

# *Reaching Out to the Unchurched Webinar Series*

## Today's Topic

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### Session 3

## **Becoming an “Evangelizing Parish”**

*Equipping Your Parish for Reaching the Unchurched*



Joseph  
Kormos

# Summary Statement

- Spreading the Gospel is both a personal and corporate effort.
- An “evangelizing parish” creates the **motivation, atmosphere, identity and impetus** to make inviting and sharing easier and more effective.

## NOT (explicitly) Covering

1. Reaching lapsed parishioners
2. Basic Orthodoxy
3. Differences: Orthodox Christianity and other faiths
4. Reviving dying parishes

Session 4  
Oct 24

# Assumptions

YOU have:

- A decent understanding of Orthodox faith
- Reviewed or attended previous sessions

Your parish:

- Is open to becoming effective at sharing the gospel
- Wants to grow.



**The “Good News” is NOT  
our little secret”**

# Goal: A Parish Framework

## *Planning & Action*

### Part A

#### “Getting Ready”

Foundation:  
Healthy Communities

Plan of Attack

### Part B

#### “Taking Action”

Parish Evangelization  
Education

Connecting with the  
Community

Communicating Your  
Parish

*Improving First Time  
Experiences*

Healthy Communities

# FOUNDATION

# Warning!

- It starts with a worshipping, god-fearing, loving parish.  
***That is the pre-requisite.***

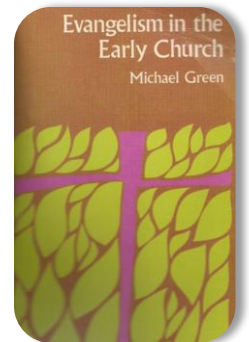


After that...  
the ideas in this session can help.

# Not an Easy Job!

*But Our Challenge Pales Compared to the Early Church*

- Jesus commissioned...
  - 11 men to carry on his work to bring the Gospel to the whole world...
- They were...
  - Not distinguished
  - Little education
  - No influential backers
  - “Nobodies” from a second class, backwater province



# Making an Impression on the World

**“Unless the Christian ethic marked [the early Christians] *a new race* it would have been no good proclaiming the Christian story. As a result their lives came under close scrutiny (by others).”**





# Elements of Early Christians that Made Such an Impression on the World

## Their Fellowship

Rich & poor

Slaves & aristocrats

Special consideration for lowly, sick needy;

Contributions: Voluntary & proportionate

## Their Joy!

This new faith did not make them miserable.

Jesus promised His joy as a permanent possession of the church. Can't be taken away.

## Their Transformed Character

Chastity

Hatred of cruelty

Holy living – Christ likeness of life

## Their Power

Shear power of the name of Jesus healed.

Done by directing prayer to the Lord.

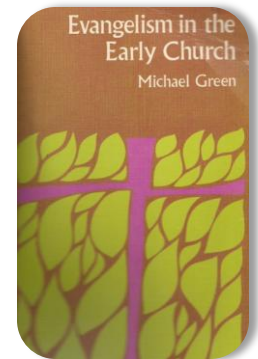
No sophisticated training needed.

# Sharing the Good News

## *Proper Motivation*

### ***Apostles Motivation***

- Gratitude  
Overwhelming appreciation of the love of God experienced through Jesus Christ.
- Responsibility  
To share the message of God's love
- Concern  
For the well being of the unevangelized – a lively awareness of the *peril of those without Christ*.



#### **Not**

- Saving Our Parish
- Increasing Attendance
- Paying the Bills
- Justifying *My* Choice
- Thrill of Conquest
- A chance to show off my knowledge of \_\_\_\_ .
- A Ride to Church



Some Thoughts on Getting Organized

# **A PARISH PLAN OF ATTACK**

# “Evangelistic Strategy”

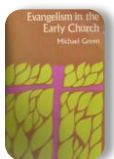
## *Skills/Tools*

**“Strategy! Sounds Like “business”! Manipulative!”**

*Consider:*

- Paul focused on cities that were important centers of:
  - Administration
  - Greek civilization
  - Commerce
- Paul preached to influential people –ones who could be valuable if converted.
  - Others (Justin, Clement, Origen, Tertullian) then followed this approach.
- Implies a strategy or “plan of attack”

**Is it not appropriate for Orthodox in America –and Orthodox parishes – to have a plan of attack?**

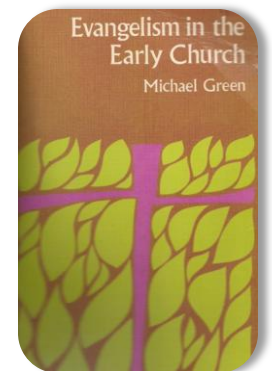


# **Life and Lip**

## *Skills/Tools*

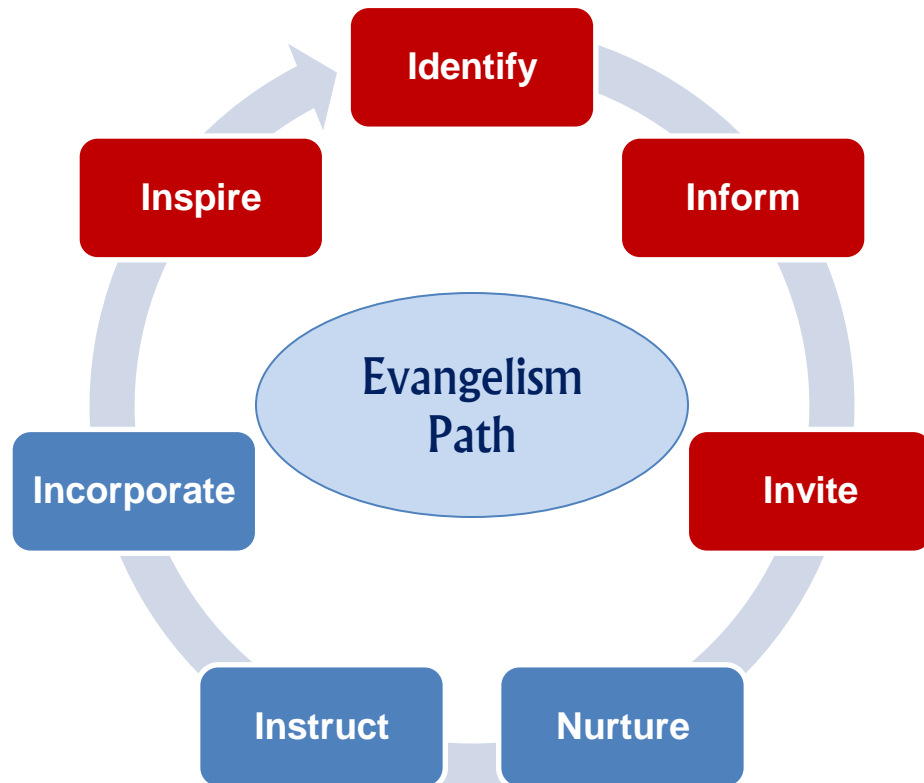
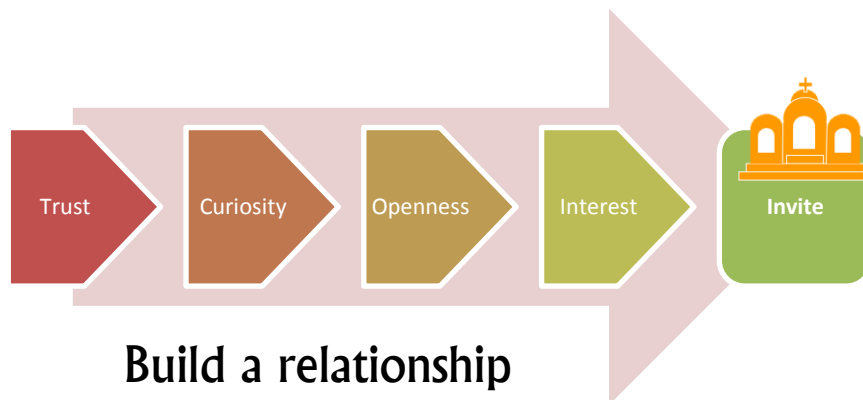
“Their (apostles’) approach always included both **‘Life & Lip’**”  
*(Behavior AND Proclaiming.)*

