



Second Congregational Church of Boxford  
*United Church of Christ*

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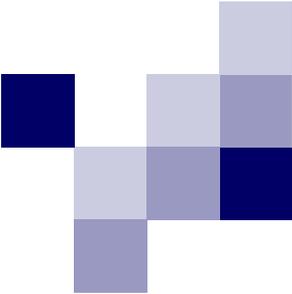


# Communication Guidelines

A guide for *communicating* within the  
church and the community.



173B Washington Street P.O. Box 508  
West Boxford, MA 01885 (978) 352-2127  
[www.secondchurchboxford.org](http://www.secondchurchboxford.org)



# Preface

**To:**

**Board/Committee Chairpersons**  
**Church Pastor and Support Staff**  
**Special Event Coordinators**

The content of this booklet is the result of committee research that includes communication with the United Church of Christ Mass. Conference, United Church of Christ National Conference in Cleveland OH, examination of our church bylaws, personal interviews with our church staff, investigation of other resources related to these areas, and consultation of experts in the fields of law, ethics and publishing.

On behalf of the Communications Committee, I hope this booklet serves you well.

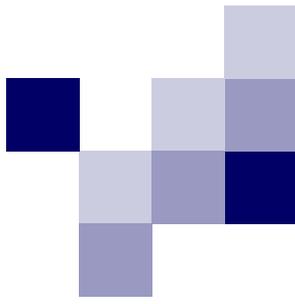
Fred N. Gronberg

Chair, Communications Committee

Our committee welcomes congregational input!

The Communications Committee was created in April of 2010 and reports to the Church Council.

<b>Chris Barenfeld</b>	<b>Fred Gronberg (Chair)</b>	<b>Marge Hildebrand</b>	
<b>Martha Maysek</b>	<b>Betty Obernesser</b>	<b>Jim Sterio (Legal Consult)</b>	<b>Bob Was</b>



# Guidelines Committee

The Communications Committee has the responsibility of reviewing and maintaining the many communication vehicles that are currently, and may be, utilized in the future by our church and to look into the issues that may accompany them.

Considering the growth of our church, the community and the advances in recent technology, we have focused on security, sensitivity, ethics, legal issues and media uniformity. Our goal is to suggest guidelines that will improve our communication within the church, with the community and with each other.

The areas of initial investigation and suggested guidelines in this booklet include:

- Church Name & Logo
- The Messenger
- Web Site
- E-News / E-Mail
- Annual Report
- Photography Ministry
- Announcements  
Information Tables  
& Bulletin Boards
- Critical/Emergency  
Contact Plan
- Press Releases or Articles
- Summary Chart



# Church Name & Logo

## Statement of Purpose

The name Second Congregational Church of Boxford represents the name of our local church located in Boxford, Massachusetts. We are members of the United Church of Christ, whose offices are located in Cleveland, Ohio.



The choice of the church's logo is an architectural sketch submitted by Merton Barrows in 1963. It was scanned and enhanced from an archived document retrieved from the Boxford Historic Document Center.

Technological advances have made it possible for a local church to exhibit a global presence and members of our church should strive to protect the official name and logo of our church and that of the United Church of Christ against misuse and misrepresentation.

When used consistently and properly, the church name and logo ensure a uniform identity and professional presence in our community and beyond.

## Responsible Party

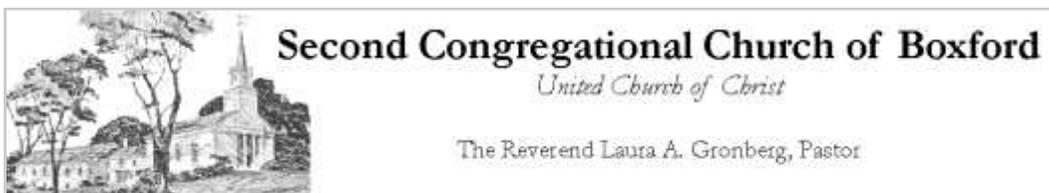
As with all proper names, there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to spell, abbreviate and otherwise use the name of our local church and the United Church of Christ. Authorization from the church council and/or Pastor must be obtained before using our church name and logo on publications created for *non-church sponsored* events.

The UCC logo is a registered trademark of the United Church of Christ. The logo may be reproduced by congregations of the United Church of Christ for use in print publications and websites and they may also modify the colors and size of the image as deemed necessary.

