

Overview

The year of 2018 saw continued growth with respect to the Communications Department. Traffic to the Diocesan website grew again. Average monthly visitors totaled 15,591. This is nearly double the amount of just 5 years ago which saw a monthly average of 8090 visitors a month.

The Diocesan Magazine, *Your Diocese Alive in Christ*, unfortunately saw only 2 issues (the second issue is going to press as this report is being written) in 2018. The value of the expense of the magazine must be considered going forward.

www.doepa.org

The Diocesan website saw over 12,000 visitors during every month of 2018. In fact, the LOWEST number of monthly visitors was in May, with 12,377 visitors. The last five months of the year, visits totaled well over 14,000 per month, with October seeing a high for the year at 18,054. In layman's terms, what this all means is the website is getting a lot of daily and monthly traffic and views which is a good thing. Using the statistics for October, if only ONE HALF of ONE PERCENT (.05%) of viewers are people who are searching for a faith, the number indicates a possible NINE HUNDRED AND TWO seekers. How often does one get to speak to nearly one thousand potential converts to Orthodoxy?

The website is updated at least weekly, but during busy times it may be updated daily. An important change was made this year due to the many notable deaths that were reported. If a very notable event occurs, the featured story will reflect this event only for a period of one day. That is - all other news items will stop appearing on the main web page for a day to give the notable event its' due. The news items will reappear after the one day period.

News items are 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 on different days during the week. This keeps the website fresh. There have been many questions about this during the year. 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 of 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).

A thorough and complete review of the website was conducted this year by Father Martin Browne and the communications department. In the course of the new year some changes will be made to better serve the Diocese.

His Eminence, Archbishop MARK has requested that notices for food sales and the like be discontinued on the Diocesan website. The new year will see this policy followed carefully. It is a fine line - we certainly want to show your active parish, but feasts, sacraments and religious activities will be what is featured. This is important for all parishes to understand - you should use your own parish website, Facebook page, and whatever other media the parish chooses to publicize these events. Upcoming events will be for Liturgical events, speakers and concerts only.

A continuing issue is the quality of the images sent. The Communications department realizes that not every parish has a resident photographer or expensive equipment to take photos. However, it is respectfully requested that parishes send the LARGEST, highest quality photos they can. There is a noticeable difference between photos shot with a traditional camera and those shot with a cell phone. Please take the time and make the effort to get a reasonably good photo. If there is a group involved, please get a group shot. PLEASE DO NOT EDIT, CROP or get "ARTSY" with photos (no instagram effects, coloration, odd cropping.) We have striven to develop a "brand" for the website, meaning it has a certain look and feel. Think of it as your community newspaper, and submit accordingly. Again, the

OCA requirements are being followed here. Blurry photos will not be posted on the website or Alive in Christ as it takes away from the professional appearance of our website and publication. Furthermore, a writeup of at LEAST the information who, what, where, and when is required. With potentially 35 parishes submitting info, it is not feasible for the Communications department to research and write each news item.

DOES YOUR PARISH HAVE TEENS OR YOUNG ADULTS? Ask them to be the “parish photographer” or news person. They will know what to do! And you give them a purpose!

All submissions decreased 214 total. We need you to share your good news to continue our growth. Do not think that your parish website or Facebook page is the only place to share - also send news to the Diocesan Communications department to share with our nearly 20,000 viewers.

