

Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota
Web Style Guide and Best Practices
(updated December, 2008)

In general, follow guidelines found in the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* and the most recent edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. For punctuation, grammar, and other stylistic considerations, refer to the diocesan Print Style Guide.

Online References

- emails should be lower case unless specifically designated otherwise. Underlines should not be used unless the email is a hotlink.
 wendy.j@episcopalmn.org
- Websites should begin with www. and only be underlined when they are a hotlink.
 www.episcopalmn.org (NOT <http://www.episcopalmn.org> or episcopalmn.org)
- Observe the following:
 - the internet
 - the web
 - webpage
 - website
 - email
 - newsletter

Write information, Not Documents

- People do not read the web; they scan.
 - Less is more.
 - Focus on facts, not background info.
 - Don't write in all capitals.
 - Don't underline anything but links.
 - Pictures are worth a thousand words, use them.
- Use tables, columns, and headers to break up information.
 - Keep lists short.
 - Use numbered lists only for defining steps.
 - Use tables when you have numbers to compare, if you are writing a series of "if, then" sentences.
 - Keep tables simple. No more than 2 columns and 5-10 rows.
 - Don't center text in tables.
 - Make headings statements.
 - Use action phrase headings for instructions, such as "How do I...?"
- Break up large documents and divide web content by:
 - time or sequence
 - task
 - people
 - type of information
 - questions people ask
- Write as if you are in a conversation.
 - Use "you" rather than "he" or "she."
 - Use the active voice.
 - Use as few words as possible. Write simple sentences.
 - Keep paragraphs short. One sentence paragraphs are okay.
 - Use short, simple, common words.
 - Do not use jargon or inside speak.
- Make hyperlinks meaningful.
 - Don't make titles or headers into links.
 - Don't use "click here" or "more". Web users know what hyperlinks look like and do.
 - Links of 7 to 12 words have the highest click-through rate.
 - Use action phrases for links.
 - "Read more about our ministries" rather than "Ministries."

Make the website user friendly.

- Use descriptive keywords and tags, e.g. if you are writing an article about Total Ministry, keywords might be total ministry, ministry, ministries, shared ministry, lay ministry, new ministries. The internet is becoming more and more centered on search engines. Keywords are one way to ensure the website has a high search rating.