

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax

Communications Operations Policy

Subject: Communications

Number: VII.B.

Effective Date: 9/16/15

Approved By: Coordinating Team

Revised: 04/23/23

Policy and Procedures

UUCF Communications Policy covers all communications produced to promote the mission, vision and values of UUCF and covers communications that use the name UUCF or Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax. To ensure a consistent communications focus - aligned with UUCF's mission and vision and values - the UUCF Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for message management to the UUCF Coordinating Team. The Coordinating Team authorizes the director of communications to review and edit all UUCF communications with this goal in mind. Disputes or questions that arise in relation to the design or content of UUCF communications may be taken to the Coordinating Team. Communications covered by this policy include, but are not limited to: Email announcements, Order of Service announcements, uucf.org or other UUCF websites, UUCF social media presence, congregational and program-oriented emails, newsletters and brochures, congregational blogs, banners, posters and flyers. See UUCF's [Social Media Policy](#) for specific guidance related to all social media carrying the UUCF name. For questions about any of these policies, contact the director of communications or the senior minister.

This policy also includes visual identity standards, which can be found at the end of this document. These standards cover use of the UUCF logo, logotype, colors and fonts in UUCF communications.

NOTE: For safety policies related to youth communicating with UUCF staff, see the [RE Safety Policies](#).

Email and website announcements

- All announcements are posted individually on uucf.org under What's Happening.
- The announcements for the coming week are sent out via email every Thursday morning. Additional special announcements may be sent out via email at other times at the discretion of the ministers in consultation with the director of communications.
- All announcements will be edited for clarity, brevity and style (see UUCF Editorial Style Guide attached to this policy).
- Thursday email announcements will be limited to the following: activities scheduled in the coming week, save-the-date notices, volunteer needs, gratitudes, caring news and other announcements requiring reader action in the coming week.

- To be included in the Thursday email, announcements are due by 5 p.m. Tuesdays. Announcements submitted after that time will be posted on the website and will be held for the following week's email announcements. The UUCF communications staff reserves the right to determine placement, frequency and inclusion based on available space and other priorities.
- Announcements from organizations and individuals outside UUCF will be posted in the Friends section of the website under What's Happening.
- Congregants may request a copy of the email announcements to be printed and mailed to them by contacting uucf@uucf.org.

Order of Service

- The Order of Service is posted before each Sunday's service on the website at uucf.org/oos and uucf.org/streaming.

Website

- Uucf.org is managed by the UUCF director of communications with assistance from the communications specialist and other staff and volunteers as determined by the director of communications.
- Items submitted for posting to the website are subject to editing by communications staff to ensure consistent style and clarity.
- Only core UUCF activities may receive home page exposure or links on the home page unless otherwise approved by the Coordinating Team.
- UUCF-related groups may request that pages be added for specific purposes. Communications staff will determine the placement and content of such pages with input from the group and approval from the Coordinating Team.
- For non-core event promotion, the communications staff will be able to produce basic web pages with basic UUCF Realm database payment structures.
- The website holds a variety of archived documents for congregational and external use (e.g., CT and Board meeting minutes and blogs). The website will make available the latest 2-years' worth of minutes and 5 years worth of blogs.

"Connections" email newsletter

- "Connections" is distributed via email every Monday.
- "Connections" includes the "Faith Matters" weekly blog (see below) and other feature content that promotes UUCF's mission, vision and values and helps build community within and beyond the congregation.
- Other feature content will be written by communications staff or other writers as needed.
- All content will be edited by communications staff for style, clarity and brevity, as needed.
- "Connections" is not a vehicle for announcements.
- Members may also request copies of the Monday "Connections" be printed and mailed to them by contacting uucf@uucf.org.

“Faith Matters” blog

- The “Faith Matters” blog is for the ministers, director of religious exploration, director of music and arts and lay leaders to share views and inspiration related to monthly themes, sermons, congregational events, program areas, world events that call for spiritual perspective or other content they want to share with the congregation. The blog should reflect the writer’s role in the congregation and their personal perspectives on the topic. Blogs should refrain as much as possible from promoting programs or events unless that promotion is germane to the viewpoint expressed. Blog length should be about two to four paragraphs.
- The “Faith Matters” blog is generally featured every Monday in the “Connections” newsletter. Additional blogs, as determined by the ministers in consultation with communications staff, are also featured at other times, as needed.
- The blog must reflect the mission, vision and values of UUCF.
- Communications staff edits and manages the blog in consultation with the ministers.

