

St. Andrew By-The-Sea UMC

Communications Policies/Guidelines

Policies/Guidelines Purpose: To provide guidelines and resources for expressing information related to our faith, our mission, and our program internally and externally. *These comprehensive guidelines are to be used by all persons responsible for communications to ensure that a uniform code is followed.*

Communications Committee: The communications committee will serve St. Andrew by providing planning, guidance and assistance with the internal and external communications of the church in cooperation with the Church Council, church staff, committees and volunteers. The Committee will oversee the regular review of the communications policy & guidelines and their implementation. The committee should consider two-way communication as important as dissemination.

Editorial Board: The Sr. Pastor and the Director of Administration shall act as the editorial board for day-to-day decisions regarding the policies and guidelines. Any member of the Communications Committee, if available, may act as a third member of the board when needed.

The following Policies/Guidelines include information regarding:

1. Print/Electronic Communications

- Pg. 2: *The Fisherman*, the St. Andrew By-The-Sea newsletter
- Pg. 4: Broadcast e-mail (blasts)
- Pg. 5: The St. Andrew By-The-Sea web site: hhiumc.com
- Pg. 6: Brochures, pamphlets, and other publications as needed to communicate the mission and ministry of St. Andrew By-The-Sea UMC
- Pg. 6: Telephone messages
- Pg. 6: Press Releases: Newspaper, Radio, TV
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2. Worship Communications

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1. Guidelines for Print and Electronic Communications

St. Andrew communications, print or electronic, are designed to announce and report on issues and events of interest. Content in publications, print or electronic, should be true, accurate, thoughtful, readable, relevant, significant and give evidence of being based on the values of care, compassion, community, civility, and UMC theology.

All publications, print or electronic, should be proofread by a second person for grammar, spelling, typographical errors and accuracy.

I. Specific Guidelines for The Fisherman Newsletter

A. Basic Information

1. The Fisherman is published bi-weekly on Thursdays, unless a holiday or summer schedule is enacted. Contact the editor should there be a question.
Distribution is to those requesting mailed copies, to the e-mail distribution list, on the church website, and to visitors in the pews and literature racks.

B. General Content/Contributions

1. All articles/contributions are expected to conform with these Policy Guidelines and should be submitted electronically as a Word document. Type Face: Arial Type Size: 12
2. Submissions will be edited for space, content and timeliness.
3. Deadlines are Thursdays the week prior at 8am for submitting articles for the following Thursday publication. Submit to Megan Kaelin.
4. Items submitted after the stated deadline(s) may or may not be published, at the discretion of the editor.
5. Front page space will be held for an article by the pastor.
6. Topics for consideration: Upcoming events, stories of faith, spiritual journeys, mission projects and events, issue-oriented features reflective of the lives of readers and the diversity in our congregation, coverage of successful events or learning experiences.
7. Professionally written and edited articles/information submitted for inclusion shall be accompanied by a written and signed copyright release from the author and/or publisher, or noted as permitted by the publisher. All such copyright releases shall be cited.
8. Children's artwork submitted for publication must be accompanied by a release form signed by the parent or guardian.
9. Parents or guardians must provide approval for the publication of children's names with photos. (Photos of children should generally be approved by parent or guardian.)
10. Digital photographs for print should be high resolution jpg files (preferred minimum resolution 150 dpi). Non-digital photographs are acceptable, if high quality.
11. Fundraising of any nature must first be approved by the finance committee prior to publication.

12. **Information will be accepted on the following basis of priority:**

- ❑ **Information for and about St. Andrew By-The-Sea UMC programs & people**
- ❑ **Information about SC district or conference issues or events**
- ❑ **Information about national UMC issues or events**
- ❑ **Information on ecumenical events in the community**
- ❑ **Other articles and events:**
Articles about secular or other non-profit events may be included only with the approval of the editorial board. Space preference should always be first given to St. Andrew needs and programs.

NOTE: Outside advertising is not available in St. Andrew publications. If not related to a church fundraiser or activity, offers to the congregation including discounts, etc., with local retailers or restaurants will not be published.

12. *The Fisherman* is subject to the “St. Andrew Prayer Publication Policy” guidelines.

II. Specific Guidelines for St. Andrew Broadcast E-mails

A. Purpose

The purpose of Broadcast (blast) e-mails is to transport *The Fisherman* newsletter, and highlight news, announcements, and event updates related to the ministry of St. Andrew By-The-Sea.

