

BEING SEEN: MEDIA OUTREACH

Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina





WHY BE SEEN?

**A LITTLE COVERAGE CAN GO A
LONG WAY**



**WELCOMING THROUGH
GETTING THE WORD OUT**

BROADCAST VS. PRINT

BROADCAST

TV news stations want heavy-hitting, entertaining stories. Advocacy events/stories can work well.

PRINT

Newspapers want community coverage from all angles. You might ask about writing a column for the faith/religion section among other things you send.



WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

- Create a catchy headline and informative subhead.
- Draft a compelling lede.
- Include actual quotes by actual church officials.
 - Write the quotes yourself so they fit where you need them and get them approved by the speaker. This can be a quote about why it's an exciting/important/relevant thing.



WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Examples:

[St. James Rector Call](#)

[Barrier Breakers: The Pilgrimage](#)

[Cold Mountain Music Festival](#)

- Compose a tight nut graph (everything distilled in a nutshell).
- Inverted pyramid
- By paragraphs 3–4, if not sentence three or four, the reader should know everything necessary.
- A good guide might be:
 - Lede
 - Quote
 - Nut graf (everything in a nutshell)
 - Quote from official/rector
- Include contact info for people in your organization for interviews.
- If you have the skill, lay it out as a newspaper story so they can "see" it and more easily envision it in their own paper.
- Always include dynamic art. No grip-and-grins.

Grip and Grin



Dynamic photo





TALKING TO REPORTERS

SAY IT SMART

Reporters are typically charismatic and friendly, but the reporter is not your friend. Be mindful of what you say to them.

TIP

- **DON'T GO 'OFF THE RECORD'**
 - It's not actually a thing, just up to the reporter's discretion.

TALKING TO REPORTERS

- **Have a single voice** responsible for talking to or being interviewed by the media.
- **Decide the point or points you want to make** and return to them, no matter what is being asked.
- **Never say anything you don't want attributed to you.**
 - If you say, "Some churches believe *the Bible teaches that homosexuality is a sin to be condemned in the strongest of terms*, but in The Episcopal Church we welcome all."
 - That can easily become, through the power of editing, "The Bible teaches homosexuality is a sin to be condemned in the strongest of terms." Yikes!
- **Only speak for yourself.** "The Episcopal Church believes LGBTQ+ people are beloved by God and to be celebrated as God's own children."



TYPES OF CONTENT

WHAT MAKES IT NEWSWORTHY?

Impact, timeliness, prominence, proximity, oddity, novelty, conflict, human interest.



EVENTS

Happenings that are open to the public and coming up soon. **Submit your event to the community calendar, do a write up afterward, send photos.**



FEATURE

Human interest stories that tend to focus on one person or organization doing cool things, like a new pastor. **Reach out to reporters about interesting aspects of your church community.**



OPINION/COLUMN

Many local papers have an opinion section for letters to the editor, opinion pieces, and columns. **Reach out to the editor about writing a regular column.**

FAITH



Widow finds more than a mission field in answered prayer

21 baptized after church hands out Bibles, creates relationships

BY SINCLAIRE CARR
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It all started with Santa Claus.

Verlin Shuler needed someone to play Santa Claus for the mobile home park on Red Fox Loop. Two members of the Piney Grove United Methodist Church happened to be in Hardee's and willing on the same day as Shuler.

This chance meeting in 2019 led to the formation of a relationship between the community of Red Fox Loop in Clyde and Piney Grove UMC, and eventually that relationship brought about the church's first baptism in eight years.

Shuler, who now attends Piney Grove, worked with Dennis and Deborah Reed to organize the Santa Claus encounter, but through this ministry, some families came to have encounters of a deeper nature.

For 21 people — many from Red Fox — Sunday, July 24, marked their baptism and reception into the United Methodist Church. Children and parents alike gathered around the Rev. Jason Smith, pastor of Piney Grove UMC, as he led the baptism service.

The donation of a 15-passenger van from a family connection in Florida will help the church pickup the families for Sunday service, but with so many new members, the church may soon need a bigger van.

