas’ Sealy Center on Aging will lead “Gray Matters” Conference on Friday, May 4, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Conference to provide inspiration, resources and support that clergy and caregivers need in dealing with aging loved ones.

WHAT

The “Gray Matters” Conference is being organized and brought to Kansas City by the Episcopal Community Services. The one-day conference will provide clergy and the public with information and resources on dealing with an aging population.

The Rev. Dr. Helen Appelberg is a Visiting Scholar at the Sealy Center on Aging at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. In 1994, she founded Community of Hope, which trains volunteer lay people to participate in Christian communities committed to pastoral care.

WHY

Episcopal Community Services (ECS) holds an annual health conference, and this year the focus is on our aging population—Gray Matters. For more information on ECS, visit www.episcopalcommunity.org.

WHEN

Friday, May 4, 2007

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost for the workshop is \$25 and includes lunch.

To register, call 816/561-8920.

Must RSVP, but can pay at the door.

WHERE

Grace & Holy Trinity Cathedral
420 W. 14th St. (13th & Broadway)
Founders’ Hall
Kansas City, MO 64105

CONTACT

For more information call **Nancy Jenkins** at **913/432-6177** or **913/709-0229** or email nancy@jenkinsim.com

Feature Stories

Your church's activities are important to editors and broadcast people because they are chronicles of community life. You can help reporters by providing features that brighten their pages and enliven their broadcasts.

Feature stories take time and research to develop and more skill than a regular news release. Contact the reporter with a story idea to determine their interest. Most daily newspapers will want to write or cover it with their own reporter, photographer or camera crew. Community publications or small newspapers will be more receptive to having you write the feature.

Your round-table discussion with vestry and clergy is a good place to brainstorm feature story ideas as well as possible news stories.

In our diocese, one of our clergy plays in a jazz band. A parishioner in one congregation has her paintings exhibited in a private show, despite her absence of complete arms. Other potential feature stories are right under our noses.

The beginning or ending of a building campaign can be an occasion to reminisce about the church's roots in the community and how many ways its presence has affected the community. You may be able to resurrect some fascinating detail from the church archives with old engravings or period photos. The appointment of a new rector offers the possibility of bringing into the story some of his or her predecessors. This is especially true in small towns.

Don't overlook an amusing or offbeat incident that may occur in connection with some church activity. Church news doesn't have to be "serious" all the time.

Feature stories on the church's involvement in community service can be ecumenical in nature. This will help your piece not appear to be publicity for one church but more general news. You may be the catalyst who

brings the story to the media's attention.

Charity drives, efforts to help homeless people or at-risk children, clergy involvement in social justice issues, the establishment of day-care centers for children and counseling services for youth are all good topics to cover. They furnish good photo opportunities as well.

Ideas for Feature Stories

Look around the congregation for members with unusual skills or talents, backgrounds or achievements. Personal profiles or opinions offered out of personal experience on some current topic are good story material.

- A retired military person commenting on the situation in Iraq.
- A doctor or youth who helped on a mission trip following a natural disaster.
- Parents of teenagers talking about being active in their children's lives.
- Teens talking about their parents.
- A nurse's or doctor's perspective on spirituality and healing.
- A parent's experience with adoption.
- Someone's clown ministry to local at-risk youth.
- A program to teach English as a second language or other community outreach that touches others besides Episcopalians.

Interviews

If you have arranged an interview for your clergy person or someone else, help the reporter do his/her preparation by providing background information prior to the interview. This might include a fact sheet, a biography, a brochure or a list of possible questions. Make sure your interviewee has all the answers. Know the message you want to send, say it, repeat it concisely for clarity and quotability, give an illustrative anecdote and then say it again.

If you have been approached by a reporter, ask questions about the story; its angle, the context of your comments, who else is being interviewed, deadline, etc. Anticipate probable questions and practice responses before the interview.

For all interviews, plan explicitly how you will communicate ways that your congregation is living out the mission of The Church. Especially if a reporter's questions are negative or emphasize conflict, respond with a positive message about how your congregation is engaged in Christ's work in the world.

