

Website, Social Networking Sites & Electronic Communication Policies

Website:

The UUC Web site will serve four primary purposes:

1. To reach out to the larger community
2. To inform interested persons about our congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Association.
3. To invite people to visit and participate
4. To be a communications tool among the members of our congregation.

Audience

The target audience consists of: individuals who are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and/or our congregation; Unitarian Universalists who may be planning to visit or relocate from other areas; UUCGL members; former members and friends; and affiliate organizations.

Guidelines for privacy of members and others

1. Individuals' private e-mail addresses will not be posted (unless specifically requested by that individual).
2. Individuals' private phone numbers will not be posted (unless specifically requested by that individual).
3. The names of individuals in photos will not be listed in the public area without permission. If an individual's face is featured in a photo, permission will be asked of that individual before posting the photo.
4. Photos of children will not be posted without permission.
5. In the church newsletter any personal notes may be posted with the permission of individuals providing the information.

General Oversight

The website, social networking site and all communications are overseen by the parish minister who has final decision making authority, with more specific supervision provided by the Church Administrator, who has direct responsibility for all communications.

General procedures

1. The Web site is not to be considered a primary historical archive for documents. Newsletters will be kept on the web site for no more than one year.
2. Sermons to keep on the Web site will be selected by the parish minister.
3. Decisions regarding content and form:

- In consultation with the administrator and selected staff, the parish minister has final decision making authority regarding content and form
- All postings require approval by at least one member of the UUCGL senior staff who has been designated for this responsibility by the parish minister. Accuracy of content is the responsibility of the posting party.

Social Networking Sites

For the time being UUCGL will limit its social networking website use to Facebook. This is because Facebook is the largest of the social networking websites and it has the control capacity required by UUCGL on-line policies. There will be a central UUCGL fan page which will follow these guidelines:

- The UUCGL Facebook page will be overseen by the parish minister, with more specific supervision provided by the Administrator. Other staff persons may have designated responsibility. We will always have at least two members of the staff designated as “page administrator.”
- The main purpose of the UUCGL Facebook page will be to post announcements regarding the church (mostly by reposting the Weekly Update) and to post the weekly video of the Sunday sermon.
- Pictures may be posted. However those pictures must meet the same guidelines outlined above for the church website.
- The UUCGL Facebook page will be set so only designated staff persons may write on the wall of the Facebook page. However, the comment function will be active. The following notice will be posted in the Information section of the page:

”The primary purpose of this Facebook page is the share information about the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn with its members and those in the wider world who have an interest in our church. We have purposely disallowed anyone other than administrators of the page to write on its wall. If you would like to post something to this wall please email webperson@uucgl.org.

Comments to postings are welcome. However the UUCGL has the right to delete any content from this page, including but not limited to: irrelevant content, hateful content, malicious content, uncivil or disrespectful content, attacks against an individual, financial solicitations, endorsements of a political candidate or party, and content that violates Facebook’s terms of use, code of conduct, or other policies. Content that violates Facebook’s policies may also be reported. “

- Other groups, committees and ministry teams within the church may have their own Facebook page or group. If that page or group is primarily for UUCGL related programming or business the Parish Minister will be notified and at least one of the page administrators will be a UUCGL Staff Person. If

groups, committees or ministry teams want to use Facebook it is recommended that they set up a Facebook group as opposed to a Facebook page. It is further recommended that those groups should have their privacy settings set so that only members of that group, committee or ministry team are members of the Facebook group. If a UUCGL group, committee or ministry team sets up a Facebook page it must follow the same guidelines outlined for the main UUCGL Facebook page including restrictions on who can write on the wall and posting the disclaimer in the “Info” section of the page.

Electronic Communication:

Email, texts and social networking tools are powerful tools for our church community to use to reach out to people and to efficiently make decisions. However, like any tools they have their shortcomings. Electronic communications, by its very nature, can be impersonal and move very fast. This can lead individuals to say something that they might not in a phone or face-to-face conversation. It is also easy for individuals to read something into a message that was not intended. To mitigate these shortcomings and to allow us to most effectively use this technology, these guidelines are put forward for UUCGL Staff and Volunteers to follow while using electronic communication tools for church business. This includes Facebook, Email List Serves or single communications to groups or individuals in the church that relates to church business.

Guidelines:

- Remember that not everyone at the church uses email or other electronic communications. If you are making an announcement make sure it is also included in the Sunday Order of Service or the TIMES so that it has a chance to reach everyone.
- As much as possible try to avoid making decisions via email or electronic communications. This is especially true of tough, controversial or decisions that need any amount of discussion first. People have varying abilities to communicate via these tools and we want our decisions to be fair to all who are participating. Also, it is easy for someone’s intent to not be fully understood using these communication methods so conflict can easily and quickly escalate where in might not have in a face to face meeting.
- Avoid sending messages that are more belligerent, sarcastic, or accusatory.
- There are some circumstances were individuals may be removed from email list servers or have their ability to make comments blocked. These include:
 - Creating offensive or disruptive messages, including those containing sexual implications, racial slurs, or any comment that offensively addresses someone's age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability.
 - Repeatedly sending messages that are belligerent, sarcastic, or accusatory and continuing to do so after being asked to stop.

- The decision to remove someone from an email list serve or to be blocked from commenting will be up to the Parish Minister in consultation with the Administrator and Senior Staff.

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