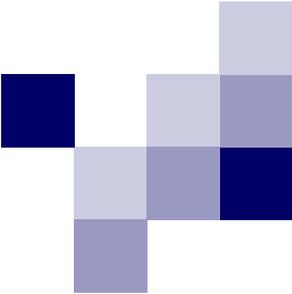


## Guidelines

- ◆ The following church and denomination text abbreviations are acceptable for publishing when used in the appropriate context: Second Congregational Church Second Church Second Church Boxford UCC
- ◆ The church name should appear in Garamond font –bold. Please note that the word [*The*] should not be used as a prefix to the church name. Whenever possible, the text should be accompanied by the church logo in the configuration as shown below in the sample church letterhead *header*.
- ◆ Whenever possible, the United Church of Christ text and/or logo should also appear on all church publications.
- ◆ Please note the proper church address, phone and web site as shown below in the sample church letterhead *footer*. Digital files of these images may be obtained from the church office upon request.
- ◆ Second Congregational Church publications should include a date of publication to aid in future reference.



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# The Messenger

## Statement of Purpose

*The Messenger* is our church newsletter and it is published at a minimum of four issues per year. It includes a pastoral message, a calendar of events, and narratives about members and committees who are involved in fulfilling our mission as a church.

*The Messenger* is mailed to church members, potential members and friends of the church. The recipients may be current members and friends of our church, or former members and friends who have moved away but have expressed the desire to continue to receive this publication.

## Responsible Parties

Responsibility for the content and the format of *The Messenger* include those who submit articles and pictures for publication, the church Communications Administrator and the church Pastor.

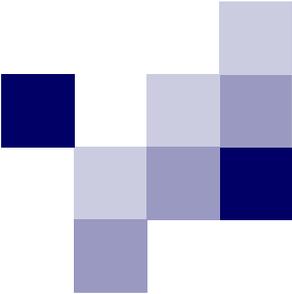
## Guidelines

- ◆ Content should be consistent with our mission as a church. The newsletter should provide spiritual enrichment and should inspire readers to respond to the invitations and the challenges that the church provides. It should be objective and factual, but also display our church and its members in an inviting manner that allows us to know each other and to build community.
- ◆ Editorials, letters to the Editor and letters to the church are not included for publication.
- ◆ Articles whose content includes church doctrine or theology will be written by our church Pastor or will have the approval of the church Pastor.
- ◆ The publishing of addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or other personal information requires prior permission from the individual (parent or guardian).
- ◆ Photographs, cartoons, and other complementary graphics may be used, if desired.
- ◆ Group photographs are allowed without expressed permission if those pictured are not explicitly identified. Photographs of individual adults and children are allowed, but when the subject of a photograph is identified by name, permission is required before publishing.
- ◆ Submitted materials must include the date and the name of the person submitting the materials.



## **Writing Tips**

- ◆ Remember to include the five “w’s” of journalism: who, what, when, where, and why.
- ◆ Make sure that the facts are correct. Ask for permission to use the names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and other personal information of those individuals mentioned in the article or visible in the photograph.
- ◆ Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Use the active voice if possible and maintain a positive writing tone.
- ◆ Keep in mind that many *Messenger* articles are also published on our church web site. If you think that your article is not appropriate for the web, be sure to notify the Editor or submit a substitute piece for web publication.
- ◆ Individual “thank you’s” are best expressed by sending personal notes of expression and are discouraged from publication in *The Messenger*.



# Church Web Site

<http://www.secondchurchboxford.org>

## Statement of Purpose

The *Second Church Web Site* provides our members with activity and programming information, and it also serves as a resource for those who wish to obtain past sermons or require information about our church Bylaws, Covenant, Vision Statement, or our Boards/Committees. The *Church Web Site* is our ‘calling card’ to the world: our invitation to visit for those who may be ‘church shopping.’ Through the *Web Site* we are also able to “reach out” to the homebound and to those who no longer reside in the local area.



## Considerations

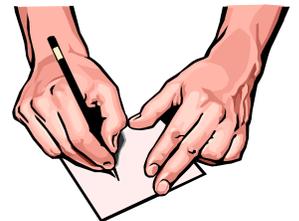
We are blessed with new technology and resources and we must be mindful that our church *Web Site* audience is, in fact, the world. We must assure that information published to the *Web Site* does not compromise the privacy of our church members. The Web Site may contain both *secure* and *unsecured* sections. The *unsecured* section of the web site is open to the public, but entry into the *secure* section of the web site is permitted only to church members (and selected others) through the use of a username and password.

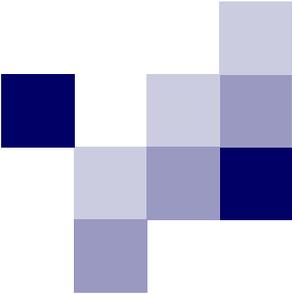
## Responsible Parties

Responsibility for the content of the *Web Site* include those who submit information and pictures for publication, the Webmaster, the church Communications Administrator and the church Pastor.

