

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Spanish Fort United Methodist Church

The staff of Spanish Fort United Methodist Church desires to effectively communicate our church's story. The following guidelines will help staff, church leaders, and members be equipped with information, insight, and ways to respond to do God's work.

PRIVACY

Spanish Fort United Methodist Church is committed to maintaining the privacy of its membership. The church will take all reasonable measures to ensure the confidentiality of member information to include, but not be limited to, home addresses, family membership, email addresses, and contact information. Email distribution, lists, contact lists or mailing lists containing member information may be used only for communications related to the activities of the church, staff, committees, or sponsored groups. Under no circumstances may member lists be used to solicit or communicate events or activities which are not specifically church related.

GENERAL NOTES

- Spanish Fort United Methodist Church does not rent any of its facilities and/or equipment to the general public. Please refer to our Wedding Policies for specifics concerning weddings.
- All events, ministries, activities, meetings, etc. should be submitted to the Communications Department in the church office for approval before publication. (forms are available on-line and in the church office.)
- Should you want or need special graphics/materials for your event, you may present your idea(s) to the Communications Department. Ultimately, all graphics, designs, and logos for the church are approved and/or developed by the Communications Department. This aids in our communication efforts when sending out emails, newsletters, brochure, flyers, signs, etc. for continuity and appearance using correct file formats.
- In all cases, communications requests will be given consideration, however there is no guarantee that communication requests will be included in any/all publications and outlets. Approved content may be edited as deemed necessary by the Communications Department and Staff.
- Having ample technology throughout both campuses to present slides, publish events on-line, and printed materials, we will abstain from posting posters and/or flyers on windows, walls, and bulletin boards.

LOGO USE

Please refer to the following notes when using any the churches logos:

- All official SFUMC logos are in the “Y” drive under the “Publications/Logos” folder. There are logos labeled for in house use and for outside use. If you are unsure which logo to use, please contact the Communications Department.
- All SFUMC logos have specific colors. Do not change the colors of any of the SFUMC official logos to anything other than the listed colors, solid black, or solid white. There is a color chart in the “Y” drive under the Logos directory with various color formulations. If you are unsure which to use or need the colors in another color format, please consult the Communication Department.
- Do not stretch, mis-shape, or crop any official logo. Some logos can use different setups and those pieces will be in with the logo files. If you need something different or a modified version, please contact the Communications Department.
- Do not change logo fonts. If you need to know what the font names are, please contact the Communications Department.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

- **CONTACT (Newsletter):** *Monthly* ~ The CONTACT is a monthly publication and will appear online and sent via email, as a primary means of communication. Items included, but not limited are note from the Pastor, ministries and church related activities, studies, service opportunities, job openings, community events, new members, birth, and death announcements, thank you notes, etc. For those without computer access, the newsletter is printed and available in the church office and Narthex. The CONTACT is mailed to those unable to attend regularly. *Church members are encouraged to read the newsletter on-line if they have computer access.*

The deadline for newsletter article submissions is the 15th of each month, and articles submitted late may not be included. Email is the preferred form of submission, and articles should be emailed to the Communications Department using “CONTACT” and the month in the subject line.

- **Website and Calendar:** *On-going* ~ The church website is continuously updated with information regarding upcoming services, Bible studies, service projects and special events. The entire church calendar is also available online. Committee chairs, Bible study leaders, and event coordinators are encouraged to develop web content for their individual committees. Contact the Communications Department for ideas and/or help promoting your area online.