B. Content

Broadcast E-mails will convey news or information in the following general areas. When possible, these items will provide websites, e-mail addresses, or telephone numbers to contact for further information.

- Late breaking news (which also adheres to our prayer publication policy)
- Information about church events which need extra attention
- Brief announcements of church needs
- Brief encouragement

Criteria:

Items must be of general interest to a significant portion of St. Andrew, and should be as brief as possible, giving a contact person/church/group and a method of contacting them (e-mail, website, and/or phone number).

Procedures

1. Requests for items to be included must be e-mailed to Phyllis Brodie by 5:00 PM on Tuesday for inclusion that week.
2. E-mails will be sent from the Church Office as early as possible, and usually no later than the close of business each Thursday, to facilitate meeting the congregations' update or newsletter receipt.
3. The subscriber list created for The St. Andrew Broadcast E-mails will be used only for these express purposes. The addresses on this list will not be sold, or given to any third party.
4. Recipients will be given instructions on how to unsubscribe if they choose to do so.

Exceptions

1. In case of an emergency, as determined by the Pastoral Staff, Director of Administration and at least one Council Member, special broadcast e-mails related to a specific situation will be sent out of the Church Office to the distribution list, as soon as the basic information has been verified.

Examples of what constitutes an "emergency":

- Weather-related cancellations/postponements
 - Disaster at the church or involving the greater church family
 - Death of a currently serving pastor, or person involved in leadership, or other significant church figure
 - Event of national or international, church-related significance.
 - *If there is a disagreement over whether or not the situation warrants a special broadcast, the decision will be made by the Senior Pastor.*
2. Broadcast e-mails that are for a special target audience, or considered not to be in the general interest, will be the responsibility of the staff person or steward making the request & will use distribution lists created specifically for that constituency.

3. The Director of Administration or Administrative Assistant will provide guidance to appropriate committees & staff members in the establishment of additional contact lists.

III. Specific Guidelines for The St. Andrew Website

Deadlines and Expirations

1. Postings/information for the web site must be submitted electronically to the Director of Administration Phyllis Brodie
2. Items with a specific deadline will be removed within a few days following the designated date or when removal is requested.
3. St. Andrew employment opportunities will be removed after a hire or as advised by SPPRC.

Guidelines for Submissions

1. Items submitted for posting on the St. Andrew web site should originate from a committee or staff member.
2. Items requiring a committee's approval should be directed to the chair of the appropriate committee before submission.
3. The preferred submission method: E-mail as plain, unadorned, unformatted text with graphics included as attachments.
4. Clip art graphics should be jpg format or gif. Photos should be in JPG 72 dpi resolution and should be in full color. Prior to submission, submitter should ascertain that the clip art's copyright is licensed for publication on the web. (All Microsoft clip art is licensed)

Editorial Responsibility and Policy Decisions

In general, the website abides by **the same content guidelines as those for *The Fisherman*** newsletter. (See pg. 2 B) In addition:

1. The Director of Administration or Sr. Pastor is authorized to deal quickly with any items that could be damaging (e.g., libelous, abusive, or obscene material).
2. Links to other web pages will be restricted to those items of interest to St. Andrew members.
3. Links to other websites featuring advertising banners of an offensive nature will not be included. Note that the church currently uses & links to a Google calendar for all church calendaring.
4. Liability concerns require taking all reasonable steps to minimize legal liability to the church from the use of the Internet as a means of publication. This includes copyright issues, personal contact information and appropriate image releases.
5. Selected documents of St. Andrew committees that are public **may be** published on the web site.

Other

1. Individual street addresses, phone numbers or personal e-mail addresses may not be published without permission. **Inclusion of a street address or an e-mail address in a submission will be considered implied permission.** (A submission to *The Fisherman* is also published on the web.)
2. The Church Directory is published and updated on a regular basis. Members only are given passwords to view this section of the site. Member Directory information is for the exclusive use of St. Andrew By-The-Sea United Methodist Church functions and is expressly prohibited to be used for commercial or any other purpose.
3. All photographs of children and youth (or artwork by them) submitted for use on the web site must be accompanied by a release form signed by the youngster's parent or guardian.

4. No information about any visitor to the web site is stored or sold. Financial information submitted for registration purposes will be transmitted on a separate, secure site.
5. A copy of this policy is available on the website.

IV. Guidelines for Church brochures, pamphlets and flyers

A copy of brochures, pamphlets, or publications approved by committees should be provided to the chair of the communications committee prior to publication. All print publications should be proofread by a second person for grammar, spelling, typographical errors and accuracy. All materials of this nature should be focused on the purpose and attractive to the reader.