UUCF group newsletters

Any UUCF group that publishes a newsletter or other communication to be distributed within or outside of the UUCF community and that uses the UUCF name or logo is required to work with the director of communications to ensure the design is consistent with general UUCF branding, style and format, including the use of the UUCF logo. Communications staff reserves the right to edit for style and content any newsletter that is distributed publicly.

Brochures

- All UUCF brochures must use a UUCF template or one approved by the director of communications and/or the CT.
- Communications staff will edit all UUCF brochures for style and content.

Banners, posters and flyers

- UUCF office staff will design and print posters/flyers only for UUCF core events except as approved by the Coordinating Team. Flyers may not be handed to any worship attendees before or during the service without specific approval from the worship planning team.
- Congregants wishing to distribute flyers for UUCF programs/events after a service may do so at a table in the Commons or by approaching individuals in the Commons after services.
- Staff may ask event organizers to change the content of posters/flyers if staff finds any content to be inconsistent with UUCF mission, vision and values.

UUCF logo merchandise

UUCF groups wishing to use the logo on special promotional items must work with the director of communications to ensure alignment with visual identity standards.

Video and audio recordings

UUCF's AV tech records each Sunday worship service and prepares and posts a recording of the service on uucf.org/streaming at 7 p.m. every Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. A video recording of the sermon is prepared for posting to the UUCF YouTube channel and on uucf.org. An audio podcast is also available on uucf.org. These sermon videos and podcasts are archived for 5 years.

Lay leaders and other congregants may request communications staff to video record core UUCF events or make videos to support worship or promote core UUCF programs or activities (e.g., Annual Giving Campaign, Annual Auction). Such videos may be shown in worship services or UUCF events and/or featured on the UUCF YouTube channel, uucf.org or on UUCF social media.

Staff ability to produce such videos is contingent on available work hours and budget. Any requests to record events other than core UUCF events must be approved by the senior minister and a fee to cover the cost may be charged.

Videos may be produced by other UUCF staff or congregants, however, all videos that carry the UUCF name and/or logo, must be approved by UUCF communications staff and/or the Coordinating Team before being shown in a public setting or featured online.

Communications staff also prepare videos to support worship and other congregational activities.

Live streaming and licensing

UUCF live streams all Sunday services to the Internet for viewing by those unable to attend in person. The stream is available through a link on uucf.org.

UUCF maintains a license agreement giving copyright permission to use a limited amount of music and other worship materials. Only music and materials covered by that agreement may be shared on the UUCF YouTube channel or social media.

Wireless internet

UUCF maintains a wireless internet (Wi-Fi) network for use by staff, congregants and visitors. A guest network is available for non-staff use and can be accessed without a password by accepting the terms outlined. Upon accepting the guest network terms, users have 2 hours of access to the network, after which a new acceptance of terms and sign-in are required. Users are expected to refrain from viewing or downloading any material considered offensive, including but not limited to pornography, violent images/video or text or material that denigrates an individual or group. Failure to comply with this restriction may result in loss of access to the Wi-Fi network and the individual being asked to leave the premises. In addition, because bandwidth on the guest network is limited, users are encouraged to avoid downloading video unless needed for a UUCF-sponsored activity or approved in a rental agreement.

Users access the Internet through the UUCF network at their own risk and UUCF accepts no responsibility for computer viruses, malware or hacking that may occur while using the UUCF network.

UUCF also maintains a restricted, password-protected staff Wi-Fi network. In some cases, congregants may be given access to this restricted network if they have a legitimate UUCF-related need that can't be met through use of the guest network. Priority use for the available internet bandwidth is as follows:

- Live streaming of services and other UUCF-sponsored activities
- Staff use
- Children and youth Religious Exploration classes and activities
- Other UUCF-sponsored groups
- General congregant use
- Rentals

Featuring congregant opinions, reference materials and opinions in UUCF communications

Special communications through UUCF communication channels written by or promoted by a congregant or individual outside the congregation must be vetted and approved by the Coordinating Team in consultation with the Board to ensure it is consistent with and supports UUCF's mission.

