

Communication Procedures May 2012

I. PRINCIPLES and VALUES

A. Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

Communication Procedures should reflect the core principles and values of Unitarian Universalism. All our statements and communications should embody the seven principles of our faith.

As such, we should use inclusive, respectful language in all forms of communication. Where possible and practical, we should produce content that is accessible to people with disabilities and language barriers. And, we should use environmentally-friendly printing practices when hard copy cannot be avoided.

B. River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation Mission and Values

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation has its own, individual statement of mission and values. Communication of all forms should embody the values we affirm as Members of RRUUC.

Mission

The Mission of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation is to meet the spiritual aspirations of people of free faith in our community through inspiring worship, life-long religious education, a caring community, and the ability to put our faith into action in society.

As a community, we should always practice kind, open dialogue that is respectful and caring. In using electronic media such as email and list serves, or social media outlets like blogs, FaceBook or Twitter, we should always remember that these are public spaces and should be treated as such.

C. Guidelines

To further these goals, the following guidelines may be helpful:

1. Be honest and authentic. Use your real name, be clear about who you are, and identify yourself as a member, friend, volunteer or staff member of RRUUC.
2. Be aware of your own privacy needs and those of the congregation. Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. Consider carefully what you post, and be cautious about disclosing personal details. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.
3. Protect RRUUC members and friends. Never identify someone by name or obviously reference them in some other way without their permission; and never discuss confidential details about them. If you do speak about another, make sure that what you say is factual and does not disparage that person.
4. Assume good intentions are behind every comment or post.

II. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

At RRUUC, we must ensure that all communication complies with federal and local laws and ordinances. Be sure to respect Copyright, Fair Use and the Bylaws and Polices of RRUUC.

A. Use disclaimers.

Always make it clear that any views and opinions you express are yours alone and do not express any official position or view of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

B. Observe copyright rules.

Always credit others for their work; and make sure you have permission to use material before you do so. "Fair use" requirements dictate that you should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work without explicit permission; always attribute work to its original author or source.

III. SIGNAGE

A. Bulletin Boards & Digital Signs

Only RRUUC, JPD and UUA sponsored items are posted on designated bulletin boards. Postings for groups or individuals are not permitted unless RRUUC or a denominational group is sponsoring as part of congregational or denominational programming.

All material is dated and kept current. All must be approved by Director of Communications. Because these are posted in public, open spaces, care should be taken with information shared. Some contact information may be included in specific authorized circumstances.

B. Wall Space

Fliers or signs should not be stuck on walls, doors, windows unless authorized by Director of Communications or Director of Administration.

C. Signs Not Included

Exterior signage, administrative or directional signs, or those required by local code or regulation are not covered by these procedures. Those are responsibility of building management, and not the Communications Committee.

IV. PUBLICATIONS and ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Congregation Publications

Congregation Publications exist to give all RRUUC sponsored groups space to promote their events and good works. Because of volume and demand coupled with limited space, all notices are subject to editing or may be returned to author for editing. Space limitations and the timing of an event may prevent inclusion in certain media.

Items to be included in Congregation Publications include the following, and are listed in order of publishing priority.

- All RRUUC events/programs
- Minister's communications
- Staff announcements and information
- RRUUC sponsored events/programs
- JPD/UUA
- Other UU/partner congregations and affiliated organizations (local)
- Time critical/chronological order will be superimposed on above priorities.

1. **eWeekly**

The *eWeekly* is a publication of RRUUC that is mailed electronically to members, friends, visitors, and other subscribers and is made available in the Members section of the RRUUC website. This may include personal data, such as contact information, or Joys and Sorrows of specific pastoral interest, approved by the ministers. These emails go to all **listed** email addresses in the RRUUC database.

A Public version of the *eWeekly* appears on the RRUUC website and excludes all personal data, including Joys and Sorrows.

Because of limited turnaround time and scheduling requirements, submissions must be sent by deadline in order to be included. Provide basic facts (50-60 words); without editorializing. Congregation-wide events such as Stewardship Campaigns may run longer and/or have special sections in *eWeekly*.

2. **Sunday Bulletin**

The *Sunday Bulletin/River Road Weekly* is print publication inserted and distributed as part of the *Order of Service*. Like the *eWeekly*, it gives RRUUC sponsored groups space to promote their events and good works. Because of volume and demand coupled with limited space, all articles and notices are subject to editing. Submissions may be returned to author for editing. Space limitations and the timing of an event may prevent inclusion of all items submitted. Because of limited turnaround time and scheduling requirements, submissions must be sent by deadline in order to be included.

3. **Inserts**

These additional *Bulletin* pages are kept to a minimum out of respect for the purpose of *Order of Service*. Inserts must be scheduled in advance and approved by the Director of Communications in conjunction with the ministers at least one week before the service.

4. **Sermons**

Sermons are the intellectual property of the minister or speaker and may not be used or reproduced without the consent of the speaker. A transcribed version of the sermon may be available in the public section of the website at the discretion of the minister.

5. **Emails**

All-Announce emails are sent by authorized staff and are limited to exceptional or time-critical situations such as emergency closings or memorial services for long-time active members when there is insufficient time to use other forms of communication, The *All-Announce* emails are also used for congregation-wide events, programs or meetings that shape direction, mission and vision of RRUUC such as strategic planning or the Stewardship Campaign. These emails go to all **listed** email addresses in the RRUUC database. Unlisted email addresses will not receive the *All Announce* unless the unlisted address is signed up to receive them.