Committees and staff must make advance arrangements for placement of materials into other publications, on bulletin boards, into literature racks or pews with the Director of Administration or Administrative Assistant.

Materials requiring a special mailing should be scheduled with the Administrative Assistant several weeks in advance to assure adequate postage, envelopes, labels, and volunteers are available.

V. Guidelines for Telephone & Voice mail

Voices on the telephone are of great importance in conveying the joy we have in serving our Lord and is a very direct reflection of St. Andrew's congregation. Anyone answering a phone, staff or volunteer, should carefully self-evaluate their tone in answering. Answering a phone has become so habitual that most people don't realize how they sound when answering. Voices should be cheerful, enthusiastic and friendly. Answers and conversations must be warm, professional and reliable. All those answering should slowly and clearly identify the name of the church and themselves by first name.

The telephone at St. Andrew is to be used for communication of church business, and personal use should be restricted and as brief as possible.

Calls should be answered quickly, within the first two or three rings, if possible. Callers left on hold should be picked up promptly or acknowledged regularly if they wish to continue to hold.

Return all calls promptly.

VI. Guidelines for Press Releases

Committees seeking to place press releases in newspaper, radio or other media for a special event are encouraged to produce at least the first draft of the material they intend to send to the media.

Committees are encouraged to draft a communications volunteer. When writing:

1. Use the words: For Immediate Release or "For Release ___date___"
2. Include the most important information in the first paragraph
3. Be sure who, what, when, where, how and why are included
4. Submit material electronically when possible (otherwise use church letterhead to mail or fax), identify yourself and your role within the church, and any other contact person.
5. Put the word "MORE" at the bottom of a page when more pages follow
6. At the end of the release, type "30" or ### or type the word END

7. Media websites now contain information related to staff email addresses, deadlines and other policies.
8. Have someone proof read material being submitted.
9. Contact the Director of Administration for resource information.

VII. Signage and Bulletin Boards

The church maintains a Community & Church Bulletin Board located outside the entrance to the Administrative Building. Posters and flyers may be left with the Administrative Assistant for posting. The church gives priority to its own events & programs, and those of an ecumenical nature. Should a posting be in question, the Editorial Board will be consulted. No personal notices will be permitted. ex: Help Wanted, Roommates, Animals for sale.

Church Bulletin Boards may be used to promote events, educate and report on significant events. Contact the Administrative Assistant to schedule the use of a bulletin board in the Celebration Center or Admin Building. They should be bright and attractive, and use large lettering. Persons or committees who post bulletins boards are responsible for their removal. The church encourages bulletin boards be changed very frequently and any posting, especially in the Celebration Center, should not be longer than one month. Bulletin Boards that become out-dated and have not been removed, may be taken down by the church staff or the next user of the board.

VIII. Church Calendar

An up-to-the minute church calendar is maintained by the Dir. of Admin. on Google. Access is available to the public through the church website at <http://www.hhiumc.com/Calendar>

Committees or persons wishing to schedule a church event should:

1. Check the other events the same day
2. Check events the day before and the day after to ascertain set-up or take down issues
3. Check the calendar for the month to assure there are no conflicts.
4. When ready to book an event, contact the Administrative Assistant who will put the event and location on-line. Be prepared to give details as to set-up and other needs.
5. Chairmen must contact the Administrative Assistant of changes or cancellations of meetings or events.

St. Andrew also publishes regular calendar events in each issue of *The Fisherman*. In the listing, we include outside meetings of organizations using our facility for services open to the public... such as AA.

IX. Conference Communications

The SC Conference of the UMC as well as the Walterboro District are interested in information from local churches.

1. Lowcountry Spirit:(Walterboro District newsletter) – editor John Allgood
bluedog(at)lowcountry.com
2. The SC United Methodist Advocate: editor – Jessica Brodie
3. Director of Communications (website/AV): Matt Brodie mbrodie(at)umcsc.org

2. Guidelines for Worship Communications

These guidelines are intended to assure meaningful, succinct communications within the worship service to both assure that the largest weekly gathering of the congregation gains information about their church, its programs and mission; and that the messages are delivered in ways appropriate to worship and the allotted time available.

