

# Report to the 119<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention

## From the Canon for Communications

### INTRO

Seven months ago the Communications Office ramped up to support the bishop's ministry and our congregations in a time of crisis. In subsequent months we have all wondered about our capacity to sustain God's mission under unimaginable circumstances. I have been blessed to work with many who have met the challenges of these days with creativity and resolve. These interactions have inspired me to continue this work in faith. What we have learned about ministry in the digital age cannot be summed up here or reduced to simple adaptation. All of our congregations have been brave, compassionate and faithful in this time.

This pandemic has made me more aware of the limits of my own abilities, and I am deeply grateful to **Ms. Ellen Lincourt** of St. Michael's-on-the-Heights who has given countless hours of consultation time to our congregations. Her expertise in digital communications has made her a valued colleague. I also want to note the independent work of **the Reverend Eric Elley**, principal at Verhayen Integration, Event and Repair Services. Eric's professional design and installation for livestreaming has prepared several of our congregations for this time. His expertise at our Diocesan Convention has always been a gift. Lastly, I offer a word of gratitude to **Ms. Alison Gamache**, Communications Assistant. Alison's creative vision and her willingness to take on new and challenging projects has made her an invaluable partner in this work and freed me to enter new areas of responsibility as canon.

### Ministry of Communications Assistant

- "ABUNDANT Times" magazine: responsible for consistent style and tone; copy & layout editor
- Webmaster & Content Manager: manage content changes for Human To Human sites; design and build new Building Bridges website, update content on Diocesan website (news articles, Creation Care, BCC pages, Diocesan Council portal)
- Creation Care Network e-news with Missioner for Creation Care
- Curate "Mission Matters," our bi-monthly communication to diocesan leadership
- Database Manager: update all the diocesan databases (correct contact info makes communication easier)

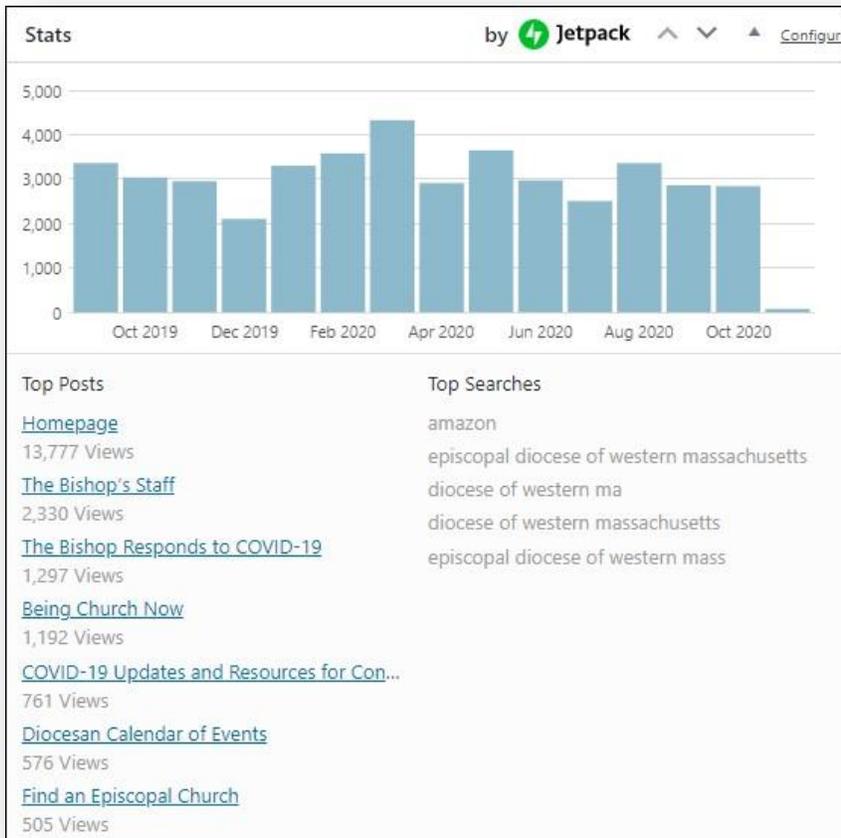
# Ministry of Canon for Communications

## I. General

- Facilitate quarterly communications review
- Collaborate with Communications Assistant
- Content manager for social media feeds
- Maintain security of diocesan website and **The Bishop's Blog**
- Coverage of Bishop's ministry and major events
- Videographer for Bishop's Office
- Managing editor, and contributor for [ABUNDANT Times](#) magazine
- Content management e-news communication (**Mission Matters**) and announcements from the Bishop
- Presence at annual **Episcopal Communicators Conference**
- Parish support for digital ministers, communicators, wardens
  - Consult with parish communicators, as needed
  - Assistance/advice on website issues
  - Press Releases for Bishop's visitation – as requested
  - Lead communications workshops for 2-3 parishes, as invited
  - Website and Digital Ministry audits by request
- Member, **WMA Disaster Preparedness Team** & liaison to **US Disaster Program at Episcopal Relief and Development**
- Administrator of the **Episcopal Asset Map**
- *Ex officio* member of the **Social Justice Commission**
- *Ex officio* member of **Beloved Community Commission**