**“Paul makes the link between holy life and effective evangelism inescapably plain.”**



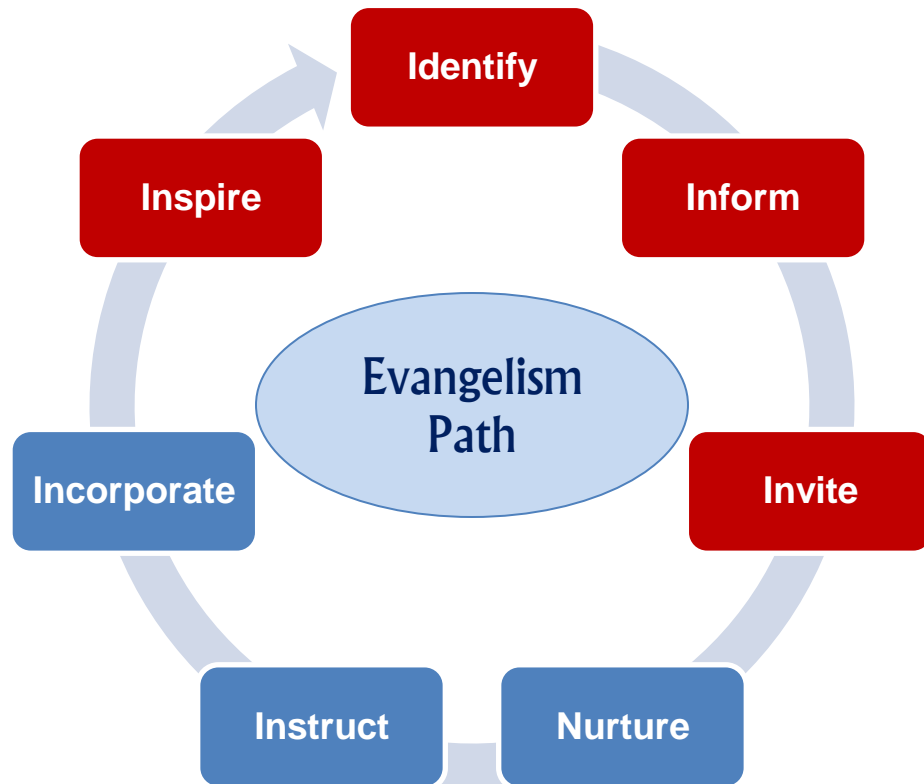
# New Member Evangelism “Path”

1. **Identify** – individuals & pockets of persons representing areas of fit
2. **Inform** --build awareness, trust, curiosity, openness, interest.
3. **Invite** - those with curiosity to come and see. Welcome and receive warmly



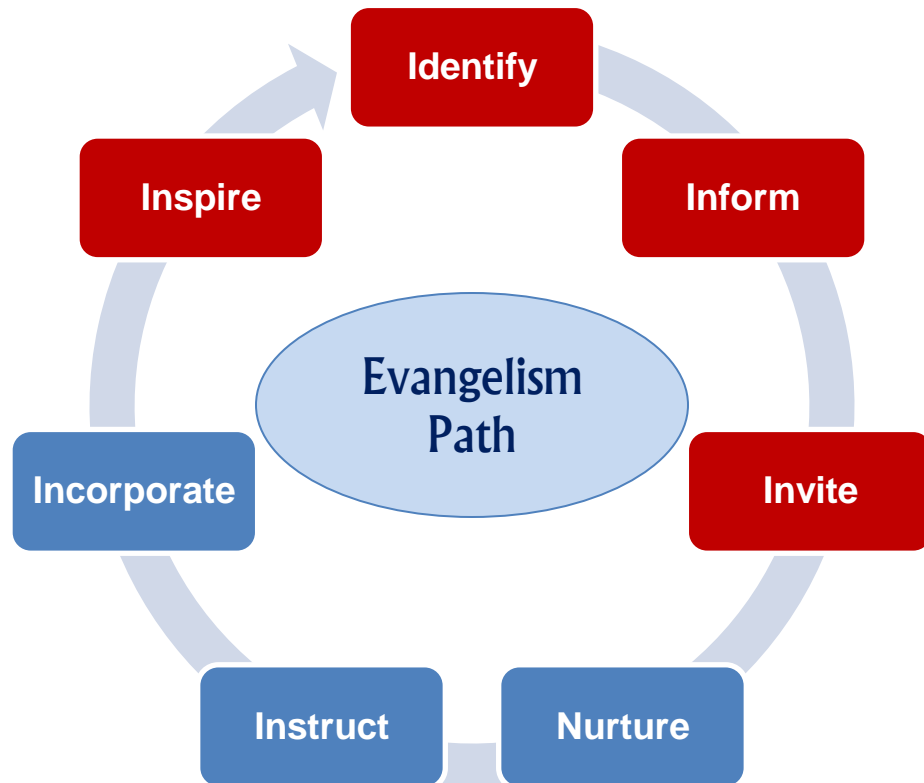
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5. **Instruct** - Guide potential new members to catechetical programs or other paths of entry through parish groups.
6. **Incorporate** - Include in a role, task or group after uniting them with the church.



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6. **Incorporate** - Include in a role, task or group after uniting them with the church.
7. **Inspire** - Begin the cycle anew by evangelizing the active – to renew their commitment to Christ; the inactive – to heat up those only minimally involved; and the unchurched-to share the light of Christ with all.





# A Simple Three Part Parish Plan

## 1. Stop

- Doing things that drive people away.

## 2. Start

- Doing things that attract people and then cause them to continue returning.

## 3. Continue

- Doing things that are working.

# Seven Step: Plan of Attack

## *More Complete*

### 1. Commit ... should we:

- Begin Evangelization effort?
- Become an “Evangelizing Parish”?

### 2. Create Core Group



- Align Clergy/ Lay leaders
- Collect Status
  - Past Practices
  - Numbers
  - What/How we communicate
- Explore/Analyze
  - Strengths
  - What holds Us Back
  - Our bottleneck/ “funnel”

### 3. Review Decision

- Are we ready for this?



### 4. Plan Actions



- Identify a few goals
- Discuss obstacles
- Examine an evangelism path
- Nominate actions
- Propose/select
  - (Ease vs. impact)

### 5. Do it 1-2 items MAX

- Classes/ videos?
- Outreach
- inviting / communicating?

