

Rocky Mountain Synod Communication Strategy



*Together we proclaim and embody
God's unconditional love
for the sake of the world.*

Claiming our Gifts: Our guiding principles



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1;14

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

Acts 1:8

†S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying activity in the world.

†S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall: a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

-Constitution of the Rocky Mountain Synod, 2017

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism...to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed... I do and I ask God to help and guide me.

-Affirmation of Baptism, Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Called to Proclaim: A Theology of Communication



Called to proclaim

As the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we claim a particular understanding of our call to bear witness to God's grace in the world. This call is rooted in our understanding of Scripture, shaped by the stated purpose in our governing documents, and grounded in our baptismal promises.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" we hear in the opening verses of the Gospel of John. What a powerful image to begin the unfolding of the story of God incarnate! These words from John remind us that God's Word is both embodied in our sacred texts and in the life and witness of Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we are called to continue that proclamation of God's unconditional radical love for all of creation in both word and deed.

In the Rocky Mountain Synod, we articulate our understanding of that call through our mission statement, that together "we proclaim and embody God's unconditional love for the sake of the world." Grounded in that mission, we understand that all we say and do, all decisions made, and all the ways ministry is supported, is not for ourselves, but for the sake of a world in need of love, grace, and healing.

What does this mean?

Claiming our central call as followers of Jesus to proclaim the Gospel informs our understanding and strategy for communication. Communication, understood as both the exchange of information and the means of connection between people, is also more than those definitions. Communication is indeed the tools we engage in print, digital, and social medias. And our tools are not simply the means to the end, that is the proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, our responsible, creative, intentional engagement of the tools available to us are also the embodiment of the Gospel.

We claim a commitment to actively engage any mediums that will strengthen our proclamation in ways those we serve are best able to receive what we share, while always seeking to be wise in our engagement. We also commit to collective discernment in using our formal communication channels to respond to happenings in our church and world, trusting that God indeed will "help and guide us". With joy and assurance of our call, we will seek first and foremost to proclaim and embody God's unconditional love for the world

Deacon Erin Power
Assistant to the Bishop for Synodical Life

2019-2020 Communication Priorities

Claiming
our Gifts

Equipping
all Leaders

Connecting in
Ministry &
Witness

Accompanying
One Another
into God's
Future

Growing in
Gratitude &
Generosity

In concert with the 2.0 Strategic Plan and the Rocky Mountain Synod Communication Strategy, the following priorities have been identified:

- **Strategic Communications:** Intentional awareness will be given to timing, medium, and relationship to other current and up-coming publications.
- **Claiming our Gifts:** we will seek to celebrate and interpret our ELCA identity and witness
- **Church Together:** We will seek stories celebrating the witness of our partners in ministry including synod, Churchwide, and global ministries.
- **Healthy Leadership**
- **Growing in Gratitude**
- **Being a Public Church**
 - Advocacy
 - Anti-racism
 - Immigration
 - Hunger and Poverty
 - Theological reflection on current events

*Together we proclaim and embody
God's unconditional love for the sake of the world*

RMS Communication Channels



Claiming
our Gifts

eConnection

Audience: Rostered Ministers, Congregation members, lay leaders, Congregation administrators

Purpose: Email newsletter to share information, job postings, news, and events from RMS & Churchwide ministries and related partners; to share updates from the Office of the Bishop; to share relevant resources for congregation leaders.

Frequency: Weekly on Wednesday morning



Equipping
all Leaders

Leadership Link

Audience: Rostered Ministers

Purpose: Email newsletter to share information, news, and events from RMS & Churchwide ministries; to share updates from the Office of the Bishop specifically relevant to rostered ministers; to share prayer concerns of rostered ministers.

Frequency: bi-weekly, and other times as needed



Connecting in
Ministry &
Witness

Church Together Ambassador Toolkit

Audience: Synod Assembly voting members; congregation identified ambassadors

Purpose: Email and paper toolkit to provide voting members/ambassadors stories, prayers, offering connections, activities, and discussion guides centered around a monthly theme

Frequency: Monthly



Accompanying
One Another
into God's
Future



Growing in
Gratitude &
Generosity

From the Bishop's Office

Audience: eConnection subscribers

Purpose: Replacing printed Connection newsletter; e-newsletter to communicate roster changes, updates from the Office of the Bishop, theological reflections

Frequency: Monthly/Quarterly

RMS Communication Channels(continued)



Claiming our Gifts

Website

Audience: Members and partners of the Rocky Mountain Synod

Purpose: To provide information, resources and event support for the ministries of the RMS



