

Towson Unitarian Universalist Church

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE

It is the policy of Towson Unitarian Universalist Church (TUUC) to ensure high quality, consistent, timely and appropriate communications to congregants, prospective members, and the outside community. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the use of communications methods and to assist staff and congregants in promoting church programs consistent with the mission, vision and relational covenant of the church.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all modes of communication, including social media.

3.0 REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Administrative Team periodically reviews this policy and makes revisions in consultation with the Board of Trustees.

4.0 DETAILS

The church has **official** and **unofficial** methods of communication. **Official communication methods** are for promoting church programs and announcements about events that are delayed or cancelled. Official communication methods include: The Threshold, our website, our public Facebook page, our YouTube channel, sending all church emails or texts via Breeze, announcements made during worship services, announcements posted physically in the building, and events in the Facebook Group. Communications methods not currently in use such as Twitter and Instagram are also official methods.

Unofficial methods of communication are intended for member-to-member communications. Unofficial methods of communication include: the Facebook Group, the bulletin board email list, the member-to-member bulletin board in the church and sending individual emails.

“Core Staff” refers to:

- The Minister
- The Church Administrator
- The President and President-Elect
- The Communications Head and the House and Grounds Head
- The Communications and Outreach Coordinator

The President-Elect, as Convener of the Program Council, in conjunction with the Minister, will decide on the priority of programs to be promoted. The Administrative Team will decide on building closures.

The Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) is responsible for obtaining written permission from parents to post pictures of children on the public Facebook page or the website.

Additional Details on Official Methods:

Website

The main purpose of the website is to provide information about the church to potential visitors, and to provide an information hub for the congregation.

- The Church Administrator is responsible for managing the website, with assistance from the Communications and Outreach Coordinator.
- The Church Administrator, the Communications and Outreach Coordinator and the Communications Head may update and make changes to the website.
- Upcoming Services and Special Events shall be updated weekly on the homepage.
- The DRE shall forward the Religious Education updated information as needed.
- The Threshold and Sunday Service Schedules shall be posted as they become available.
- Board minutes, including staff reports and financial statements, approved policies, Bylaws and Congregational Meeting Minutes (including the annual report) shall be posted to the website as they become available.

Facebook Page

Any member of the Core Staff listed above may be given Facebook administration or moderation privileges. Administrators and Moderators may create, post and moderate content. Administrators and Moderators are empowered to block or remove those who use our Facebook pages inappropriately in ways that violate our principles and purposes and reflect negatively on the institution of TUUC.

The Administrators and Moderators are empowered to remove inappropriate content on any Facebook page by taking a screenshot, removing any posts or comments that are deemed inappropriate, and sending the screenshot to the

Minister and the President of Board of Trustees indicating why the post was removed.

The use of Facebook events is an easy way to gain a broader audience. While we are virtual, some events may not be publicly shared for security reasons. Events can be created on the public Facebook page and then shared to the Facebook group, or created directly in the Facebook group.

All social media postings and management are to abide by our Public Relations and Disruptive Behavior Policies.

“Breeze” Email (to the entire congregation)

Members of the Core Staff above may be given authority to send emails through Breeze to the entire congregation. The Threshold is sent weekly via this method, as is the login information for our Sunday virtual service. Additional use of this method should be planned/scheduled with other members of the Core Staff and typically will be limited to no more frequently than weekly. Examples where this method is appropriate are the Call to the Annual Meeting, the Annual Report, changes to the church schedule, and the kickoff of the Stewardship campaign.

Additional Details on Unofficial Methods:

Facebook Group

Member-to-member communication is permitted here, in addition to the promotion of church programs. No advertising of businesses or services is permitted in this group. Asking for recommendations is permitted.

To join this group, the question must be answered: When did you last visit TUUC? We are careful to not allow fake accounts, trolls, etc. into this group.

TUUC bulletinboard (Email group)

While this started out as a discussion group, it has evolved into an email list for member-to-member communications. Any member of the TUUC community can request to be added to this group. All subscribers may post to the group. The Church Administrator administrators this group. This group may be used to notify about a member need for meals, or a request for recommendations, or a reminder of an event.

UU Content from other sources

The primary focus of our official communication channels is on the programs of Towson Unitarian Universalist Church. The following types of content can *selectively* be shared in official channels, as long as it doesn't detract or distract from focus on the programs of the church:

- Content from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
- Programs sponsored by the Central East Region of the UUA
- UU summer camps and programs
- Programs at UU churches in our area