A. Announcements

1. The preference is that announcements be made by the Senior or Associate Pastor. Written notes should be provided the week prior.
2. Should the requesting committee feel a spokesperson should be called upon to make an announcement, the chair or the designated person should contact a member of the administrative staff or one of the pastors to see if an announcement may be scheduled on the requested day. **It is the general policy that no more than one special spokesperson be scheduled on any given Sunday. On occasions, with the approval of the Senior or Campus Pastor, an exception may be made.** It is recommended that a request be submitted as soon as possible or at least 2-3 weeks in advance. As the discipline gives the Senior Pastor responsibility for worship and as he/she is most familiar with the order of worship, the Senior Pastor shall make any final decisions regarding special announcements. On “high” holiday Sundays, for example, some Sundays during Advent or Lent or stewardship times announcements may be deemed inappropriate. Also, due to the time involved in serving the congregation, some communion Sundays may not be available.
3. Those making announcements should do an advance sound check. While microphones will enhance the sound, all speakers must project their voice and not depend only on the mic.
4. The announcer should sit in the chancel area or on a front pew or seat.
5. Announcements should be kept to 1-3 minutes. A general rule of thumb is that 150 words will equate comfortably to approximately one minute of spoken time. Announcers should write their comments to check the timing.
6. A separate pulpit announcement requirement sheet can be mailed or emailed to anyone who is speaking.

B. Projections

1. St. Andrew’s projection system may be used for a variety of purposes before or during worship, including projection of video, Power Points, congregational events, or for enhancing worship.
2. The use of the system should be requested at least 2-3 weeks in advance. Note that the computer must be set up in advance and that a trained operator must be scheduled to run the projector, separately from the sound board operator.
3. The Senior Pastor shall have final decision making on the use of the projector within the service.

4. Committees wanting to project are responsible for obtaining their own volunteer to create any PowerPoints or graphic files. Graphics displays should be simple and readable. Too many graphics on any one slide make it difficult for the viewer to focus on the main message.
5. If a projection also has sound, arrangements must be made with the sound board coordinator.
6. The church projector is for the express use of the church and may not be loaned out for other events, such as wedding receptions, etc.

C. Worship Bulletin

1. The purpose of the worship bulletin is to contain information relevant to the worship service and those participating. The staff reserves the right to compose language, including the editing of flower and prayer quilt requests, to assure it is in keeping with the dignity, appropriateness and normal format.
2. Any changes to those assisting in worship on published lists call or email the church office by Tuesday at 5pm. (Ex: Changes in ushers, greeters, acolytes)

D. Inserts

1. While most program and event announcements should appear in *The Fisherman* and/or on the website, **on a limited basis**, an insert in the bulletin may be needed for special sign-ups or for other reasons.
2. Those committees requesting inserts in the bulletin should contact the Administrative Assistant to schedule the insert at least 2-3 weeks in advance. Groups are encouraged to produce their own insert(s), and submit via email or on CD in Microsoft Word, PDF, or Publisher. Assistance may be provided by staff when scheduled adequately in advance.
3. Submitted inserts may be edited for clarity or to enhance design, or to make them easier to run on church duplicating equipment.

3. Relational Marketing/Special Ads

St. Andrew By-The-Sea has a separate Relational Marketing team whose sole responsibility is to place advertising directed to those seeking a church home. The team prepares ads for a variety of local newspapers and magazines, as well as places the ad in *The Island Packet's* church directory section and the yellow pages.

Any committee wishing to be included in the Relational Marketing team efforts, should contact the steward of Relational Ministries or the Relational Marketing team chair.

It is the **responsibility of committees promoting special events to pay for and place their own ads**, unless the ads are deemed within the purpose of the Relational Marketing effort.

4. Prayer Publication Policy

St. Andrew seeks to be a praying congregation. During the week we meet in worship and in small groups to share prayer concerns. In an effort to keep our prayer life active and our prayer list updated, we have developed the following procedure for publishing prayer concern information. Our worship bulletin and weekly newsletter are venues for our most recent prayer announcements including births, baptisms, deaths, weddings, funerals, and new members from the previous week. At our weekly Healing and Wholeness service, at staff

meetings, and through our prayer chain, we pray for those in immediate need as well as for those persons receiving ongoing medical treatment, thanksgiving for healing, world issues, etc. The prayer requests are generated from our Ministry/Prayer Request Cards and from those specifically requesting prayer and giving permission for posting. The current list is kept in the church office and updated each Monday, or as special requests are received.

As a caring congregation, **we seek to balance our desire to be in prayer for one another and for the world with our commitment to maintaining confidentiality with persons who do not want their information shared publicly**. To this end, the following policy will be followed.