Broadcast interview reminders

Television and radio interviews afford the opportunity to address an audience on a more personal basis.

Your voice is your most important tool — begin with high energy and strength in your first statement. You have the opportunity to convince the listener that you know what you are talking about and are happy to be there.

Appearance and body language are important when taping a television interview. Although it can be intimidating, know what you want to say and make it concise. If you ramble, you will end up on the cutting room floor, and your shortest sentence will be used on the air.

If your rector/vicar is unavailable or unable to comment, try to suggest alternative sources the reporter might call and supply them with information about the project or program with which the interview is con-

cerned; i.e., if interviewing a runner of the marathon who is raising money for the Episcopal Relief and Development, provide a fact sheet with phone numbers for ERD.

If your rector is being interviewed about an after-school program established by your church, give the reporter a fact sheet with all the pertinent information ahead of time, so he/she knows what questions to ask.

Coach your subject to give short, succinct answers, especially to broadcast media. This improves the chances of comments being used. Never go “off the record.” Anything that is said may be used, even after you think the recorder/camera is off.

Tips

- Use of a tape recorder is common. It increases your chances of being quoted correctly.
- Be up-to-date on current events and news that relate to the Church.
- If you don't fully understand a reporter's question (or need time to gather your thoughts) ask them to repeat or clarify the question.
- Anticipate contrary points of view.
- Plan your points and make them early.
- Remember you're a guest and an authority.
- Be brief.
- Speak in language everyone understands (avoid words understood only by members).
- Refute untrue statements immediately and politely. “That's not quite true. Let me explain...”
- Don't repeat the negative.
- Be sure the reporter knows where he/she can reach you in case additional information is needed.
- Never ask to review or edit the reporter's copy or request changes before publication.
- Don't complain about minor slips in an otherwise accurate story.

Interviews *continued*

INTERVIEW TIPS

Before an interview:

- If the reporter wants an immediate phone interview and you feel unprepared, you might offer to call back in so many minutes – this will give you time to make a few notes.
- Choose a face-to-face meeting to minimize potential miscommunication that can occur in a telephone interview.
- What are the two key points you would like to make? Focusing on just a couple of ideas will help you control the interview.
- Think about the questions you hope won't be asked, then decide how you might answer them.

During an interview:

- Sincerity and energy translate well.
- Make your one or two key points early, and repeat them at the end of the interview.
- Use simple language, and try to speak in short sentences. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- If you don't know an answer to a question, say so. Guessing can create trouble for you later.
- Accentuate the positive; avoid repeating a reporter's negative phrasing.
- Calmness, directness and brevity are your best defense against hostile questions. Defensiveness and argument are not.
- Take a second or two to think about your answer. Rapid responses can appear rehearsed.
- It's safest to stick to facts; opinion and speculation can backfire.
- Answer only one question at a time. If a reporter poses several questions, choose one you want to address.

- You are not required to answer the question that was asked. Reporters often frame their questions to bring out the conflict in a story. "Bridge" responses allow you to make your point your way:

"Yes, and I want to remind your readers/listeners/viewers that ..."

"Maybe, but the real issue is ..."

"No, but what's important for your readers/listeners/viewers is ..."

"I don't know, but what I do know is .."

- Use one or two one-liners that people will remember, and phrase them in complete sentences so they can be directly quoted.
- You may also restate the question in your response to give the interviewer a complete quotable sentence.
- Use of facts or statistics are great, but it's better not to use them if you are unsure of their accuracy. Stating your source gives you "expert" status, which reporters seek.
- Assume everything you say to a reporter – even in a social situation – may appear in print or on the evening news.
- Avoid "no comment" answers, which suggest that you are trying to hide something. A better response is to say:

"I'm not the right person to answer that."

"I don't want to speculate on that."

"I don't have an answer for you."

"I'll have to think about that. Can I get back to you?"

- When you've said everything you wish, you may end the interview instead of allowing the reporter to do so. A good way is to recap your main points.
- Give the reporter your phone number and encourage a follow-up call if needed for clarification or additional information. Ask for the reporter's phone number and e-mail address.