- **Emails:** *As needed* ~ Electronic news/announcements are sent to all members who provide the office with an email address and those who opt-in to receive all forms of communications from SFUMC. Emails are sent as soon as information is available. This includes information on funerals, crises, weather closings, or other necessary information. The church office reserves the right to edit and/or not publish submitted email requests. We do not want to overuse this format of communication because it causes a diminishing return in readership.
- **Verbal Announcements in Church:** *Weekly* ~ As the worship hour is indeed a sacred time, announcements at the beginning of the service should be kept to a minimum. The pastor(s) will highlight certain announcements. Announcements should be cleared with one of the pastors in advance, preferably in writing.
- **Bulletin:** *Weekly* ~ The Sunday bulletin is a means to communicate in a variety of ways: primarily, we intend to communicate to everyone our Order of Worship and encourage all to be participants. We want people to gather with us as a family of believers, engaging in worship through music, hearing the message, studying the Bible, prayers, sharing in Holy Communion, Baptisms, and other liturgical worship means set forth by the United Methodist Church. We also want to disseminate information about events, bible studies, activities, mission opportunities, etc. for all to be involved through worship, study, and service to grow as Christians. Bulletins are printed each Thursday, so no edits can be made after Wednesday of each week.
- **Slides / “Big Screen” Announcements:** *Weekly* ~ Slides are shown on both campuses in the Sanctuary Narthex and Office Area. Once an event is approved and a request made for the event to be published via slide, the graphic will be converted to a high-quality, multi-platform appropriate design by the Communications Department for presentations.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Spanish Fort United Methodist Church

The following outlines the process for all communication requests of church publications and other printed and electronic literature (worship bulletins and programs, website, announcements, video/slide materials, brochures, pamphlets, e-mails, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCESS FOR COMPLETING REQUEST FORMS

MEETING/CLASS/EVENT REQUESTS

In efforts to streamline and remain consistent with communications at SFUMC, please consider these guidelines when requesting an event or activity:

- Information should be submitted **3 weeks before you want the event publicized**, not before the event's actual date.
- If you would like to hold an event, continuous meetings, or a Study Class please submit a Meeting/Class/Event Request Form to the Communications Department in the church office or email. You can find the Meeting/Class/Event Request Form on the church website, shared drive (office staff), or in the church office.
- Please provide all **required** information and supporting information on the request form. If it does not pertain to your event, please mark it as N/A. Missing information will delay your request and approval.
- Once you have submitted your request, the Communications Department will check the church calendar to avoid potential event conflicts, discuss the request with the pastors and staff to obtain approval and you will be provided a response within approximately five business days.
- After approval, we will then publicize the event in the applicable media outlets, which may include the CONTACT newsletter, worship bulletin, SFUMC website, Facebook, and/or other media as we deem appropriate.
- Once the meeting and/or class has been placed on the Church's Google calendar you will receive a copy of the approved Meeting/Class Request with any other information that may be useful to you, primarily via email.

Steps to take once your event has obtained approval:

- Should you feel a graphic will help promote your event, please submit any idea(s), rough draft, or description of the event, to the Communications Department. This will allow us to prepare materials to promote your event.

- Please do not take the time to create the finished product as we can prepare the materials for you in keeping with our guidelines and protocol for SFUMC communications. You may provide a rough draft, but please allow us to edit graphics and content.
- If you wish, you can **then** distribute the completed product as you see fit through your friends, fellow employees, etc. If you are going to share information through social media, please do so from the SFUMC Facebook page (sharing, reposting, etc.). In addition, please consider sharing a link from our events webpage on the SFUMC website, www.spanishfortumc.org. This will facilitate that the correct information is distributed.

**Note: authorization to publish pictures of youth or children is kept on file in the church office. Please be aware we do not publish photos without parental consent.*

NON SFUMC SPONSORED EVENTS / MEETINGS / CLASSES

We receive many requests for publicizing events in our community. As much as we want to be supportive, the sheer volume of requests is overwhelming.

- Outside events, not sponsored by SFUMC, will be publicized in our publications at the discretion of the Church Program Staff. Posters advertising local non-profit events must be turned in to the Communications Department. If deemed appropriate, of interest to the congregation, and space allows, the event poster will be placed in the church office and Fellowship Hall, **not on doors or windows.**
- Should a Church Member request a non-sponsored church event, a certificate of liability insurance is required and approval to hold the event by the Church Trustees.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Faye Childers | faye@spanishfortumc.org

Jennifer Stewart | jennifer@spanishfortumc.org

Please send all communication requests to both Communication Staff Personnel.