## Guidelines

- ◆ Personal information including (but not limited to) address and phone number should not be included with individuals’ names in the *unsecured* section of the web site, without the individual’s permission.
- ◆ Names accompanying photographs require permission, other than for clergy, staff or “special event” speakers.
- ◆ Pastoral approval must be obtained prior to publishing content related to church theology or doctrine.
- ◆ Information and photographs related to an outreach partner must be consistent with the partnership’s guidelines.
- ◆ The name of a person submitting information must be submitted with the article.
- ◆ Names of minors require permission of parent/guardian prior to publication.
- ◆ All sub-webs and blogs require the approval of church council prior to publication and are subject to the established web site guidelines.





# E-News / E-Mail

## Statement of Purpose

*E-News* is a communications tool sent to church members and friends via electronic mail (e-mail). It is used to provide our members with weekly information regarding activities, programming information and emergency/critical notices. The E-News provides links to our website and to other resources for additional information regarding church activities.



## Responsible Parties

Responsibility for the content and the format of the E-News include those who submit articles and pictures for publication, the Communications Administrator and the church Pastor. Editing and publishing is the responsibility of the church Communications Administrator.

## Guidelines

### **E-News**

- ◆ The E-News mailing list is comprised of email addresses provided to the church office, and an opt out option is available.
- ◆ All news must be submitted by Wednesday noon to be considered for that week's E-News publication.
- ◆ Content should be consistent with our mission as a church.
- ◆ The publishing of addresses, phone numbers, emails addresses or other personal information requires prior permission from the individual (or parent/guardian).
- ◆ Articles will be run for a short duration and edited for length and content by the Communications Administrator and/or the church Pastor.
- ◆ Photographs, cartoons and other complimentary graphics may be used, if desired.
- ◆ Submitted materials must include the date and the name of the person submitting the materials - electronic submission is preferred.
- ◆ Permission must be given by any individuals named in photographs to be published. Publishing permission is not required for group photographs where specific individuals are not identified.



### **E-Mail**

- ◆ Church Staff are to communicate church business using the church e-mail account created for that purpose. This aids in addressing issues of church data backup, system maintenance and repair and emergency file access. Private e-mail accounts should not be used by the church staff for conducting church business.
- ◆ Church members wishing to send event or business-related e-mail from outside of the church office must seek approval by the Communications Administrator or the church Pastor.
- ◆ Church members' e-mail addresses should not be shared outside of the church membership nor should they be used for non-church event correspondence and fundraisers unless specific permission has been given by the individual(s). E-mail address privacy must be respected.

# Annual Report

## Statement of Purpose

The church *Annual Report* contains the individual reports submitted by the church boards and committees, the church staff and the church officers. The church *Annual Report serves our church both as a reporting tool and as a historical record. The minister's Annual Report* should provide insight into both the spiritual and business life of the church and is mandated in our church bylaws. In addition, reports submitted by the various boards and committees provide the church member with a broader and more detailed view of the spiritual life, activities and business aspects of the church.



## Responsible Parties

The church Moderator and Clerk, in cooperation with the church staff, are responsible for the review of the *Annual Report*.

## Guidelines

- ◆ The board/committee chairperson or designated individual shall write the report.
- ◆ The entire board/committee should review its chair's report before submitting it for publication.
- ◆ The report should be balanced, complete, concise, informative, factual and friendly.
- ◆ Use sensitivity when describing events or issues which maybe controversial in nature or may evoke strong differences of opinion.
- ◆ The report will not include an individual's personal information, such as an address or phone number.
- ◆ Submitting the report electronically and formatted in a word-processing program (i.e. MS Word, Publisher or plain text file) for publication is preferred in order to reduce church office staff workload.
- ◆ Add graphics/pictures to the text body, if desired and also send as an attached image file.
- ◆ Write sentences in active voice – they will be more interesting than those in passive.
- ◆ Avoid long lists of the year's events/topics – attempt to provide some interesting details about events/topics without getting too "wordy".

## **The Church Annual Report should:**

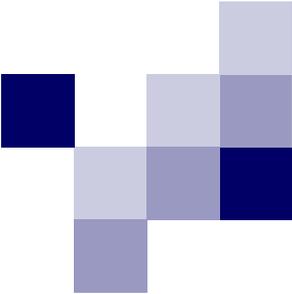
- ◆ Provide a summary of the year's activities for each board and selected committee and for the church minister.
- ◆ Provide a clear sense of the finances and the business structure of the church.
- ◆ Identify the issues important in the year ahead.
- ◆ Provide a historical record of our current church life.

