

IDENTITY STATEMENT WORKSHEET

Some examples of identity statements (none of them perfect!):

- We are Monday-Saturday followers of Jesus who worship on Sunday. We're a movement of missionary people who've made a choice to leave the relative safety of the established church and take the love of Jesus "to the streets." Our calling is to bring this transforming love into people's lives in positive, transformative, and practical ways.
- We are an accepting, progressive Anglo-Catholic parish renewing its people for their Christian lives in today's world through worship, spiritual formation, engagement with the arts, life in community, and acts of compassion.
- St. Monica's Episcopal Church is made up of children and elders, families and singles, straight and gay people, lifelong Christians, interfaith couples, converts and seekers. We join in worship and service, creating a community that shares the unconditional welcome offered at Jesus's table.
- Welcome home to Christ Church! You will find people here who genuinely care for one another, and who gather for worship each week. We are very much like a family – many different ages and stages, personalities and quirks, with political, theological, and personal perspectives of every sort. We strive for authentic prayer, inspiring preaching, and worship in the Episcopal tradition.

Using the notes from your interviews, write an identity statement that describes how you see your congregation. How would you talk about your congregation to a friend? What would you say about your congregation on the front page of your website?

Here's a guideline—or "Mad Lib"—to get your creative process started:

We are a _____, _____, and _____
(descriptor) (descriptor) (descriptor)

congregation/parish/church/mission. We _____ _____
(verb) (descriptor or noun)

in our _____ _____.
(descriptor) (noun)

And now...change this, edit, add more!

WORD BANK

Descriptors

Funky, eclectic, reverent, earnest, fun-loving, adventurous, questioning, paradoxical, formal, informal, flexible, creative, compassionate, passionate, effervescent, introspective, agile, collaborative, contemplative, diverse, spontaneous, careful, thoughtful, disciplined, structured, outward-looking, irreverent, energetic, on-the-move, growing, intimate, edgy, deep, traditional, hopeful, rooted, complex, mystical, tolerant, joyful, participative, open, honest, multi-cultural, talented, humble, inspiring, supportive, challenging, kind, diverse, courageous, full of wonder, breathtaking, astonishing, centered, questioning, authentic, open-ended, definitive, crazy and mixed up, values-centered, altruistic, self-giving, sacrificial, intense, nimble, lively, experimental, smart, gregarious, polite, freewheeling, friendly, harmonious, playful, peaceful, experimental, outdoorsy, environmentally sensitive, maverick, pious, exuberant, organized, outrageous, young, adolescent, mature, standing, on tiptoe, expectant, optimistic, settled, in-the-moment, humble, practical, artistic, persistent, skillful, warm, expansive, free-wheeling, beautiful, winsome, whimsical, tender-hearted, questioning, kindhearted, approachable, gracious, contented, animated, active, alert, talented...

Nouns

Family, children, elders, seniors, singles, straight folks, gay folks, trans folks, LGBTQ folks, lifelong Episcopalians, seekers, former Roman Catholics, former evangelicals, people who grew up in other churches, people who didn't grow up in church, former churchgoers, believers, doubters, questioners, students, teachers, business owners, healthcare professionals, homeowners, renters, homeless folks, youth, young people, millennials, baby boomers, Gen-Xers, teenagers, toddlers, peaceniks, animal lovers, white folks, black folks, people of color, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, refugees, immigrants, athletes, Native and indigenous peoples, out-of-towners, snowbirds, Central New Yorkers, strangers, newcomers, couch potatoes, truck drivers, people living with developmental disabilities, farmers, mechanics, men, women, nonbinary individuals, adults, food lovers, people living with disabilities, grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, guardians, divorced people, artists, dreamers, helpers, gardeners, workers, unemployed people, people affected by addiction, Jesus, God, Holy Spirit, Jesus-followers, church, congregation, parish, community, family, town, village, city, suburb, rural, empty-nesters, vacationers, academics, blue-collar, white-collar, hikers, nature-lovers, TV binge-watchers, individuals living in assisted living facilities, pet-lovers, cat people, dog people, horse people, veterans, activists, Republicans, Democrats, socialists, libertarians, rich folks, poor folks, broke folks, happy folks, sad folks, people affected by mental illness, caregivers, sisters, brothers, siblings, cousins, dying people, SU fans, Bills fans, longtime residents, newcomers, aging hippies, joy, boundaries, stillness, power, wisdom, understanding, kingdom, burden, truth, peace, sorrow, sadness, wealth, poverty, faith, hope, help...

Verbs

Live, renew, worship, go out, help, seek, question, serve, care, gather, ask, greet, befriend, welcome, meet, proclaim, invite, share, give, feed, eat, break, work, love, grow, listen, heal, value, call, dream, take, leave, foster, engage, act, transform, transcend, reach, pray, connect, start, fight, empower, struggle, fear, support, stand, comfort, look, soothe, pity, hear, come, inspire, approach, follow, accept, explore, be present, guide, witness, treasure, appreciate, occupy, harvest, advance, glorify, lead, trust, refresh, choose, prepare, tell, abide, relate, speak, send, create, maintain, perfect, attract, respond, influence, advocate, teach, learn, doubt, believe, offer, bring, preach, lean, fulfill, cry, celebrate, make, process, mark, sing, play, laugh, cook, build, tear down, march, carry, protest, draw, meditate, hope, bear, attend, show up, innovate, preserve, assist, weep, shield, strengthen, protect, pour, rejoice, embody, dance, lift, be still, bless, sanctify, turn, wait, rest, commit, rule, run, walk, plant, cultivate, condemn, judge, spend, pause, reflect, free, liberate, discover, see, watch, apply, open, close, stay, remain, change, ordain, drink, swim, cavort, train, affirm, activate, destroy, shout, whisper, long for, understand, sew, reap, revere, accompany, conspire, ally with, stir, arise, burden, hold, begin, lament, appeal, reconcile, forgive, clasp, cling, hug, shake, lock arms, shape, clothe...