The *All-Announce* emails are sent by senior staff and authorized staff members to members and friends, and as such, may contain “member-only” information, such as personal contact information.

6. **Directories**

The River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation membership lists, congregational directory or selected names from these sources shall not be used as a source of names and addresses for the purpose of soliciting money or support for any organization, institution or cause unless approved by the RRUUC Board of Trustees. This policy applies to all organizations, committees, individuals, including ministers of RRUUC and the UUA. A disclaimer to this effect shall appear on the directory.

Only those persons listed in the directory will receive a printed copy of the directory.

7. **Website**

The website is divided into two distinct areas:

- a. Public Area, where visitors may access general information about the congregation. No personal information (e.g., home/email addresses, phone numbers) is posted in public portion of site.
- b. Member Area, where members and friends have access to other member information, such as a photo member directory, contact information of members and committee member data.

All information submitted for website publication is subject to the RRUUC Website style guide standards. Material will be reviewed for appropriate content, style and usability standards.

Committees and groups are encouraged to have their own www.rruuc.org pages and are not permitted to create their own websites. A committee volunteer may be authorized by the Director of Communications and Outreach and trained to prepare website material.

8. Social Media

Social media and networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter and others provide additional ways for RRUUC to interact with members of the congregation and strengthen those interpersonal connections. Social media and networking sites also have the potential to be important tools for attracting visitors by enabling them to discover RRUUC.

Any official RRUUC social media presence shall be maintained by the Director of Communications and Outreach as well as the Communications Committee, who may provide content, such as weekly reminders, links to items of interest, and posting of images of congregational events as well as editorial oversight. The Director of Communications and Outreach and the Communications Committee will maintain Social Media Guidelines that apply to different forms of social media and will change the Guidelines in order to keep pace with technological changes. These Guidelines will adhere to the procedures laid out herein.

9. Links to External Websites

- a. **Links to for-profit entities** are to be avoided, because of the potential impact on tax-exempt status, but if the links are deemed essential to the mission of RRUUC, then multiple links to similar products or services must be provided. If the link is to advertise a speaker or artist at an upcoming event at RRUUC, then a short-term, informational link is permissible.
- b. **Links to non-profit entities** shall be limited to those that the Congregation, Social Justice Council or chartered committee have formally affiliated with. (For example, Shepherd's Table or Beacon House.)
- c. **All other links** must be approved by the Director of Communications and Outreach.

B. RRUUC Group Communications

1. Committee and Task Force Email Lists

shall be used solely to conduct denominational, congregational and committee business. Information shared via committee emails should not be shared outside the congregation. Personal, for-profit, political and external, unaffiliated organizational information is not permitted. To prevent spam, sender's email address must be in the database in order to send email to committee addresses. For example, a message addressed to "Committee@RRUUC.org" would go to all members of the committee.

2. Committee Email Addresses

Committee email addresses are available for the general public to contact the committee directly. For example, when promoting an event, a committee should use a generic eMail address rather than a private, personal one. For example, Info.Committee@RRUUC.org could be created for the general public to contact the organizers of the event directly.

The Director of Communications and Outreach is the contact person who approves issuance of all Committee eMail Lists and Addresses.

3. Social Media and Online Storage for RRUUC Groups

Social media and networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter and others that use RRUUC's name must support the church and its mission. Use of any congregation created and maintained social networking sites should adhere to the following:

Any RRUUC group creating a group page, image account or online storage should include the Director of Communications or designated member of the Communications Committee as a member on the account. This is solely for the purpose of ensuring continuity of ownership and shall not be used to monitor content. However, content, postings or other information on such sites should be in keeping with the mission of the Congregation, the Principles of Unitarian Universalism, or congregational policy.

For information regarding applicable congregational policy, see **USE of RRUUC's Name, FUNDRAISING/SOLICITATION AT RRUUC** and the **SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY**, all available at the RRUUC website under "**Governance.**"

C. Use of Images and Recordings

1. Images of Adults

- a. A statement of Image Use Policy will be printed in event programs and be placed where visible near building entrances. The Image Use Policy is:

"Events may be photographed or recorded and used for congregational purposes. Images of children will not be used without consent of legal guardian."

- b. All images used in the public section of the website need signed release forms authorizing use.
- c. Images of adults are freely used and posted on the member section of the website.
- d. Images may be used in social media and shared in online storage sites such as Facebook or YouTube, pursuant to the posted Image Use Policy. But any image will be removed upon request.
- e. Images used will not contain identifying information.

2. Images of Children

Images of children (under 18) may only be used if a release form is obtained, signed by parent or guardian.

3. Recordings of Sunday Services

Sunday services or other congregational videos are available only in the Members section of the website. This protects the privacy of individuals who participate in the service and conforms with our Safe Congregation Policy.

A video of each week's sermon is available on the public page of the website.

4. Recordings and Images of Speakers or Artists at RRUUC Events

All speakers or artists who participate in RRUUC events should be asked to sign a release that authorizes use of images or recordings of that event for congregational purposes.

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