

Overview

2012 saw the departure of long-time communications director Cindy Davis upon her graduation and pursuit of a professional career. Cindy did much to deliver the message of the Diocese via the website newsletter, and magazine. Thanks to her for her many years of faithful service. May God Grant her Many Years!

In February of 2012, Aric Gingo was named Assistant to the Bishop for Communications. Aric works from his home office and visits the Diocesan Center twice a month when possible to discuss the messaging of the Diocese. Early in March, all parishes were sent an email announcing the change in the department and urged to submit material. The website also made this announcement, and the first issue of the Diocesan Magazine under the new management shared this news. A “Best Practices Guide” for submitting news, photos and material to the Diocese for publication was posted on the website and remains on the home page for reference.

In March, the communications department was contacted by Mark Linnehan regarding a Revitalization Prayer Card. The cards were designed and sent to Mark Linnehan for production at a community college near his home. The cards were distributed to parishes after production.

www.doepa.org

The beginning of the year was spent with catch-up work and the Paschal Cycle. Many submissions that were never addressed were posted, lines of communications were established, and a work-flow created. Lenten photos were submitted regularly, and the Mission Services allowed the Diocese to see many parishes. After Pascha, the website postings and traffic slowed down. As Fall approached, an ambitious and much needed revamp of the website began. His Grace, Bishop TIKHON (at this time) presented a well-thought out and well organized site map. In his wisdom his Grace realized that the website was in disarray and needed an overhaul, streamlining and simplifying it. This was somewhat accomplished, but there are more changes that were discussed and agreed upon that will take time. The consensus was that the home page needs to offer more - the news items and articles do not change much and it needs to be re-thought. One addition that was made is a section on the home page devoted to the Deaneries and the goings-on in each. Currently there is a placeholder on the home page, with plans to link to sections specifically featuring each Deanery. This will take a lot of cooperation and effort from the Deans, and is something to look forward to in 2013.

There are other areas of the website that need to be utilized more efficiently. A Google Calendar of Diocesan events was added in November, and some parishes are submitting information to be added to the calendar. The calendar is an important tool that all should make use of. It is updated regularly, and is easily accessible by all at www.doepa.org/monthlycalendar or simply clicking on the tab on the main website. Video can be incorporated as well, but is something to be considered carefully in the new year.

Statistics

The website has continued to grow in page views. October had the highest amount of page views ever, with 7,511 visitors. Then came November and the big news from the OCA, and the record was broken again with 8,310 page views. The trend is definitely up, and this is reason to rejoice, but considering the size of the Diocese, this number could and should be bigger. This is an area the Communications Department will address in the upcoming year.

Content

Content submission has picked up from the beginning of the year. However, there are still 4 main parishes that submit items to the Diocese regularly - Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg, Jermyn and Edwardsville. There are items submitted by other parishes from time to time, but this is the exception. Items are posted within a day of receipt,

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and typically staggered to appear throughout the week. A comprehensive “best Practices guide” has been posted to the website regarding submission of information. Furthermore, Aric Gingo is available to answer any questions regarding this topic. The idea has been raised of making the webmaster/communications person a part of the Parish Council, which merits some discussion. As the internet is a primary source of information to the masses today, it is important to have a presence there. This may take some education (seminar or class) to get everyone on board.

Moving Forward

The website overhaul continues, a general neatening up and reorganization. Once this is complete the plan is to look to a re-design, that is, change the look of the site and personalize it for The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. We would like to be able to revolve themes around the different feasts that occur during the year. Although not discussed just yet, the incorporation of Social Media such as Facebook for fast breaking news items should also be explored. The website also has the capability of automatically sending mass e-mails to a mailing list, an easy way to contact every person on the mailing list with one click. This will be explored also.

Alive in Christ

Alive in Christ was revamped over the course of 2 issues this year. The first issue was a recap of all the content that had not been published. A Diocesan Talent Survey was included in the Winter Issue, results are unknown to the Communication Department. The next issue was a late Spring / Early Summer issue, expanded to 24 pages to encompass Pascha around the Diocese as well as the Graduates. This was a “catch-all” issue which accounts for the expansion of pages. Announcements regarding submission of graduate photos and information was repeatedly sent out, but at least one graduate was missed, and the information for each graduate was not always supplied. The only reason this is mentioned is that a Graduate got extra money for school due ONLY to the fact that someone saw her in the magazine and saw where she was going to school. The feedback from this issue has been VERY positive, and it will continue moving in this direction. Attempts are being made to steer readers to the website for more photos and extended stories. The long-term plans are to use the magazine as a way to reach out to others and tell them about Orthodoxy, showing the good works of the Church with different facets of Orthodoxy featured in articles. An editorial calendar is also in the works, so that we may plan better for each issue, assign article writing to those who are experts, and better control production. This is something the Communications Department will address in the new year. Pricing will be investigated as well to see if a more economical choice is available without sacrificing quality and workflow issues, although the current printer has been very effective and timely with production.

Content

Each issue of Alive in Christ has a cut-off date as shown on the inside front cover. The department makes every attempt to stick to this, but the past year has been topsy-turvy, and that did not always happen. The calendar will be followed closely in the new year. The editorial calendar will be established, and articles assigned. The next issue will feature a book review, and we would like to incorporate items like “Orthodox Movie Reviews” and so forth. This will take work by people who can and will do the job.

Conclusion

The Communications Department is moving forward with an aggressive plan for the future. So far the results can be seen in record numbers of visitors to the website and much positive feedback regarding the magazine. In discussions with his Grace, Bishop MARK, he encapsulated the mission behind both perfectly when used the word “Evangelism.” If one takes a look at how other faiths are using media and communications to reach out, it is easy to see we have a ways to go. We are on the right track, but much needs to be done. The continuing evolution of the website, an editorial calendar, getting ALL parishes in the Diocese involved with submissions on a regular basis, incorporating Social Media, exploring the use of Mass emails are all items that will be looked at in the upcoming year. The magazine will continue to mesh with the website and expand editorially. Both items will be updated regularly and look the best they can – the key is content. If only twice the number of parishes submitted photos and stories regularly, the results would be impressive. The core belief of the Communications Department is to spread the word, create excitement and interest, and make people sit up, take notice, and want to get involved with the good works that are happening. Be a part of it!

Website Statistics Comparison 2011 - 2012