The church on Piney

Grove Road in Waynesville is small, with about 15 members attending regularly. Built in 1879, the church has seen its ups and downs through the years, but COVID brought membership to an all-time low.

"I walked through the door and saw five people sitting in church. That was the day I went to the Lord and said, 'Take me home or give me a job,'" said Glenda Plemmons, a dedicated member of Piney Grove.

Plemmons, whose husband, Nyle, died about six years ago, sees ministering in the Red Fox Loop community as her calling.

"This is all about Jesus," Plemmons said. "There were children out there who didn't even know who Jesus was."

Before COVID, Piney Grove served the people of Red Fox by doing a back to school event and a Christmas party with Santa Claus handing out presents. After the big flood of 2021, the church held a special warming event to hand out blankets and heaters, as well as fresh hot chocolate.

After COVID slowed down, Plemmons went to pastor Smith and asked if they could get back out into Red Fox.

"A lot of these families are single moms. Glenda would get their information and she just started reaching out to them and building relationships there," Smith said.

Bible distribution was



TEAM — From left to right: Jeffrey Medley, Verlin Shuler, Natalie Heatherly, Glenda Plemmons and Noah Heatherly.

at the top of Plemmons' mind. The church prayed about it, gathered donations and worked with Aunt B's Blessings Shop in Maggie Valley to fund the purchase of about 100 Bibles to hand out to the families in the trailer park. Shuler spoke to residents ahead of time to prepare the way.

"People used to just come to church on Sunday mornings, that's just what you did. But today, not so much. You have to go out and build relationships. There's a hunger for God's Word and there's a hunger for a relationship with Jesus that people have still, even if they aren't coming to church," Smith said.

Heaven Heritage, a resident of Red Fox Loop, said she grew up in church but was unsure about going to a new place when Plemmons

came knocking on her door to hand out Bibles.

Heritage, originally from New Jersey, worried that she would be judged for having mixed children and though she wanted to find a church home, she didn't know how to connect.

"With Glenda and Verlin and Pastor [Smith], it's more welcoming. It feels like they want you to come and be a part of their family," Heritage said.

Heritage and her children, Evren, Ender and Aaida, were part of the group baptized Sunday in the Pigeon River.

The river baptism took place at a special site along the East Fork of the Pigeon River. Once a historic site of baptisms in Cruso, the area through the years had become run down.



BLESSING — Heaven Heritage is surrounded by her children and church family during her reaffirmation baptism as Piney Grove Methodist pastor Jason Smith gives the blessing.

"They had meth. They had tents. They had everything under the sun," Plemmons said.

The flood destroyed many homes along Cruso Road, but the structure at 9420 Cruso Road somehow remained intact. Plemmons' daughter and son-in-law, Nylenda and Danny Heatherly, decided to purchase the property and restore it to a grassy area. The couple's further plans for the site are undecided, Plemmons said.

Smith feels that outreach is an important part of any church community.

"You gotta get out and make relationships. People are hungry for community. We don't care what you've done. We don't care where

you've been. We aren't all perfect. We're all gonna mess up. That's not a reason not to be in church," Smith said.

Plemmons takes care to nurture the relationships she creates when she goes out to share her faith in Jesus with people. She texts with many of the mothers from Red Fox, and hopes the church can soon get out more into some of the other communities around the Cruso and Canton area.

A trailer park ministry that started with Santa Claus for the children became something with the potential to change lives for the long run.

"Santa Claus isn't real, but Jesus is," Plemmons said.

All the world's a stage: Reflecting on church and theater

BY JOSLYN SHAEFER

Last month Brian and I had the pleasure of seeing "The Book of Will" at HART Theater. The play provoked reflection, stirred a spectrum of emotions, and created a fleeting but genuine community of friends and strangers who shared the two-hour long experience.

Haywood County has such a treasure in the HART theater. I'm so grateful they, like other voluntary institutions such as the Church, survived the pandemic.

