



## **Communications Strategy**

### **General Principles**

Our vision is to evangelise the Pontypridd Ministry Area, bring new life to the Church and transform our communities; and we will do this by bringing people home to Jesus, tackling loneliness, challenging preconceived stereotypes of church and building the Kingdom of God. One of the tools that we require to enable us to engage and execute this vision successfully is a communications strategy.

The final end of our communication strategy is to declare the love, grace, and welcome of God into the people of God revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, lived and proclaimed by the Church.

In this way, we hope to enable our vision to evangelise the Pontypridd Ministry Area, bring new life to the Church and to transform our communities. As such, our communications will be clear, affirming, inviting, attractive, and soaked in the message of God's grace.

Our media productions will be of high quality and beauty, as God is the God of creativity and beauty. As communications or media productions (videos, photos, posters, et al.) are usually our first impression, we strive for the impression given to be true to who we are: one diverse Church community spread over different locations, who is seeking to love God and serve and bless the world God has created. We strive to use all our various media to promote and life and work of the Pontypridd Ministry Area as part of the ongoing work of the Kingdom of God in the world. Moreover, in our use of social media, we will not seek to merely add to the noise but present an invitational and welcoming spirit, full of care and grace.

### **Objective**

Our objective is to foster a culture of spiritual growth, community connection, and active participation in the life of the Pontypridd Ministry Area. We will do this by:

- i. To foster the mindset of one Church over multiple locations, by enhancing a sense of inclusivity and community, and keep the current congregation informed and inspired.
- ii. To reach out to those on the periphery of Church to come home to Jesus, and the wider community to feel the same love, grace, warmth and welcome regardless of which location or tradition in which they wish to worship.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

Our current audience is our congregation and those who have engaged with the Ministry Area through life events. We communicate with these individuals through Weekly Sway newsletter/magazine, individual location notices, Instagram, Facebook, and the Website.

The strength of this current strategy are:

- Lots of hits on the website
- People across the MA communicating through pews news
- Everyone loves the new logo!

The weaknesses identified are:

- Few joyful stories are submitted. Those that are come from a small number of locations, and often have very little 'story' and simply describe photographs.
- Sometimes the joyful stories are simply 'news'.
- There is a strong parochial attitude which is reinforced through our current communications strategy.

## **The Future**

To be well informed is to feel as though one belongs. To ensure that all feel as though they belong to our Ministry Area, a multifaceted approach which enables a clear, concise and accessible communication is vital. Our communications plan has three strands: Electronic, Welcome and Seasonal. This report will focus on our Electronic Communications Strategy.

## **Electronic**

Our electronic communications strategy is both our 'shop window' and 'front door' into the Ministry Area. It is our primary source of communication to people outside of the church and those who worship with us regularly. We recognise that not everyone is in a position to communicate with us electronically, and provision will be made for this small number of people. We use electronic platforms to:

### **Ministry Area newsletters**

#### **Current Use**

The weekly Ministry Area Newsletter has a wide readership. Approximately 20% of our audience are individuals who have contacted the church through life events. This Sway document is a hybrid of a newsletter and a weekly magazine. It was originally created to draw together all locations in the Ministry Area to share our good news stories with each other and to invite each other to events hosted at each location. Its strengths have been that we have established a pattern of invitation, however, it's greatest weakness is the lack of appropriate good new stories shared.

## Growth Potential

The Newsletter is our primary source of communication with each other and with those who have shown interest in our Ministry Area. In order to make this more effective and attractive, we need to separate the functions of the current Sway document into:

### **Pontypridd Ministry Area New Flash**

This weekly News Flash will serve as an internal document for those who are regularly attending Church across all locations of the Ministry Area. This document will continue to foster a culture of invitation and provide details of services and events scheduled for the forthcoming week. A limited number of the News Flash will be printed each week and disseminated to locations where congregants do not access electronic communications.

### **Pontypridd Ministry Area Magazine**

A monthly E-magazine will share good news stories that reflect our vision, mission and values across the Ministry Area, along with events for the coming month. The magazine will continue to share our successes with each other and develop the culture of invitation, with a particular focus upon making our M.A. attractive to those who are on the periphery.

### **Pontypridd Ministry Area local news**

Clerics and Vergers will continue to make announcements 'from the front' of significant events across the Ministry Area in addition to local notices e.g. "This week, the flowers are dedicated in memory of A. N. Other'

## Website

### Current Use

In 2021, there were multiple websites attached to the Ministry Area. They were sparsely populated, with out-of-date information and no sense of unity. Our current website has a strong sense of identity and cohesion, up to date information and it is gaining traction in the wider community, with over 10,700 views, just under 4,000 of these being unique visits to the site. It has been hailed as the best website in the Diocese of Llandaff for its content and ease of use.