### 6. Evaluate

- What worked
- Didn't work
- Why



### 7. Celebrate!

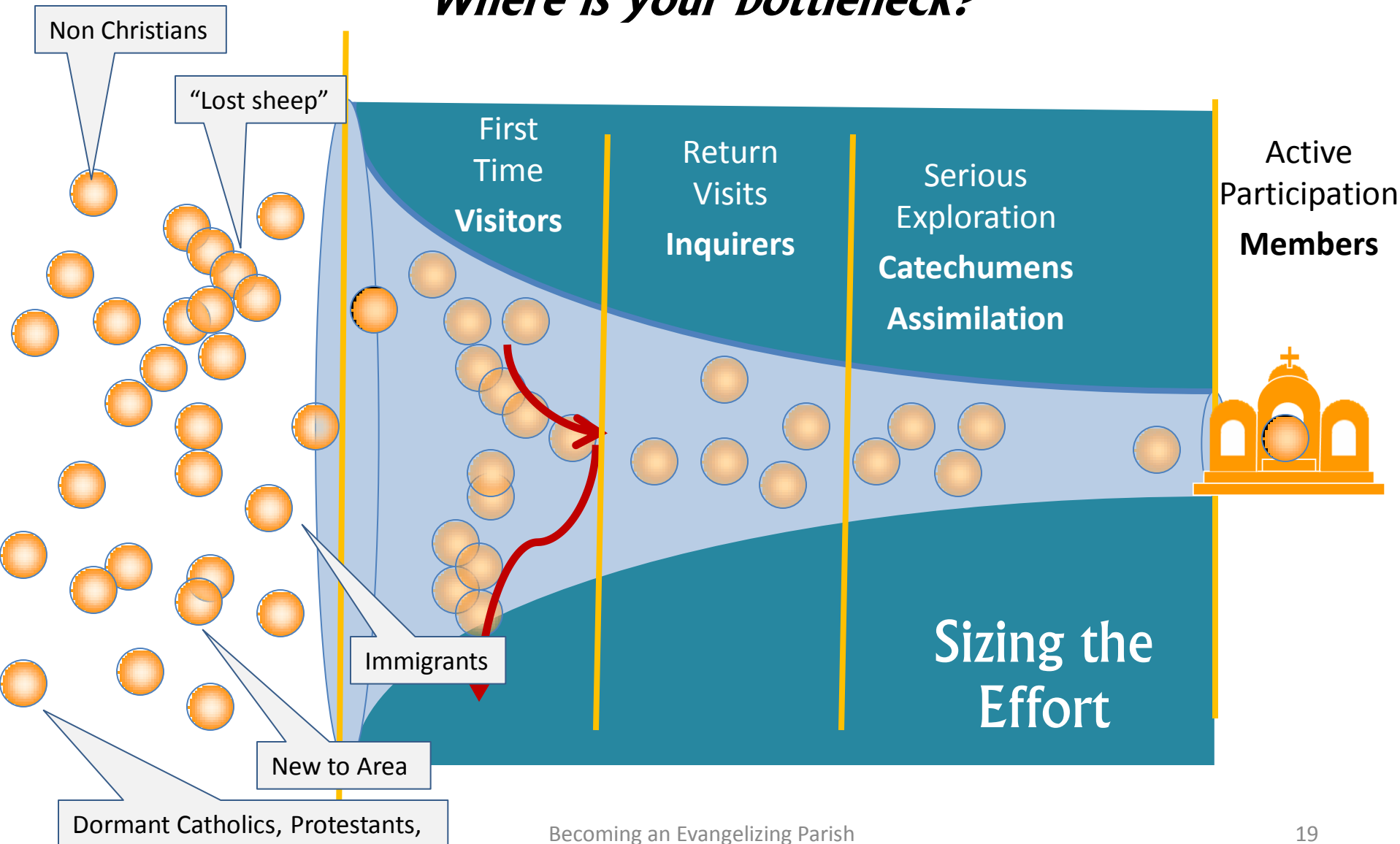
- Catch breath
- Start over



 Communicate to parish

# Awareness to Active Membership “Funnel”

*Where is your bottleneck?*



# Sizing the Effort

## *A Formula*

- You need to replace >> 10% every year – just to tread water.
  - Parish of 100 needs 10 “new”

100 inquiries x

(40% return x 25% continue) =

10 New

*“At bats”*

*Effective batting average  
10%*

# Opening Our Doors

## *Assessment Questions*

- How many new persons showed up at our parish in the last (e.g.) 6 months?
  - More or less than the previous six month period?
  - Their background?
- How many returned?
  - Why? Why not?
- What, in your opinion, or theirs (if you know it) were they looking for?
  - Did they find it?
  - How would they evaluate that?
- What is the source of our last (e.g.) 5 new members/families?



# Assess – What is Holding Us Back?

## Why too few visitors?

- Insulated from neighborhood
- Limiting identity -known for wrong things –food/ festival
- Inviting Skills/Understanding –what to say; when.
- Lack events for inviting
- Poor communication/awareness

**Collect**

- Numbers
- Stories
- Observations

## Why few returns?

- Church looks empty
- Ineffective first time experience
- Limiting behaviors –worship; fellowship; other
- Facilities – parking lot
- Inability to convert second/fourth visit into real interest

## Other

- Understanding of Evangelism – why, what does it mean
- Lack follow through on initiatives
- Money

Are we ready for working on growth/evangelization – or should we put our emphasis elsewhere?

# Outline

## Part A

### “Getting Ready”

✓ Foundation  
Healthy Communities

✓ Plan of Attack

## Part B

### “Taking Action”

Parish Evangelization  
Education

Connecting with the  
Community

Communicating Your  
Parish

Improving First Time  
Experiences



# Evangelization Education:

## *An Outline*

### 1. What and Why of Evangelization

- Use parts of session 1, 2 & 3 materials

### 2. Tools /Skills

- Prayer; “FRAN”
- Understandable language; Listening Skills
- trust >> curiosity >> openness >> interest
- Good Questions; Personal Narrative

### 3. “Sharing the Hope”

- Liturgy; Sacraments; Saints; Mary; Tradition

### 4. Understanding where they’re coming from

- Lapsed RC; Mainline Protestants; Evangelicals; Baptists
- “Nones”
- Atheists/ Agnostics
- “Most difficult” see survey [here](#)

### 5. Growth limiting behaviors

*Consider*

Videos ♦Classes ♦ In home discussion groups ♦ On line sessions



Breaking Your Insularity: Events and Service to Others

# **CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

# Exterior Appearance!

*Look Welcoming!*

**Goal:** Most attractive exterior in neighborhood!



**Flowers!**

# Parish Identity

*Who Are We? Why Are We Here?*

- How many people living within a 2 mile radius of the parish...  
...could say at least something accurate about the parish?
- How many know our parish for our food, rummage sales, craft fair etc. ...  
...as opposed to our Gospel centered ministries?
- Is there any part of your vision statement that values welcoming others?



*"Why?"*

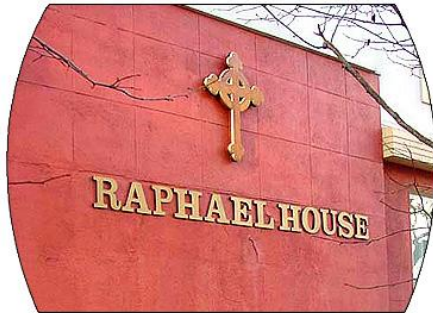
# Charitable Service





# Many Known Examples

## *Shelters*



## *Neighborhood Outreach*

## *Nursing Home Ministry*

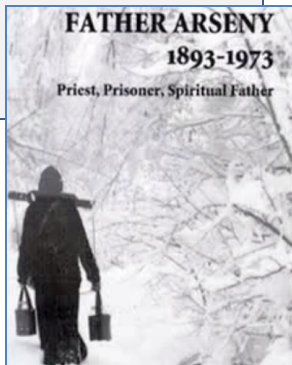


## *ESL Classes*

# Insularity Breaking Events\*/Activities

## “Standard” Inviting Situations

- Liturgy
- Vespers
- Feast day
- Parish event
- **Class before Vespers**
- **Concerts**
- **Topical Lecture Series**
- **Book discussions**
- **Classes**
- **Retreat**
- **Bible Study**



## Community Connectors

- Personal Financial Mgt
- Vacation Bible School
- ESL
- Teen movie night
- Community service clean-ups
- Divorce recovery
- Food Pantry
- Bereavement support
- Job skills/search
- 12 step programs

## Keys

- Prepare
- Make good first impression
- Tune events to the people you are trying to reach
  - e.g. “families” may not = “New Year’s Eve Party”
- Available literature
- “Message from our hosts”
- Transparency – no bait & switch or manipulation

*\*Think “experiences” –not “events”*

# Special Venues for Reaching Out



Harrisburg PA



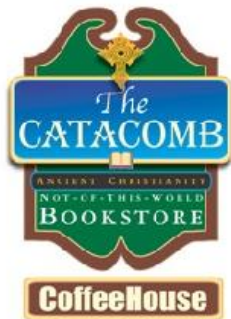


# Special Venues

## Catacomb Bookstore and Coffee House

6510 Holdrege St. Lincoln Nebraska USA 68505  
402-464-6441

Ancient Christianity Writings, Icons, Incense and Jewelry



### Store Hours

Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays: 8am-2pm.  
Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 6:30pm-9:30pm.  
Now Open on Saturdays 10am-2pm. Closed Sundays.

yn for Any Special Needs You May Have During This Time, at 477-647

ENTER

Site last updated: 27Mar07 webmaster@catacomb.com

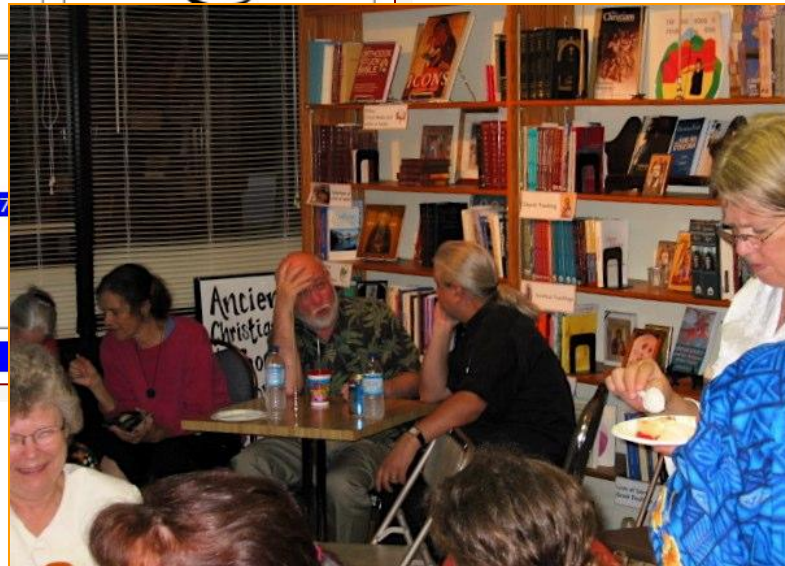
We offer a unique place in Lincoln Nebraska to come, relax and browse our many unique books, and listen to music.

