

# UUCC Communications Policy

The purpose of this Communications Policy is to provide guidelines for how the members and professional staff of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte utilize various media to communicate among ourselves and with the larger community. The policy covers all of our formalized media, addressing their intended uses, as well as roles and responsibilities for creating the content that is communicated using them.

There is an overriding intention that all communications support and further our Mission and Ends – specifically that we are a congregation of people who respect, care about and are connected to one another, and that we strive to be beacons of progressive thought and action in the broader community.

Although we are all responsible for living up to these intentions, the professional staff of the congregation has ultimate responsibility for all published UUCC content: on websites and in social media, in electronic newsletters, in circulated printed material and on physical bulletin boards.

Use this Communications Policy as a guide for writing and publishing to:

- UUCC website – [www.uuccharlotte.org](http://www.uuccharlotte.org)
- *Soundings* – the congregation's monthly publication
- *Currents* – the congregation's weekly electronic newsletter
- UUCC Facebook page
- weekly Order of Service
- press releases
- bulletin board postings in the UUCC building

## The UUCC Website - [www.uuccharlotte.org](http://www.uuccharlotte.org)

### Intended Uses

The UUCC website has two major audiences and multiple goals.

#### For nonmembers

- Explains to the greater community who we are, what we believe and what we do. To the extent that UUCC does any advertising, this is it.
- To be helpful for anyone planning to visit our church.
- Provides a clear explanation of the path to UUCC membership.
- Publicizes activities and events that are open to nonmembers.
- Provides useful information for potential space renters.
- Provides information about our programming and challenging reflections through access to our newsletters, *Currents* and *Soundings*.

## For members

- The “Get Involved” section of the website functions almost as a handbook for members.
- On the homepage one can readily find the most topical information: upcoming service topics, programs, events and activities.
- The Contact Form page provides a convenient way to communicate with the professional staff.
- There are interactive blogs that provide both a forum for and additional means of communicating with the Senior Minister, CYRE Director and Social Justice Team.
- The website provides a convenient way to make a pledge or contribution.
- The Access UCC site provides members secure access to an online membership directory through which they can update their own profiles, their roles and activities, and can access their own pledge accounts and volunteer opportunities.

## Rules and Guidelines

### Content

Staff is directly or indirectly responsible for all website content. Content that is likely to require regular updates includes:

- topical announcements and postings - the Next Services section, What’s Happening, calendars, sermon podcasts, *Currents* and *Soundings* newsletters
- new programming and activities
- staffing and staff responsibilities
- lay leadership roles
- changes to policies and procedures

### Design and graphics (including photography)

The Communications Team is responsible for keeping the website looking fresh and for improving its design, through periodic reviews of its appearance and ease of use.

### Roles and responsibilities

The UCC website is published as a WordPress site. Control over website changes is maintained using the WordPress administrative tool, which grants access to professional staff and to volunteers.

- Website Editor-in-Chief - The Director of Administration, or designee, acts as Website Editor-in-Chief, which involves coordinating management of the website and granting rights to update content.
- Weekly Editors - The Office Administrator and Administrative Assistant share responsibility for updating all information on the website that changes on a regular basis, such as the Next Services section, What’s Happening, calendars, sermon podcasts, and Voices newsletters.
- Design Editor - The Communications Team appoints a Website Design Editor who coordinates design and graphics changes in consultation with the Team and professional staff.
- Access UCC Editor - The Membership Coordinator acts as the Access UCC Editor, taking the lead in developing and monitoring our use of the member-only site using the ACS administrative tools.

## *Soundings: The Congregation's Monthly Publication*

### **Intended Uses**

In October of 2015, the UUCC introduced *Soundings*, a monthly publication for members, visitors and friends of the congregation to *discover deeper spiritual meaning* through thought-provoking pieces. *Soundings* is offered only electronically, September - June.

Submissions for *Soundings* should:

- Share the theme of the Second Sunday Topic of a particular month.
- Offer a deeper connection to the congregation or to Unitarian Universalism in general.
- Encourage involvement within the congregation.
- Highlight members or program areas for volunteerism or outreach in the greater community.

### **Rules and Guidelines**

- The professional staff functions as an “editorial board,” selecting contributors, editing selections and organizing each issue.
- The Office Administrator serves as the Layout Editor.

## *Currents: The Congregation's Weekly Electronic Newsletter*

### **Intended Uses**

*Currents* communicates the following items:

- congregation-wide upcoming events
- registrations and sign-ups
- reminders
- projects and volunteer opportunities
- upcoming service information
- news from the UUCC

Submissions should highlight the who, what, when and where of events and gatherings, and describe how the congregation can get involved.

### **Rules and Guidelines**

- The Office Administrator and Administrative Assistant serve as co-editors.
- Professional staff members are charged with updating the *Currents* web page under their area/s of responsibility by Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m.
- The *Currents* webpage is reviewed by the Office Administrator and/or Administrative Assistant for content, clarity, grammar, spelling, and prioritization.
- The Director of Administration reviews the webpage and the weekly email invitation before it's sent out.

## Specialized Electronic Newsletters (Email Blasts)

### Intended Uses and Rules and Guidelines

The following teams and entities publish email blasts (e-blasts): Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE), Congregational Care, Music, Memorial Endowment Trust (MET), and Open Door School (ODS). All e-blasts are sent on an ad-hoc basis except ODS e-blasts (weekly-Mondays during school year).

