



Community of Christ

GREATER PACIFIC NORTHWEST USA MISSION CENTER

Congregation Communications Guidelines

Your goal should be to collect, organize, and distribute information and news, both internally (within the congregation) and externally (outside of the congregation). Well-informed members can respond promptly to leadership; support projects and activities; attend services, meetings and social gatherings; cooperate with and strengthen priesthood members and each other.

These guidelines are not intended to be limiting. The Communications Coordinator may or may not perform all of the communications functions. Additional workers may be enlisted to assist as need, talents, and opportunity suggest. However, the Coordinator will be responsible for blending and harmonizing all communication activities into a coordinated effort.

Internal Communications

The Communications Coordinator should see that congregational leaders and members within the congregation are kept informed in a timely manner.

Sources of News

1. Mission Center materials and/or information sent to you via email or mail
 - Most mission center communications are sent to both Pastors and Communications Coordinators. Please make sure that you have a clear understanding with your Pastor about your responsibilities, so that you each know exactly who will distribute information and when.
 - If information needs to go out on a Sunday that you will not attend church, make sure the Pastor or someone else can do that for you.
2. The Mission Center Web Site and Calendar – www.cofchrist-gpnw.org:
 - Check the Mission Center calendar and alert congregational worship and event planners to possible conflicts in scheduling of activities.
 - Check the Web site regularly for news you might have missed, documents people need, etc.
 - Know the Web site address so you can give it to people who need it.
 - Help keep it up to date: Contact the Mission Center Communications Coordinator if you can't find something or if you see something that needs to be updated.
3. The Mission Center NewsBrief Email – This e-newsletter is emailed every Friday to all congregational officers and every member in the mission center who has signed up for email news. Included in each NewsBrief is a special section near the top specifically for Communications Coordinators. It includes flyers and/or bulletin inserts for you to post or distribute.
 - Be sure to post the flyers and bullet inserts provided in your top section of the NewsBrief.
 - Share the NewsBrief. We currently have nearly 1,000 members signed up for email news; however, that still leaves about 2,000 members that do not get it. Please be sure to print out each week's NewsBrief, post it at your congregation, and announce key elements to your members.
 - Help your members sign up to receive the NewsBrief. Encourage your members to sign up for Mission Center email news. Direct them to the sign-up button on the homepage of the Mission Center Web site.
4. The Chinook (Mission Center printed newsletter) - This is our printed, hard-copy Mission Center newsletter. There are two issues per year. We send one copy to every member household.
 - Help members receive it. If you know of members that are not receiving it, please contact the Mission Center Communications Coordinator.
 - Make it available to members and visitors. Extra copies can be requested from the mission center.

Distribution of News

1. Post news and event flyers in noticeable places - such as near the front door, near the bathroom, or where people congregate. Sometimes just posting a flyer in an unexpected place draws attention.



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2. Include news and events as bulletin inserts. This is a common place where many people expect to find information and announcements.
3. Make regular verbal announcements at church. Sometimes you can better explain something in person than in print.
4. Coordinate and utilize a phone chain. This still works, especially for members who do not have email or do not check it regularly. Some people just like the chance to talk to someone and connect. Make sure those in charge of calling others do so, or volunteer to fill in if someone is unavailable.
5. Coordinate and utilize an email group. Distribute or post a sign-up sheet at church; call people or send mail to those who do not attend regularly, asking them to email you to be added. To ensure their continued subscription, make sure you have their permission to send email, keep all email addresses private (blind copy), send on a regular schedule, and not too often.
6. Use the internet/social media. Particularly if you want to reach a younger audience, this is a vital tool. Create a congregational Web site, a Facebook group or page, a Twitter account, or a blog. Remember that these tools only work if you keep them updated..
7. Repeat, repeat, repeat. Be sure to use all communication avenues you have - print, phone, email, website, social media, etc. - and keep repeating!

Privacy in News

1. Always get permission. If an announcement or prayer request involves an individual, be sure you have their permission or permission of their spouse/next of kin before you communicate it. Many well-intentioned people ask for prayers on behalf of others, but many people prefer to keep their hardships private.
2. Get the wording approved. In addition to getting permission to share, be sure to ask them to provide the wording they would like shared, or ask them to approve your wording before you communicate it.
3. Don't over-share. Always keep specific medical information and too many personal/private details about your announcement/prayer request out of it. Be careful of the appropriateness of the information you are sharing.
4. Be careful of "open" sharing. It's hard to know what people might say or share about others during an open-mic "prayer request" time, on your Facebook page, etc. Help to communicate and enforce these guidelines to your membership during such times. It might be easier to establish a policy of asking for prayers with names only, without specific reasons.

External Communications

The Communications Coordinator should see that congregational news and events, both past and future, are distributed to outside of the congregation in a timely manner to meet required deadlines.

Reporting to the Mission Center

Submit items to the Mission Center Communications Administrator according to established guidelines. Items to submit include:

- Congregational events and activities for the mission center calendar and NewsBrief – anything that other members may be interested in and/or welcome to attend
- Congregational articles for *The Chinook* - mission and outreach activities your congregation is participating in, as well as fun milestones like special birthdays, anniversaries, baptisms, ordinations, and more
- Be sure to include photos, and be sure they are of high quality (larger file size is better). Be sure to receive approval from the subjects in the photos before submitting photos for publication.

Reporting to Other Sources

Other external sources to which you might submit congregational news include the *Herald* and local, weekly and daily newspapers, radio, and television stations. Contact those outlets for their submission guidelines and deadlines, or contact the Mission Center Communications Administrator for assistance.

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