We specialize in early church writings, ancient Christianity, Orthodox bibles and many icons.

The selection is varied, with some modern writers, as well. We offer good coffee and light snacks!



## Lincoln NE





- Don't communicate to everyone in the same way
- Avoid jargon – particularly when you hope to speak with “outsiders”

Web, Social Media, Signage, PR, Speaking Engagements; Inviting

# COMMUNICATING YOUR PARISH

# Your “Brand”

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{What you say about yourself} \\ + \text{What you do daily} \\ + \text{What people experience} \end{array} \right] \times \text{What others say about you} = \text{Your “Brand”}$$



... SAINT GREGORY ...  
BISHOP OF NYSSA  
THE FATHER  
OF FATHERS

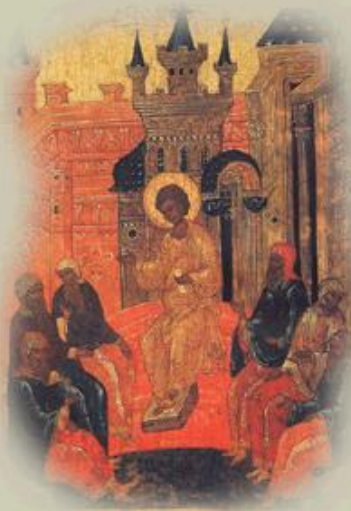
Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, was a younger brother of St Basil the Great. His birth and upbringing came at a time when the Arian disputes were at their height. Having received an excellent education, he was at one time a teacher of rhetoric. In the year 372, he was consecrated by St Basil the Great as bishop of the city of Nyssa in Cappadocia.

*Christ is Risen!*

...  
MIDFEAST OF  
PENTECOST

After the Saviour had miraculously healed the paralytic, the Jews, especially the Pharisees and Scribes, were moved with envy and persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, using the excuse that He did not keep the Sabbath, since He worked miracles on that day. Jesus then departed to Galilee.

About the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles. He



... WELCOME ...

THE COLUMBUS, OHIO,  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PARISH OF  
ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA  
WELCOMES YOU.

St. Gregory of Nyssa Orthodox Church in Columbus, Ohio is a church where students can worship in English away from home, and where all who are interested may continually participate in the life of the church. The parish is a local community of the Diocese of the Midwest in the Orthodox Church in America.

We have provided this website to help you become better acquainted with the Orthodox Christian parish here at St. Gregory's and perhaps, with the beauty and glory of the timeless

... INDEX ...

ADULT'S RELIGIOUS ED.  
BAKE SALE  
BUILDING COMMITTEE  
CALENDAR  
CAMPUS GROUP  
CAMPUS COMMITTEE  
CHARITIES  
CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS ED.  
CHOIR  
ICONS  
NEWCOMER'S GROUP  
NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH  
PARISH HISTORY  
PATRONAL FEASTS  
PRAYER GROUP  
PROPERTY ACQUISITION  
RECTOR'S COUNCIL  
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE  
ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA  
ST. STEPHEN'S GROUP  
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE  
WEEKLY SCRIPTURE

# Website is the Gateway

- Your website is the front door to your church.
- First impression
- Drive beyond one parish for another



# Communication Facts

- “Currently **80% to 85%** of people are finding their church based on Web sites.”
- 9 of 10 people visit your website before calling you
- “It takes 7 encounters with your “brand” before someone will act on it.”

See webinar [“Improving Your Parish Website”](#).



## Questions to Ask

- What encounters with your church does your audience experience?  
*Websites, Social Media, Word of Mouth, Invitations, Speaking engagements, TV/Radio; Billboards; Signs*
- What are you communicating in each medium?
- Are you making the most of each outreach attempt?

# Consider Stereotypical Reactions

*What might web visitors be assuming about your parish?*

## Orthodoxy

- Food festivals
- Culture club: Ethnic; immigrants; not English
- Unfriendly; closed to outsiders
- Strange; severe; old world;
- Ancient >> Not relevant
- “Like Catholics” >> Celibate clergy
- Don’t know bible
- White & Old
- Complex
- “Colorful” >> Infighting
- Zealots
- Idolatry
- Music

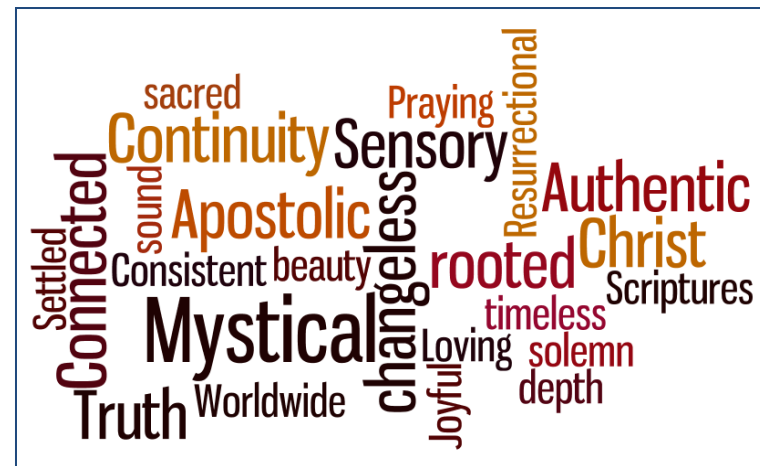
## Churches in General

- Gossip
- Judgmental
- Empty
- Too big
- Closed
- Old People
- Sunday “entertainment”
- Church service = Sermon

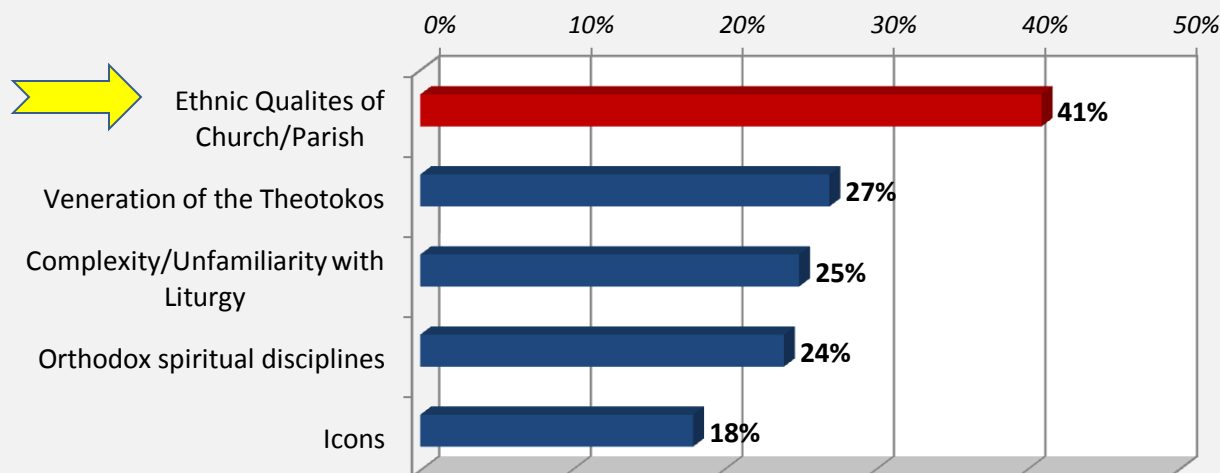
**Often *gracefully* confronting wrong stereotypes can be important and helpful. How can a website help do that?**

# Inquirer Audience

- 88% - some college
- 29% -switched more than once
- Previous reading about Orthodoxy (web)
- Limit - fund raising/overt ethnic



**Difficulties and Differences Experienced by Orthodox Converts in America**



***Use words that resonate with serious inquirers***



# Personal Narratives

## *Tell Stories*

- ‘You won’t be alone. We have others like you.’