### Growth Potential

The website is our 'shop window' showing the wider community who we are and what we believe. In this consumer society, many younger newcomers to church undertake an online search to see. Priority must be given to creating a visually stimulating, warm and welcoming page for each location and ministry in the Ministry Area. It is currently a portal for all of our governance documents and going forward, it has the potential of being a portal for shared learning.

### Community Engagement

In this digital age, having a website is a necessity and not a luxury. Its primary audience is those who do not yet come to church. Our website is full of information that a first-time visitor will need and it contains authentic images which will match what they see when they come through the door.

## **Facebook**

### **Current Use**

The main purpose of the Pontypridd Ministry Area page on Facebook seems to be three-fold:

- i. People connect with one another through local closed the Facebook pages
- ii. People connect with P.M.A. general or specific events on the Facebook page
- iii. People are friends with specific Facebook pages (e.g. St Catherine's Church Facebook page)

So far, the most useful and beneficial activity is the creation and sharing of events. This allows for easy invitations to current users, in addition to potential to reach the wider community. This is done through individuals in the church sharing stories and tagging community Facebook pages.

### **Growth Potential**

Facebook remains as popular as ever with many local individuals as well as community groups using the platform. Posts on Facebook receive a higher algorithm score when images are attached. Therefore, whenever we are making posts on Facebook that do not include events, a corresponding image should be created in Canva to improve visibility. This also makes posts more shareable to individual Facebook pages, which will help to foster a culture of invitation, and aids people as much as we can in sharing the good news in the way that they share their lives with the people they know. A branding package is available in Canva to help these images remain consistent with the message and style of P.M.A.

### **Community Engagement**

Facebook is a great, cost effective, community engagement tool. It is not only used to inform our regular audience about ministry opportunities they may not be aware of, and opportunities to serve. It's 'share' feature provides us with the opportunity to reach other, targeted audiences. The ability to 'share' post means that we can partner and engage with community-based groups and partners.

## **Instagram**

### **Current Use**

The P.M.A. has only recently created an Instagram account. It is currently linked to the P.M.A. Facebook account and has 72 followers. As this is the preferred platform of younger people.

### **Growth Potential**

The Pontypridd Ministry Area is located in a beautiful part of Wales, with many visually stimulating aspects, from our buildings themselves to our quirky local landmarks. We also are a community of diverse, exciting people worshipping in a variety of ways. Through a bit of photojournalism with a focus on what makes P.M.A. special, Instagram could be used to show our vibrancy, which would be attractive for young people. These posts can also be cross-posted on other media, especially Facebook.

## **Soundcloud**

### **Current Use**

Our newly established a Soundcloud account is being populated with weekly sermons. These are available to be listened to on Spotify, Apple and our website.

### **Growth Potential**

The biggest area of growth potential in Soundcloud is to use the tools that Soundcloud already has available. The P.M.A. could create “albums” or “playlists” of different sermon series or liturgical seasons. There needs to be a developed consistency in the title styles and descriptions, which is laid out in a training document and style guide.

The other area that could bring growth in our use of Soundcloud is adding reflection questions to every sermon, so that sermons can be used by home groups for their study and conversations.

## **WhatsApp**

### **Current Use**

WhatsApp is used extensively by the clergy, however, it's use in the wider Ministry Area is limited to small groups of individuals who have created their own groups.

### **Growth Potential**

As response rates to email steadily decline, we have to pursue other avenues of staying in contact with people. This doesn't apply to making people aware of news items necessarily, but rather to messages which require action such as requests for volunteers to fill specific slots in a rota. We should explore ways of disseminating information that makes it as easy as possible for people to respond and engage, which at this point may include narrowcasting messaging apps like WhatsApp.

## **Good Stewardship**

When considering communication, it is tempting to revert to what we know, which is a paper-based form of communication. Whilst this continues to have a role, electronic communications are significantly more cost effective than paper-based systems. It is good stewardship of our finances, and it is better for the environment to steadily move towards a paperless form of communication. That being said, there are individuals within our M.A. who, for various reasons, do not access electronic communications; and as a result we will continue to produce hard copies of our communications. This should be regularly monitored by the vergers to ensure minimal wastage.

Given the costs of maintaining photocopiers, all printed communications should be done centrally to reduce the financial and time burden, on vergers and locations through the Ministry Area.

## **Concluding Electronic Communications Remarks**

One of the key factors of measuring success in these activities and actions is measuring what success means to us. For the P.M.A., there are only a few data points that could be measured. Given our mission of the growing the Kingdom of God we will be succeeding, simply by communicating with each other. That being said, we are able to track is views, shares, hits on sites, number of SWAY documents opened, and other such data from social media. Another indicator of success is our placement in the search engine results, as social media presence and activities impact the placement in result lists.

