Parish Development Ministry
Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania
Orthodox Church in America

July 12, 2014

COMMUNICATING YOUR PARISH

WEBSITES

PLUS SOCIAL MEDIA, PR AND A GOOD SIGN

A Fundamental Premise...

"Just as individuals with good intentions can benefit from learning listening skills for their personal relationships and speaking skills for their oral communication, so congregations can benefit from considering the implications of the ways they communicate and what they are communicating. In this age of rapidly proliferating communication technologies, this task of evaluation is even more urgent."



What you say about yourself

- + What you do daily
- + What people experience

What others say about you

_Your "Brand" 4

Importance of Parish Websites

Why are Websites Important?

The front door to your parish. First impression!

People make "taste and see" decisions

Drive beyond one parish for another





The Jobs of Your Website

- Communicate information
 - What/when/where/why
- Express your parish's identity Tell the world...
 - Who you are, what you do and what you stand for.
 - That you "Proclaim Christ"
- Help to reshape parish identity
 - Help the parish understand who they are and the importance of talking to others.



Key Background Points

Why Websites Are Important

- Website <u>more</u> important for an Orthodox parish
 - Orthodoxy not well known (Who knew!)
 - Technology levels playing field
 - "Helps little guys look big"
 - High uniqueness
 - Inaccurate stereotypes
- Switching
 - 44% of Americans have switched religions.
 - Lapsed Catholics are third largest "religious body" in US.



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."







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?

7/16/2014

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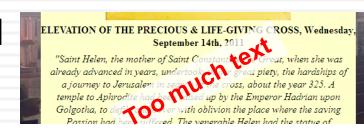
Common Website Mistakes

In My Opinion!

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, <u>underline</u>, **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
 - "...Father Basil was assistant priest at St. Elijah from 1992 to 2002..."
- Unwelcoming
 - Unduly formal, pedantic, even arcane
 - Premature theology lessons
 - Ancient & foreign vs. <u>today, alive and here</u>
- Lack clear focus –internal or external
 - Too much? Unclear purpose?
 - Disconnect with audience



Beware of Adjectives

Better to Say Too Little than Too Much

Overstating

"... is a thriving congregation
....one of the largest
one of the premier parishes...
a leading force ...
an instrumental example...
parish with true vision ...
booming Sunday School ...
one of the foremost choirs in the

parish commitment second to

Apologizing

"we are a small <u>but</u> active parish..."

Instead

"small and..."

Try this:

"... big enough to offer a variety of ministries --with more being developed -- and yet small enough to be warm and personal with many opportunities for fellowship."

country...

none!"

Understanding Your Audience

Defining Users and Their Needs

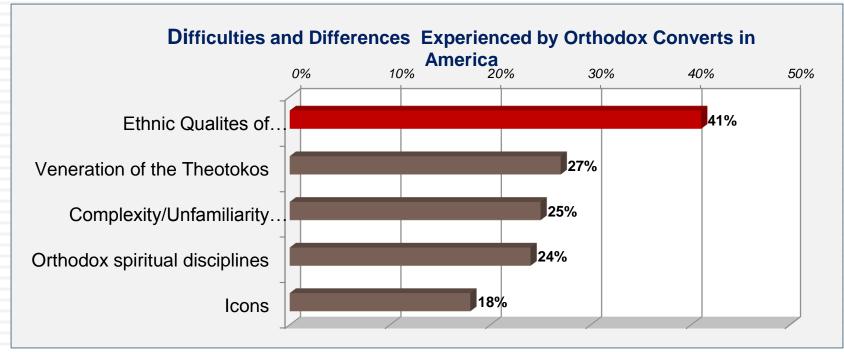
Understanding Various Audiences

	Audience/User	Needs	Stereotypes to be Addressed	Key Points to Make	
Orthodox	Parish Veterans Parish newcomers Parents Youth Possible (in-bound) transfers (new to town; switching parishes) Dormant	likely churc Which What What	 What types of people are most likely to be attracted to your church? Which will stay & grow? What are their needs? What are attributes would be attractive to this audience? 		
Non Orthodox	Roman Catholics Liturgical Protestants Evangelical Protestants Unchurched	 Of Orthodoxy Of your parish How can these attributes be strengthened and communicated?			
Either	Visitors to events (weddings etc) Neighbors			7/16/2014	

Profile of Inquirers

2009 Diocese of Midwest Survey -- 149 Convert Respondents

- 88% College Educated
- 29% switched more than once
- Previous reading about Orthodoxy (web)





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;
 - Not relevant; ancient
 - 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?

