

## Shawnee Mission UU Church Communications Policy

Our various communications tools (Website, Weekly E-Mail, Order of Service, Social Media) are intended to affirm our religious values and educate and inform members, friends and guests of the congregation of our ongoing programs, events, finances, church policy, UU philosophy and other related activities.

The Board affirms the responsibility of the Editor/Webmaster/Administrator(s) to exercise discretion in interpreting content policy within the framework of these guidelines.

Depending on resource constraints, emphasis is placed on the following information, in priority order:

1. Activities, programs, calendar items and information directly concerning the congregation;
2. Information from the Minister, President, Director of Congregational Life, the Director of Religious Education for Children; and the Music Director;
3. Denominational announcements and information;
4. Items of interest from members that directly relate to our UU Principles.

Items submitted by individuals, organizations, or congregations which advertise a fee-based activity that is not in direct support of the mission of our church will not be published. Items that are submitted by individuals, organizations, or congregations for non-fee based activities of relevance to SMUU Church members and friends may be published as resources allow, with preference given to members of SMUU Church. Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis. (Please note that a member bulletin board is available in the foyer of the church for member-to-member communication, as well.)

Submissions should be as brief and succinct as possible. The Editor/Webmaster/Administrator(s) are empowered to abbreviate and edit as deemed necessary. Items will generally be published as submitted. However, it must be remembered that, as a religious community, the church cannot endorse any political party or candidate. If the Editor/Webmaster/Administrator(s) feel a particular item raises an issue which might be divisive or has the potential to offend or alienate a group or individual, or if the item is primarily of a personal nature, the Editor/Webmaster/Administrator(s) may either refuse to publish the item, or edit the content. They may, but are not required to, consult with the Minister or Board President before making such decision. The individual who submitted the item will be informed of that decision.

Because areas of the Website and our Social Media tools are accessible to the entire world and open to scrutiny from all, it can be inappropriate to include certain sensitive information. The Webmaster/Administrator will consider suggested content with an eye toward protecting the privacy of those served by the congregation.

This includes:

- No last names of minors will be published
- Limited use of phone numbers, addresses or email addresses except church staff and current lay leadership
- Limited inclusion of personal news of interest to the congregation only, but not to the entire world, such as “Joys and Concerns.”
- Limited use of last names when identifying individuals in photographs

Groups affiliated with the church (book groups, parenting groups, etc) that maintain their own web presence are asked to let the church office know the URL and administrator contact information for their site so that we can refer members to the site as needed. When a link is placed on the church website to one of these affiliated groups’ sites, a message will appear to notify users that they are leaving the church website. The webmaster will also review such links periodically for appropriateness. We ask that affiliated groups place this disclaimer on their site: *This \_\_\_\_\_ (website, facebook group) is a communications tool for the \_\_\_\_\_ (Thursday Book Group, Parenting Group). For official communications of the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church, visit [www. smuuchurch.org](http://www.smuuchurch.org)*

We will not display identifiable photographs of people on our web site or in any of our publications distributed to the general public unless a release form has been signed by the person(s) appearing in the photograph. Photographs of minors will not be published unless a similar release has been signed by a parent or legal guardian.

Information that needs to be communicated to the congregation should be sent to the church administrator ([markum@smuuchurch.org](mailto:markum@smuuchurch.org)). The deadline for the Weekly E-Mail and Sunday Order of Service is 11 a.m. Wednesday. The administrator will forward information to the webmaster as appropriate. If needed, members can also contact the webmaster directly at [smuuchinfo@gmail.com](mailto:smuuchinfo@gmail.com).

Given the rapid change in the social media landscape, this policy will be reviewed annually, at the direction of the Director of Congregational Life.

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