Appendix 1 outlines a potential strategy for effective electronic communications.

## Appendix 1

### Channels:

#### Electronic Communication platforms

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Website
- SWAY
- Direct emails to congregation members and/or special interest groups

### Potential Weekly Schedule:

#### Monday:

- Social Media:
  - Share a Bible verse or an inspirational quote.
  - Highlight a community member or a testimonial.

#### Tuesday:

- Social Media:
  - Post a mid-week encouragement message.
  - Share a behind-the-scenes look at church activities or preparations.

#### Wednesday:

- Email:
  - Send a mid-week email newsletter.
    - Include updates on upcoming events.
    - Share a short devotional or reflection.
    - Highlight volunteer opportunities.

#### Thursday:

- Social Media:
  - Feature a staff or volunteer spotlight.
  - Share a thought-provoking question or discussion prompt.

#### Friday:

- Social Media:
  - Share a preview of the upcoming Sunday service theme or sermon.
  - Engage the audience with a fun and interactive post (polls, quizzes, or challenges).

Saturday:

- Social Media/WhatsApp:
  - Remind followers of the next day's service or event.
  - Share a relevant article, video, or podcast recommendation.

Sunday:

- Social Media:
  - Live updates during the service (photos, short videos, quotes).
  - Share highlights from the service.
  - Post a thank-you message to attendees.

Additional Considerations:

Consistent Branding:

- Use consistent colours, fonts, and logos across all platforms for brand recognition.

Engagement Tactics:

- Encourage congregation members to share their own content related to the church using a specific hashtag.
- Respond promptly to comments and direct messages.
- Host Q&A sessions or live streams with church leaders.

Event Promotion:

- Create dedicated posts or emails for major events, including save-the-date announcements and countdowns.

Visual Content:

- Use a mix of photos, graphics, and videos to keep content visually appealing.

Metrics and Evaluation:

- Regularly analyse engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, email open rates).
- Adjust the strategy based on what content resonates most with the audience.

By implementing this communications strategy, Pontypridd Ministry Area aims to strengthen connections within the congregation, reach out to the broader community, and create an online presence that reflects the values and mission of the church.

### **Special liturgical campaigns**

Advent Season:

- Countdown Posts: Create visual countdowns to build anticipation for the Advent season.
- Daily Devotionals: Share short daily devotionals leading up to Christmas.
- Scripture Reflections: Share scriptures related to the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.
- Advent Wreath Lighting: Share photos or videos of the weekly lighting of the Advent wreath.
- Community Prayer Requests: Encourage followers to share their prayer requests for the season.



#### Christmas Season:

- Christmas Eve Service Promo: Create visually appealing posts to promote Christmas Eve services.
- Christmas Day Reflections: Share reflections or quotes on the significance of Christmas
- Community Outreach: Showcase the church's involvement in local community service during the holiday season.
- Virtual Christmas Greetings: Invite members to share their Christmas greetings through photos or videos.

#### Epiphany:

- Wisemen Wisdom: Share quotes or reflections on the journey of the Wise Men.
- Star of Bethlehem: Post about the symbolism of the Star of Bethlehem.
- Epiphany Celebrations: Share photos or videos of any special Epiphany services or events.

#### Lent:

- Ash Wednesday: Share a post explaining the significance of Ash Wednesday.
- Lenten Devotionals: Provide daily or weekly devotionals throughout the Lenten season.
- Fasting and Reflection: Share reflections on the spiritual practice of fasting.
- Community Outreach: Promote and document any charitable or community service activities during Lent.

#### Holy Week:

- Palm Sunday Reflections: Share reflections on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
- Maundy Thursday: Explain the significance of Maundy Thursday and share images from any special services.
- Good Friday Reflections: Share powerful quotes or reflections on the crucifixion.
- Easter Vigil Promotion: Build anticipation for Easter with posts promoting the Easter Vigil service.

#### Easter Season:

- Resurrection Sunday Celebrations: Share highlights from Easter Sunday services.
- Easter Joy: Encourage members to share photos or stories of how they celebrated Easter.
- Post-Easter Reflections: Share thoughts on the hope and joy of the resurrection in the days following Easter.

#### Pentecost:

- Pentecost Sunday: Create posts to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- Reflections on the Holy Spirit: Share quotes, verses, or teachings about the Holy Spirit's role in the Christian faith.

These ideas aim to align with the liturgical calendar, helping to foster a sense of community, reflection, and celebration throughout the church year on social media.