### Our Members on Our Faith at Holy Trinity Parish

"Becoming Orthodox for me was the natural end of my search for an authentic and true catholic Anglo-Catholic Anglican. Although I remain close to both communions, and while both reflect portions of the undivided Church, only Holy Orthodoxy possesses the fullest vision of the Church founded by Christ. The Truth of God in His Church. For me, this Truth was found by *coming home* to the true catholic sacraments for 2000 years... *Holy Orthodoxy.*" -- Paul, non-profit fundraiser

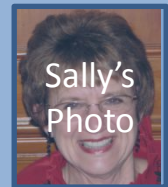
"I remain grateful for the Baptist upbringing and Calvinist education that taught me faith in Christ. I concluded that these traditions fell short of the full expression of the New Testament Church. I found surprise and satisfaction -- in the historic liturgy and organic continuity of the Orthodox Church. As my children become as we look forward to receiving the Body and Blood of Christ each Sunday I will graduate

"My conversion to Orthodoxy was not based on emotional or social needs but rather a hunger for truth. For the years, I felt disillusioned and discouraged because the faiths that I had been taught were untrue. This "moment" I found is in the Orthodox Church. I no longer was my own secret

### meet the parish

**Sally Smith**

Westhaven WI



Sally's  
Photo

Sally has been attending St XXX for five years, having been raised in a (ethnic) Orthodox parish.

#### **Why St XXXX is My Home Parish**

St XXX is simply an exciting spiritual home. It provides a link to the church of my youth while offering a sense of mission and community that works for my family. At St. XXXX we're truly bringing the Orthodox faith to all people.



# Welcome Video?

## *Website*

- Simple
- Short
- Friendly



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgukPNI6W8I&feature=relmfu>

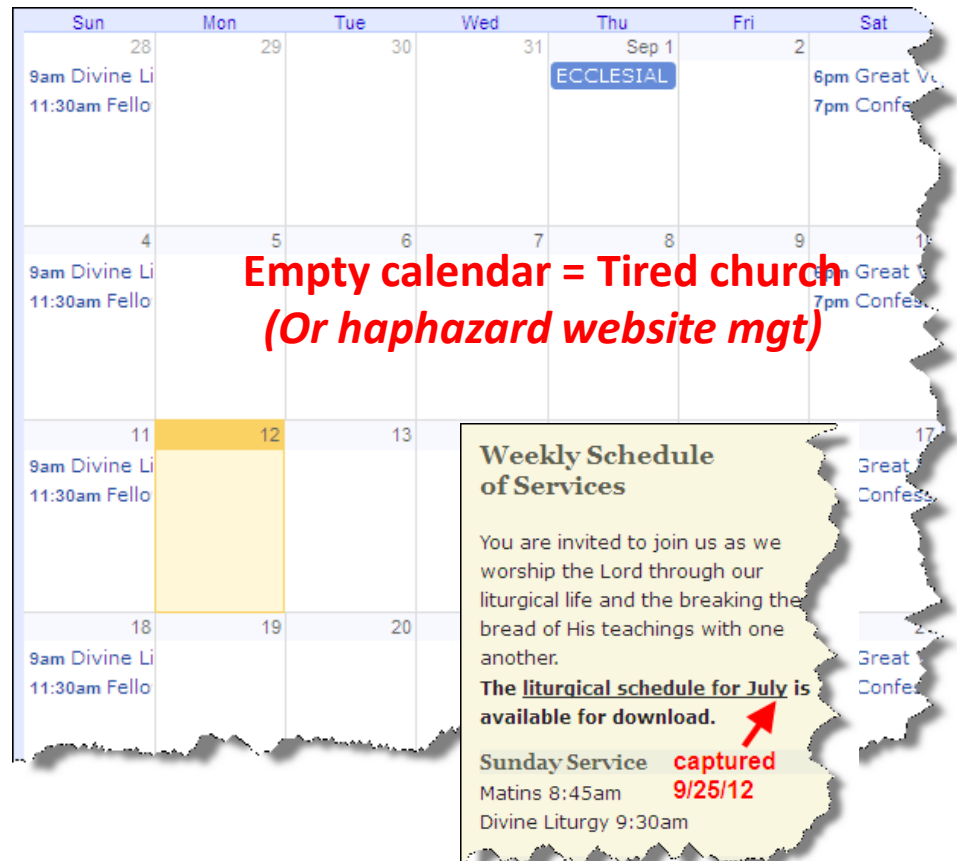


[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C\\_KWoJaLaTE&NR=1&feature=endscreen](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_KWoJaLaTE&NR=1&feature=endscreen)

# Calendar

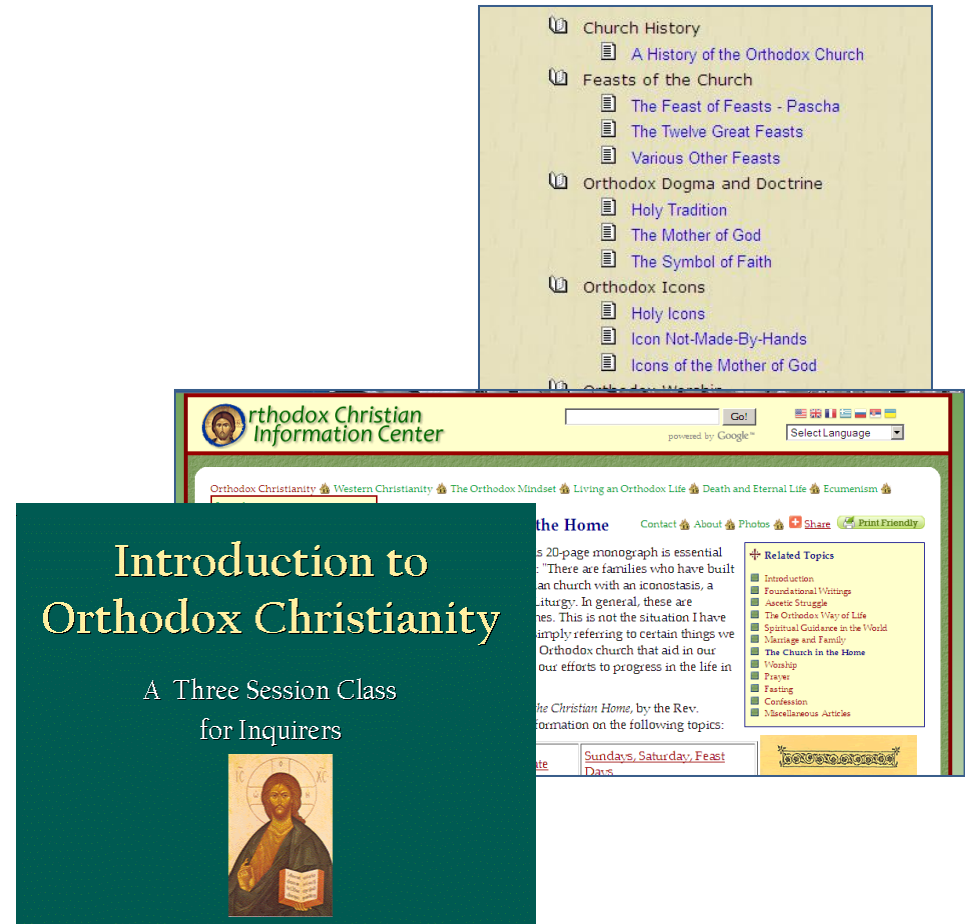
## Website

- Calendar should give people a feeling this place is:
  - Holy
  - Active
  - Something for me
- Keep up to date



# Info on Orthodox Faith

- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Use links
- Link to basic videos
- Inquirer slide presentations



Intro topics slowly –in layers. Get browsers to return

# Using Photos Well

- Orthodox Christianity is photogenic



# Using Photos Well

- Use active/action shots when possible





# Using Photos Well



***Good***



***Better***

# Using Photos Well

- Avoid showing an empty church



Watch what you show –  
Consider the visual cues that you send.



# Facebook

List religious prefs on  
personal page

Should parishes Have Facebook Pages?

## Important Facebook Qualities

- Personality
- Community
- Two way communication
  - Highly monitored
- Push
- “Like” “Comment” “Share”
  - “Simple rule of thumb about your church and ministry Facebook Fan Pages:
    - ‘Likes’ are good. ‘Comments’ are better. ‘Shares’ are best.”
- Regular Less Formal
- Lite (short) message
- Engage parishioners >> communicate with non-Orthodox friends



# Signage

- Parish Sign
  - No clutter
  - Well maintained
  - Understandable words
- Directional Signs
  - “Orthodox Church 1 Mile ->>>
- Interior
  - “Rest Rooms”
  - “Office” etc.
- “Holy” Messages ... limit...
  - Golf outing
  - Bake sale
  - Bingo



What message do you want to send?

Holy, Welcome,  
Friendly, English,  
Orderly, Alive

OR

Disorganized,  
Food, Culture,  
Closed, Sales

# Public Relations

## What Do We Tell America?

### “Orthodox Church”

- Google Alerts~50 press releases in one week
- 17 of 20 from North America are about ethnic food festivals

Is it possible to balance our message?