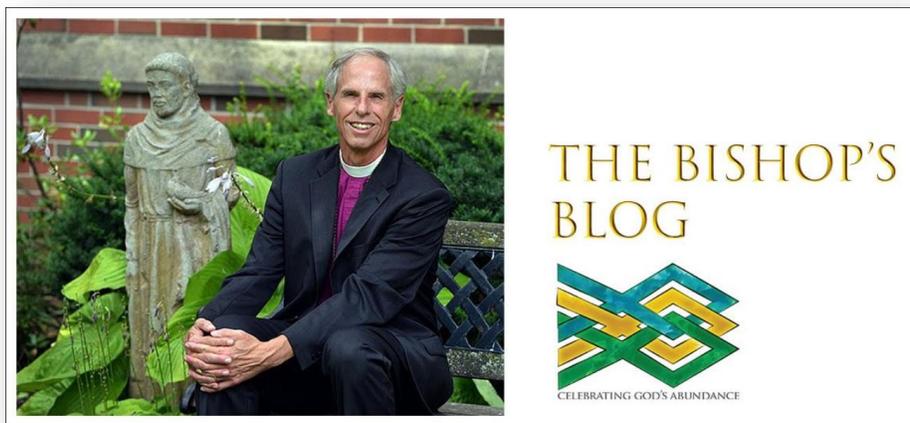
## II. Website: [diocesewma.org](http://diocesewma.org)

- Most visits to our page in **March 2020 (4,326)** as COVID-19 pandemic resulted in numerous communications
- Maintained double security with SiteGround and Sucuri – consequence of hack in 2015
- Supervised regular updates of WordPress as needed
- Managed content upload & security for The Bishop's Blog – **3,002 subscribers**



ABOVE: Annual visits to website per month and top pages searched

BELOW: The Bishop's Blog subscription has increased to **3,339**

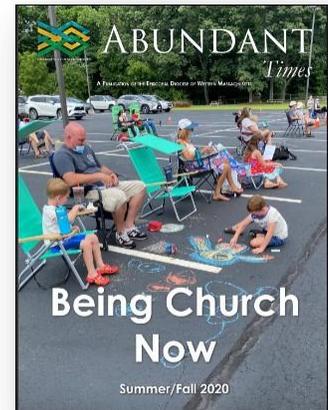


### III. **Mission Matters e-newsletter**

- Post reach/contacts **2,820 (+276)**
- Annual average open rate: **48%** (up 3% over last year w/ industry average religious: 25%)

### IV. **“ABUNDANT Times” magazine**

- We produced two issues in the last program year: September, Winter/Spring
- AT is our biggest reach delivered directly to **7,237 Episcopalians**
- Moved all issues to [ISSUU](#) – a digital platform for storing and retrieving
- Printer, **Tiger Press, Inc.**, continues to speed distribution and upgrade sustainable practices. We continue to use soy-based ink and FSC paper from responsible sources.
- *ABUNDANT Times* continues to be a ministry requiring **no subscription fee** to members of our 50+ congregations



### V. **Social Media Benchmarks**

**PLEASE NOTE:** [The tragic death of Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro](#) has placed our podcast on hold.



- **Podcast: The Bishop and The Rabbi** on SoundCloud **240 plays** in the past year (up 125)  
Listeners beyond US: 4 Ireland, 1 Ghana  
Also available on iTunes

- **Facebook** “likes” have gone from 1544 to **1783** (up 15%)  
 FB average post reach 11/1/2019 – 11/01/20 **606**  
 Biggest reach spike May 30 PENTECOST event **2,719**  
**Premiere Video** with biggest reach Pentecost **1.5 K**



Our presence on **Facebook Watch** has increased followers to 1.9 K



- **Twitter** feed has grown from 1062 “followers” to **1147**.
- **Instagram** shows growth in spite of sporadic use: **550**
- **Our Vimeo channel** houses all WMA video productions which reduces stress on the diocesan network and protects our work from alteration or advertisements
- **YouTube channel** currently features, all livestream events, sermons, and areas for **Beloved Community Commission**, **Creation Care** and **Voices of Faith**
- *Voices of Faith*, produced by the **Diocesan Vitality Committee**, has drawn increasing views on both YouTube and Facebook Watch



## VI. External Media

**Coverage resulting from diocesan press releases** and pitches: **14** (down from 22)

**Coverage resulting from congregational press releases** and pitches: **39** (up from 31)

*The Republican, Greenfield Recorder, Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Episcopal News Service, WWLP Channel 22, Western Mass News, Berkshire Eagle, iBerkshires, WGBY Connecting Point, Hampshire Gazette, Valley Advocate*

## Goals for the Ministry of Communications: 2020-2021

- Track progress of the Tech Reimbursement Grant
- Produce two expanded issues of ABUNDANT Times in 2020 as we evaluate, concurrently, a move to an exclusively digital publication. Current pattern of Summer/Fall & Winter/Spring will remain.
- Research options for refreshing the diocesan website. Last template revision was in 2015. Site construction to begin in 2021.
- Increase our coverage by external media – especially for the public witness of prayer and advocacy.
- Move content from Vimeo to YouTube

Most importantly, and in every aspect of this ministry, I hope to follow where the Spirit is leading our congregations and our bishop. There is only one story to be told – the good news of God's love for us in Christ. It continues to be my privilege to serve in support of that mission.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Vicki Ix  
Canon for Communications