No surprise: the scene that stayed with me the most is when John, a man in his fifties who has just lost his beloved wife, recalls the loss of a young child early in their marriage. He sought comfort first in an empty church but ended up finding it an empty theater.

The church offered nothing but silence, coldness and a heightened sense of isolation. By contrast, in the theater he felt free to weep and cry out, as images of plays, memories of lines and characters affirmed his immense pain and spurred its expression. (Please note this is the impression I have of the scene, as I don't have access to the play's text.)

I have no idea how much research the playwright did about religious expression in 17th Century England, but the implicit critique of the Church had a contemporary feel. I wondered

how many in the audience could relate to the idea that the range of permissible emotional expression in a church is narrower than what we find at the theater and certainly in front of the 'big screen' of cinema.

So I'd like to share two responses to this wondering: a hope and a gratitude. First, my hope is that churches honor and value the need we all have to express the feelings that well

up in us, both the feelings we enjoy and, especially, the ones that are hard.

Frankly, in my limited experience (and drawing with a broad brush), the Black Church has a lot to teach my mainline tradition about creating space for praise and lament, joy and righteous anger. And, of course, Jesus' prayer book and hymnal—a.k.a. the psalms—grant us not only permission but encouragement to express the whole range of emotions from vengefulness, jealousy and despair to thanksgiving and ecstasy.

Second, my gratitude. I'm thankful for the arts where the Divine can encounter us with beauty and truth and stir us up emotionally and spiritually. And I'm grateful for the unique gift of the theater where a mirror is held up to us reflecting aspects of the human experience that many of us may feel



Joslyn Shaefer

ashamed to admit personally but relieved to see portrayed publicly, like the intensity and loneliness of John's grief upon losing a child.

I'd like to close with a quote from a book that explores the intersection of Christianity and theater published by Baker Academic in 2009, "Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatre in Dialogue,"

"The theatre event, of all arts, uniquely embodies the central tenets of the Christian faith. The fact that live human beings embody the characters of a play speaks of the incarnate nature of God in Christ. The fact that the actors perform for a live audience highlights the communal nature of theatre and reflects the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in relationship. The fact that the relationship between audience and performer allows for interaction and influence between the two speaks of the presence of God transforming the world through nature and grace."

So enjoy the theater, my friends, and consider crying at church. Both places are containers and vehicles for grace and wholeness. Thanks be to God.

The Rev. Joslyn Shaefer is the lead pastor at Grace Church in the Mountains in Waynesville.

Mission

Continued from Page 4B

for practical training in the mission field. Students don't know ahead of time where they will be placed for the practical training.

Monday began her journey to worship leader at New Covenant church during her freshman in high school, and she's organized worship gatherings outside the church as well.

After the floods of 2021, Monday got a worship team together to put on a fundraiser for the flood victims. The event raised about \$3,000 to help the people of Clyde who were devastated by the flood. She has also led worship nights at the Haywood County Fair.

Monday also volunteers at the Jubilee women's shelter in Asheville twice a week.

"I felt a heavy burden on my heart for women. I look forward to going all week, and I just sit and talk with the people who are there and give support," Monday said.

After YWAM, Monday said she may apply for Appalachian State University to pursue a career in music therapy, though she's open to other paths.

"I'm kind of just letting God do whatever he needs to do and staying tuned in to him for where he leads me," Monday said.

The Mountaineer

FAITH & WORSHIP

WORSHIP AT THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE

Perspectives class offers a look into purpose

The nationally established curriculum titled "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" will be held in Clyde starting early August.



Historical Lessons (6-9): Discover your spiritual lineage as you learn Christian history is wrought with the immeasurable power of God as He makes His name

undergraduate or the graduate level. The basic fee for this dynamic 17-week course is \$275, plus books.

Online registration must be completed to reserve a

Parishioner column

Let people know they made a difference — before they go

BY MELANIE ALLMAN MUZIO

A few weeks ago the ladies from our Bible study held a lunch in honor of a beloved sister who will be moving to the beach (poor dear) very soon.

