

UUCSR Web Team Report To Congregation

June, 2014 – June, 2015

Achievements

- The Web Team has established trust in the Web site's timeliness and accuracy, as shown by Google Analytics statistics. In May alone, our site had 1400 sessions.
- The home page gives quick information at a glance, while more detail is readily accessible via well-designed navigation.
- The site is pretty and inviting. A variety of presentation methods are used.
- The site establishes greater transparency for Congregational decision making.
- The Web Team convinced ordinary folk that they could create and edit content.
- The site offers Web-accessible tools for low-overhead donation and pledging. The WordPress add-ons creating this functionality can be used for future projects.
- The Web Team has set a high standard for technical support for Congregational staff and volunteers.
- The Web Team delivered all these outcomes on a very modest budget.

Process

- Built a server, installed WordPress
- Selected a WordPress Template, modified it for site-wide look and feel
- Created navigation menu and Web pages
- Migrated data from old server
- Developed a stylesheet to ensure consistent copy
- Rewrote and reformatted old pages to a higher quality level
- Identified team and committee members who would become editors
- Trained 24 editors in two classes, first during Summer 2014, and then during December, 2014
- Created compelling panorama photographs for our site header image
- Released the new Website on October 12, 2014
- Debugged site errors and performance
- Added functionality and maintenance tools to server via WordPress Plugins, 25 in all
- Identified Vanco Services as an outstanding candidate for our online transaction processing
- Implemented permissions system for editor logins to WordPress

- Implemented Vanco Services, working together with Financial Stewardship and UUCSR Administrator. We now have 51 people processing their pledge payments and other donations through Vanco.
- Created an online pledge form and procedure for The Last Pledge Drive. 30 pledges have been created via the Web Pledge tool.
- Created a photo release protocol and form. 200 people have submitted this form, allowing us to use their images on the Web site.

Observations

The amount of time, effort, and expertise to meet our goals was greatly underestimated. You'd think that professionals would know better! As time passes, more resources will have to be dedicated to this project.

Future Projects

- Upgrade WordPress, and implement a new UU template (to be released around GA)
- Review the site's look and feel, and implement visual and functional improvements
- Embrace Google Analytics to better understand our audience, and to guide planning
- Develop Web tools and publicity for the Service Auction
- Provide more editor training, both for new and existing editors
- Provide Web assistance office hours for editors
- Encourage teams and committees to use the Web site for promotion of their work
- Promote photography for use on site
- Publish sermons in audio format