



# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP of HUNTERDON COUNTY

*Nurturing Spiritual Journeys, Expanding Social Justice.*

## Communications Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

This policy was developed to paint a vision of the kind of communication we want and expect from our members and friends— the kind of communication that is socially responsible, respectful of our community, and in keeping with our Unitarian Universalist principles. This policy is also designed to take a stand against incivility and abuse and to help provide a safe environment within which to express ourselves. It is a work in progress and will take on the spirit and nature of this beloved community as it evolves. This policy may elicit a response among thoughtful U.U.'s along the lines of, "Of course!" But there are areas where the evolving nature of communications makes a clear answer less obvious. To this end, a section on frequently asked questions has been added at the end. Additional questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Communications Committee at [commconvener@hunterdonuu.org](mailto:commconvener@hunterdonuu.org).

### 2. SCOPE

This Communications Policy applies to any FUUFHC publications, FUUFHC bulletin board, FUUFHC website or internet, all online or mobile-based tools for sharing content and discussing information, whether controlled by the First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hunterdon County (FUUFHC) or hosted on other platforms (such as Facebook), when members of the FUUFHC community engage in activities relating to FUUFHC or FUUFHC programs (or when members are representing the views of FUUFHC, organizing FUUFHC events, or commenting on FUUFHC or its events or members).

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Channels:** The various tools that FUUFHC may use to communicate with members, friends, and the general public. Examples include the Sunday order of service, listserv, newsletter, Facebook, and the public website. Each of these is a channel for information and may be used for different types and frequency of communication.

**Official vs. Personal:**

Official communications are used by FUUFHC staff and laypeople to communicate with members, friends, and the general public. They represent the voice of the fellowship and are subject at all times to this policy.

Personal communications are the day-to-day interactions between the members of our community and may include e-mails, Facebook posts, comments on a website, or casual conversation. Being personal, they are not considered the official voice of FUUFHC but are nonetheless a reflection on our community.

This policy, while not binding for personal communications, should be considered a guideline for such interactions.

**Moderator, Producer, Editor:** A person who takes on a supervisory role for a publication, listserv, fan page, or message board. Someone who has the authority to rule on policy and make decisions regarding online content.

#### **Internal vs. External Communications:**

Internal communications are those intended only for Friends and Members of the FUUFHC, and therefore, at a higher level of trust and openness. For example, some internal media are—

- a) The Cornerstone newsletter posted on Dropbox or available hard-copy;
- b) The Sunday Order of Service;
- c) The FUUFHC Photo Directory;
- d) The FUUFHC Facebook page (Nurturing Spiritual Journeys; invited members only);
- e) The FUUFHC Listserve—[groups.yahoo.com/group/FUUFHC/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FUUFHC/);
- f) Announcements on the Dodd Hall bulletin boards.

External communications are those intended for a public audience, and therefore, places to be more cautious with information that might be misused. For example,

- a) The FUUFHC website—[hunterdonuu.org](http://hunterdonuu.org);
- b) The FUUFHC Facebook Fan Page—(First UU Fellowship of Hunterdon County) [Facebook.com/FUUFHC](https://www.facebook.com/FUUFHC);
- c) The Dreaming Tree concert series communications; and
- d) Press kits and articles prepared for publication in local newspapers.

**Social Media:** Activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction through the use of words, images, video or audio tools. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, social websites, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image- and video-sharing sites, live webcasting and real-time web communities. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy.

**Traditional Media:** Include books, newsletters, directories, and the bulletin board in Dodd Hall.

*For other definitions, consult sources such as Google.com, or Wikipedia.com.*

#### **4. GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES**

- Respect the privacy of others – do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of minors, written permission of their parents or guardians.
- Be selective – there are a variety of media available-- digital, audio, and print. Use the right medium for your message – a blog or social network might not be the right place for messages intended only for a small group, and email or other means might be best.
- Be responsible – social media are individual interactions, not official congregational communications, except for the FUUFHC website, FUUFHC Listserve, FUUFHC Facebook Fan Page, which are official congregational communications and must follow these strictures. Friends and Members of the

