

Social Media Policy

Social media is often the first avenue for the impression our congregation presents to newcomers, questioners, and visitors. We must be mindful of how we present our congregation through these social media channels and how we engage with others through these channels. Always on our mind as we communicate under the UUCOM name should be the fact that we aren't speaking as ourselves; we're speaking and acting as the congregation. Communications should further our mission, and interactions should follow our covenant.

General social media guidelines:

- All communication must comply with our covenant, mission, and policies. We must lead by example.
- The following statement should be included (with relevant edits) for each social media account: "UUCOM welcomes all people to contribute to conversations on this page and to share content directly related to Unitarian Universalism. Wall posts, comments, photos, and other content posted on this page are expected to be relevant and respectful. UUCOM has the right to delete any inappropriate content from this page, including but not limited to: irrelevant content, redundant content, hateful content, malicious content, uncivil or disrespectful content, attacks or complaints against an individual, financial solicitations, endorsements of a political candidate or party, and content that violates Facebook's terms of use, code of conduct, or other policies. Content that violates Facebook's policies may also be reported."
- If there is a post from a congregant/visitor that administrators feel violates our covenant, mission, and/or policies, it should be brought to the attention of the Minister and/or Board. If they concur it is a violation of one of the above, the comment/post in question should be deleted and a private message sent bringing attention to our covenant, mission, and/or policies, and informing commenter that repeat offenses will lead to being blocked.
- Refrain from posts dealing with social justice issues unless that position is stated in a worship service, class, or event hosted by UUCOM, or approval is given by Board or Minister, or unless it is initially posted by the UUA or Standing on the Side of Love campaign. When we post something as UUCOM, it comes across at the official stance of the congregation. If we haven't yet taken a well publicized stance on an issue, approval is needed before posting. If any congregant posts something social justice related on our official communication tools, be clear that, "this represent the opinions of this individual, not the congregation," and moderate them to make sure they are in accordance with our covenant of healthy relationships.
- No posts advertising private businesses or political candidates.

- No slander, libel, profanity, or off-color humor.
- Events/posts from partner nonprofits we have worked with in the past or further our mission/values/ends are acceptable unless those events/posts conflict with any policy in this document.
- The official UUCOM logo should be prominent, and styles should be consistent our media “branding” styles set by the Public Relations Committee. Any changes made to themes/profile pictures/color schemes must be approved by the Public Relations committee.
- Before posting photos of adults, secure verbal or written permission from them, or make a good faith effort to notify event attendees in advance through all possible channels. Before any posting that has a picture or image of a child, we must have verbal or written permission from the parent/guardian.
- Do not “tag” persons in photos or posts without their permission.
- Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should be immediately reported to the Minister, Director of Religious Education, and Board; and/or the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If the material is on a church affiliated site, that material should be documented for church records and then removed from the site after consultation with DCF and/or police. The DCF hotline is 1-800-842-2288.
- All social media outlets need to be updated regularly, preferably daily, with relevant content. Content should look professional and be free from typos and grammatical mistakes.
- All words, pictures, videos, music, and any other media must either be the original work of the poster, or copyright laws and appropriate attribution must be followed.
- Formally recognized affinity groups within UUCOM may request events posted on their behalf, with a maximum of a one time a week posting.
- The account owner needs to be registered with an email address such as user@uumidland.org so that ownership role can be transferred if and when we have personnel changes.
- The contact information for UUCOM should be prominently displayed and up to date.
- The Public Relations committee should notify the UUA of any UUCOM social media accounts with a request to be added to any UUA social media directories or resources that are available.

- Only one UUCOM account should be in existence for each social media platform unless it is for a clearly alternate purpose for the church (i.e. a UUCOM youth group's page).
- New social media accounts representing UUCOM should not be created without the approval of the Public Relations committee. Before new social media accounts are created on new platforms, the Public Relations committee will create policy for use of that platform.

Facebook

The "Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland TX" Church/Religious Organization Facebook page is currently our primary means of social media communication. Facebook serves three main areas for UUCOM:

- Community building, inspiration, and announcements for current members/friends
 - Information for visitors/newcomers/seekers/questioners
 - Outreach/Connection to greater community and denomination.
- Regular posts must be made addressing each of the three areas, preferably at least one post a day. The majority of posts should be original posts, not "shares," although "shares" are ideal in certain circumstances such as when sharing posts from the UUA page, etc.
 - Administrators should monitor messages daily and respond promptly or ask other church staff or leaders to respond. Administrators should respond quickly to notifications of posts to the wall. If something is posted that violates our covenant, mission, or policies, act immediately (see above under general guidelines).
 - Administrators should be mindful of when they are using Facebook as their personal page and when as the UUCOM page. Administrators should not comment on other pages as UUCOM. Follow-up comments must be relevant to the initial post/comment, provide accurate information, and have a calm, nonviolent tone. If there is a discussion that forms over a post, do not participate in or elevate any kind of argument under the "UUCOM" name.
 - Events from the weekly announcements, newsletter, etc should be created on Facebook as an event under the UUCOM name.
 - No more than six Facebook posts should be made on a single day unless there are extenuating circumstances. Flooding our fans' newsfeeds should be avoided.
 - The page should not be significantly edited without prior approval of the Public Relations team.

- We prefer to “like” denomination-wide pages, district-wide pages, interfaith partners with whom we have established relationships, and affinity groups within our congregation. Any page UUCOM “likes” should align with our covenant, mission, and policies. Administrators should be sure when liking a page from their personal Facebook account that they don’t accidentally like it from the UUCOM page.
- All of the above also applies to interactions over Facebook applications such as Messenger and Pages. When sending and responding to messages via Facebook, the message should be signed with the person’s name.

Interactions over Social Media with Children and Youth

- Adults who work with children and youth are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile. Personal profiles are to be used to interact with real friends, family, and peers. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to minors or youth. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask to be “friends,” and adults should discern the level of contact they want to maintain with youth prior to responding to these requests.
- If an adult chooses to accept friend requests from minors or youth who are associated with the church, other adult leaders must have full access to all aspects of that adult’s profile and correspondence.
- Adults who minister to youth who want to connect via a social networking website with youth to whom they minister are strongly encouraged to set up a closed group account that youth may join. Youth requesting to “friend” an adult can then be invited to join this group rather than be accepted as a friend on an adult’s personal profile account. The purpose of these two separate accounts/profiles is to create a line of privacy and maintain healthy boundaries with youth and real family, friends and colleagues.
- Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should be immediately reported to the Minister, Director of Religious Education, and Board; and/or the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If the material is on a church affiliated site, that material should be documented for church records and then removed from the site after consultation with DCF and/or police. The DCF hotline is 1-800-842-2288.

Minister’s and Staff’s Interactions over Social Media with Adults

- The minister and other staff are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile to shield both adult and youth members from viewing content that may be inappropriate.
- Individual personal profiles of the minister are to be used to interact with real friends, family and peers. The minister should not submit “friend” requests to congregants and

others to whom they minister. The disparity of power may not give the other person the ability to decline such request. The minister may accept “friend” requests.

- The minister should consider the impact of declining a “friend” request from congregants. These encounters may create a tension in “real world” relationships. If desired, the minister can direct “friend” requests from congregants to the church’s group page.
- When the Minister’s ministry ends, the minister should remove congregants as “friends” or contacts in all forms of social media, in order to protect the ministry of the subsequent Minister.