



EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS – NEWSLETTERS AND WEBSITES

January 12, 2023

Tips about holistic and content driven decisions for newsletters

- **Be a part of the ministry planning process.**
- **Set seasonal meetings** (our planning is based on the liturgical calendar) to discuss content calendar and information cycles.
- **Build on what you did last time** (if it worked).
- **Have a central source for event info.** We provide a schedule for submitting event information and a process for submitting changes. If information/request comes in late, evaluate if it can wait until next week or just go with what we have and publish “more info coming soon” or “save the date” text to meet weekly production deadlines. As much as possible we strive to publish information that has been submitted and approved to be on our church calendar. This helps ensure facilities, staff support, schedule conflicts, etc. are confirmed and potential challenges resolved *before* announcing to the world.

Specific tips for newsletters

- **Give people a reason to look forward to your next newsletter.** Example: we share periodic building and renovation updates. We believe this contributed to a 17% increase in open rates over last year.
- **Keep it fresh.** We update header and section images pulled from our photo library.
- **Build and maintain photo library** with annual/seasonal, engaging images (consider permissions, aspect ratio for various media, image quality).
- **Batch work for more efficient workflow.** Example: once an image is selected and text final for one medium, resize/format for other media: social media, video/livestream on-screen graphic assets, lobby screens, campus posters, table toppers, postcards, etc.).
- **Keep it short.** Provide the basics on an event and link to more info on website. Our newsletter is relatively long, but it packs a lot of information that reflects the activities of the church.
- **Consider audience and mobile viewing/scanning.** Enlarge text, organize so most important or timely info at top.
- **Keep it consistent.** We start our newsletter with upcoming Sunday worship and formation information. We structure the remaining “blurbs” with big headlines, smaller subheads, contact info, and links to more information. We also color-code our ministry brands.
- **Learn and borrow from peers.** We subscribe to other newsletters to see how others are doing it and sometimes a reminder of what we should also be doing.

Interplay between websites and newsletters

- **Go back to basics.** For us, that means making sure we are in alignment with our communications strategy to make it easy to welcome to worship, connect to community, and foster fellowship.
- **Brand consistency can help bridge the experience from one medium to another.**
- **Define your primary audience.** Our [weekly e-newsletter](#) is primarily for parishioners/internal audience. Our [website](#) is designed for visitors/external audience.