*A thought:*

- balance every food festival release with a release on a topic central to the parish mission?

### Google Alert - Orthodox Church

Google Alerts [googlealerts-noreply@google.com]

Sent: Wed 8/29/2012 8:13 PM

To: parishfacilitator%midwestdiocese.org@gtempaccount.com

#### News

10 new results for Orthodox Church

#### [Antiochian Orthodox Church hosts food festival Sept. 8 and 9](#)

Los Altos Town Crier

The Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Redeemer has scheduled its 31st annual Mediterranean Food and Cultural Festival from 10 p.m. Sept. 8 and noon to 8 p.m. Sept. 9 on the church grounds at 380 N. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

[A celebration of Romanian culture, and 'Portlandia' is weirder than ever ...](#)  
OregonLive.com  
St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church held its ninth annual Romanian Festival - one week after the church celebrated its 25th anniversary as a Romanian refuge in the Northwest. Romanians from along the West Coast attended, singing and clapping along ...  
[See all stories on this topic »](#)

[Crowd feeds hunger for Greek barbecue, pastries](#)  
Montgomery Advertiser  
Hungry customers waited in their vehicles or stood in line Monday for the Greek Orthodox Church's annual Labor Day BBQ & Pastry Sale and they weren't disappointed. Many bought several boxes filled with barbecue or pastries and headed home with them ...  
[See all stories on this topic »](#)



#### [Greek-American festival salutes Olympics](#)

Oakland Press  
St. George Greek Orthodox Church will salute the Olympics by lighting what is believed to be the world's largest Saganaki, or Greek flaming cheese, this Friday at the St. George YASSOO Festival. Greg Mitchell and his brother Mark own Athens Coney ...  
[See all stories on this topic »](#)

#### [Merrillville church fights would-be burglars with new door, alarm system](#)

Post-Tribune

A door was kicked in at the Descent of the Holy Ghost Orthodox Church in Merrillville late Monday night. The Rev. Thomas Frisby said the door is located next to the circular driveway that faces 61st Avenue. Frisby said the glass in the door was ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

# A Somewhat Better Message

Yet...

- 150 people! *Yikes!*
- What about
  - “english”
  - “All are welcome”
  - Sermon topic?

## 4 area Orthodox churches plan 1st combined service in 2 years

Sylvania to be site; 3 others to suspend rites for special holiday weekend event

BY TANYA IRWIN, STAFF WRITER

Four area Orthodox churches will hold a combined outdoor service Sunday, with four priests and a combined choir.

The Orthodox Clergy Association of Greater Toledo will hold the Pan-Orthodox Outdoor Combined Divine Liturgy in the Pavilion at St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, 4940 Harroun Rd., Sylvania.

A barbecue will take place after the services for a nominal cost. The Pan Orthodox Churches in Toledo are (list with names addresses and priest name))

Services will not be held at the other Orthodox churches

Sunday.

The last time the combined service was held was two years ago at Olander Park in Sylvania, said Father Aristotle. It is usually held in mid to late September, but scheduling issues pushed the event up this year, he said.

**“We usually get 150 to 200 people, but with the holiday weekend it could be lower,” he said.**

Other than having four priests and a combined choir, the service will be the same as an indoor Divine Liturgy, Father Aristotle said. In the event of rain, the service will be moved indoors at St. Elias, he added.

Members of the churches enjoy and look forward to the service each year, he said.

“It is for fellowship and to share our common Orthodox faith, even though we come from various ethnic backgrounds,”



The grounds of St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, 4940 Harroun Rd., Sylvania are to be the site of the combined services.

# Decent Content

## RIVERSRIDE: Orthodox Church changes date for lecture series

Press-Enterprise

St. Andrew **Orthodox Church** in Riverside has delayed a free seven-part lecture series titled: "A Christian Ending to Our Lives: Death, Burial and Praying for the Departed in the Orthodox Tradition." Lecture topics include The Remembrance of Death ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Cancel something! (snow day?)

## North Royalton's St. Matthew's Church to host retreat

Plain Dealer

NORTH ROYALTON: St. Matthew the Evangelist Antiochian Orthodox Church in North Royalton is inviting people to take part in a retreat Oct. 19 and 20. The retreat will take place at the church, located at 10383 Albion Road. The event will be 6:30 p.m.-9 ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

## Agia Sophia coffee shop celebrates first anniversary

Patriot-News

30, the quaint coffee shop at 225 Market St. will hold a first anniversary celebration 2-5 p.m., including a service by Archbishop Tikhon of the **Orthodox Church** of America Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. Located across from the

- Newsworthy content
- Think like a reporter.
- Understand the publication
- Inform don't sell
- Avoid jargon
- Be concise
- Have an angle
- Follow standard format

## A Standard Format



# And Even Better...

- Angle
  - Orthodoxy is more than ethnic food
  - Calendar
- Qualities
  - “Christian”
  - Positive
  - “Growing”
  - Photogenic
  - Americans
- Impact?
  - Negligible

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## Timeless faith sees good times

### Orthodox Christianity growing swiftly in U.S.

3:55 AM, Apr. 8, 2007

Johnothon and Theresa Sauer usually don't celebrate Easter on the same day as their extended families and neighbors.

Today is an exception. Raised Roman Catholic, the Mason couple and their children attend Christ the Savior-Holy Spirit Orthodox Church in Norwood. They are members of one of the fastest-growing Christian denominations in the United States - Orthodox Christianity - whose growth is fueled by American converts to the faith.

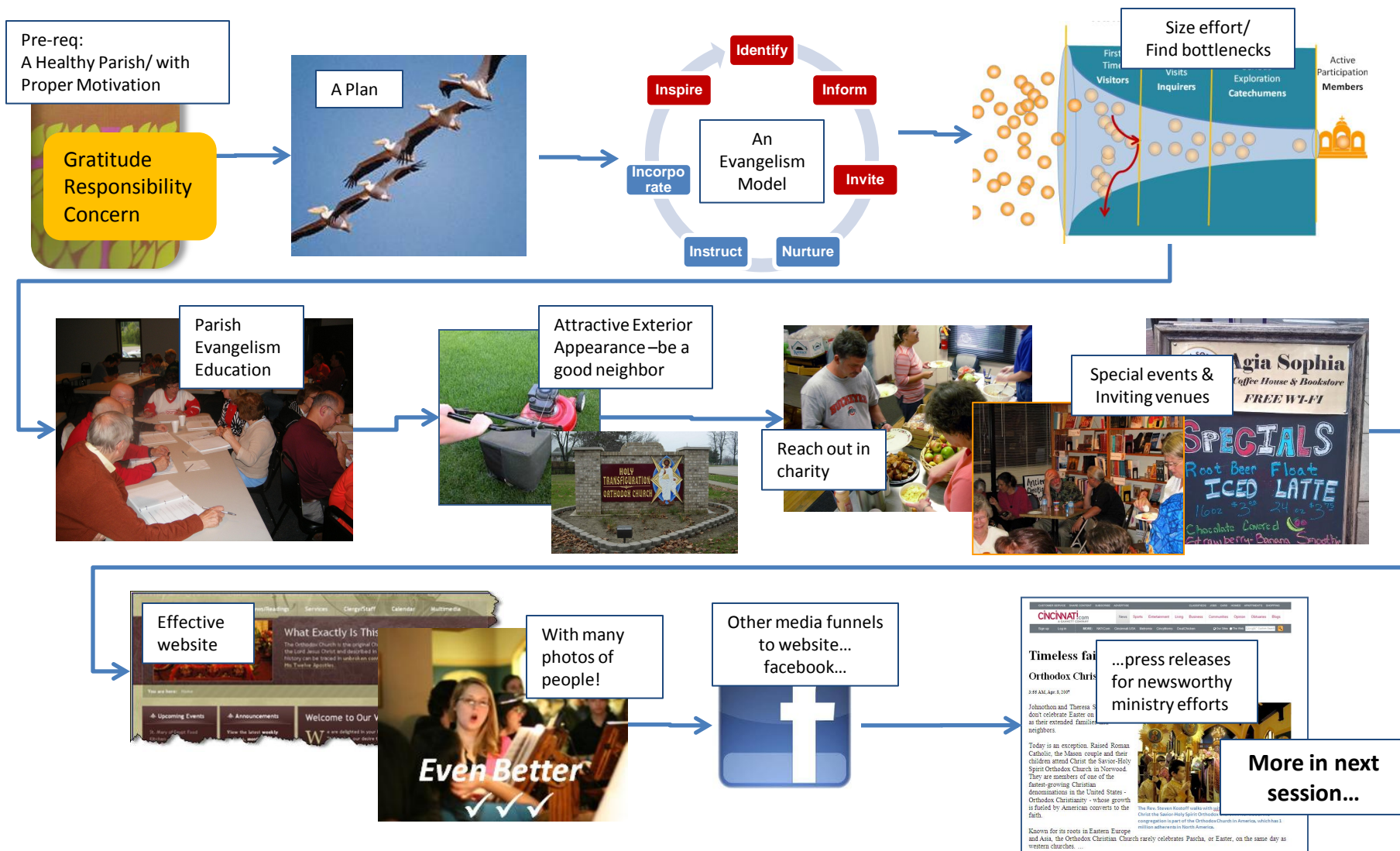
Known for its roots in Eastern Europe and Asia, the Orthodox Christian Church rarely celebrates Pascha, or Easter, on the same day as western churches. ...