This is someone who has ministered so faithfully in various capacities in the church and has exemplified the character of Jesus in so many ways. Personally, she has taken me grocery shopping most every Wednesday for the past two years and we have shared our lives together while doing this necessary chore making it so very sweet.

At this lunch she was extolled with a precious poem and several ladies shared what this person had meant to them. On top of that she received gifts that held meaning to her from this area.

When all the accolades were over I said, “isn’t it too bad that one has to move or die to know just

how much they are treasured!”

Along that same line, two much loved and respected pastors and leaders in our denomination were recently called home to be with Jesus in just two days time. I’m sure they were aware that they were appreciated by many, but I’m pretty sure they would have been overwhelmed at the out pouring of love that congregants and others world-wide shared regarding how their ministry had changed their life’s trajectory or gave comfort to their hurting soul.

Wouldn’t it be better if all those who come out of the woodwork to sing praises of those moving on or those who have been called to glory could speak at least some of those encouragements while these people walk with us?

We live in a very transitory society where folks

come in and our of our lives making them richer but we have to wait until we see the moving truck to say just what they mean to us.

In the same way, we never know when the breath we just took might be our last or that person that has made a tremendous impact on your life might be called to glory. It may be a bit awkward,

but I guarantee you it will be a treasured moment to the hearer to know they have made a difference in your life. 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Melanie Allman Muzio worships at Hazelwood Baptist Church in Waynesville where her husband is the pastor.



Melanie Muzio

Event Announcement

Block party to bring together service, fun



St. Andrew's on-the-hill Episcopal Church in Canton

Neighborhood churches in Canton will get together Sunday, July 31, for a special joint service followed by a block party full of free food and fun on Academy Street.

Worship will begin at 11 a.m. in the sanctuary of Canton First Baptist Church with a sermon by Billy Staley, pastor of Harris Chapel AME Zion. The event brings together eight Canton churches across many denominations.

Following the service Harris Chapel will fire up the fish fry as snow cones, food trucks and popcorn stations roll out into the parking lots of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and First Baptist.

At noon, the fun begins with bounce houses, a water slide, games and treats, all

free. The churches involved will also collect donations of school supplies to hand out at a later event.

“We love getting to know our neighbors without any pressure to be the biggest church. We’re able to hang out and just be the church together,” said the Rev. Court Greene, senior pastor at Canton First Baptist.

The neighborhood block party will take place from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Sunday, July 31 in the parking lots First Baptist and St. Andrew's churches on Academy Street in Canton.

The event brings together Methodist, Baptist, AME Zion, Episcopal and more denominations throughout Canton.

Event coverage

Blessing offered for all creatures great and small

Pet blessing pays tribute to beloved animals

BY JEANNETTE CARRILLO
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Twelve pet parents with just as many pups turned out for the 2 p.m. pet blessing at Grace Church in the Mountains Episcopal Church, 394 Hazelwood St., on Oct. 4.

The annual event marks the Feast of St. Francis, a 12th Century saint, who is regarded worldwide as the patron saint of animals and the environment.

The Rev. Joslyn Ogden Schaefer officiated the service that started with a rousing rendition of “All Things Great and Beautiful.”

Next, priest associates the Rev. Orion Davis and the Rev. Harriet Simmons formed two lines and performed the hands-on blessings.

The popular service was held at the fire pit behind the church off Miller Street. The service was moved outside this year due to COVID restrictions.

Asked about the event, Joyce Brooks said, “I just love this,” as she cradled her beloved Pomeranian Koda in her arms.

As for Don and Donna Culp, the couple said they have participated in similar services with their dog Chelsea in Williamsburg, Virginia. And Bernadette Ray said she just had to bring her gorgeous rescue Stella Sophia out for the occasion on such a beautiful day.

In addition to the blessings, Schaefer led a small group of attendees to the nearby pet memorial wall, where she honored the memories of animals who are no longer alive.

Schaefer brought the celebration to a close by starting off the song “Rise and Shine.” A second service in the afternoon repeated at 3 p.m.



