

FUS Communications Policies May 2009

Good communications are essential in an organization as large and complex as First Unitarian Society (FUS). Members need to understand where to find information, and leaders and staff need to know how best to communicate with members. These policies are meant to aid in that process.

We have a rich variety of programs, activities and groups, most of which desire to be better known and to have more participants. The role of these policies is to assure equal access to those resources and to promote continuity; inevitably this means some constraints.

No member may send any communication in FUS's name and represent it as coming from FUS. (This idea was generated during the April 2009 board meeting and needs to be developed and placed in a proper context.)

FUS Communications Publications & Announcements

This section describes the principal communication vehicles used within FUS, their purposes and limitations.

The Website: The website of the First Unitarian Society is our most powerful mechanism for providing information.

Website: The FUS website, <http://www.firstunitariansociety.org/> is a repository of information about FUS intended both for new church seekers and for members and friends. It is an excellent vehicle for describing who we are and what we do.

All committees are responsible for identifying a person on the committee to regularly update the content of their committee or group's web page. This is the place for detailed information. This is the place to which you will refer readers in the 50-words-or-less submissions made to *The Unitarian FLASH*, and for written pulpit announcements.

The First Unitarian: This quarterly journal is distributed via the FUS website and by first class U.S. mail to the Caring Circles newsletter list. Its purpose is to publish society-related news, announcements, and publicity. Other than columns by the staff, *The Unitarian* is not a vehicle for opinion pieces or discussion.

Members and visitors are encouraged to sign-up to receive *The Unitarian FLASH* and to view *The First Unitarian* online, or to take a hard copy from the "Ask Me" table or the FUS office.

The First Unitarian newsletter will become a quarterly publication focusing on such topical questions as spiritual maturity, the education of children within the humanist tradition, music in the humanist experience, and critical social justice challenges. It will still contain useful FUS information but also will expand to be an exciting forum for exchanging ideas.

The Unitarian FLASH: The email bi-weekly announcement list draws attention to upcoming events and services and timely. *The Unitarian FLASH* alerts its recipients when a new edition of *The First Unitarian* has been posted on the FUS website and provides a link to the current edition.

Caring Circles Newsletter: Beginning in September 2010, the Society will distribute a highly condensed summary of FUS news, produced as a large-print document and sent only to folks identified by the Caring Circles team as needing such assistance. This printed document will continue to link FUS activities with our members who may lack access to electronic systems, or who choose not to use them.

Order of Service Announcements: The Order of Service will print brief announcements or reminders of pending events on a space-available basis. Priority is given to events of institutional importance.

Pulpit Announcements: Two announcements or reminders per Sunday Assembly, that have been submitted to the office in advance, will be read by a Board member. Priority is given to events of institutional importance.

Oral Announcements: Two announcements per Sunday Assembly, that have been arranged with the office in advance, may be made by a representative of the group requesting the announcement.

Ask Me Table: Brochures and similar materials that would be of interest to visitors or members & friends are placed on the *Ask Me* Table by FUS Staff.

Flyers: The distribution of handouts or flyers on the *Ask Me* table must have approval from a member of the FUS staff. Ushers do not hand out flyers.

FUS Posters/Bulletin Boards: Groups may establish and maintain bulletin boards, subject to approval by the church administrator. With the explicit exception of canvass-related materials or others approved by the Board, posters may not be placed on the walls, doors or windows.

Community Bulletin Boards: FUS groups and outside organizations must submit any item to FUS staff for approval and posting. These boards are maintained by FUS staff and office volunteers.

All member e-mail list: A master list of member/friend e-mail addresses is maintained for making broadcast e-mails in cases of major urgency on a very limited basis, and can only be authorized by the senior minister or FUS administrator. The list may not be used for routine event announcements or publicity.

Submissions for All Official FUS Publications

Submit completed copy by the appropriate deadline with a note as to what publication and on what date it is requested to appear.

