Eighty percent of church shoppers look at church websites. What they want is to get an idea of what the congregation is like before they go there, and what’s happening.

The single biggest turn-off is a website with old information, because it looks like nothing is happening, or else the congregation is out of touch.
The challenge is to keep your website current and accurate. But before you can do that…
...you need to have someone who understands website technology, and who also keeps up with it, because it’s changing all the time.
You also need someone who knows how to design a website that’s both attractive and easy to navigate.

For many churches, this can seem almost insurmountable.
In September 2011, the diocese launched a new website.

When we were researching possible website technologies, one of our top priorities was finding one that would not only meet the diocese’s needs, but could also be scaled for and shared with our churches.
The technology we selected is called Drupal, a free and very powerful content management system.

Some of the websites that use Drupal are...
The redesigned White House website launched by the current administration...
...and the new Episcopal Church website launched in December 2011.
These are the components of the diocesan website.
For many years the diocese has made web hosting available to our churches for free.
What Drupal will allow us to do for the first time is to share our website technology with any church who is using the diocesan web hosting.
A team will develop a basic theme and database scaled for churches.
A church using one of these websites will be able to work with us to customize the colors of their theme...
...and we will teach them how to populate their individual database with their unique website content, so they can tell the story of who they are on the World Wide Web.
Once a church website has been set up and configured, posting content will be as simple as logging in...
... and filling out a form.

If you can use Microsoft Word, you can update one of these websites.

No special software is needed, and you can log in from any computer over the internet.

You can even assign different people permission to update different parts of website, with oversight and approval.
Drupal websites can also be fully integrated with social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
Because the church websites will be sharing the same codebase used by the diocesan website all technology updates will be handled automatically by the diocese.

Design will be handled by the customizable theme.

Many of the barriers to having an effective church website will disappear.

The only thing churches will need to worry about is updating their content. This will still take a commitment, but now is a lot less daunting.
Best of all, the diocese is able to offer this to our churches for free.
We don’t have an exact launch date yet, because the project is just getting started.

Developing the diocesan website took 4 months, so my hope is that we will be ready to start working with churches on their websites by Summer 2012.
The project team members are...

*The Team:*

John Rollins  
Jan Paxton  
Steven Boston  
Randy Johnson  
John Mennell  
Joseph Harmon  
Christian Paolino
This project will be one of my top priorities this year, and I promise to keep you updated.