WORDS OF COMFORT — The Rev. Orion Davis bestows a blessing on Koda during a celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 4.



ANNUAL TRADITION — Don and Donna Culp arrive with Chelsea at the annual pet blessing at Grace Church in the Mountain on Hazelwood Avenue.

Front Page News Article

Long's Chapel to open Second Season in place of Open Door

New facility plans August opening

BY SINCLAIRE CARR

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As Open Door closes its ministry, another door is set to open for food security and low-cost shopping in Waynesville.

The Second Season neighborhood pantry and thrift store hopes to fill the void left at 32 Commerce St. in Waynesville, the shuttered location of Open Door. This was



UNDER CONSTRUCTION — The interior of the Second Season food pantry and thrift store awaits construction crews.

Haywood County's first soup kitchen that began as a ministry of Long's Chapel United Methodist Church in 1996.

The church also operated Second Blessings

Second Season continues on 9A

Feature

B4 The Mountaineer | Wednesday, September 14, 2022

FAITH



Tuscola grad prepares for mission training in Australia

BY SINCLAIRE CARR
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As Kennedy Monday prepares to leave home, she has her sights set on staying in tune with God's plan for her life. "I'm letting God do

what he needs to do and going where he leads me," Monday said.

After graduating from Tuscola High School in May, Monday said it was clear that missions training should be her

next step. On September 30, she will set off for the "land down under," Whitsunday, Australia, to start her six-month mission journey with Youth with a Mission.

The YWAM program offers discipleship training to youth in a number of countries across the globe. In deciding where to attend the training, Monday said she spoke to many groups and felt most at home talking to the Australian group.

Her church, New Covenant Church in Clyde, sends many high school graduates to the program.

Monday serves in the worship leader rotation at New Covenant under worship pastor Jenny Murray, meaning she leads worship once a month and plays in the band most Sundays. Of the instruments she plays, including guitar, piano, ukulele and man-



Submitted

WORSHIP — Kennedy Monday leads the congregation of New Covenant Church during Sunday worship.

dolin, Monday said she's best at piano, and guitar is her favorite.

"She's a fantastic singer," Murray said. "It's been a real joy to have her on the team. Typically her band is all guys and they always tell me how they love to follow her," Murray said.

Monday will spend three months in Australia attending the lecture phase of the YWAM program, and then she will travel abroad

Mission continues on 6B



FAVORITE INSTRUMENT — Kennedy Monday said her favorite instrument is guitar.



GOING TO AUSTRALIA — Kennedy Monday will travel to Whitsunday, Australia to begin training with the Youth with a Mission program on Sept. 30.

A time to talk: Churches plan gatherings on suicide, mental health

ACTIVITY TIME

Brainstorm some stories within your congregation. What are some things your community may be interested to hear about?

