

This draft approved by the Communications Team on 9/23/21; affirmed at the 10/7/21 UUFM Board Meeting

## **UUFM Communications Procedures**

This document enumerates the various platforms the Fellowship uses for communication, with guidance and procedures for the Staff and volunteers responsible to use and maintain them.

### **Weekly Update**

*Purpose:* To provide a means for the Minister, Board and Committees, and Ministry Teams to communicate with the Fellowship about events and programs of immediate interest to the congregation. Space and emphasis will be allocated according to the content and guidelines listed below. The **Weekly Update** will be brief, with links to the website where more fulsome descriptions are provided.

#### *Content:*

- Information about Sunday services
- Communications from the Minister and Staff
- Communications from the Board and Committees
- Communication from Ministry Teams
- News of church members/friends; brief announcements of members' special needs. (No information about someone's health without their consent)
- District and denominational news when there is an invitation for congregant participation

#### *Rules and Guidelines:*

- The Office and Communication Administrator is the Weekly Update editor, in consultation with the Minister. They are granted the right to set deadlines for submission, right to edit material that is too long or that contains incorrect grammar or spelling, and to refuse material that is not appropriate. Any questions or problems concerning the Weekly Update should be addressed to the Office and Communication Administrator.
- Announcements should originate from the UUFM Staff, Board and Committees, and Ministry Teams, and events or program coordinators.
- Emailed copy will include News Items, Current and Time-Sensitive Programs, Ongoing Programs, and Informational Links. Photographs should accompany all items, with an emphasis on photos with people.
  - News Items: total of 500 words (brief introductions to each item, with a click to take to webpage)
    - Next Sunday Service
    - Minister's Message
    - Children's Faith Development Director's Message
    - Board President's Message
    - Primary Social Justice Initiative News [this year, Green Sanctuary]

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- Current and Time-Sensitive Events: Consists of titles and photos that link to website pages
    - Out of Office notices
    - Invitations to participate in UUFM events and programs in the week or month of publication (Stewardship asks, Second Collections, Soul Matters Sharing Circles, educational and social events beyond Primary Social Justice Initiative [e.g., Healing Our Democracy, Welcoming Congregations, etc.]
    - Invitations to events and programs with partner organizations (e.g., Indivisible, MUUSJA, UUA, YWCA, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, Indigenous Peoples' Day Committee, Islamic Center, colleges and university offices, etc.)
  - Ongoing Programs: Consists of titles and photos that link to website pages
    - Ongoing Fellowship educational, financial, and social programs and events (e.g., Shop with Scrip, Auction and Rummage Sale, Library, book Group, Breakfast club, Meditations, Fair Trade, Chalice Lighters, Safety, etc.)
  - Links
    - Facebook page
    - Facebook groups
    - Staff contact information
- All items in the Weekly Update will be linked to specific website pages, where fuller information is available for those interested.
  - Advertisements for ongoing business or professional services **will not be** published.

### **Order of Service (OOS) Announcements**

*Purpose:* To welcome visitors and to inform the congregation about announcements and upcoming events on the day and in the next week

*Content:*

- Welcome visitors
- Mission Statement
- UU Principles
- CFD News for the day and week
- Invitation to the congregation, friends and visitors to participate in the Fellowship Coffee hour after the service and to let them know who the hosts are for that Sunday
- Brief description of activities upcoming in the next week

*Rules and Guidelines:*

- The OOS is for activities and announcements that pertain to the UUFM. Space is limited.

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- The Office and Communication Administrator is the OOS announcements editor and is granted the right to edit material that is too long or that contains incorrect grammar or spelling, and to refuse material that is not appropriate.
- Any questions or problems concerning the OOS announcements should be addressed to the Office and Communication Administrator.

**Website:** uumankato.org

*Purpose:* To introduce visitors to the congregation, location, history, and beliefs, as well as to provide information to both congregants and other interested parties about upcoming service topics, activities, and events. The UUFM website is a WordPress site using a theme supported by the UUA.

*Content:*

- Congregation name and complete building address, telephone number, e-mail address, Facebook page and groups addresses
- Directions to the building and map, including accessibility information and rental information
- Mission, Vision, and Governance (including elected leaders, bylaws, policies, membership policies)
- Statement of principles, sources, and beliefs
- Information about the Minister and Staff
- Upcoming sermon topics and past service information, including sermon archive of services of current Minister and lay-leaders
- Children's Faith Development information
- First time visitor information
- Links to UUA, MidAmerica region, and other partner organizations at the national, regional, and local levels
- Weekly Updates and other congregation news, including the UUFM Calendar
- Information about ways to connect to and engage in programs and initiatives of the Fellowship
- Ways to offer financial support

*Rules and Guidelines:*

- Staff is directly or indirectly responsible for creating much of the web content and for maintaining all website content.
- The Office and Communication Administrator is responsible for the website administrative functions. The Office and Communication Administrator may designate other staff or volunteers with appropriate skills as website administrators.
- The Office and Communication Administrator is the Web Editor, in consultation with the Minister. They are granted the right to set deadlines for submission, right to edit material that is too long or that contains incorrect grammar or spelling, and to refuse material that is not appropriate.