Interviews *continued*

After the interview:

- Immediately send an e-mail note that includes spelling of difficult names and restates your primary points. Include your phone number and times that you will be available.
- Call if you think of a clarification or additional point later.
- Respect deadlines. Return phone calls promptly.
- If you're misquoted in the resulting story, contact the reporter directly; but if the error is minor or just not quite the words you would have chosen, you may think twice about reopening the conversation.

On-camera interview tips:

- Dark clothes look best on TV. Blue shirts are better than white. Avoid wearing checks, small patterns and insignias.
- Note whether the backdrop is appropriate.
- Ask the reporter beforehand what type of questions to expect so you can prepare your responses.
- Look at the reporter, not the camera.
- Speak clearly and slowly in short phrases.
- If you are asked to "chat" while the cameraman shoots "B" roll (non-interview footage, cutaway shots, etc), be aware of your body language. If you are still wearing a microphone, your comments are fair game.
- If a reporter asks a negative, difficult or unexpected question, you don't have to answer it. If you want to answer, take your time. A moment of silence is not a bad thing. Media-savvy politicians on TV often don't answer tough questions - they simply restate their own message.
- Interview subjects who show interest, energy and responsiveness are better perceived by the audience.

*Interview tips compiled by: Sharon Rasmusse,
Diocese of East Tennessee*

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Take Your Best Shot

Good photographs are worth a million words. Bad ones aren't worth much. In television, pictures enhance any story and improve chances for broadcast.

So, where possible, provide pictures with your press release, indicating on the release that there is a photo to accompany the story. Many times, a good photo with an extended caption will be used when a story would not have been. Submit both at the same time to avoid confusion and allow the editor to judge the story and picture as a package. A color print is sufficient, most of the time. Black and white film is harder to take, takes longer and is more expensive to process.

Taking good photographs requires real skill. Photojournalism, the art of telling a story in pictures, requires even more. Clear focus, good light and framing to direct attention to the persons or activity you are emphasizing in your news release are essential.

With people, concentrate on faces and upper body. Full-length shots are a waste and leave the faces too small to mean much when reproduced. Putting someone in the foreground of a building gives scale to the structure; that person can also be pointing out the architectural features your press release is describing.

“Grip and grins”

Avoid poses with one person shaking hands with another or receiving a check.

Don't line everyone up staring at the camera but try for a more natural pose, even if you have several people stand, talking to one another, and all they are really doing is counting while you click away.

Exercise some imagination, such as showing the outgoing rector introducing the new rector to the pulpit or a parishioner. If the church bazaar is offering a hand-made quilt, photograph someone sewing on it. Focus on one or more children for Sunday school photos. Having several people in a shot is better than 10 or 20.

Film is cheap; digital is cheaper

Shoot lots of pictures because people get more relaxed as the photo session moves on. Most media welcome higher resolution digital files. However, if you are sending in prints, they should have a glossy finish. A matte finish gives the photo an out-of-focus look when reproduced.

Photos gain definition when reduced and lose it when enlarged. If you have a choice, send in a larger print or a larger digital file (also known as a high-res file). Don't expect to have photos returned unless it is valuable (such as an archive photo) and then make prior arrangements to get it returned.



DO! These ladies are clearly preparing and serving food for a church event. Showing them *IN* the kitchen, cutting cake, speaks a thousand words. This is a good example of choosing action over the “lineup” of people involved in an event.

Photography: Dos and Don'ts

Provide a full caption with names for each photo you submit

If you are submitting electronic photos, also include a Word document that provides captions. Make sure the name of each jpeg file corresponds to the name for each caption. If you are sending photos, tape or paste the photo to a sheet of paper. Type out the caption so the names will be spelled correctly. Identify everyone and tell what they are doing, from left to right and front to back order (when necessary.) Explain where, when and why they are together, what they are doing or hope to do. This is essential even though it may be a repeat of information in the press release.

Include the photographer's name for a possible credit line.



DO! This photograph was not posed! The subjects are engaged with one another, not with the photographer. Good composition and contrast.

