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Refreshed Logo, Website Focus on Cedarville's Mission

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Distinct. Clear. Intentional. When you think of Cedarville University's logo rebranding, those are ideas Janice Suplee, vice president for marketing and communications, hopes come to mind.

Cedarville's marketing and communications team redesigned the university's website and refreshed its logo during the past six months. The purpose of this work was to make the university's identity and purpose distinct, clear, and intentional.

"The website is our virtual front door and the logo is our visual identity," Suplee said. "These two significant branding projects are part of our overall commitment to ensuring every element of our communication very clearly articulates and demonstrates our passion for biblical truth and academic excellence."

Changes to the logo are subtle. The basic design — a classic Greek pillar with a sunburst on top — is unchanged. But look closely and you'll notice that the three vertical channels running the length of the column have a crossbeam. Combined with the curved base, remaining from the original logo, and the picture is clear: three crosses on a hill.

Before the redesign, the sunburst stood alone on top of the pillar. But now there's an open book — the Bible — laying on top with the light flashing out from its pages.

"We had the crosses before, but people didn't always see them," Suplee said. "The new design makes our focus on the Gospel clear. The pillar itself is a widely used symbol of academic excellence, but with the sunburst on top of the Bible, the idea that Scripture is the source of truth and illuminates and guides our path is more clearly conveyed."

"This is a pictorial representation of our tagline — 'For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ,'" she continued. "This is who we are as an institution."

The logo upgrade came at the same time Cedarville launched a new website. Visitors to cedarville.edu will first notice a continuous loop of video vignettes at the top of the homepage, portraying different aspects of the Cedarville experience. Photography is peppered liberally on the new site, making it more visually engaging, and numerous videos depict ministry, campus life, basic facts, and core principles of the university.

“Our goal with the website was to transform it from focusing on an internal audience to an external one,” Suplee said. “Right from the homepage, we’re telling the Cedarville story; we’re explaining who we are.”

The website is also restructured with future students in mind. The old site was built around university departments. To learn about a specific major, visitors had to know the department it was under. The new site is program-centered, allowing visitors to explore majors without knowing departments.

The website upgrade also prominently features a hallmark of the Cedarville experience – chapel. “Based on focus groups with faculty, staff and students, one of our consultants observed that chapel is the embodiment of our brand,” Suplee said. “So we’ve really tried to make it as easy as possible for people to find and share chapel content on the site.”

Cedarville.edu has also been updated to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, so those who are visually impaired will find it much easier to navigate. These initiatives help strengthen Cedarville’s distinct position in an extremely competitive higher education marketplace.

“With both the rebranded logo and the new website, Cedarville is boldly declaring its identity ‘for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ,’” Suplee said. “We can’t be all things to all people, so we need to be crystal clear about who we are, to attract students looking for the college experience that we offer.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,760 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.