

Christ UMC Communications Policy – Effective October 2017

Communication Policy Overview

How we present ourselves to the public and to our own congregation is an important part of our message. Therefore, we have developed a policy that reflects and gives structure to our image. **We want our image to show that we are a congregation which transforms lives in the love of Jesus Christ enabling people to encounter Christ, grow as Christ's disciples and serve others.** Additionally, as we grow, a policy ensures consistency in message, appearance and implementation. It helps us to spread our message in the most effective way. "Information overload" from too much and/or too many different types of communication does not allow us to successfully communicate our message.

This policy focuses on how we tell God's story through the people, events and activities at Christ UMC. It covers the following areas:

- **Publicity and Promotion**
- **Weekly Bulletin and Newsletters**
- **Email Communication**
- **Church Lobby Information and Bulletin Boards**
- **Registrations and Signups**
- **Website and Social Media Presence**
- **Signage**

Planning a Christ UMC Event or Activity

When planning a Christ UMC event or activity it is important to consider time and resources. Please contact the church office when an event is being planned and fill out the **Christ UMC Event Form** provided by the office or on the church website. Your activity or event will then be assigned a Christ UMC staff member to serve as liaison and to secure approval of the event/activity, date and resources needed. A communication plan will be developed between your event liaison and the Christ UMC Office Manager and Secretary. Other Christ UMC staff or volunteers that need to be involved with the Communication plan will be notified through the church office. The communication plan for your event **may** include any or all of the following:

- Lobby Usage
- Paper Flyers, Posters or Electronic Display
- Online registration and signups
- Paper Registration and signups
- Announcement in Worship Program
- Announcement in Sunday Services
- Announcement in Monday Rundown Email
- Christ UMC Evangel Article for the appropriate month
- Feature on Christ UMC Website
- Event notice on Christ UMC Facebook site
- Posting on Christ UMC Facebook, twitter or Instagram site
- Announcement on Christ UMC's electronic sign
- Usher Handouts

In order for us to be able to communicate effectively and in a timely manner, please allow ample time and provide as much detail as possible on the **Christ UMC Event Form**. Due to various deadlines and staff

limitations we cannot guarantee a successful communications plan if we have less than two weeks' notice! **Two months minimum** is requested for major events/activities.

Signage

Any/all **signs, flyer or electronic display requests require review and approval** from the Christ UMC Office Staff. Approved signs and posters **may be placed only in designated areas** and with appropriate fixtures. No tape, nails, tacks, etc. should be placed on walls, counters, cupboards, bathroom partitions or doors.

Church Lobby Information and Other Postings

Our church lobby is similar to the living room in your home. It creates a lasting first impression and tells a story about the occupants of the home. Our goal is to tell Christ UMC's story in a clean, attractive, comfortable, uncluttered environment, so that the messages can be clear, impactful and memorable.

- **Flyers, signs, posters (Paper or Electronic)**
 - Information about events in the community must be approved by the church office. Events may not conflict with a Christ UMC event and/or worship service. We will not accept business cards, political statements or articles or business "opportunities". Items will be removed once the event is over or after the item has been there for 2-3 weeks. Inappropriate items may be removed.
- **Daily Devotionals** (regular and large print) will have a designated display location. Please keep counters and tabletops clear of pamphlets and other miscellaneous information.
- **The Christ UMC Evangel** (monthly newsletter) will be placed in a designated display location for distribution and pick up. The Evangel is published and distributed the last Sunday of the month for the next month.
- **Scheduling of the church lobby** is handled through our communication plan and ultimately the church office. *Care will be taken so that no more than two tables* are used in the lobby for the purpose of information, sales, sign ups, mission of the month displays etc. Scheduling of the church lobby is not necessarily done on a first come, first serve basis. If there is a request for more than 2 tables it will be discussed during staff meetings to determine priority levels.

Registrations and Signups

- **Registration** for bible studies, activities and events **should be offered online** whenever possible. Your staff liaison will work with you and the church office to create the online registration.
- **Paper signups** and registrations may be utilized in the Sign-up designated display location. Contact the church office staff for assistance in developing a paper signup sheet.
- When in-person assistance is needed for registrations (ie: when money is being exchanged or appointments are being set) **a table in the lobby** may be requested, however, the rule for the lobby still applies and no more than 2 tables may be set up in one week. Please give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice. Late requests will be accommodated whenever possible. Church events and activities will always have priority in this area.

Weekly Worship Program Announcements

The main purpose of the **worship program is to serve as a guide for worship** at the 8:30 and 11:00 am services. As such, announcements included should be brief and limited to events and activities that are near term events and activities of the church that are open to either all members or large segments of the membership and community. Bulletin announcements should be limited to 3-5 sentences. All weekly worship program announcement requests should be sent to the church secretary for consideration **no later than Monday the week you want it to run**. Inserts to the worship program are not normally considered unless approved as exceptions by the Senior Pastor. As much as we would like to be able to print every submission, everything is

subject to final approval by the church office (based on size restriction, content and priority). If your submission is not approved for the bulletin announcements or there is no space there are other promotional options available.