Tips

- Make sure faces are at least as big as a thumbprint.
- For most occasions, use 200 Kodachrome color print film if you're not using a digital camera.
- When possible, take photos outdoors, using natural light.
- Make sure faces are showing. A photo of people's backs is uninteresting.

Take time to notice the setting

- Don't shoot a photo with the sun behind your subject.
- Avoid blank walls and hallways.
- Shoot away from windows that will cause a flash in the photo or reflections of unwanted subjects.

DO! Take lots of pictures. Shoot in natural light when possible. The more candid, the better. This girl is caught in a joyous moment, her hands clapping in celebration.



DO! These subjects knew they were being photographed, but they are not looking into the camera. This is a good example of a successful "posed" photocelebration.

Photography: Dos And Don'ts



DO! Another example of avoiding the “lineup.”

DO! Once again, the photographer chose action over a “lineup” of people. Viewers are drawn to the photo and become more interested in an accompanying article, wanting to know “what are these people doing?”



DON'T! This photo does not “tell a story.” The viewer does not know anything about the event or what these men were doing at the event. Don't rely on cutlines to “tell the story.” This could be a photo for a hundred different stories. Better to show the ministry for which the funds were being given.



DON'T! Another classic grip and grin. If the photographer had taken a number of photos of the women, we might see some interaction that indicates their close friendship – the reason they were honored at this luncheon.



DON'T! Another example of the too many people in one shot. Better to have taken one person playing the guitar with several others standing closeby singing. The caption would indicate that they were members of Joyful Noyse, the youth choir at St. Swithin's, that sang at the recent diocesan convention.



DON'T! The subjects of this photo are too numerous and too far away. By the time this is sized to fit into the newspaper, there is no way to identify the participants. Better to take a shot of 3 or 4 of them close up as representative of the whole. Also, there is nothing to indicate what they are gathered for.

Photo Opportunities

Send an announcement to the media when an opportunity arises that would make a good photo.

PHOTO DESK
PALM SUNDAY PHOTO OP

LOCAL EPISCOPALIANS HOLD PROCESSION OF PALMS

Share the Procession of Palms with your viewers.

**St. Mary's Episcopal Church holds
outdoor Procession of Palms at 10 a.m. Sunday.**

WHAT In the Christian church, Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It celebrates the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Passover. On that day, great crowds of people lined the streets waving palm branches to welcome him. They spread branches on the road – and even laid down their clothes. They shouted 'Hosanna!' which means 'Save Us Now!' Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week, which concludes on Easter Sunday.

WHY On Palm Sunday in the Episcopal Church, congregations often gather outside the church and parade with palms after a blessing. Many parishioners wear crosses made of palms. Red is the liturgical color for the day. The liturgy of the palms includes a reading of one of the gospel accounts of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. Appropriate hymns, psalms, or anthems are sung.

FACTOID More than 300 million palm fronds are harvested each year for U.S. consumption alone, most of them for Palm Sunday.

WHEN **Sunday, April 1, 2007**, 10 a.m. Outdoor Procession of Palms with parishioners, children, choir and clergy carrying palms in celebration of Christ's arrival in Jerusalem.

WHERE **St. Mary's Episcopal Church**
1307 Holmes St.

CONTACT For more information call **Nancy Jenkins at 913/432-6177 or 709-0229** or email **nancy@jenkinsim.com**

The West Missouri Spirit Guidelines

The West Missouri Spirit: The Diocesan Newspaper

The West Missouri Spirit encourages submissions of news articles, photographs and letters to the editor from members of the diocese. Active engagement with the publication is one way to continue a thoughtful dialogue among parish members and churches comprising the Diocese of West Missouri and to inform one another of events, activities and ministries. Before submitting material, review the publication and look at the way the calendar is presented and the way articles are written. Inside the first few pages of any newspaper or magazine is a box containing the editor's name, deadlines, policies and the publication's mailing address. *The West Missouri Spirit's* editorial box is always positioned on page 4.