Telling Your Parish Story

A Few Key Communication Elements for Your Site

Website Calls to Action

1. Learn

- Teach visitors who you are; what you do; how others can get involved.
- About section: mission, beliefs, & ministries. Direct visitors here.(home pg graphic or banner, navigation. People might actually read (not skim), Make sure these words carefully chosen.

2. Visit

- encourage users to physical visit
- Make service times & address easy to find. Write with welcoming tone on your Location page. Include map, directions, and a photo of your church.

3. Contact

- Plaster phone number, address, and e-mail address in many places –Footer,
 Contact Us, Location. Contact form encourages interaction.
- shows how much you care (or don't care) about visitors.

4. Give

 Giving is a spontaneous, emotionally-driven action, so your website should not hinder someone from satisfying that urgent desire.

From Church mag blog



Three Key Questions of Every Website Visitor

□ Can I trust you?

- Can they believe what is on your site. Honest? Credible?
- □ Am I welcome here?
 - Will they fit in
- □ 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



User's Key Questions

Basic

- Where located?
- How do I get there?
- Is there parking?
- What times are services? In general.
- Specifically?
- How do I contact the church?
- Hours I can I contact?
- How can I contact priest?
- What kind of church is it?
- What kind of Orthodox Church is it?

Advanced -- Preference Generating

- Give me a feel for the personality of the priest and the parish?
- Are there people in this parish like me? Will I feel at home?
- What can I do here? What is here for me?
- What do they have for my children?
- How seriously do they take their faith?
- What's the music like?
- How do I become a member?
- Why this parish? What's the unique story here – the one that makes this the place right for me?

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 po undivided Church, only Holy Orthodoxy possesses the fullest vision of the Church founded by Ch the Truth of God in His Church. For me, this Truth was found by coming home to the true catho 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 Chris concluded that these traditions fell short of the full expression of the New Testament Church. I surprise and satisfaction -- in the historic liturgy and organic continuity of the Orthodox Church my children become as we look forward to receiving the Body and Blood of Christ each Sunday a graduate

"My conversion to Orthodoxy was not based on emotional or social needs but rather a hunger for the years, I felt disillusioned and discouraged because the faiths that I had been taught were un This "mounts! found is in the Orthodox Church. I no longer was my owner coret

meet the parish

Sally Smith Westhaven WI



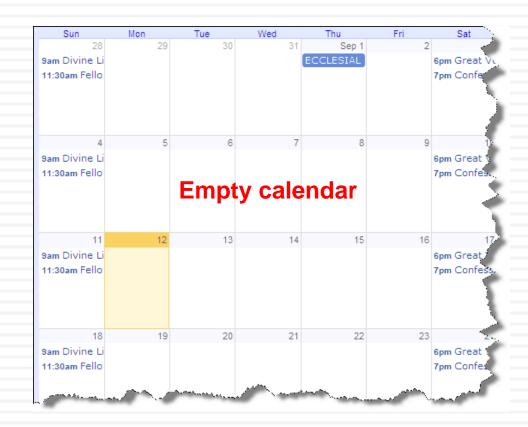
Sally has been attending St XXX for five years, having been raised in a <u>(ethnic)</u> Orthodox parish.

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.