UUCF editorial style

For UUCF communications and organizational documents that bear the name UUCF and/or the UUCF logo, UUCF had adopted an editorial style. Generally, this style is based on the Associated Press Stylebook. The UUCF Editorial Style Guide attached to this policy presents some items in the AP Stylebook that are used frequently at UUCF as well as UUCF-specific style. It also highlights style guidelines that are different from AP style.

UUCF Editorial Style Guide

Updated Apr. 25, 2023

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Punctuation

Commas

- Do not use serial commas before “and” or “or” in a series of three or more items.
- Use a comma before the conjunction in a compound sentence containing two or more independent clauses, each of which could have been written as a simple sentence.
EXAMPLES: *The boy went home alone, and his sister remained in the crowd.*
- Cities and states should be set off with commas as follows: *The applicant said she was from Baltimore, MD, and went to college in Utah.*

Semicolons

Use semicolons to separate elements of a series when the items in the series are long or when individual segments contain material that also must be set off by commas. Note that the semicolon is used before the final *and* in such a series. *EXAMPLE: He is survived by a son, John Smith, of Chicago; three daughters, Jane Smith, of Wichita, Kan., Mary Smith, of Denver, and Susan, of Boston; and a sister, Martha, of Omaha, Neb.*

Hyphenation

- Hyphenate words with prefixes only to enhance clarity. **Note:** This is UUCF style, not AP style. Examples: *pre-arrange, pre-empt, etc.* Always hyphenate words with the “co” prefix. Example: *co-chair*. *Words that are clear without hyphenation include: online, subcommittee, nonprofit, etc.*
- Do not hyphenate unit modifiers that have “-ly” adverbs. Examples: *the independently funded study*.

Quotations

- Place periods and commas within quotation marks; place semicolons outside the marks.
- Question marks go inside quotation marks if the question is a full sentence. Question marks go outside quotation marks when the question is part of another sentence.

Dashes

Put a space on both sides of a dash except when used to start a paragraph of notation.

- Use dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or an emphatic pause: *Example: Through her long reign, the queen and her family have adapted – usually skillfully – to the changing taste of the time.*
- When a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas, use dashes to set off the full phrase: *He listed the qualities – intelligence, humor, conservatism, independence – that he liked in an executive.*

Ellipsis (...)

In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces, as shown above.

- Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts and documents. Be especially careful to avoid deletions that would distort the meaning.
- If the words that precede an ellipsis constitute a grammatically complete sentence, place the sentence-ending punctuation at the end of the last word before the ellipsis. Follow it with a regular space and an ellipsis. Examples: I no longer want to offer that course. ... Will you be there? ...
- When material is deleted at the end of one paragraph and at the beginning of the one that follows, place an ellipsis in both locations.
- Do not use ellipses at the beginning and end of direct quotes. Good example: *"It has become evident to me that I no longer have support," he said.* Wrong example: *"... it has become evident to me that I no longer have support ...," he said.*

Numbers

General rule

- Spell out whole numbers below 10; use figures for 10 and above. (Examples: *They had three sons and two daughters. They had a fleet of 10 station wagons and two buses. They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters.*)
- Always use numerals with ages and periods of time and measurements. (Example: *The 2-year-old boy took 4 minutes to walk 8 feet.*)

Dates

- Use this format in announcements/order of service and other UUCF communications: (example: Tue., Mar. 19, 2015, 6-8:30 p.m.) NOTE: The exception

would be in posters and flyers where graphic aesthetics might require spelling out days and dates, and where AM/PM may be used instead of a.m./p.m.

- Always use a three-letter abbreviation with a period for day and date, with commas as shown.
- Never use “:00” for times on the hour.
- Never use 6 p.m – 8 p.m. Instead use 6-8 p.m.
- For “a.m.” and “p.m.,” always use lower case with periods following each letter. Never use PM or P.M. or pm.
- No apostrophe is used for the plural form of dates (e.g., 1940s, ‘80s = correct).
- When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.