Calendar items for *The West Missouri Spirit* should be of interest to the larger group of churches and include the event name, event description, location, date, time, cost and contact person with phone number and/or e-mail address.

Conferences and retreats should be described in a short paragraph. If you desire, you may also submit a brochure outlining specific workshops and activities to provide additional information that may accompany the article.

The purpose of *The West Missouri Spirit* is to reflect and inspire this diocese's journey into the Emmaus Era – a time in which all people of West Missouri live as ministers commissioned by the Baptismal Covenant and thereby transform the diocese into one Church engaging the world. *The Spirit* accomplishes this mission by reporting on people who are actively living out the Baptismal Covenant, by reporting on events in the life of the diocese and the larger Church, and by serving as a forum for the lively discussion of issues.

When you write a story for the paper, it is valuable to show how your program or event fulfills this purpose.

Example: "The after-school program at XYZ Church, Your Town, began as a direct result of the gathering of the diocese in 2004. The director was inspired to look at the needs of the surrounding community and respond to them. XYZ Church is surrounded by schools, and many children leave those schools in the afternoons with no supervision. The church now provides an after-school program that has won accolades from the Governor's office."

Example: "The Blue Truck Vacation Bible School of St. XYZ's, Your City, took VBS to the neighborhoods and parks around the church, drawing children who would never otherwise attend Bible school. This idea is easily exported to many other locations in the form of the 'yellow school bus VBS' or the 'St. XYZ's old purple van VBS.'"

West Missouri Spirit Guidelines continued

Both these stories show a church reaching out to its community, and the methods for doing so provide examples for other churches. Interesting parishioners and feature stories on ministries also make good reading.

What is not good reading are things you yourself would not read; for example, a tedious meeting report. Sometimes a story arises from a meeting – a ministry that is proposed, a vision that arises, a spark that is ignited from a meeting. General committee meetings of the diocese are reported as briefly as possible, sometimes in bulleted form.

Other helpful tips include:

- Writing in the third person with the exception of letters to the editor, columns or testimonials.
- Fully identifying any individuals that appear in photographs.
- Identifying people in articles using first and last names and titles.
- Providing background information when necessary.
- Including quotes from individuals who experienced an event or ministry or who are planning an event or ministry.
- Making the writing as concise and as accurate as possible.
- Soon, *The Spirit* will be accepting advertising. For more information, contact the editor.

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COMMUNICATING IN A CRISIS

Managing a Crisis

What is a crisis?

- “A stage at which all future events affecting a person or organization will be determined. It is a major turning point resulting in permanent drastic change. It is far more crucial than most emergencies.”

– *Philip Lesly*

- “A significant business disruption which stimulates extensive news media coverage. The resulting public scrutiny affects the organization’s normal operations and also could have a political, legal, financial and governmental impact on its business.”

– *Institute for Change Management*

- “A situation that puts your organization’s values on trial in the court of public opinion.”

– *William Curry*

In times of crisis, you will likely see the soul of your congregation, as well your own, exposed for better or for worse. You’ll see, sometimes suddenly, weaknesses that need attention both in yourself and your congregation. The best time to plan for a crisis is before you have one!

Life cycle of a crisis

The typical life cycle of a crisis begins with the event, quickly moves to investigative coverage and eventually to blame-assignment, public reaction, reminders and disinterest. Your objective is to get from the event to disinterest as quickly as possible. The longer that full and complete facts are not forthcoming, the longer the situation continues to be unresolved, the longer the crisis will be kept alive. The longer the crisis lives, the more damage that will be done.

Common components of crises

- They arise suddenly.
- Information and key leaders are not always available when you need them.
- Every crisis provides its own opportunity to position your organization in the way it wants to be understood. This opportunity comes very early in the game.
- All crises tend to impair judgment and clear thinking.

What should you do?

If a crisis should arise at your parish, immediately contact the Ven. John McCann at the Diocesan offices at 816/471-6161, ext. 17. We will work with you to respond to the media, community and your parish in a caring, timely and appropriate manner.

*Most of the material presented here is drawn from the book **Not if, but When**, published by United Methodist Communications.*

Notes