(Often) Missing Info

- Empty calendar
- Priest photo and greeting
- Parish overview
 - Who we are, what we value
 - Putting best foot forward
- When and where
- Xpressway accessibility
- Parking
- "English language"
- Service descriptions
- Ministry info
- Membership/ Stewardship info
- Bookstore
- Reading List





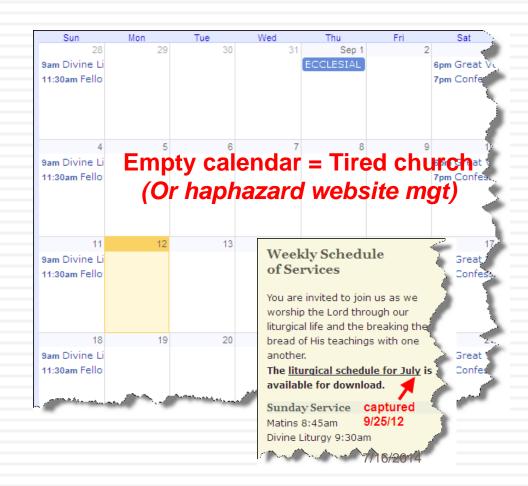
Calendar

Website

Calendar should give people a feeling this

place is:

- Holy
- Active
- Something for me
- Keep up to date





Missing Info – Public Events

- Talk about events that enable your members become inviters.
 - Marital Classes
 - Parenting classes
 - Concerts
 - Financial Planning management series
 - Lecture series/ Topical classes
 - Bible studies
 - Meeting place for professional organizations
 - Grief support groups
 - Art shows
 - Teen nights
 - 'Welcome to the Neighborhood' events
 - Parent's Night Out



Describing Ministries

- Act like somebody –from the "outside" will be interested.
- Church school
 - What do we study? How do we teach? Class grades? When do we meet? Forms? Safety?
- When does next adult class start? Past topics? Next topics? Interactive?
- And more....



A Decent Contact Form

Source Forgotten!

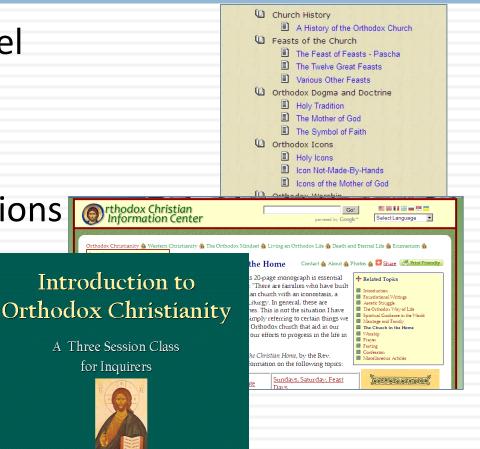


Info on Orthodox Faith

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

Inquirer slide presentations





Intro topics slowly -in layers. Get people to

for Inquirers

Let People <u>See</u> Who You Are

- Orthodox Christianity is photogenic
 - Icons/ architecture
 - Candlelight
 - Liturgical/sacramental "action"
- People
 - To an extent church selections are made based on "atmosphere" & people"
 - So... show people ... & atmosphere





- Keys
 - Not fuzzy!
 - Good light (sunshine/candle light)
 - Properly cropped/framed
 - Limit broad panoramas —tight shots of faces or interesting

elements

Emotive





Integrate photos with text

DO NOT ...

keep all photos on "photo album"

page!





Use active/action shots when possible





Repeat yourself visually. It makes you easier to remember.



Even Better

Use active/action shots when possible







Better

- 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



Avoid showing an empty church



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



- Test
 - If part of your audience is non- Orthodox -- use them to test.



"We do not deal much in fact when we are contemplating ourselves."

Mark Twain



Needed Parish Photos

Using Photos Well

- Possible Categories
 - People/Families Children
 - The Temple
 - Worship
 - Sacraments
 - Leadership
 - Ministry
 - Community
 - Parish History(?)





Children, Families People

Needed Parish Photos

- Multiple age groups
- Different demographics
- Smiling, hugging
- Learning Praying, Singing





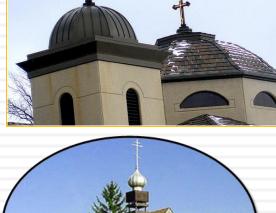
Temple

Needed Parish Photos

Church

- Exterior –overall (sunny) day1)
- Close up of an attractive detail (dome/sign/window/arch)
- Vertically oriented photo 4x taller than width
- Horizontally oriented photo (4-5:1)
- Interior wide
- Icons
 - Close ups/ In situ
- Decorated cross (flowers)(Sunday of cross)







Worship

Samples

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Communicating Your Parish -- Websites and More