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- All submissions should be *completed* copy. This means that they should not require extensive rewriting or editing.
- All submissions should relate directly to FUS, the UUA, PSD and/or be sponsored by an FUS committee.
- Items submitted to FUS publications may be edited for style, content, and to fit the space available.
- Deadlines are strictly observed.
- Email copy to the appropriate address either as text or as an attachment in MS Word format. PDF text files should be converted to text before emailing.
- Hard copies of submissions (typed or legible handwritten copy) can be delivered (mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered) to the FUS office. Please put copy in the Publications staff member's mail box.
- Appropriate clip art or photos (emailed as a JPEG file only) may be used if space and FUS's reproduction capacity allow.

Policies for *The First Unitarian*, print newsletter

Purpose: This is the publication of record. Published monthly, it is the vehicle used to announce items specified in the FUS bylaws (example: notice of the annual meeting). It updates the congregation on events, and announces the events and programs of FUS departments and committees.

Published: Monthly

Distribution: Sent by U.S. mail to members and financially contributing friends who have not requested an opt-out of this mailing. Each edition is posted on the FUS website.

Submission Deadline: Completed articles are due in the FUS office on the 7th of the month preceding publication. Electronic submissions (preferred) may be sent to:

newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org

- Deadlines are strictly observed.
- Due to space constraints, announcements must be less than 125 words, approximately one paragraph. Copy may be edited without notice based on space availability. If announcements require more than 125 words, please contact the Publications Coordinator as you may want to consider another means of communication.
- Submissions to *The First Unitarian* should include the name and phone numbers of one or two contact persons in case there are questions about the material.
- Group-focused information will be published, space permitting, but will have lower priority than Programming announcements.
- Appropriateness of submissions will be determined by the Publications Coordinator in accordance with published guidelines.
- Additional flyers or inserts create production problems and can only be included for unique and compelling reasons.

- Guidelines for the length of regular columns by staff members and FUS committees are arranged with the Publications Coordinator.
- *The First Unitarian* is a vehicle for distributing FUS related information and cannot accommodate the following requests:
 - Commentary or opinion pieces
 - Employment ads
 - Want ads of any kind (i.e., apt. for rent, roommate wanted, car for sale)

Policies for *The Unitarian FLASH*, email news

Purpose: To engage the reader with concise, timely need-to-know information. Content is intended to be current (events and programs are highlighted within two weeks). Rich in links, it encourages the reader to forward the email to friends and to demonstrate FUS's connectedness to the wider world (Metro, UUA, national, global). It also encourages interaction with other parts of the FUS website.

Published: Twice per month.

Distribution: Emailed to members and friends of FUS who have requested it.

Submission Deadline: Ongoing; may be delivered to the FUS office at any time. Electronic submissions (preferred) may be sent to: newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.

- It is a document produced for publicity, an effort to attract new members and to continue to engage current members and friends. It is not intended as a publication of record.
- Announcements for events that did not make the deadline for the newsletter may be published in *The FLASH* (provided they will occur within two weeks of the *The FLASH* publication date).

Policies for *Order of Service* Announcements

Purpose: Short reminders, not intended as a publication of record.

Published: Weekly, appear in paper version for Assemblies, and are posted on the FUS website.

Submission Deadline: Articles and notices are due in the office at noon on Wednesday for the forthcoming Sunday. Electronic submission (preferred) may be sent to:

newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.

- All submissions for inclusion in the *Order of Service* or placement on the *Ask Me* table must be sponsored by an FUS committee or staff.
- The *Order of Service* will print announcements or reminders of pending events on a space-available basis. Priority is given to events of institutional importance.
- *Order of Service* announcements must be short and to the point.

- Priority is given to completed submissions (submissions not requiring extensive rewriting or editing).
- Most Programming announcements may be listed only twice in the *Order of Service*.
- Institutional announcements may be repeated but it is highly recommended that the text be changed to make it more interesting.
- Group-focused announcements (e.g. committee meeting dates) are rarely appropriate unless they represent a last-minute change.
- Very brief and general announcements about flyers or event sign up sheets can be included on the announcements page in the *Order of Service* directing people to the *Ask Me* table in the Lower Assembly Hall, the FUS website, and our online calendar for more information.