The Rev. Steven Kostoff walks with with a chalice during Divine Liturgy at Christ the Savior-Holy Spirit Orthodox Church in Norwood. The congregation is part of the Orthodox Church in America, which has 1 million adherents in North America.



# Summary: An Evangelizing Parish



# Outline

## Part A

### “Getting Ready”

✓ Foundation  
Healthy Communities

✓ Plan of Attack

## Part B

### “Taking Action”

Parish Evangelization  
Education

Connecting with the  
Community

Communicating Your  
Parish

Improving First Time  
Experiences

# A Final Point...

“Unless there is a transformation of contemporary church life so that once again the task of evangelization is something which is seen as **incumbent on every baptized Christian**, and is **backed up by a quality of living** which **outshines the best that unbelief can muster**, we are unlikely to make much headway through techniques of evangelism. **Men will not believe that Christians have good news to share until they find that bishops and bakers, professors and housewives, are all keen to pass it on.** And men will continue to see the church as an introverted society composed of “respectable” people, bent on its self preservation until they see in church groupings, and individual Christians, the caring, the joy, the fellowship, the self sacrifice and the openness which marked the early church at its best.”

*Evangelization in the Early Church*

Michael Green

## “Competition”

**Churches are competing with unbelief... why are we better?**

# Evangelization Webinar Series

## Session 1 The Unchurched

### Defining the Unchurched

- Characteristics
- Statistics
- What matters to them
- 5 faith stages

**July 18**

## 2 Inviting People to Church

### Personal Evangelism

- Motivation
- Obstacles
- Skills & tools
- Who to Invite
- Inviting Tips

**Aug 22**

## 3 Engaging the Parish for Action

### Parish (Corporate) Evangelism

- External Communication
- Sizing the effort
- Focus
- Greeting; follow up
- Events
- Growth behaviors

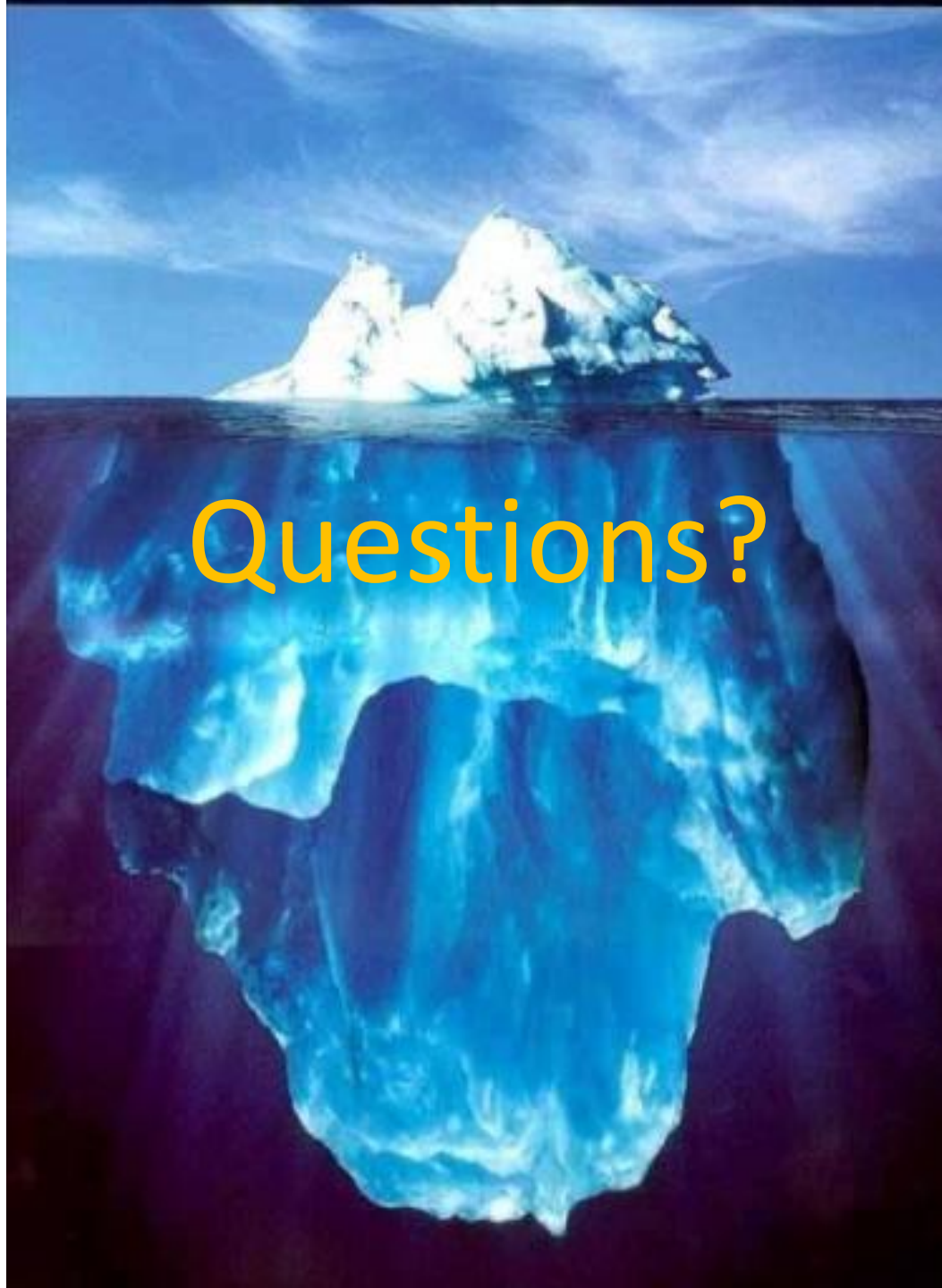
**Sept 26**

## 4 Assimilating

### Integrating New Persons

- Catechesis
- Mentors
- Making friends
- Total Stewardship
- Member expectations
- Small Groups
- Inspiring to Invite

**Oct 24**



# APPENDIX

# More Detail About Inquirers\*

*\*An opinion offered by a friend – a limited summary*

Group	Some <u>may</u> be searching for...	Probable hurdles...
<b>Roman Catholics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Vatican II Mass - sense of glory &amp; transcendence of God.</li> <li>• married clergy better able to resist sexual temptations.</li> <li>• Possible doctrinal doubts: papal infallibility, the immaculate conception, &amp; more</li> </ul>	<p>All:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic concerns -- unwelcoming to “outsiders”</li> <li>• Services are conducted entirely or mostly in a foreign language.</li> </ul>
<b>Liturgical Protestants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life w/o praise bands” &amp; “clown masses.”</li> <li>• Deeper spiritual life</li> <li>• Possible doctrinal doubts: “sola scriptura,” “faith alone,” “substitutionary atonement”</li> </ul>	<p>Some liturgical Protestants &amp; most Evangelicals... Above plus ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• worship that is too “elaborate and showy,”</li> <li>• “idolatry” (veneration of icons &amp; cross),</li> <li>• invocation of the Theotokos; saints</li> <li>• prayers for the dead,</li> <li>• doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist,</li> <li>• sign of the cross,</li> <li>• excessive authority vested in Bishops.</li> </ul>
<b>Evangelical Protestants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beauty in worship (building/music)</li> <li>• More than popular entertainment or theological lecture</li> <li>• Deeper spiritual life</li> <li>• More than initial “decision for Christ.”</li> <li>• “authentic New Testament Christianity.” “rootedness”</li> <li>• Doctrinal doubts: “sola scriptura,” “eternal security,” “believers’ baptism,”</li> </ul>	<p>Above plus...unaccustomed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liturgical worship</li> <li>• Use of a church year.</li> <li>• Sacraments, Saints, Tradition is more than bible</li> </ul>

What can you add?



