Calling all Church Leaders...

Is your church ready for Christmas?

ANGLICAN DIOCESE MONTREAL

Deck the Halls:
Digital Advent / Christmas Checklist for all your platforms

- **Banner / Cover Photo**: must be seasonal - ie. festive for Christmas or somber for Advent. Choose a theme and image that best reflects the flavour of your approach to the season. Consider using this image on your bulletins as well. This will create a more consistent, reliable experience for your guest.
- **All Information must be accurate**: include a link to your website and office hours etc. Verify all details. This can seem minor but can make or break your credibility for visitors who are getting to know you for the first time. Remember, you are building trust and this means being accurate, transparent and reliable.
- **What is in it for them?** If someone is visiting your page, they are seeking something. Perhaps they are seeking comfort or community.Create content that has value to the seeker.
- **Pinned Post at top of page** / Latest Tweet or share, Keep it Fresh! Must clearly indicate the most relevant and seasonal event that you hope to welcome guests to be a part of. Update regularly! Guests will be encouraged if they visit your page and notice that you have recently updated your content. It's like they knocked and somebody answered the door.
- **Aesthetics Matter**: When communicating events or services, be sure to Include an image or graphic. It is recommended to use pictures from your own church that reflect your community and that are good quality, bright and / or colourful etc. Consider using the same image on the bulletin of the service. This will create a sense of familiarity and cohesive branding. ie. Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve service, Christmas Pageant, or a listing of all your services on one graphic. Choose colours and fonts that will reflect your brand, personality and aesthetic as a church. Once you have done this, be intentional and consistent with your communications. For example, you may choose three colours and one font for Advent / Christmas and this will serve as your template throughout. Use *Canva* for templates, colour schemes etc.
- **Make sure information is clear and helpful**, readable, relevant and provide details to encourage and assist those who are considering visiting. Parking? Wheelchair access? Donations? How? What to wear? Come early? Coffee afterwards? Which door? What to expect… etc.

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Open the Gifts:
Prepare easy online giving options and don't be shy to talk about it

- **Donation Buttons are easy to install**. *Canada Helps* already has every charity in Canada registered on their site. Contact them and follow the steps to upload the link. Statistically, people are carrying less cash and are enjoying the convenience of online giving. WIthout online giving options you are at risk of losing patrons who may feel inclined to contribute from home, from the street, from the pew etc. It is free and safe.
- **Be specific and identify a ministry.** Over the holidays, when you are welcoming new guests, find creative ways to request financial support for a specific ministry (children's program, washroom reno, website costs etc...) Encourage monthly giving and remind patrons of the benefits of giving.
- **Giving as a spiritual practice:** When donors contribute to your charity, this opens a reciprocal relationship and deepens your connection. Emphasize the importance of this relationship and find ways of cherishing and honouring givers. How can you do this? Words of gratitude, notes of thanks, transparency and openness in terms of your budget and spending habits, Write blogs, sermons and social media posts about the importance of your donors. Be gracious Etc....

Tree Topper:
How to build and maintain a
digital community

- **Capture email addresses** of every guest not only for your newsletter but to to follow up, thank, invite and encourage their faith.
- **Speak to the congregation about the digital community you are building**. Encourage members to go on the Facebook while you are speaking to "check in" and "like" the parish FB page, rate the church, take a selfie with the Rector etc. Talk about the potential advantages of digital communities.
- **When your church is empty, this does not mean that your job is over.** You may continue to connect with existing and potential parishioners via email, website, blogs, video and social media posts. *"The worship has ended, now the service has begun…"*
- **Questions to wonder about**…. How can you build your digital community, inspire and interact with your digital audience? Create posts about prayer, share quotes that inspire (scripture, poetry) , host Live worship sessions, ask questions that encourage conversations, observe how others are effective in this area. The possibilities are endless! Iy is important to find ways of engaging that feel creative and inspiring to you as well.