- FUUFHC community are personally responsible for their posts. Official statements of congregational policy are approved through the FUUFHC Executive Board, the Minister, and FUUFHC Administrator.
- Be smart – a blog, podcast, or community post is visible and/or audible to the entire world. Remember that what you publish will be public, and potentially for a long time. Be respectful to our community.
  - Identify yourself – authenticity and transparency are driving forces behind social and other media. Use real identities to the greatest extent possible rather than anonymous posts and comments.
  - Be respectful – FUUFHC is a thoughtful and responsible community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with civility. Respect your audience, express your views with appropriate language, and be respectful of thoughts and beliefs of others, as the principles of Unitarian Universalism advise.
  - Do not tell secrets – respect the confidentiality of matters that are shared with you in confidence, or that are meant to be kept confidential by the nature of your work, ministry or volunteer mission.

“I’m a great believer that any tool that enhances communication has profound effects in terms of how people can learn from each other, and how they can achieve the kind of freedoms that they are interested in.” – Bill Gates

## 5. SPECIFIC POLICIES

**Use of Official Name and Logo:** Outside of official communications, any use of the FUUFHC name or logo for branding or titling pages, blogs, or other similar elements of social media or publications must be approved in writing prior to use. In general, the FUUFHC name or logo may not be used in any personal, commercial, or promotional way, such as on T-shirts, buttons, or banners, without written approval through the Communications Group. Requests for prior consent to use any such names or logos should be made to the Communications Group through [commconvener@hunterdonuu.org](mailto:commconvener@hunterdonuu.org). Permission to use the name or logo of the congregation may be revoked at any time at the sole discretion of the FUUFHC Executive Board.

**Interpretation:** In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should answer communications questions, members should consult the Communications Group through [comconvener@hunterdonuu.org](mailto:comconvener@hunterdonuu.org), bearing in mind FUUFHC’s need to preserve accountability for the use of its name in all media.

**Duties of Moderators, Editors, and Producers for FUUFHC sites:** Friends and Members of the FUUFHC community are personally responsible for their posts on any FUUFHC or social media site. However, official statements of congregational policy are approved through the FUUFHC Executive Board. Moderators, editors, and producers of official FUUFHC media are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Communication Policy and consulting staff or Board members when appropriate.

Moderators’ duties:

- a) All FUUFHC comment and blog response areas must be moderated.
- b) Those responsible for such areas will remove posts that violate our standards for civility, misrepresent the position of the congregation or FUUFHC Board, or that include profanity, defamatory language or speech that is otherwise inappropriate or off-topic.
- c) Moderators will not permit anonymous comments.
- d) All moderators reserve the right to ban repeat offenders.

- e) Moderators will ensure that all photographs will comply with the Photography/Video Permission Policy outlined herein. Moderators will regularly review and revisit the rules for their sites with subscribers/members/participants.

**Photography/Video Permission Policy:** This section of the policy is divided into separate sections for minors and for adults. It is intended for the governance of individuals acting on behalf of the FUUFHC. The Fellowship recognizes that it has no legal control over the behaviors of individuals acting on their own discretion, but wishes for Members and Friends to understand that the overall goal of this policy is to ensure the safety and privacy of all. Examples of photo permission forms are provided in the appendices of this policy.

**Minors** – Minors must have written parental permission to be photographed and to appear in any FUUFHC publications, FUUFHC bulletin board, or FUUFHC-sponsored website. No personally identifiable information will be used in any external publication except when express consent is given by that minor's parent or guardian. For internal publications (offered only to FUUFHC Members and Friends), only the minor's first name and last initial should be used. A group photo caption might refer to the class group (1-4th graders) or to another general title, ex: "students in our FUUFHC RE program."

**Adults** – Participation in internal or external media including photographs or video or audio recordings are entirely at the discretion of the individual. If adults are going to be photographed, recorded, or videotaped, this fact will be advertised on all promotional materials for the event at which the photography, recording, or videotaping will take place. A good faith effort will be made to notify event attendees through all possible channels in advance if photography, recording, and/or videotaping are to occur. For events at which people may normally have an expectation of privacy, or events with which people may run some risk by being publicly identified, the extra step of obtaining written permission from each person in advance will be made. In some circumstances, blanket/broad permission for photography will be requested. If the congregation receives a request from someone featured in a photograph or video segment to have that photograph or video segment removed from a congregational website, et cetera, we will do our best to honor that request. If a recording is made of a worship service or other presentation that may include copyrighted material, all copyright laws will be respected.