Announcements/presentations before or during worship services (Oral)

Announcements during worship will be made by the Senior Pastor or designated replacement. All requests for announcements or presentations before or during worship services should be directed to the Senior Pastor at least **the Wednesday prior to the service**. Most announcement and presentations will take place during the announcement time and these things will be planned with the help of the Senior Pastor so that the flow of worship is not interrupted. Again, as much as we wish we could accommodate everyone, announcements will be determined by the senior pastor and are priority based, not first come first serve.

Monday Rundown Email Update

The church provides a **weekly email update** with upcoming activities to its visitors, members and staff who have submitted functioning email addresses. Requests for announcements to be included in the update should be **submitted by the Friday before** to the church secretary to ensure inclusion.

Monthly Newsletter (Christ UMC Evangel)

The church provides a **monthly newsletter** to report on past and upcoming church activities and events. Please submit article requests or photos to the church secretary. The **deadline** for the Evangel is the **12th of the month**. If you are a regular contributor to the Evangel please contact the Church Secretary and get on the email list for Evangel reminders and deadline exceptions. The Evangel is usually distributed the last Sunday of the month for the next month.

Church Website

The church has one authorized website, www.cumclansdale.org to represent its ministries, events, activities, staff members and membership. Christ UMC Preschool has their own website to represent the preschool at www.christumcpreschool.com. All requests for changes, corrections or additions to the church's web site may be directed to the Office Manager. The website can be used to highlight larger events and more long-term items.

Church Facebook Event Notices and Postings to Social Media

If you have an announcement, request, event photos or video etc. that you would like to promote on the Christ UMC Facebook page, please contact the **church office or the Social Media Coordinator**. We have select people set as administrators on these pages and they are the people that can post events and updates etc. Also, it is important that any video or photos are authorized for use and that we have a photo release signed by the parents/guardian of those under 18. Once an event or update is posted we ask that all members and church leaders to engage and share the events and invite others! This allows more people to see the good works we are doing!

Christ UMC Outdoor Electronic Sign

The outdoor sign on Valley Forge Road is considered an evangelism tool and therefore only programs and announcements meant to **reach the community** will be posted. Internal programs meant for members and regular attendees will generally not be listed. Any request for the church sign must be directed to the church office. The sign will feature no more than three rotating messages in addition to a slide featuring our worship times and a sign for the Korean Church. The sign will display things that are happening within 7-10 days. Sign

messages must be very brief and no more than 2 lines of text. Your staff liaison can assist you with crafting a message for the sign should you need assistance.

Print and online advertising, marketing and information

No print or online advertising, marketing or information (including newspapers, magazines or online advertising) should be arranged – with or without cost – on the church’s behalf without review and approval through the church office.

On-site and off-site printing

Church staff, paper, copies and printers are resources **reserved primarily for church communications**. These communications include, but are not limited to weekly worship programs; funeral and memorial bulletins; monthly newsletters; bible study and small group information; visitor, new member and other informational flyers or booklets. Staff members and volunteers that need assistance in formatting or printing should contact the Office Manager to request these services as far in advance as possible. If church resources for that time period are exhausted, staff members and volunteers may choose to use off-site printing. In either case, all **printed materials need to be approved** by the Church office prior to distribution.

Emergency Communications

When a **significant event** or grave situation occurs at Christ UMC or preschool, it is important to communicate the event or grave situation to the Senior Pastor immediately. This may include, but is not limited to, natural disasters, accidents with injury or death, law enforcement or firefighter notification and response, and serious misconduct by a member, student, faculty or staff. No member or staff person should speak on behalf of the church without receiving prior consent from the Senior Pastor or President of the Board of Trustees.

The Senior Pastor or President of the Board of Trustees will decide if the building is to be closed at any time including cancelling worship services. This will be communicated via the Christ UMC outdoor electronic sign, Facebook, email, phone calls and the church’s voicemail system. The Pre-school will generally follow North Penn School District weather related closures and delays, unless the Senior Pastor has decided to close the building.

Privacy of church member and staff information

Christ UMC is committed to **maintaining the privacy** of its membership. The church will take all reasonable measures to ensure the confidentiality of member information to include but not be limited to home addresses, family membership, email addresses and contact information. Email distribution lists, contact lists or mailing lists containing member information may be used only for communications related to the activities of the church, staff committees or sponsored groups. Under no circumstances may member lists be used to solicit or communicate events or activities which are not specifically church-related.