



The Vergers Voice

The news blog of the Vergers Guild

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Friday, July 28, 2017

VTech: The Cell Phone



How can the cell phone help the verger in her work before, during, and after church?

By Charlotte Sullivan, Verger, [All Saints' Episcopal Church](#), Austin, Texas, casullivan@alumni.utexas.net

This is the first installment of a series of Vergers Voice blog posts called, "VTech" which is about the Verger ministry and technology. If you have stories about how you use (or would like to use) technology in your own ministry, please send them to ideas@vergers.org.

Since first serving as a verger in 2006, I have noticed that I use my cell phone, currently an iPhone 6, more and more to assist in my Sunday responsibilities. Hence, I was wondering how other vergers use mobile technology.

Here are some of the phone applications and methods that I have used to assist me. What other applications do you use and are there apps that I am missing?

Email

We use email to communicate on a regular basis for scheduling, service preparation, etc.

Alarm

On days when I have a lot of pre-service activities, I set my phone alarm to make sure I get to the sacristy in time to meet the acolytes.

Clock

I use my phone as a clock rather than using a watch because most cell phones are synced in time. Therefore, when the choirmaster/organist begins playing a particular prelude for Evensong, he will tell me to process at a certain time in order to make sure that the choir is in place on time. We both use our phones to tell the time so we are automatically synced rather than our watches

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- ▼ [2017](#) (29)
 - ▶ [October 2017](#) (1)
 - ▶ [September 2017](#) (5)
 - ▶ [August 2017](#) (4)
 - ▼ [July 2017](#) (4)
 - [VTech: The Cell Phone](#)
 - [How does the Vergers Voice blog work?](#)
 - [Tales from the Slype, Part 2: It Is In Giving That...](#)
 - [In Service, Fellowship, and Worship at the VGEC An...](#)
 - ▶ [June 2017](#) (5)
 - ▶ [May 2017](#) (4)
 - ▶ [April 2017](#) (4)
 - ▶ [February 2017](#) (1)
 - ▶ [January 2017](#) (1)
- ▶ [2016](#) (17)
- ▶ [2015](#) (46)
- ▶ [2014](#) (50)
- ▶ [2013](#) (17)
- ▶ [2012](#) (12)
- ▶ [2011](#) (10)
- ▶ [2010](#) (15)
- ▶ [2009](#) (2)

Past issues of the Printed Vergers Voice

- [2010 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2009 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2008 VGEC Archives](#)

being a few minutes ahead or behind. I also use the clock app to show the rector what time it is at the beginning of the service since we are not always standing near each other. That way, I do not have to shout out the time and disrupt the peacefulness of the prelude.

Flashlight

Since the Easter services begin with the nave lights dimmed, it can be difficult for the rector to read from the program of service. Therefore, I use a flashlight app to shine enough light for the rector to read the order of worship prior to the processional. The flashlight app also helps me find my way in dark corridors or find items that have been dropped in dark places.

Text Messages

At my church, the children process to the children's chapel at the beginning of the service, but come back to the church during the peace in order to take communion with their family or come back earlier to watch a baptism. The vergers text the children's chaplains during the service to let them know when it is time to bring the children back into the church. We have also used texts to find the parents of sick children or communicate about an issue in which the verger needs to be aware.

Book of Common Prayer (BCP)

I have a copy of the BCP downloaded on my phone. Since the vergers text the children's chaplains during the service, I need to pay attention to my phone in case they (or anyone else) need assistance. I find it helpful to use an electronic copy because text messages will appear even when I have the BCP open. There is an old app of the BCP; however, I would recommend downloading the [PDF copy of the BCP](#) and opening it in an app like iBooks. The text will be small, but you can hold your phone sideways and expand the text.

Phone

The vergers have been asked to call 911 should an emergency arise during the service. Therefore, I keep my phone on, but set the ringer to silent when in church.

Recorder, iTunes or other audio app

Finding the right pace for the procession during The Great Litany is always a challenge. I have a recording of The Great Litany (both traditional and modern) that I use to practice the pace of the procession prior to the first Sunday in Lent. One of the other vergers worked out the timing and marked the points in the church where we should be during the litany. For instance, I know that I should be at the St. Michael's stained glass window when the litanist sings, "That it may please thee to illumine all bishops, priests, and deacons..." Using my phone to play a recording allows me to pace the steps prior to the service to make sure we do not arrive too early or late to the sanctuary.

Stopwatch

On one occasion, a visiting minister, who knew he tended to speak too long, requested that I give him a signal when he had preached for 12 minutes. The clock app has a handy stopwatch for just such a purpose.

Camera

When we have special services with large programs of service, I find it difficult to physically keep up with the program during the service. Therefore, I take photos of each page of the program (with my markings) and use the photo as a reference instead of carrying around a bulky 8.5" x 11" booklet. (The type is small, but you can turn your phone sideways and expand the text.) I have thought of using a scanned copy of the program, but find that we make enough last minute changes that it is best if I take a photo of each page of the program a few minutes before the service begins. Also, I have been known to sneak photos of acolytes on their first day of service to share with their proud parents.

Photos

The vergers at my church do not sit behind the rail near the acolytes since space in the sanctuary is limited. With that in mind, there are times when I need to remind the acolytes to light the candles/torches, pick up the plates, or move the railing at communion. Instead of using hand signals, I use a photo made from the Pages app, to show them in large letters, "Light Torches", "Plates", or "Rail". The type is large enough for acolytes to read from about 15 feet away. It helps to improve communication without playing a brief game of charades, which has proven to not be one of my gifts.

These are some of the ways I use my smart phone. I would enjoy hearing from others as to how you use your mobile devices to assist in your work as verger. No doubt, there will be more applications invented that will continue to support the work that we do. Please comment below if

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- [1998 VGEC Archives](#)
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Editors note: Send ideas for Vergers Voice blog topics to ideas@vergersvoice.org

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Posted by [Scott Smith](#) at [3:46 PM](#)



1 comment:



Unknown July 28, 2017 at 4:30 PM

Thank you some excellent ideas. Guess I need to trade my old phone in for a smart phone.

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