Policies for Flyers

Purpose: Flyers provide more detailed information about events and are designed to be taken home by FUS members and friends for future reference. Flyers approved by FUS staff can be made available for distribution at the *Ask Me* table in the Lower Assembly Hall during social hour.

Submission Deadline: Ongoing; may be delivered to the FUS office for approval by noon on Wednesday for the forthcoming Sunday.

As FUS continues to fulfill its vision that Earth Matters, we have moved Order of Service insert materials to the Lower Assembly Hall as of December 7, 2008. The *Order of Service* will direct people to the *Ask Me* table, the FUS website, and our online calendar for details about announcements.”

- All flyer submissions for placement on the *Ask Me* table must be sponsored by an FUS committee or staff.
- The staff member or committee requesting flyers is responsible for their layout and production.
- For 200 8.5 x 5.5 flyers \$20 will be charged for 2-sided color copies and paper, and \$7 for black and white.
- The distribution of flyers for personal or non-church related reasons is not permissible (e.g. electoral materials, personal garage sales, etc).
- The Social Action Committee also has a table in the Lower Assembly Hall for distribution of materials and flyers related to social justice issues and events. Please contact the Social Action staff or committee chair for permission to distribute information or flyers with them.
- Ushers do not hand out flyers.

Policies for Pulpit Announcements

Purpose: Announcements during assemblies of FUS sponsored events draw special attention to the event itself and specific details such as ticket sales, deadlines, etc. Announcements are intended to be as succinct as possible, so as not to detract from the rest of the service and should not include detailed information (phone numbers, addresses) since it is unlikely the listeners will be taking notes. Specific congregational events (auction, retreat, social events, etc.) are limited to a maximum of two written announcements (read by the Board member) and two oral announcements (delivered by a representative of the group requesting the announcement) over successive weeks.

- Written announcements
 - Are read aloud by the Board Member greeting the congregation.
 - Should be typed using a minimum of 12 point font.
 - Should take 10 - 20 seconds to read.
 - Should not be identical to Order of Service announcement text.
- Oral announcements
 - Are made by the representative of the group requesting the announcement.
 - The length of any oral announcement should not exceed 2 minutes.
 - May include more than one presenter, but should have a primary spokesperson.

Submission Deadline: requests for oral or written announcements must be scheduled by the Wednesday preceding the Sunday announcement. Email the announcement to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org or office@firstunitariansociety.org with your request. Last minute announcements are not accommodated.

Policies for All FUS Member E-Mail List

Purpose: Emergency or urgent communication with all members who have given permission to be contacted by email. Mass emails will be used very rarely and with authorization only from the senior minister or the congregational administrator.

Policies for FUS Bulletin Boards

Purpose: Advertising events, highlighting programming and posting staff and FUS Board members' photos.

- Event advertising must be submitted to FUS staff for approval and posting.
- Program groups (RE, Social Action, Membership, etc.) are responsible for maintaining their respective Bulletin Boards and making sure that posted information is timely and not out-of-date.

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* The following policies are actively under discussion and development.

Policies for Website

Purpose: The FUS website is designed to attract interested visitors to find out more about our philosophy and programming, to visit on Sunday mornings, and to inform current members and friends of happenings at FUS. Information included on the website must be accurate and up-to-date. The website is also a repository of archived materials of record (sermons, board minutes, etc.).

Submission Deadline: Submit information to be included on the website (electronic preferred) to the administrator at office@firstunitariansociety.org.

- Last names or phone numbers will not be published on the website for privacy and safety.
- No children's names will be posted on the website.

Notes:

- Currently last names DO appear on the website as part of *The First Unitarian* newsletter, Sunday's Order of Service announcements that are posted each week, and as part of *The Unitarian FLASH*.
- Phone numbers and addresses are deleted from material to be posted on the web and website.
- Email addresses are presented as links or as part of PDFs to help prevent them from being harvested by others for unintended/inappropriate use.

Privacy Policy

Members and friends who are published in the FUS directory are asked to sign a Contact Information Permission form to grant permission to FUS to publish specifically designated contact information in order to protect their privacy.

Note: The implementation of this information is currently under discussion and development.