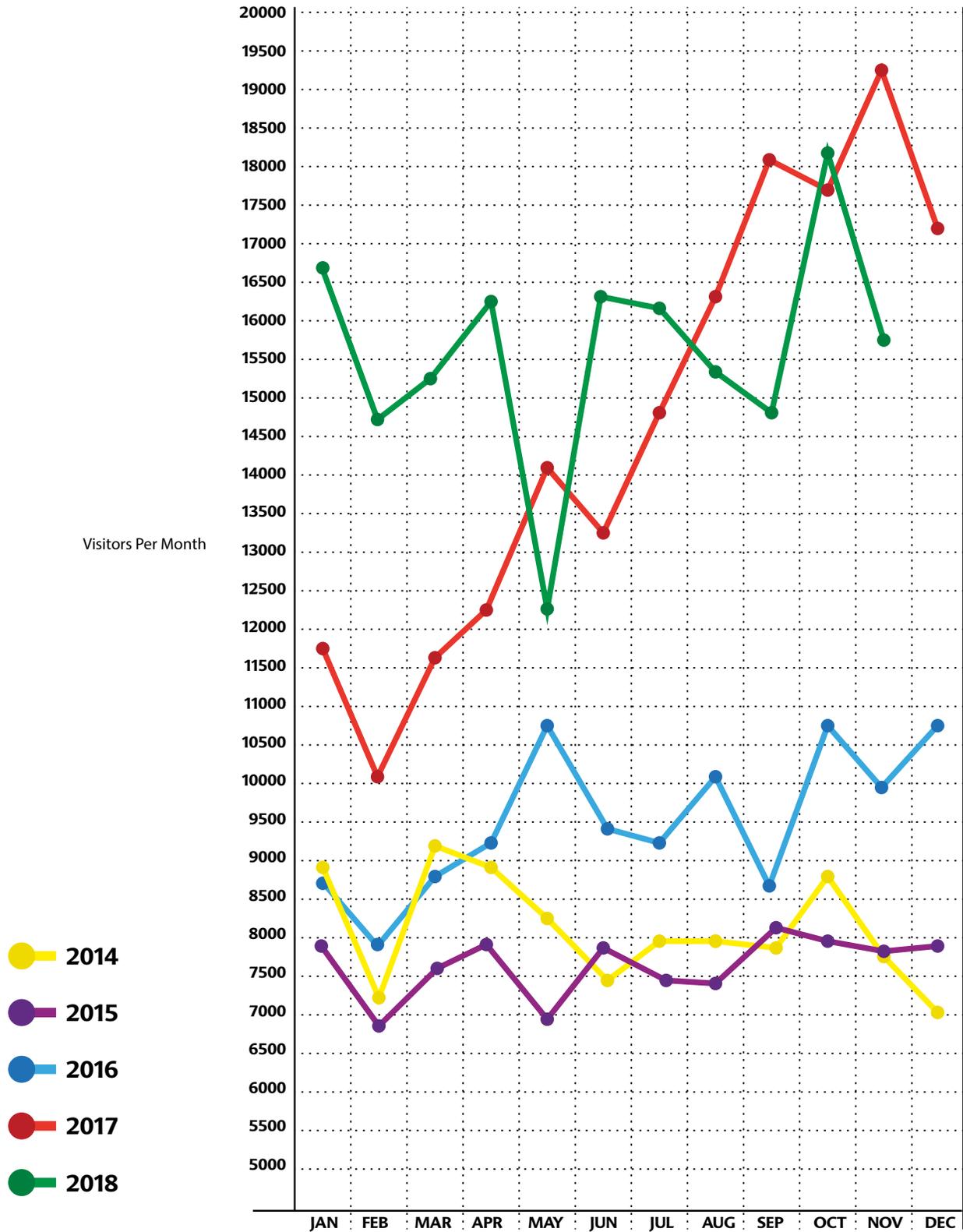
Parishes submitting news items this year:

Berwick
Bethlehem
Coaldale
Edwardsville
Frackville
Harrisburg
Jermyn
Lopez
Lykens
Mechanicsburg
Mount Carmel
Nanticoke
Olyphant (Both All Saints and Saint Nicholas)
Philadelphia (Holy Assumption & St. Stephens)
Pottstown
Stroudsburg
Wilkes-Barre (Holy Resurrection Cathedral and Holy Trinity)
Williamsport
Wrightstown

This year 5 parishes were removed from the above list and only 1 added. Additionally, 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.

It must be mentioned again that video is an area that needs to be better incorporated. His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON uses video to address the OCA very regularly. We have the capability to add video galleries, it is not used at all, and should be made a priority.

Website Statistics Comparison 2014 - 2018



Facebook/Social Media

The Diocesan Facebook page continues to be a mystery. The communications department does not utilize the Facebook page at all. We need to think of Facebook like a newspaper – with the exception that news is shared easily and quickly to a worldwide audience. A decision or action should be taken on this as we are missing opportunities to easily spread good news.

Alive in Christ

The magazine took a back seat this year as focus was put on (in no particular order) the new Diocesan Chancery, the All American Council, the website redesign. There will be two issues in 2018, and discussion over the future of the magazine is probably a good idea.

Matushka Sandra Kopestonsky has been graciously scanning back issues of the magazine, which have been posted to the website at the Alive in Christ page. It is interesting to look at these old issues and see what were important issues facing the Church some 30 years ago. The more things change, the more they stay the same. These old issues were sometimes up to 70 pages in size, with advertisements. Today, the internet is much more effective at distributing information. However, the editorial content published in the past is lacking today.

Other Areas

Many old Diocesan Assembly and Diocesan Council reports have been scanned and posted as well. These are also interesting reading. They can be found under their respective pages.

Issues Going Forward

The main issue this year will be revamping the design and architecture of the Diocesan website. This will take time and thoughtfulness but should be completed by the end of the year.

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 and much positive feedback regarding the magazine. We have come a long way in five years and there is still much to be done. 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, but it needs more timely and helpful information. The Diocesan magazine has evolved, with more articles and information to go along with the photos. The core belief of the Communications Department is to spread the word, create excitement and interest, and make people sit up, take notice, and want to get involved in the Orthodox Faith along with the good works that are happening. 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