- CYRE: Three types of e-blasts are distributed based on the ages of the children. They are used to remind and inform parents and high school youth about upcoming events, registrations and sign-ups, projects, and volunteer opportunities. The CYRE staff write and send these e-blasts.
- Congregational Care: These e-blasts are used to send out information regarding the deaths and memorial services of UUCC members only. These emails are sent to the congregation as a whole. The Senior Minister writes the e-blasts, and the Office Administrator or the Adult Programming Coordinator sends them.
- Music: Weekly emails that give music program participants rehearsal and performance details, as well as information about special programming.
- ODS: These e-blasts remind and inform ODS parents about upcoming events, registrations and sign-ups, projects, and volunteer opportunities at ODS. Only *ODS parents* receive these e-blasts. The ODS Office Administrator writes and sends them weekly.
- MET: These e-blasts are sent out as needed to *Chalice Society Members* only for invitations to gatherings and for need-to-know information. The Chair of the MET/Director of Administration writes these e-blasts, and the UUCC Office Administrator sends them.

## Universal Social Media Policies

### Intended Uses

UUCC social media postings are often how newcomers, seekers, and visitors first experience the church.

### Rules and Guidelines

- All postings must comply with the UUCC Mission and Ends statements, because they represent the UUCC congregation.
- Any member who wants to set up a social media site for a UUCC group needs to obtain written permission from the group's staff liaison. Once permission is granted, the member will assign the staff member administrative privileges and include the staff person in online communications.
- The professional staff may remove postings, social networking sites, or administrator access at any time if content is deemed inappropriate.
- Posts that advertise private businesses, political candidates, or social justice issues that the UUCC congregation has not endorsed are not allowed.
- Social media posts should be open, transparent, and safe for all users.
- All images of children must be approved by the CYRE staff before they are posted on social media.
- All social media outlets need to be updated regularly with relevant content. Attention should be given to professionalism and grammar.

- Anyone who provides images for publication online and who wants to protect those images from re-publication is responsible for adding a copyright watermark to the images. The UCC is not responsible for copyrighting all images provided to it for publication.
- All submissions must adhere to copyright laws and provide appropriate attribution for quotations and other published material.
- Contributors should be mindful of social media privacy policies and copyright rules.

## Facebook

### Intended Uses

The [UCC official Facebook page](#) is UCC's primary social media presence. It serves three audiences:

- For current members and friends, it promotes community building, inspiration, and announcements.
- For visitors, newcomers, and seekers it provides useful information about congregational events, ongoing programs, and member activities and milestones.
- For the greater community, it provides outreach and connection to the day-to-day life of UCC, its staff and members.

### Rules and Guidelines

In addition to the Universal Social Media Policies above, the following rules apply to posting content on the UCC Facebook page:

- In general, the professional staff manages content and decides about the frequency of updates.
- The Director of Administration, in consultation with other staff, will assign UCC members as page administrators, so that they can post messages, events, and photos on behalf of UCC.
- Posts should be directly related to the UCC mission, programming and activities. Posts promoting community activities (non-UCC) or community general reminders (non-UCC) are not appropriate.
- The professional staff must approve images used as the UCC Facebook page cover photo (large banner photo at top of page).
- Anyone posting to the UCC Facebook page is encouraged to use original photos of our members and events.

## Blogs

Currently, only staff and staff-approved members may create UCC-related blogs. Social media policies apply.

## Order of Service

### Intended Uses

The Order of Service includes the elements of the Sunday service, general information about the UCC, and announcements about upcoming events.

### Rules and Guidelines

- The Worship Team approves all template and formatting changes.
- The professional staff submits all announcements for inclusion.

- The Office Administrator or the Administrative Assistant creates the Order of Service based on the submissions from the Sunday Service Leader.
- Additional sections are then prioritized based on available print space.
- The Senior Minister or the Director of Music is responsible for reviewing the final copy before it goes to print.
- Announcements included in the Order of Service are intended to be very succinct reminders; it is not the place to introduce or publicize in more general ways.

## Press Releases

### Intended Uses

Press releases are an effective means of seeking publicity for the UUCU and its activities in the greater community. Appropriate subjects include:

- Guest speaker appearances
- Programs or activities that are open to the general public
- Social justice initiatives
- Positions that the congregation takes on issues of interest to the greater community
- Key staff changes

### Rules and Guidelines

- Any lay leader or staff person can propose that a press release be issued and offer language for the release. The Communications Team is a resource for writing effective releases.
- Because a UUCU press release is a visible representation of who we are, the Senior Minister, Director of Administration (or approved designee) must approve all press releases.
- The Director of Administration or the Office Administrator submits the press releases to news outlets. The Director of Administration may seek guidance from the Coordinating Team before giving approval.
- The Office Administrator maintains a list of media outlets.

## Bulletin Board Policy

### Intended Uses

Bulletin boards are used to provide members with information about the congregation and its members, organizations with which we partner, Unitarian Universalism, and community events.

### Rules and Guidelines

- All displayed items must adhere to the UUCC Mission and Ends statements.
- The professional staff and designated volunteers may post signs, posters and notices on approved bulletin boards.
- No items may be attached to unapproved surfaces without the permission of the professional staff.

### Bulletin Board Content By Location

#### Office Area

- Our Members in the News - articles that mention members.
- Board Minutes - latest minutes of UUCC Board of Trustees, Coordinating Team Minutes - most recent minutes.
- Open Door School - updates about news and events.
- UUCC Upcoming Events and Ongoing Meetings happenings of the UUCC and our partners.

#### Vestibule

- Upcoming Community Events - local events in line with the UUCC Mission and Ends statements.

#### Freeman Hall

- Congregational Swap Board - postings by UUCC members and visitors.
- Welcome to Our Newest Members - photos and bios of newest members.

#### Kitchen

- Kitchen procedures and safety measures.

#### CYRE and ODS Wing

- All boards: All postings must be approved by the CYRE Director or the ODS Director.