Equipping all Leaders

Bishop's Blog

Audience: Members and partners of the Rocky Mountain Synod

Purpose: to share official statements and reflections from the Bishop

Frequency: Variable



Connecting in Ministry & Witness

RMS in the Neighborhood Blog

Audience: All members of the Rocky Mountain Synod

Purpose: To highlight stories of *Church for the sake of the world* throughout the Rocky Mountain Synod; the online publication of Toolkit mission moment

Frequency: Variable



Accompanying One Another into God's Future

LAM-NM Advocacy Update (and action alerts)

Audience: Rostered ministers, congregation members, lay leaders, and advocacy partners

Purpose: Regular e-newsletter with information related to LAM-NM and ELCA advocacy work (updates on legislation, issue activity and action alerts), events, and organizational news

Frequency: Biweekly during legislative sessions and at least monthly during the rest of year



Growing in Gratitude & Generosity

LAM-CO e-newsletter (and advocacy alerts)

Audience: Rostered ministers, congregation members, lay leaders, advocacy partners

Purpose: Regular newsletter to share information related to advocacy work, our events, partner events, updates on legislation et al.

Frequency: Biweekly (Jan.-May), Monthly (June-Dec.); alerts sent ad hoc as needed

RMS Communication Channels (continued)



Claiming
our Gifts

RMS App

Audience: Members of the Rocky Mountain Synod

Purpose: Primarily used during RMS events; also includes directory for rostered ministers, electronic giving, and social media feed

Vimeo

Audience: Members, partners, and followers of the Rocky Mountain Synod

Purpose: To tell our stories of ministry and witness, share reports from Synod Assembly, and offer resources for conversation and learning

Frequency: Primarily prior to or after synod events, and other times as resources are created



Equipping
all Leaders



Connecting in
Ministry &
Witness

ZOOM

Audience: Members and Partners of the Rocky Mountain Synod

Purpose: To connect teams, committees, and leaders for real-time conversation; Monthly Dean's Zoom is intended to be a communication channel between the Office of the Bishop and Rostered Ministers



