Congregation Website Self-Evaluation

Developed by Bob Fisher, SEPA Synod ELCA

Websites are living things, and they need to grow and change to remain vital. It is good to periodically review your site for its content, its design, and its ease of use to see how a visitor might experience it, and then make updates or additions as needed.

To evaluate your site, first take an overall look at the home page and main landing and subpages. You want to look for three characteristics: its overall visual impact (which I call "curb appeal"), how the site conveys the personality of your congregation, and how the site meets current standards of professionalism for websites (a moving target, at best).

"Curb appeal" – Is the appearance and organization of the site visually pleasing? Will a drive-by visitor be met with strong visuals or have to wade through a lot of text? Does the site feel current or futuristic rather than dated?
Rate 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Comments:

"Personality" – Does the casual visitor get a sense of who the congregation is, through story and/or pictures/video? Would a first-time visitor making a quick assessment sense that people have fun and are engaged in church? *Is this sense of personality accurate to what visitors will find?*
Rate 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Comments:

"Professionalism" – How does the site look and function on a scale of 1 (amateurish) to 5 (very professional)?

Rate 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

Comments:

Information and Ease of Use

Is the address, phone number and email of the congregation visibly posted on the front page? Y/N

Is there a map and directions (or link to map/directions) easily available? Y/N

Are worship times easily viewed (on the front page)? Y/N

Is information on the site current? (i.e., present or future events listed, not past; listings/pictures of current staff, etc.) Y/N

Will a visitor see information about your congregation's engagement with the community/world along with information about what you do inside the walls? Y/N

Is your navigation menu clear and complete? Y/N

Is there an easily accessible link to a calendar of events or listing of upcoming programs? Y/N

Is there a way for people to contact you prominently displayed on the home page? – Live call button, email us link, etc. Y/N

Are links to your social media streams obvious? Y/N

Are social media posts displayed on your home page via a widget or RSS feed? Y/N

Do you have ELCA and Synod info displayed by widget or RSS feed? Y/N

If you have an email newsletter, is there a clear place for people to sign up? Y/N

Is there a section for visitors describing what they might expect when they visit, and is this prominent on the front page? Y/N

Is the text (especially on the home page) short, active and inviting? Y/N

Overall scores: How well do you think you do in each of these areas?

1. Visual appeal: _____ (1 lowest-10 highest)
2. Personality: _____ (1 lowest-10 highest)
3. Professionalism: _____ (1 lowest-10 highest)
4. Ease of use: _____ (1 lowest-10 highest)

Total score: _____ out of possible 40