



The Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia

Communications Department Report to the 58th Diocesan Assembly

Overview

The year 2022 was a very busy year for the Office of Communications. News/Photo submissions were WAY up, and many new parishes became VERY active this year.

www.doepa.org

The Diocesan website saw an average of 10,500 visitors a month in 2022. The LOWEST number of monthly visitors was in August with 9,192 visitors. March saw a high of 12,029. The totals are down somewhat this year, but with everything opening up and people being worn out from sitting at their computer/device, this is not unexpected.

In 2021, we had 137 news submissions. In 2022, the number grew to 200. We had quite a few new parishes begin submitting photos and news which is great. There are still quite a few churches from whom we receive nothing at all. It would be great if this changed in the new year.

DONATE buttons were added to the website - one for St. Tikhon's Summer Camp and one for the Diocesan General Fund. This will be featured going forward.

Submissions from parishes were posted as they are received - that is, if many news items are submitted, the first one received will appear first. ALL news items are staggered to appear at different days during the week. This keeps the website fresh. Submissions (unless needing approval from His Eminence) are ALL posted. They may be delayed if I am away from my office, but they will all eventually appear - but again, they will be staggered in order or receipt. ALL news items stay featured for a period of three weeks. There is an algorithm that will bump items out of the rotation if there are too many (common around major feasts).

This process was disregarded for some major events - typically the repose of a noted person. In those cases, all other news stories were suspended for a short (typically 3-day) period, to return for their allotted time.

Thanks to all parishes for abiding by the policy regarding secular events (food sales etc.) - the Department once again advises all parishes to use their websites and social media outlets to promote these items.

Parishes submitting news items this year:

Bethlehem
Coaldale
Edwardsville
Frackville
Gettysburg *NEW
Glen Mills
Harrisburg
Jermyn
Mechanicsburg
Minersville
Mount Carmel
Old Forge
Olyphant (All Saints)
Olyphant (Saint Nicholas)
Philadelphia (St. Stephens)
Saint Clair
Stroudsburg
Wilkes-Barre Holy Resurrection Cathedral
Wilkes-Barre Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
Williamsport

PLUS

MANY items from the Diocese, FOCA, IOCC, the OCA, OCPM, and Diocesan Youth.

Last year saw 17 unique parties submit news items. This year we are up to 26. Additionally, many parishes really “stepped up their game” and sent weekly stories accompanied by MANY photos.

This year 2 parishes were removed from the above list but, as mentioned, 5 were added. Sadly, many of the above parishes submitted one story and were never heard from again. It is important to realize that publicizing your parish is a major part of “sustaining the mission.” It is a way to let the public know what you are up to, and show that you are active and do good works. It is imperative that your parish makes publicity and specifically the internet a key part of your parish life. We need to broaden our vision regarding this topic - do people want to be part of a community that is stuck in first gear? Or are people looking for a community that is busy, active, and acting as an agent of good deeds? Most are looking to be part of a community that is the latter, where do they find that? Lastly, what is your parish’s web presence - what appears when someone googles “Orthodox Church in My Area?” Does your church appear? Is the information presented correct? This is truly the first place a person goes when preparing to make a decision.

Major Clean Up Coming in 2023

The website ran out of space in 2022, and we were forced to buy more. His Eminence, Archbishop Mark, has requested that the department do a “clean up” of the website. This means that photos and stories more than 5 years old will be deleted. **YOUR PARISH SHOULD MAKE SURE YOU HAVE COPIES OF THIS INFORMATION AS IT WILL BE GONE FOREVER.** The department will not archive/backup this info. Please make it a point to download any info/photos you need as they will be gone by the end of next year.

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Conclusion

The Communications Department continues to spread the message of the Diocese. The results can be seen in record numbers of visitors to the website. It is good to see the amount of parishes participating; all need to be more regular with this. The website is updated frequently with the goings-on of the Diocese. Be a part of it! Share your good news! Do you have a parish website? Parish Facebook? Or a Parish Communications Coordinator? These are all important parts of a healthy parish. Please feel free to contact me by email or phone with any questions.

Yours in Christ

Aric Gingo
Assistant to the Archbishop
Communications