Accompanying
One Another
into God's
Future

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

See Rocky Mountain Synod Social Media Policy

Annual Communications

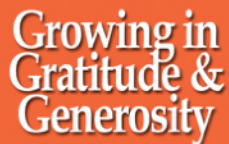
Mission Support Thank You

Mission Support Intent Form

Annual Report Insert

RMS Events Poster

Synod Assembly Information Packet

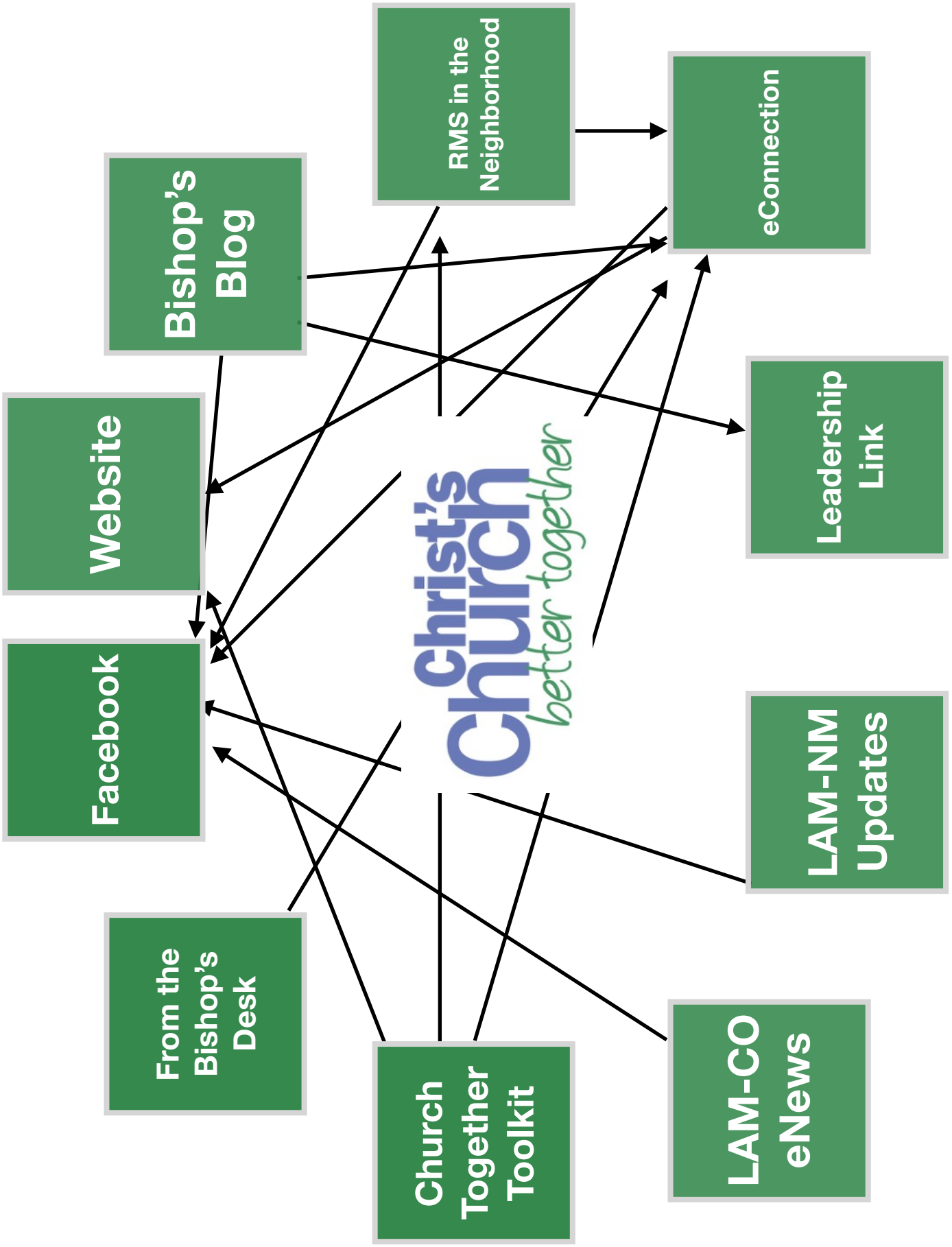


Growing in
Gratitude &
Generosity

Ministry Partner Communications

Daily Bread (RMS Hunger Network)

View from the Rockies (RMSWO)



Social Media Guidelines

The Rocky Mountain Synod recognizes social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo, and Youtube as opportunities to proclaim and embody God's unconditional love for the sake of the world. Specifically, we will use our social media presence to:

- Celebrate the ministry and witness of our congregations, leaders, and ministries of the Rocky Mountain Synod
- Connect leaders and ministries to our Church-wide and global witness
- Offer theological reflection and public statements to offer our Lutheran lens on current events
- Share news and updates directly connected to Rocky Mountain Synod and ELCA ministries and events
- Promote new resources available for congregations and leaders

We adhere to these Facebook posting guidelines to ensure consistent messaging, authentic presence, and a witness that supports dialogue and community:

Claiming
our Gifts

•**Note timing of previous post** before sharing new post, to ensure consistent, but not overwhelming, presence.

•Include the **tagline** whenever possible: Christ's Church, Better Together.

•Include **images, links, and videos** when relevant to increase interaction.

Equipping
all Leaders

•Pictures should be posted **within 24 hours** of event taking place.

•**Get permission** to post pictures, particularly pictures of children. This could be done by announcing your intention to take pictures and post on Facebook.

Connecting in
Ministry &
Witness

•**"Like" other related pages** to develop relationships and share information.

•Post **original AND shared content**. A good rule is 80/20.

•Posts should be directly related to **RMS/ELCA affiliated ministries**. Posts connected to non-ELCA organizations need to be approved by RMS staff.

Publicity and Event Support Guidelines

The Rocky Mountain Synod Mission Statement guides all written, digital, and social media communication.

- **Promotion of articles, statements, and/or events is informed by:**
 - Priorities identified in the Rocky Mountain Synod Strategic Plan
 - ELCA Social Statements and Social Messages
 - Priorities and statements from the Synod Council
 - Resolutions passed by the Synod or Churchwide Assembly
- **Synod communication channels are available to the Office of the Bishop, Synodical Teams and Committees, and RMS/ELCA Ministries**
- **Events and news from affiliated ministries (such as ecumenical organizations) shall be shared based on:**
 - Space available
 - Adherence to RMS/ELCA priorities
 - Perceived interest by area ministries and congregations
- **Events with no connection or relationship to the Office of the Bishop, RMS ministries and congregations, or ecumenical partners shall be shared at the discretion of Office of the Bishop staff.**
- **Events that are in conflict with synodical events and/or priorities will not be shared.**

**Christ's
Church**
better together

Publicity and Event Support Guidelines (cont'd)

Rocky Mountain Synod/Office of the Bishop sponsored Events

- Registration/information hosted on website
- Publication on eConnection, website, and social media
- Full staff support

Rocky Mountain Synod Conference Sponsored Gatherings/Events

- Publication on eConnection, website, and social media
- Registration/website/staff support as able and appropriate

ELCA or RMS Affiliated Teams/Organizations/Ministry Sponsored Events

- Publication in eConnection
- Publicized on social media as appropriate (staff discretion)
- Website/registration support as determined appropriate by staff liaison



Gathering
Well

RMS Partner Organizations

- Publication in eConnection
- Publicized on social media as appropriate (staff discretion)