**Individual Judgment:** Even when engaging in social media for personal use, the comments of a member of the FUUFHC community may be viewed as a reflection on FUUFHC. Users should use their best judgment when engaging in social media activities and should be on guard against actions and discussions that could harm the interests of our community.

**Transparency:** Users' social media communications are made in their personal capacity and not on behalf of FUUFHC. Statements made by members of the FUUFHC community should not be taken as expressing the formal position of FUUFHC unless the speaker is specifically authorized to do so by the FUUFHC Executive Board.

**Copyright Laws:** Users must comply fully with copyright law when posting and uploading copyrighted materials. Any posting of materials to official FUUFHC social media must be limited to materials in which the party seeking to post the information owns the copyright, or materials for which permission for use has been obtained from the author/publisher. Images and other materials from the FUUFHC websites shall not be copied and uploaded to other forums without the prior written consent of the Moderator for that site or as expressly indicated by that person's role (via FUUFHC Policy and Procedures). This policy should not be

construed to limit discussion of matters using the FUUFHC name, and it should not be interpreted to limit users' ability to link to FUUFHC sites.

**Privacy:** All users of social media within the FUUFHC community should take care to safeguard the privacy interests of other community members. In particular, personally identifiable information (that is, information that can identify a particular person, including name, phone number, address or email address) should not be disclosed publicly without the prior consent of the person identified. And in all cases, respect the confidentiality of matters that are told to you in private or which by their nature are meant to be kept confidential.

**Minors:** Social media maintained by FUUFHC are not intended for the use of children under the age of 13. Any site operated by FUUFHC that is oriented toward youth between the ages of 13 and 18 must require registration for all users and must be password-protected so that only registered users may access the site. Registration for such a site must require the use of a legal name and valid contact information, such as an operational email address. Users of such a site may not post images of minors without the prior written consent of a parent or legal guardian of any minor depicted and must conform to the Photography/Video Permission Policy above.

**Compliance Concerns:** Any use of social media that does not comply with this policy should be brought to the attention of the Communications Group, Minister, and/or FUUFHC Executive Board.

## 6. Bibliography of Related FUUFHC Policies

The following policies are available at [hunterdonuu.org](http://hunterdonuu.org) and viewed by request at Dodd Hall:

- a) Building Use
- b) FUUFHC By-Laws
- c) Communications
- d) Logo Use
- e) Sacred Space & Time
- f) Safe Congregation

## 7. FAQ

**Is it okay to take personal photos at FUUFHC events?** It's up to you, but we suggest you take into consideration the wishes and well-being of others in the congregation. The easiest way to do this is simply to ask people if they mind being photographed. If you use social media like Facebook and would identify people, we suggest you ask them if this is okay before you do. In other words, exercise common courtesy.

**How do I make announcements about FUUFHC-related events without revealing personally identifiable information?** There are two kinds of communication we are concerned with: external to the Fellowship and internal. If the communication is external—intended for a public audience, not limited to the church—you need to okay with anyone cited whether or not it's acceptable to publish last names, photos, or other personal information. If the communication is internal—intended for Members and Friends of the Fellowship—then the level of trust is higher and, generally, first and last names together with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are acceptable. However, all citations of personal information—both internal and external—should

be approved in essence before publication so that information is correct and approvals are given. The FUUFHC Listserve, orders of service, and the Cornerstone newsletter (see Appendix A) are some of the ways to communicate with the Members and Friends of FUUFHC; hunterdonuu.org, and the FUUFHC Facebook Fan page are open to both FUUFHC Friends and Members, as well as to the public.