THE MODERN JOURNALIST

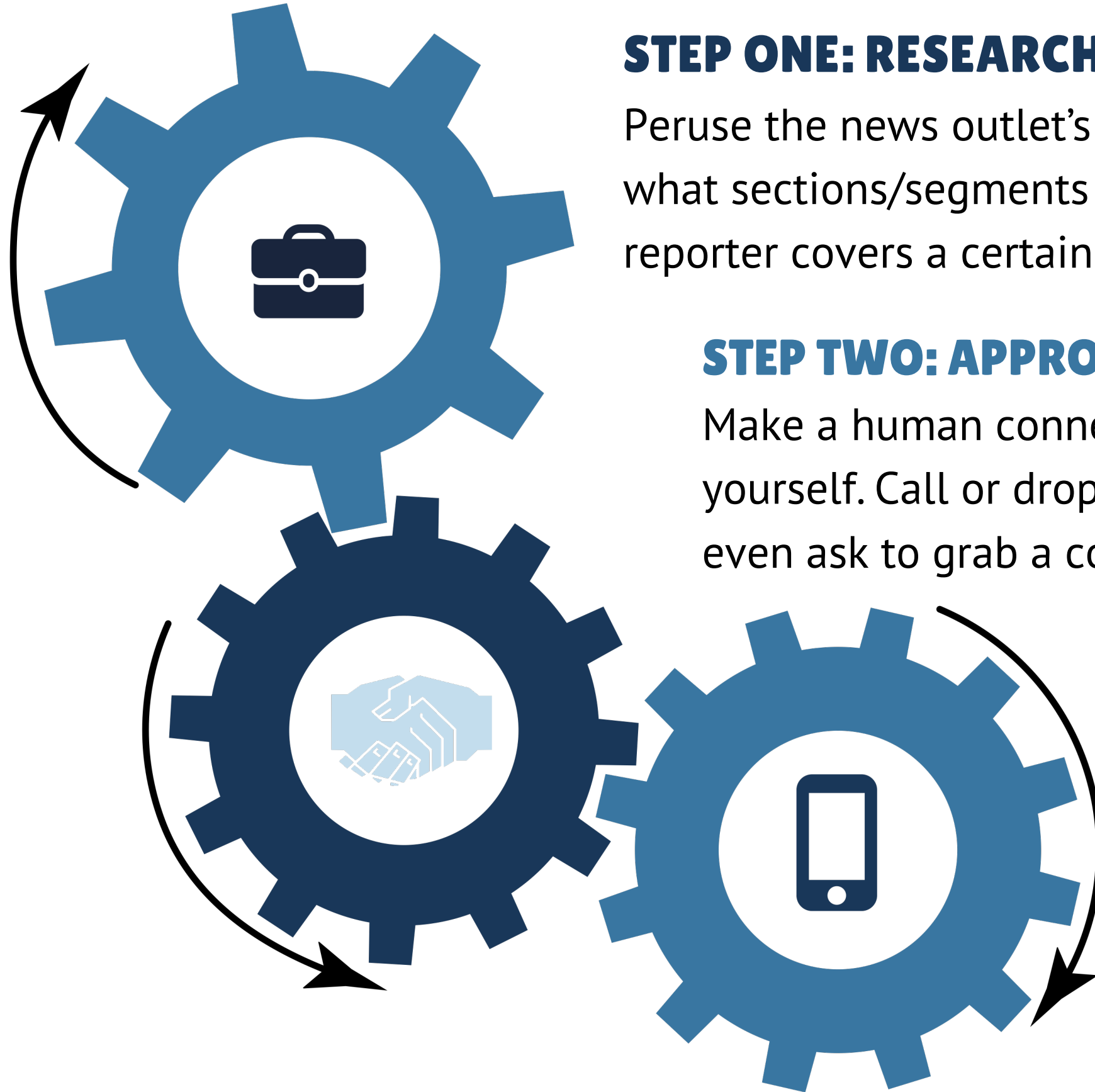
BUSY BUSY BUSY

Your typical journalist today juggles many obligations and will most likely appreciate content they don't have to track down and write.

BE PERSISTENT!



PROCESS



STEP ONE: RESEARCH

Peruse the news outlet's website to see what sections/segments they offer. Often, a reporter covers a certain subject (beat).

STEP TWO: APPROACH

Make a human connection. Introduce yourself. Call or drop by the newsroom, even ask to grab a coffee.

STEP THREE: SEND & SEND

Send the content they're expecting. Watch for the story. If you don't see it, send it to the reporter again. Be persistent!

SHARE THE STORY!

CELEBRATE GOOD COVERAGE

Send the story to the diocese (Rachel), your congregation, social media. Let it be seen by many.

BUT...

SAY THANK YOU

A small note of thanks can mean a lot to a reporter and help them remember you, so be sure to send one.





IF IT'S BAD COVERAGE



DON'T BURN BRIDGES, TALK IT OUT

Contact the editor and discuss what happened.

ASK THEM TO FIX IT

If the reporter got something wrong, ask for a correction.

CONTACT US



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Review this series:
<https://www.diocesewnc.org/communications-as-evangelism>



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