

Communications & Electronic Ministries

January / February 2009

ACS On Demand Service

ACS Technologies now hosts our Databases on their server in Florence, South Carolina via a service called "ACS On Demand". This gives us new capabilities, better service, and exceeds several goals we had established for 2009:

- New database server: This saves us a new hardware expenditure of from \$4000 to \$6000 this year.
- Secure, fireproof offsite storage: This service is usually costs \$600 to \$1200 annually.
- 24x7 live support: Each server takes 5 to 10 hours / month for OS and Application Software maintenance.

Features include:

- People and Financial data on an ACS Technologies owned server behind a separate network firewall device.
- Increased data security with nightly data backups, weekly system backups, monthly off-site system backups
- Two Disaster Recovery Sites: one in another building; second in another state.
- Secure access to data from any internet connected PC or Mac.
 - Our rector and staff can access People data from the church or from home.
 - Our Finance Secretary and Treasurer can access Finance data from the church or their offices.
- Unlimited growth to Access ACS (secure website) which would otherwise increase in cost as our church grows.

More Information is available at <http://www.acstechnologies.com/ondemand/benefits>.

Facilities Scheduler

Our old church calendar database, The Ministry Scheduler (or TMS), was designed in the 1980s before extensive internet development, is only modifiable in the church office and not easily maintained. TMS interfaced to our secure site but not all TMS data fields mapped to the web calendar.

ACS hosted Facilities Scheduler replaced TMS, is hosted on redundant ACS servers with the same redundancy as our People and Financial data. Facilities Scheduler interfaces more closely with Access ACS, so more information captured can be posted on our web site.

More information is available at <http://www.acstechnologies.com/products/facilityscheduler>.

Constant Contact

We now have 130 email addresses signed up to receive St. Michael's news via e-mail. If you do not receive your St. Michael's news this way please stop by the office to sign up or use the form on the Announcements page. If you do then you know the advantages over paper newsletters so, please pass the word to other parishioners.

The Messenger Returns

Kathy Davis, the editor of our seasonal church magazine, *The Messenger*, is reviving that publication and has agreed to serve on the Communications Committee. We need seasonal articles for the Lent/Easter edition. *The Messenger* is especially targeted toward those in our congregation that do not attend weekly.

Office Volunteers Don't Just Answer Phones Anymore

Our office volunteers are beginning to take on more electronic data tasks through the week. For example, Pat Evans is verifying our People Database records to our paper records to make sure we have dates, all family members, and all transfers in and out recorded. Kathy Davis is checking various paper calendars and schedules to make sure that all meetings, classes, etc. are listed in the new Facilities Scheduler. Rupert Pickens is verifying the People Database against the Constant Contact email database to make sure that all who request email get it. Thanks to all the volunteers.

The Church Network

So far, the network access to our data on the South Carolina ACS Servers actually seems faster than when it was on our local server. However, we have never accessed it with more than two concurrent sessions. The ACS server is multi-homed and redundant. Other web access, such as to our Constant Contact email software are actually faster from my home than from the office.

Our network is over 10 years old, easily overloaded and goes down between 1 and 3 times per week. This may improve when I remove the ACS software from our server. The phone company offers a faster service for \$10.00 per month more than we pay now. I am also talking with another vendor to see if we can get improved service.