**If I occasionally make comments about FUUFHC events on my Facebook wall, does that mean I can't post pictures of my own child with his 'minor' friends because I don't have photo permissions?** No, because even if you occasionally comment about FUUFHC events, your own Facebook page is for your own personal use, not an official FUUFHC site. Still, it's a good idea to check with the parents of your child's friends and ask them whether it's okay to post the photos.

**What if I have a birthday party for my child and invite her FUUFHC friends. Can I post the photos I take of her blowing out her birthday candles without getting permission from each of the parents of FUUFHC children?** Again, your Facebook page is for your own personal use, even if the photos you take are of FUUFHC friends and members. It only stops being your own personal space if you are making official announcements or linking those photos to a FUUFHC site. However, ethically, it would be considerate, responsible, and mindful of your FUUFHC relationships for you to address the issue with the parents of your child's friends before you post the photos.

**Is it okay to take a photo of children at a child dedication?** The answer would have to be, "It depends..." If you post the photo to your Facebook page and tag the children and adults in the pictures, then, "No. It's not okay." But if you send Grandma the photo attached to an e-mail, identifying only the special grandbaby in question, then, "Yes. Probably." We aren't the only ones to be protective of information about our minors. There are rules about the kind of information that can be shared about children under the age of thirteen. Review [www.ftc.gov/privacy/privacyinitiatives/childrens.html](http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/privacyinitiatives/childrens.html) for more information about the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule.

**Is it okay to record or podcast a Sunday Service?** Probably not. If you think about it, it makes sense. Announcements may include information people wouldn't want linked. Music may be copyrighted. Sermons are definitely the intellectual property of the person giving the sermon. And if it hasn't been announced ahead of time, then people won't be expecting themselves to be photographed and might not like it. So, on the whole, it would be disrespectful to record, and it might be illegal too! Besides, there are programmatic elements of a Sunday service that the recording could disrupt or impair.

**I've seen people taking pictures during a service. Is that still okay?** Well, if we stick to our guns, or policy, everyone should know ahead of time whether or not photographs may be taken. We attempt to record sermons for posterity, with the permission of the speaker. And sometimes—like a Christmas pageant or a Music Sunday—the performances of our laity are so outstanding that we just 'have to' take photos! For such special events, a general announcement will be made on the church calendar (hunterdonuu.org), the FUUFHC Listserve, and in preceding orders of service, announcing a blanket permission for photography. Those who wish to remain out of the camera's range may contact the Communications Group or even request that their photos be removed from the resulting images.

**How about the church picnic? Can I take photos at that event?** This is one of those events at which it might be reasonable to expect that folks will want to take photos...which might end up in the newsletter or on Facebook. For photos that will be used in FUUFHC publications or on FUUFHC sites, you'll need to get

permission from the people you're photographing. And in that case, all the guidelines about what information may be posted online or in publications about adults and minors still applies. But for your own personal photos or videos, then your own judgment is your best guide.

**If I see someone taking a photograph of minors at FUUFHC and don't know who they are or whether or not the parents of that child have given permission, what do I do?** DON'T PANIC. In most cases the photographer will be someone with a close connection to the child in question. We should be vigilant but also trust that parents will be the most pro-active in protecting their children's welfare. Minors should generally be in the charge of some adult while at FUUFHC. This might be the RE teacher, the DRE, the childcare giver, a relative, the child's own parent, or a baby-sitter. You might approach the responsible adult and ask whether or not the parent has given permission for the child to be photographed; that way the adult-in-charge can inform the photographer about the parents' wishes should the need arise. And the DRE is a reliable stand-in when in doubt, as the RE Committee will have information on file about all FUUFHC children.

**How do people who come to services for the first time learn about the guidelines in the FUUFHC Communications Policy?** Really good question! It is likely that the Order of Service will carry a box each Sunday with a general announcement something like this:

**About Photography at FUUFHC:** Uncopyrighted material from special events may be videotaped or photographed for personal use only. If you share images electronically, please don't associate photos/videos with names. Written permission must be obtained from parents prior to photographing minors. THANKS for your help!

After that, people will hear about the Communications Policy in committee meetings, on the FUUFHC website, in the FUUFHC Listserve, and the Cornerstone.