# Website Calls to Action

## 1. Learn

- **Teach visitors who you are and what you do.**
- For churches and ministries, **explaining how others can get involved** is equally crucial.
- One of the most visited pages on any church website is its About section, where your mission, beliefs, and individual ministries are detailed. Direct visitors here immediately by displaying a graphic on your home page banner or making it prominent in your menu navigation. This is the one area of your website people might actually read (instead of skim), so make sure every word is carefully chosen.

## 2. Visit

- **ultimate goal should be to encourage users to physically visit your ministry.**
- You can do this by making your service times and address easy to find and [writing](#) with a welcoming tone on your Location page.
- Make it even easier on potential guests by including a [Google](#) map, directions, and a picture of your church.

## 3. Contact

- Plaster phone number, address, and e-mail address in as many places as you can on your website—your footer, Contact Us page, Location page, We Believe section, and any other page that might provoke questions. Creating a contact form also encourages interaction.
- **How available you are shows how much you care (or don't care) about your visitors.**

## 4. Give

- Many times, **giving is a spontaneous, emotionally-driven action**, so your website should not hinder someone from satisfying that urgent desire.
- Make it easy for visitors to find your giving page and create an enjoyable giving experience with easy-to-complete forms.

*From Church mag blog*

# Three Key Questions of Every Website Visitor

## 1. Can I trust you?

- Can they believe what is on your site. Honest? Credible?

## 2. Am I welcome here?

- Will they fit in

## 3. Can you meet my needs?

- People arrive at every website looking for something. They want to know if by choosing you, they will really find what they're looking for.



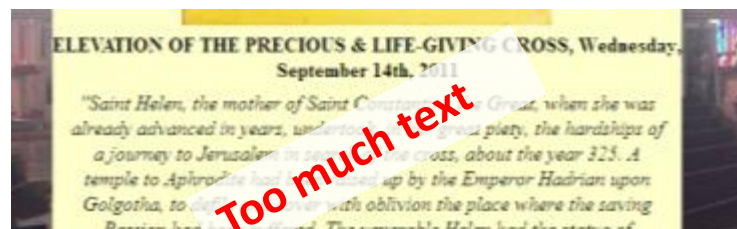
*Website visitors are looking for answers*

Source: [Using Pictures to Answer the Three Questions Every Website Visitor Has.](#)

Paul Steinbrueck , Christian WebTrends

# Common Website Mistakes (IMO!)

- Out of date info
- Important info left out/buried
- Unattractive
  - Too much text
  - Fonts; font size; bold, clutter; color; layout; clip art
- Poor use of photos and graphics
- Tech toys



## SLOPPY TEXT

multiple fonts, underline, **bold**, *italics*,

**ALL CAPS**, text size *and* color.

**PARTICULARLY** *avoid* **USING**

**THEM together!**

# Common Website Mistakes (IMO!)

- Apologizing
- Talking to Ourselves
  - Parish history lessons
  - Orthodox jargon
  - Insider talk “...*Father Basil was assistant priest at St. Elijah from 1992 to 2002...*”
- Unwelcoming
  - Unduly formal, pedantic, even arcane
  - Premature theology lessons
  - Ancient & foreign vs. today, alive and here
- Lack clear focus –internal or external
  - Too much? Unclear purpose?
  - Disconnect with audience

# Communicating with Inquirers

## Goals

### 1. **Welcome**

- Say it but also show it throughout the site



### 2. **Build trust**

- We won't be in your face; zealots; we respect you as a person

### 3. **Generate curiosity**

- Introduce topics slowly; Offer info in layers

### 4. **Action**

- Take a first step –visit, call, look around
- Dispel fears; show uniqueness AND sameness

# Website: Various Audiences

	Audience/User	Needs	Stereotypes to be Addressed	Key Points to Make
Orthodox	Parish Veterans			
	Parish newcomers			
	Parents			
	Youth			
	Possible (in-bound) transfers <i>(new to town; switching parishes)</i>			
	Dormant			
Non Orthodox	Roman Catholics			
	Liturgical Protestants			
	Evangelical Protestants			
	Unchurched			
Either	Visitors to events (weddings etc)			
	Neighbors			

- What kinds of people are most likely to be attracted to your church?
- Which will stay & grow in their love for Christ?
- What are their needs?
- What are the important qualities that should be attractive to this audience?
  - Of Orthodoxy
  - Of your parish
- How can this be communicated?

# Using Photos Well

*Use with discretion*

- “Big Liturgy”
- And...
  - 3 bar crosses
  - Onion domes
  - Bishop’s Blessing
  - People too dressed up – or sloppy
  - Too much bake sale or fund raising



*Probably a bit “much” for many inquirers*



# SAINT JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH



Photos shuffle regularly  
In each frame

[Home](#)

[Our Parish](#)

[Worship](#)

[Ministry &  
Outreach](#)

[Education](#)

[About  
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[Service  
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Welcome from Father Thomas

Photo

[Contact Us  
/Map](#)

Relevant  
photo

News

News



[Schedule](#)

Relevant  
photo

News

[Links](#)

Home page	Our Parish	Music and Worship	Ministry & Outreach	Children & Youth	Adults	Inquirers	Info
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Welcome</li> <li>•Main News items</li> <li>•Calendar</li> <li>•News Links</li> <li>•Regular Schedule</li> <li>•Bulletins</li> <li>•Contact info</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Rector's greeting (written &amp; video)</li> <li>•Parish Vision</li> <li>•Clergy &amp; Staff</li> <li>•Parish leadership/ Council</li> <li>•FAQ</li> <li>•Becoming a member</li> <li>•Stewardship &amp; Pledging</li> <li>•Church History &amp; Visual Tour</li> <li>•OCA/ Diocese of Midwest/</li> <li>•Parish docs (password)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Worship schedule</li> <li>•Service order (link to OCA site)</li> <li>•Annual / Daily weekly/ Lenten cycle</li> <li>•Choir</li> <li>•Readers</li> <li>•Altar and Decorating</li> <li>•Glossary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pastoral care</li> <li>•Music &amp; Worship</li> <li>•(Choir; Readers; Servers; cleaners)</li> <li>•Ministering to the Parish</li> <li>•Meals/ service/ prayer/ visitation</li> <li>•Charitable Outreach-hands on/international</li> <li>•Communication ministry -- web/ bulletin/ PR)</li> <li>•Bookstore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pre-school</li> <li>•Elementary level</li> <li>•Jr &amp; Sr High School</li> <li>•Youth &amp; teen group</li> <li>•Forms and Schedules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adult class</li> <li>•Fellowship events</li> <li>•Seasonal events</li> <li>•Men's Bible Study</li> <li>•Women's Group</li> <li>•Men's social group</li> <li>•FOCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Inquirers Instruction (<i>describe/ schedule</i>)</li> <li>•Doctrine</li> <li>•Worship</li> <li>•Sacraments</li> <li>•Church</li> <li>•History</li> <li>•Prayer &amp; fasting</li> <li>•Scripture</li> <li>•Links/ Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Contact info</li> <li>•Regular Schedule</li> <li>•Driving Directions</li> <li>•Contact form</li> <li>•Monthly calendar</li> <li>•Annual calendar</li> <li>•(overview)</li> </ul>

***Audience Centric Menu Structure***

***One possible menu layout  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level.***

# Good Press Releases

- Newsworthy content
  - Reporter NOT interested in helping you make money/ drive visitors to your site.
    - She's looking for a story that will be interesting to his readers and pleasing to his editor.
- Think like a reporter.
  - Before putting the effort into writing a press release, determine if your story is newsworthy. Ask yourself,
  - “Why would a reporter want to cover this?” “What is interesting about what I do and who I serve?” “Will anyone care about this story besides me?” Be honest with yourself.
  - Write the story like a reporter would -- the way you would expect to read it in a publication
- Understand the publication
  - Understand your offering in pub’s context
- Inform don’t sell
  - E.g. help write an article about many churches. .
  - Not: a fire hose of information or song-and-dance about virtues of your church
  - Be careful of hype; bloat
- Avoid jargon:
  - Plain language; no tech-speak!
- Be concise
  - Stick to the facts
  - some search engines pass over if it’s too long.
- Have an angle
  - How can you add suspense, intrigue or advice to the story?
  - Tie your story into a trend, local news or holiday.
- Details
  - On line submission
  - Provide link to online version of same release
  - Use a quote
  - Standard format
  - ###

[illegible]

## A Standard Format