

9.0 MEDIA GUIDELINES

Website Protocol

Every congregation and church plant should have an active, inviting, and regularly updated website that will provide answers to basic questions people have when looking for a church. While the development of websites is guided by basic trends and communication, it is ever evolving and local congregations should keep the following in mind:

1. Websites are becoming more reasonably priced every day and basic templates that are reasonably easy to manage are provided by several companies. The Diocesan website is one of the templates from Clover Sites. Other possibilities are listed on the Communications Resources page on the diocese's website.
2. If you use someone's personal story, make sure you have their written permission first.
3. Images are increasingly important to tell the story of your congregation so please resist the temptation to rely too heavily on text.
4. You must have the written permission of parents or guardians prior to posting photos of minors anywhere, no matter how cute the children are. This includes Instagram, Facebook, and any other social media you are using.
5. Templates for websites give you options on color schemes so that the congregation can more easily brand itself.
6. A seeker who visits your site will likely only click about three or four times, so the content must be fresh and remain fresh through frequent updating.
7. Visitors to your website are likely to look for information on worship service location, times and services offered including nursery care, children's programs, youth programs and any special events planned for the weekend. Make sure it is there and easy to find.
8. Do not post personal contact information on your website.
9. Please add links to the Diocese of Western Anglicans and to the Anglican Church in North America to your website.
10. Be willing to research any ministry you associate yourself with so as to ensure that your good reputation is maintained.
11. Websites that lead people to congregation based Facebook pages will often stimulate greater interest. Make sure your site is mobile friendly. Most people will be using their phones to read it.

Images

In the posting of images on congregation and church plant communication vehicles, both digital and printed, there are several legal issues that should be given appropriate consideration:

1. Intellectual Property Infringement – this relates to the posting of images that you did not take yourself and which may be protected against copyright infringement. This could result in legal action against you and result in monetary damages. There are online sources for copyright free pictures that will help you avoid trouble.
2. Expectation of Privacy – this relates to photos that are taken of someone when there may be an expectation of privacy, including private gatherings, private spaces or sensitive moments (hospital rooms following surgery, restrooms, AA meetings, pre-wedding photographs of partially dressed people, confessional moments in worship, etc.). This also could result in litigation or in terribly damaged relationships among the members of God’s household.

Protection of Children – while not legally required, it is pastorally responsive to the feelings of vulnerability parents often exhibit when their children are exposed to real or perceived danger. Please exercise caution in the posting of images of children, even in public settings, and do all you can to avoid their faces or to place them in the foreground. It is highly advisable to seek written permission from a parent for the posting of an image of a child on any media. (Please see the document titled ‘Media Image Permission Slip’ in the Congregation tab of the Resource section)