#### APPENDIX A – OFFICIAL CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

<i>Channel</i>	<i>Site/Contact Info</i>	<i>Comments / Deadlines</i>
FUUFHC Administrator Minister Director of Religious Education	admin@hunterdonuu.org minister@hunterdonuu.org dre@hunterdonuu.org	
FUUFHC website	web@hunterdonuu.org	3 days' notice required for event postings or revisions
Order of Service (OOS)	admin@hunterdonuu.org hunterdonuu.org/announcement-submission	Submit items by Tuesday at noon
The Cornerstone Newsletter	newsletter@hunterdonuu.org	Submit items by the 25 <sup>th</sup> of each month

FUUFHC Listserve	groups.yahoo.com/group/FUUFHC/fuufhc@yahoogroups.com	Listserve members may post items at any time. Contact FUUFHC-owner@yahoogroups.com/groups.yahoo.com/group/FUUFHC to subscribe
FUUFHC Facebook fan page	facebook.com/FUUFHC  * A private Facebook page is for members only and can include images from the fellowship, private issues, and private conversation. Email facebook@hunterdonuu.org to be invited to the private page.	Moderated, but open to the public
FUUFHC Press releases	outreachpr@hunterdonuu.org	
FUUFHC Photo Directory	membership@hunterdonuu.org	

**APPENDIX B – SAMPLE PHOTO PERMISSION**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give permission to The First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hunterdon County (FUUFHC) to **use my name and image** in the following way:

*Please check one:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>All Communications</b>	My name and image may be used for both internal (non-public) and external (public) FUUFHC publications, such as the fellowship website (hunterdonuu.org), newspaper articles, videos, or other promotional materials as well as the Photo Directory, The Cornerstone newsletter, or The Week Ahead e-mail bulletin. I understand that reasonable efforts will be made to confirm permission for specific items that will be made public.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Internal Only</b>	My name and image may be used for any non-public FUUFHC publications or videos, such as the internal FUUFHC Photo Directory, The Cornerstone newsletter, or The Week Ahead e-mail bulletin.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Photo Directory Only</b>	My name and image may only be used for the internal FUUFHC Photo Directory, <i>which is not made publicly available.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No Uses</b>	My name and image may not be used for the any internal or external FUUFHC publications or videos.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B – SAMPLE PHOTO PERMISSION (CHILD)**

**Child/ren’s Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give permission to The First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hunterdon County (FUUFHC) to **use my child/ren’s name(s) and image** in the following ways:



<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>External</b>	My child/ren's image (without other identifying information) may be used for any external ( <i>public</i> ) FUUFHC communications, such as the fellowship website (hunterdonuu.org), newspaper articles, videos, or other promotional materials. I understand that reasonable efforts will be made to confirm permission for specific items that will be made public.
<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Internal</b>	My child/ren's image (without other identifying information) may be used for any internal ( <i>non-public</i> ) FUUFHC communications, such as The Cornerstone newsletter, or The Week Ahead e-mail bulletin.
<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Photo Directory</b>	My child/ren's name (first name and last initial) and image may be used for the internal FUUFHC Photo Directory, <i>which is not made publicly available</i> .

I hereby give permission to The First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hunterdon County (FUUFHC) to **communicate with my child** in the following way(s):

<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Texting students directly (Grades 6-12)</b>	RE Program leaders may text my child/ren directly at his/her personal cell phone number with RE information only.
<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Emailing students directly (Grades 6-12)</b>	RE Program leaders may email my child/ren directly at his/her personal email address with RE information only.
<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Listserve (Grades 6-12)</b>	My child/ren may be invited to and participate in the FUUFHC Listserve.
<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FUUFHC Facebook pages (Grades 6-12)</b>	My child/ren may be invited to and participate in the FUUFHC Community Facebook pages. These are closed groups which are not seen by the public.
<u>Yes</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>No</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FUUFHC Sr. High Youth Facebook page (Grades 9-12)</b>	My child/ren may be invited to and participate in the FUUFHC Sr. High Youth Facebook page. This is a closed group that is not seen by the public and is moderated by the FUUFHC staff.

Parent/Guardian's Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_