Worship

Needed Parish Photos

- Liturgical
 - Censing; Little entrance; Epistle reading –layperson; Priest reading gospel; Great entrance; Altar boys; Kissing cross/icon
- Overall congregation with full church
 - Sunny day
 - Or at night (candlelight)
 - Feast day
- 1-2 people with heads bowed
- Choir
 - Singing -- few people not necessarily the entire group
 - Music sheet
 - Director –intense but joyful
- Child lighting candle
- People entering church reverently
- Hierarchal liturgy





Sacramental

Needed Parish Photos

- Communion
 - Adult
 - Child
- Wedding
- Baptism
- Adult or baby chrismation
- Ordination
- Anointings



Leadership

Needed Parish Photos

Active interested group discussing something around table or flip chart

2-3 photos of priest ... mostly looking approachable and warm

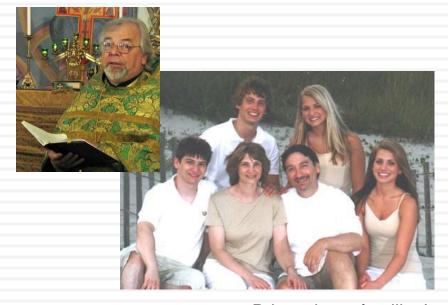
Priest in formal pose (headshot)

With family

Informal smiling ... shaking hands/hugging

Holding a baby... whatever!





Priests have families!

Education

Samples

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Ministry

Needed Parish Photos

- Charitable
- Youth: fun
- Decorating church
- Working on building (lawn; maintenance; leaf raking etc.)
- Choir
- Library
- Archives







Community

Needed Parish Photos

- People together
 - Social hour
 - People hugging/laughing
 - Teens
 - Seniors
 - Kids
 - Men
 - Women
 - Eating
 - Celebrating



Parish Family





Communal Meal



Men! In Church! Smiling!



Social Event

Parish History

Needed Parish Photos

If a history page is important –dress it up with photos! This will generate better response than text only from parish veterans and outsiders.

- Keep short and relevant to all.
- Tell a Story -- of Interest!











Communicating Your Parish -- Websites and More

Implementation Steps

Identify planning constraints

- What can you spend? How much time? How often updated?
- Source of info? Existing? New?
- Approval?

Decide on website objectives and purpose

Balance: Internal ⇔ External

Understand users & audiences

- List >> Prioritize >> Profile audiences
 - Needs, assumptions, questions, stereotypes

Identify key communication elements for your site

- Photos/graphics
- Text/topics/articles/ stories

Organize basic structure

- · Identify info sources for each section
- Define menu structure
- Overall layout



Welcome Video?

Website

- Simple
- Short
- Friendly



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_K WoJaLaTE&NR=1&feature=endscreen



Facebook

List religious prefs on personal page

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





Public Relations

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

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 noon to 10 p.m. Sept. 8 and noon to 8 p.m. Sept. 9 on the church grounds at 380 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos Hills. The fundraiser will ... See all stories on this topic »

A celebration of Romanian culture, and 'Portlandia' is weirder than

See all stories on this topic »

OregonLive.com
St. Maty's Romanian Orthodox Church held its ninth annual Romanian Festival. St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church held its ninth annual Romanian Festival in the Northwest. Romanians from along the West Coast attended singing and in the Northwest. Romanians from along the West Coast attended, singing and Montgomery Advertiser

Crowd feeds hunger for Greek barbecue, pastries

Montgomery Advertiser

Hungry customers waited in their vehicles or stood in line Monday for the Greek Orthodox

Sale and they weren't disappointed Many bough 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 ... Church's annual Labor Day BBQ & Pastry Sale and they weren't disappointe or pastries and headed home with them...

Greek-American festival salutes Olympics World's largest Saganaki, or Greek Haming cheese, this rnd

Greg Mitchell and his brother Mark own Athens

Coney ...

Merrillville church fights would-be burglars with new door, alarm system

Oakland Press
Oakland Press
St. George Greek Orthodox Church will salute the Olympics by lighting what is below
St. George Greek flaming cheese, this Friday at the St.
World's largest Saganaki or Greek flaming cheese. St. George Greek Orthodox Church will salute the Olympics by lighting what is believed the St. George YA'SSO world's largest Saganaki, or Greek flaming cheese, this Friday at the St. World's largest Saganaki, or Greek Mark own Athens Conev ...