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- Any time-sensitive updates or matters for the Website should be addressed to the Office and Communication Administrator.
- One month before the Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings, the Office and Communication Administrator (COA) will reach out to staff, elected officers and Committee Chairs of the Board, Ministry Team and Working Group leaders, and event coordinators, in order to regularly update specific areas of the website. Content that is likely to require regular updates includes, for example:
  - Upcoming Services, Events, Weekly Update links, Calendars
  - Staff
  - Committees and Team organization and participants
  - Changes to policies and procedures
  - Photos (update) regularly to keep the website looking fresh
  - Ideas for how to improve the layout and content of each UUFM group's related pages
- Advertisements for ongoing business or professional services **will not be** published.
- May publish information on outside non-profit resources and UUFM partners, as long as they are consistent with UU and UUFM principles and values (Communications Team will approve and maintain the list of partners)
- The site will be organized for coherence and ease of use
- Personal information including photos will not be used without permission

### **Social Media**

*Purpose:* To interact with members of the congregation, to attract visitors by enabling them to discover us through mutual Facebook "friends" of UUFM, and to provide a relatively simple way to communicate community news and announcements of activities of organizations of particular interest to the Fellowship or its congregants. "Social Media" currently includes Facebook pages and groups. Other social media might be engaged in the future, including, e.g., Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, etc. The Office and Communication Administrator will serve as Administrator on all social media, and they may add more admins as appropriate.

### *Content:*

1. Facebook page "Unitarian Universalists of Mankato," maintained by the Office and Communication Administrator, with Minister also an Administrator.
  - Includes Weekly Updates, Sunday Service information, Children's Faith Development and Youth Group announcements, UUA news and information, MidAmerica news and information, and Soul Matters information
  - Upcoming events and registration information as appropriate
2. Facebook group "UUFM Children's Faith Development," maintained by the Director of Children's Faith Development, with Minister also an Administrator.

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- Includes Children’s Faith Development and Youth Group announcements, Sunday Service information, UUA news and information, MidAmerica news and information, and Soul Matters information
- Upcoming events and registration information as appropriate
- 3. Facebook group “UUFM Connect!” maintained by volunteer coordinators and designated Staff as needed.
  - Facilitators of UUFM Connect! Duties:
    - Moderate and if necessary, approve posts of member-driven content to make sure they comply with our FB page rules and also with our Covenant of Right Relations; remove any posts which violate these, and contact any members whose posts are in violation to explain the rules and Covenant; remove members upon the second violation
    - announce events of interest and concern to share with others in the larger UUFM community
    - Community events, programs, and opportunities from UUFM Staff and leaders
    - Moderate any posts that advertise services or share information on outside resources, to make sure they are consistent with UU and UUFM principles and values

*Rules and Guidelines:*

- The Inbox for the Facebook Page will be checked for messages on workdays
- UUFM Contact information, Mission, and links should be prominently displayed
- Photos of children posted only with permission, using a signed and stored photo waiver
- The Facebook administrators are responsible to monitor the UUFM Facebook Page and groups and remove any content that does not comply with the guidelines contained herein. Habitual offenders may be banned from further contributions.
- Posting should be checked for inappropriate content on a weekly basis.
- New content should be added by an administrator at least once per week, and outdated material removed.
- All content will be consistent with the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism; present information that is accurate and relevant; be written in clear and grammatically correct prose; will avoid slander, libel, violations of copyright, profanity, off-color humor, and advocacy of political candidates; will not reveal private personal information, will not advertise commercial businesses (except UUFM Connect! as noted above)

**Email and Texting through Breeze**

*Purpose:* to communicate broadly about single issues, including online worship information, weather closings and emergencies, specific targeted groups of the congregation (e.g., families with children, those registered for special events, etc.).

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*Content and Guidelines:*

- Information is relevant to a single rather than to multiple concerns
- Information will come from Staff member or from delegates of the Board

**Group Texts among Teams and Committees**

A contact person will be designated for each Team, and this contact person is encouraged to create group text message chats open but *optional* to all members or interested parties of that group.

- The contact person will also be in charge of adding or removing the phone numbers or email addresses of the participants, starting with the current members of each Team.
- The purpose shall be to foster informational and speedy communication, such as meeting reminders or directions, among members and to facilitate the engagement of new or potential members. However, these channels of communication *will not take the place of official announcements* in the Weekly Update or on the Website.

**Submitting Articles and other Information for Publication**

Articles and information for publication should be sent to the UUFM office e-mail (uumankato@gmail.com) either embedded in the email or in an attachment. Any information submitted may be published in the Weekly Update, the OOS announcements, on the Webpage, and on Facebook unless it has been indicated otherwise.

Deadlines for submitting articles and other information:

- Weekly Update – by midnight on Tuesday
- OOS – by Thursday a.m.

**External Communications**

- Each UUFM team or committee is encouraged upon the decision of its members to do outreach or publicize UUFM or its events to the list of approved partner organizations, including Mankato Pride, SCC, MNSU, Mankato Fair Trade, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, local churches (add to list).
- Each team or committee will report on their outreach and/or publicity efforts at the annual UUFM meeting.
- This list of partner organizations can be updated anytime upon the approval of the Communications Team. “Outreach and publicity” ranges from tables at events to invitations sent to partner organizations, to announcements in the press or outside social media, to listing our partner organizations on relevant pages on the UUFM website, to requesting that UUFM be listed on partner organization websites.
- Visitors/attendees will be asked on the first-time visitor form: <https://uumankato.com/about-us/contact/> form if they are interested in learning more about any of the Teams/having someone contact them