

TELLING THE STORY NEWS PRESS RELEASE

★ The **Episcopal Diocese** *of Texas*

When you have something that is timely and newsworthy, write it and email it immediately to your local news sources: radio stations, television stations and local newspaper. These days, most news agencies have a link on their websites through which you can send a press release or story idea.

If you are sending a news item about an upcoming event or speaker, be sure to do so two weeks in advance, and follow up with an additional notification a week out. Photo opportunities are especially appreciated and if you have a good photo from the previous year (Blessing of the Animals or Ashes to Go) be sure to include it.

Make sure you include the church's full name, a contact name, phone number and email. Use a cell number that someone will actually answer, not the church office if you have limited hours during which someone will answer the phone.

Date the release and indicate that it is for "Immediate Release." The communicator's name should appear here too, with a telephone number to call for further information.

December 1, 2018
For Immediate Release
Contact: Jane Scott
409.520.6444
jscott@gmail.com

It's a good idea to spend some time on the headline and a one or two-line sentence summarizing the release.

Example: St. George's welcomes retired veterinarian as new rector

You should compose the text as if it were going directly into print. Every news release, however brief, should contain the Five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why (sometimes How is pertinent). Even the simplest of announcements should contain these essentials. Write as if a person reading knows nothing about your church.

Most of the time the Five Ws should be stated in the first paragraph. Amplify the statements in the subsequent paragraphs, beginning with the most important information and ending with the least important. Try to keep your press release to 200-250 words.

Remember this: 95 percent of readers do not read past the headline. Ninety-five percent of those who do, don't read past the first paragraph. Get the most important or most interesting material as high up in the story as you can. Sometimes that is not the chairperson of an event or the name of the church.

BOILER PLATE

Create a paragraph about your church and the congregation that sums up your ministry and vision and that can be added to the end of every news release or feature story.

Example: St. Mathias' Episcopal Church was established in 1874 near downtown Austin. A diverse community, St. Mathias seeks to support our community through low-cost after-school programs, senior citizen support ministries and outreach to those in prison. For more information, call 555.312.2345 or visit our website at www.stmathias.org.

You can also add this:

Ed. note: When referring to a clergy person, man or woman, first reference should be "the Rev. Kelly Smith." The adjective "Rev.," short for Reverend, should not be used alone. Referring to members of this church, please know "Episcopal" is an adjective, "Episcopalian" is a noun. It is incorrect to refer to Episcopalians as "Episcopals" or to refer to the Episcopal Church as "the Episcopalian Church."

Thank you.

FACTS

Check your facts. Check your facts. Check your facts. Make sure your phone numbers, dates and times are correct. Be sure you quote sources correctly, verify spelling of names. Give exact times, with a.m. or p.m. indicated and the day of the week as well as the calendar date for coming events.

QUOTES

The importance of using quotes in a news story cannot be emphasized too strongly. There are few stories that are not enhanced with direct quotes, even if only a single statement by someone involved. Obviously, the more lively and provocative the statement, the better. Don't editorialize in your news release. Let the quote carry the interest or color the details for you.

Example: "Last year we had a hedgehog and a boa constrictor at the pet blessing," said the Rev. Sue Smith, rector of St. Mathias Episcopal Church. "We always welcome anyone in our community to join our pet blessing, especially if it is someone with a service dog," she added.

Submit photo possibilities with news release to broadcasters

Broadcast media regard news releases as source material or suggestions for stories the station might choose to cover. Keep in mind that television is looking for lively and colorful action. With your press release, submit a list of photo possibilities. In case of radio, you may submit a suggested public service announcement with the press release. These should be no more than 75 words — less if possible.

SAMPLE NEW RELEASE

★ The **Episcopal Diocese of Texas**

Press Release

For Immediate Release
September 27, 2018
Contact: Carol E. Barnwell
o. 713.520.6444 or
c. 713.703.2652
cbarnwell@epicenter.org

Downtown Churches Include Service Animals in Annual Blessing

Two Episcopal churches in Houston have included service animals in their annual observance of St. Francis Day pet blessing events. Both the canine unit and the mounted horse patrol have been invited to participate with seeing eye dogs and a myriad of house pets from iguanas to guinea pigs. The usual dogs and cats are also invited on Saturday, October 12, 2003 at 4:00 p.m., Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave., and Trinity Episcopal Church, 1015 Holman.

Clergy, vested in white robes, will hold a brief service outside on the lawn. The animals will be sprinkled with holy water and blessed for their love and service. Treats will be served to both two-legged and four-legged participants. El Orbits, performing in animal costumes and singing animal-themed songs, will provide the music.

Information on St. Francis may be found here ([link](#)). To interview participating clergy email: Carol E. Barnwell at call her at 713.520.6444.

SAMPLE NEW RELEASE

★ The **Episcopal Diocese** of *Texas*

Press Release

October 3, 2018

For Immediate Release

Contact: The Rev. Patrick Skinner

o. 713.222.2593

pskinner@christchurchcathedral.com

Christ Church Cathedral teams with PBS for “By the People” Townhall meeting

On the eve of one of the most important elections in recent history, 2000 people will gather in 20 different communities for a nationwide townhall meeting. Selected audiences will discuss how nominees should address the issues facing our national and economic security. In cooperation with MacNeil-Lehrer Productions and Channel 8 KUHT, Christ Church Cathedral will serve as the Houston host for By the People.

One hundred individuals, selected in a national polling process to represent a broad cross-section of the Houston metropolitan area, will meet at the Cathedral on Saturday, October 16. Portions of these townhall meetings will be included in a PBS broadcast that will highlight the issues raised during the citizen discussions.

The day will include small group discussion on the topics of economics and foreign policy. An afternoon panel discussion will center on the questions raised during the small group time. These questions will be posed to people from both of the major political parties as well as experts in economics and foreign policy.

The day's proceedings are open to the public, and anyone interested in observing is invited to attend. Participation in the small group discussions will be limited to those individuals selected in PBS' random process. Please plan to arrive at the Cathedral at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, October 16, if you would like to observe. If you have questions, or would like to register as an observer, please email the Rev. Patrick Miller ([link to email](#)) or call him at 713.590.3309.

Christ Church Cathedral is located at 1117 Texas Ave., Houston, TX.