Gree Mitchell and his brother Mark own Athens A door was kicked in at the Descent of the Holy Ghost Orthodox Church in Menillville 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 »



See all stones on this topic » Your Parish -- Websites and More

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 <u>Qlander</u> 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.



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

"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,"



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 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 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 stones on this topic »

Agia Sophia coffee shop celebrates first anniversary

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

[COMPANY LOGO]

Contact: John Smith Tel. 555/555-2222 Cell Phone: 555/555-2222 Email: johnsmith@anywhere.com FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE GOES HERE IN ALL UPPER CASE Subtitle Goes Here in Title Case (Upper and Lower)

body of press release body of press release.

body of press release body of press release.

body of press release body of press release

body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release.

boilerplate boilerplate.

###

If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with John Smith, please call Pat Brown at 555/555-2222 or e-mail Pat at pr@theplace4vitamins.com



And Even Better...

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Angle

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



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.



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.

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. ...



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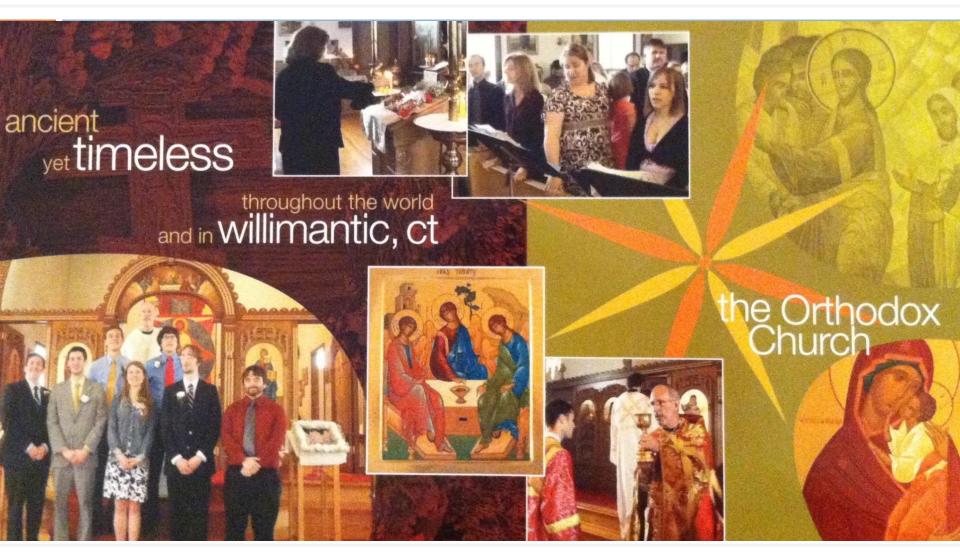
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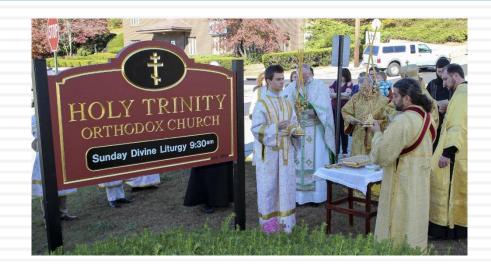
Miscellany

Parish Info Card/Church History Timeline



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



Exterior Appearance!

Look Welcoming!

Goal: Most attractive exterior in neighborhood!





Something good is happening inside!





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 1st impression
- Tune events to people you're trying to reach
 - e.g. "families" may not= "New Year's EveParty"
- Available literature
- "Message from our hosts"
- Transparency no bait & switch or manipulation

*Think "experiences" – not "events"

Special Venues for Reaching Out



Harrisburg PA



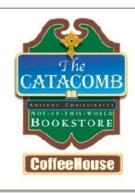


Special Venues

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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 477-6478.



Site last updated: 27Mar07 webmaster@catacomb.com

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Lincoln NE



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Visit St. John



THE END

Thank You for Your Attention