EXAMPLES: *January 1972 was a cold month. Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month. His birthday is May 8. Feb. 14, 1987, was the target date. She testified that it was Fri., Dec. 3, when the accident occurred.*

Time and ages

- When referring to units of time, including days, years, ages or grade levels, always use the figure rather than the written-out form of the number (i.e., 5 years, 8 hours, 6 years old,).
- Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. (Examples: *A 5-year-old boy*, but *the boy is 5 years old.*)
- Avoid such redundancies as *10 a.m. this morning*, *10 p.m. tonight* or *10 p.m. Monday night*. Use *10 a.m.* or *10 p.m.*

Telephone Numbers

- Use this format: 703-281-4230, not (703) 281-4230, or 703.281.4230.

Ranges

- For numeric ranges, use 25-35 (not 25 to 35). **Note:** This is UUCF style, not AP style.

Fractions

Spell out amounts less than 1 in stories, using hyphens between the words: *two-thirds*, *four-fifths*, *seven-sixteenths*, etc.

Percent

- Use the % sign. **Note:** This is UUCF style, not AP style.
- Do not repeat “%” in ranges (e.g., “15% to 20%”). Instead, delete the first usage of % and use a hyphen instead of the word “to” (e.g., “15-20%”).

Dimensions/measurements

- Use figures and spell out inches, feet, yards, etc., to indicate depth, height, length and width. Hyphenate adjectival forms before nouns.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

General rule: Call out acronyms/abbreviation at first mention within a section. Replace all subsequent uses of that callout with an acronym/abbreviation. Exception: UUCF does not need to be spelled out on first use.

Capitalization

UUCF buildings/spaces

Capitalize the names of all UUCF buildings and all major spaces: Program Building, Administration Building, Sanctuary, Commons, Nursery, Chapel, Teen Center, Classroom 1, etc. **Note:** This is UUCF style, not AP style.

Job Titles

Full job titles directly associated with a person's name should be capitalized. All other uses should be lower case. Example: *We welcome UUCF's Senior Minister Rev. David A. Miller. He became senior minister in August 2015.*

Lists

- Punctuation should be consistent within the list (i.e., each item is followed by a period or none is).
- Lists of names should be alphabetized (if not sequential).

Headlines

- Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized.
- Follow story style in spelling but use numerals for all numbers and single quotes for quotation marks. Exception: use *US*, *UK* and *UN* (no periods) in all headlines.

Electronic communication terms

- "Email" is correct. Unless it starts the sentence, the "e" should be lowercase and there is no hyphen between the "e" and the "mail."
- Use a hyphen with other *e-* terms: *e-book*, *e-business*, *e-commerce*.
- "Website" is correct. Unless it starts a sentence, the "w" should be lowercase. When referring to the World Wide Web, always capitalize.

- Lowercase “internet.”
- “Wi-Fi” is correct, not Wifi, Wi-Fi, Wi-fi
- “Data” and “staff” always take plural verbs (e.g., data ARE, staff ARE).

Composition titles

Apply the guidelines listed here to book titles, movie titles, play titles, poem titles, album and song titles and radio and television program titles, computer game titles and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art.

- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Capitalize an article - the, a, an - or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title. Examples: “UU World,” “Gone With the Wind,” “Of Mice and Men.”
- Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks and similar publications. Examples: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary.
- Sermon titles, computer game or software titles and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art are capitalized but should not be contained in quotes. **Examples:** Facebook, Microsoft Word, Words with Friends.

Cities, states, U.S.

When a city is listed with its state, the two-letter postal code for the state is used as follows: The applicant said she was from Baltimore, MD. When only the state name is used, it should be spelled out: Utah, Vermont, etc. **Note:** This is UUCF style, not AP style.

- The abbreviation for United States should be U.S., except in headlines, when it should be US.

Anti-oppression editorial guidelines

While UUCF does not currently have its own anti-oppression style guide, in its writing and editing, UUCF staff aim to align communications with the congregation’s mission and values. To that end they strive to lift up access, inclusion and liberation, rather than unconsciously perpetuating bias, prejudice and oppression. To help do this, the staff generally follow the guidance of Radical Copy Editor, radicalcopyeditor.com, and other sources like transjournalist.org.