Venues for Publication

St. Andrew has the following venues for publishing prayer concerns: (1) the church bulletin, (2) the church newsletter (NOTE: Newsletters are also published to the St. Andrew website, and (3) the Prayer List. Prayer concerns will be published in these venues in the following way:

1. Acknowledgement of members known to be **“hospitalized”** and granting permission, and those who have moved to a status of **“recovering at home/convalescening”** at the time of publication will be published weekly in the newsletter and listed on the church office Prayer List.
2. **Sympathy acknowledgements** for members will be published once upon receipt in the newsletter and listed on the church office Prayer List.
3. Information regarding those who have consented to the receipt of a Prayer Quilt will be published in the weekly newsletter, in the bulletin, on email updates, and at the weekly Healing and Wholeness Service and on the Concerns Board. **Consent must include the language to be used publicly.**
3. **Prayer List requests** (where **permission from the prayer recipient has been indicated**) will be given to the **Prayer Chain Team** and will be carried for two weeks on the office Prayer List unless a pastor deems it should be carried longer. These concerns will also be presented at the weekly **Healing and Wholeness** service and at **staff meetings**. These requests may come from our Ministry Request Cards indicating prayer is needed, or through personal conversations. E-mail requests will be considered when they indicate that permission has been received by the person being listed.

Those asking for prayer by the entire congregation should call the senior pastor.

Publication of Persons Hospitalized

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act was put into place to ensure the privacy of patients receiving medical treatment in both in-patient and out-patient situations. While churches are not required to abide by HIPPA, based on these guidelines, the following policies will be followed for publishing this type of concern in the church newsletter, bulletin and on prayer lists:

1. Church members or their families notifying the church of a hospitalization will be listed. When the church is notified by someone other than the patient or the patient’s family, permission will be sought for publication.
2. For those granting permission, church members hospitalized will be listed by name only in all printed material.
3. Congregation members seeking hospital room numbers are asked to contact the medical facility directly.

Some suggestions for church members:

1. Provide our pastors with the information about your health that you wish our pastors to have. Advise the church prior to a scheduled hospitalization.
2. Tell the pastor what information may or may not be shared with other members, either in worship or through a prayer publication.
3. Tell your family what instructions you have given the pastor. Tell your family what they may or may not share about your situation.
4. A reminder: If you are admitted through the Emergency Room or you choose to “opt out” of a hospital's patient directory or do not list yourself as a Methodist, the church will be unaware of your hospitalization.

Publication of Sympathy Concerns

The following policies will be followed for publishing sympathy concerns in the church newsletter, bulletin and on prayer lists:

1. Upon the **death of a church member or active constituent**, an acknowledgement will include the date of death and the names of family members of the deceased who are also members of St. Andrew in the newsletter.
2. When the church is notified of the **death of a family member (ex: Mother, Father, etc.) of a member** of St. Andrew, an acknowledgement will include the member's name, the deceased's name, the deceased's relationship to the church member, and the deceased's city of residence.

Publication of General Prayer Concerns

General prayer concerns are those concerns received through the following means: (1) Ministry Request cards provided in the pews, (2) Ministry Request cards or information submitted by small groups, Sunday school classes, etc., (3) phone calls received by the church staff, (4) e-mails received by the staff, and (5) word of mouth.

Understanding the importance of these prayers needs, but also acknowledging the ethical responsibilities of the **church's role in creating an environment of confidence and ensuring individual privacy**, the following is provided as suggestions for persons submitting prayer concerns of this manner:

1. Secure the permission of the person before publishing their name in any forum.
2. Ask the person what they wish to have shared with others verbally and/or in print.
3. When not able to secure permission directly, identify persons **by first name only**.
4. Err on the side of privacy and confidentiality in all communication.

Publication of Information Regarding Minors

St. Andrew will not publish the names and/or concerns (hospitalization, sympathy acknowledgment, or general prayer concern) of persons known by St. Andrew to be minors (18 years of age or younger) without the permission of said minor's legal guardian.

5.Crisis Communications

St. Andrew's Communications Committee will regularly consider the Crisis Communications plan. The plan would be followed in the event of an on-site emergency or crisis issue within the church. An example would be a shooting on campus. A priority in a crisis would be the identification of a spokesperson who would assume a role of dealing with the media, helping to free the pastor to deal with ministering to victims or those in crisis. In all aspects of crisis communications, other staff and volunteers are encouraged to defer to the spokesperson to assure accurate and appropriate release of information. Ex: To be sure the media is not told of a death prior to family notification, etc.