**(See reverse – *Suggested Annual Report Outline*)**

## Suggested Annual Report Outline

1. Board/Committee name
2. Purpose, goal, function of the board/committee
3. Committee reports should include the name of governing (overseeing) board
4. Year's accomplishments
5. Year's end financial status
6. Future goals and recommendations
7. Additional issues, concerns and other topics that may be of interest
8. Recognition of members and others who contributed
9. Signed (or typed), board/committee chairperson(s)





# Photography Ministry

## Statement of Purpose

*A picture speaks a thousand words.*

Photos and videos are crucial to expanding our ability to communicate within the church and the community. The Second Church *photography ministry* is a photography team comprised of amateur and professional photographers designated by the church to provide images of our church life.

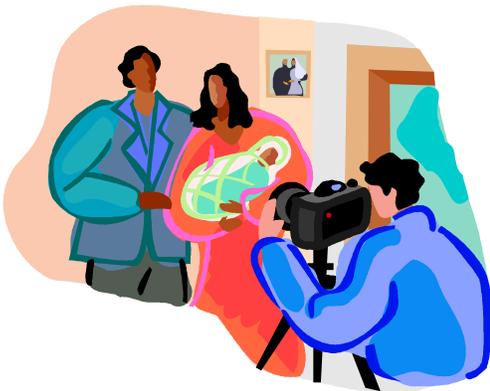
Digital image files are the property of the church and thus will be used by the church as needed for hardcopy and electronic use. Digital image files will be archived and available for use by church staff and members. Such uses include but are not limited to ministry information pamphlets, special event notices and posters, the web site and E-News, slide shows, photo displays and local news media.



## Responsible Party

The *photography team* works with the guidance and suggestions of the Communications Committee and the church Pastor. Church members and friends attending church events and/or worship services have (by default) authorized the church to utilize any and all photos/videos according to established guidelines unless the individual/family has stated otherwise. Professional photographers may be utilized for church events (i.e., wedding, baptism, etc...) by permission of the church Pastor.

## Guidelines



The Board of Deacons and the church Pastor requests that during a worship service, church members, friends and visiting families refrain from flash photography and actions that might hinder or disturb those attending the worship service.

When they are available, the church photography team has been authorized to *shoot* photos/videos (including the use of flash) of church events and Sunday worship. These digital image files may be sent to church members for personal use via email upon request.

The use and publishing of photos/videos shall follow the guidelines as established by the specific target publication as listed in this Communications Guidelines Booklet. Photos of children or adults shall not include names or personal information in any publication without specific permission.

# Announcements

## Information Tables / Bulletin Boards

### Statement of Purpose

#### **Worship Announcements**

Time is typically provided early in the worship service for event announcements and the speaker(s) is asked to *come forward* and identify him/herself. As an alternative, all are encouraged to submit announcements for publication in the weekly worship bulletin and other church media.

#### **Information Tables**

The many information tables located throughout the church are distribution points for “hand out” material relevant to church activities that may be of interest to church members, potential members, visitors and friends. *Examples include: The Messenger, church informational/visitor pamphlets, and information on current activities, opportunities and fund raising.*



#### **Bulletin Boards**

The Bulletin Boards are a posting place for informative flyers and notices about matters of interest that interact with our congregation’s activities and volunteer opportunities (copies of which, in some cases, may be on the table to be picked up by those interested). *Space may also be allocated for specific topics and groups such as UCC News & Events; and various community issues.*

### Responsible Party

Given its dynamic nature, the ongoing monitoring that is necessary and the inherent need for a knowledge base about relevant issues, the Communications Administrator shall be responsible for the **information tables and bulletin boards**. **Worship announcements** regarding fund-raising and non-church sponsored events shall be at the discretion of the church Pastor.

### Guidelines

#### **Worship Announcements**



Worship time is *sacred time* and for that reason we strive to use this time effectively.

Individuals should make an effort to limit the verbal announcement to information that reflects a need for immediate attention or one that is not correctly or clearly already written in the bulletin for that Sunday. Announcement requests intended for publication in the church bulletin, E-News or web site must be submitted for consideration via email the church office (office@secondchurchboxford.org) no later than Wednesday noon.

#### **Information Tables**

Requests and authorization for the set-up of fund-raising and information tables during *coffee hour* must be submitted to the church office by Wednesday noon.

#### **Bulletin Boards**

Items included will likely have appeared prior in approved format elsewhere within our church, the Massachusetts Conference and must clearly relate to activities consistent with the church’s operations, outreach opportunities, community interaction and doctrine. Those utilizing the information tables and posting on the bulletin boards must maintain them in current and neat order which includes the removal of outdated materials. Materials must include a clear identification of the source and note its expiration date and must meet one of the following criteria:

- ◆ Be a document approved or produced by a church board, committee, or the church Pastor.
- ◆ Be a document that describes a matter supported by the UCC Mass Conference or General Ministries office.
- ◆ Describe an outreach project supported by the Church’s volunteer or financial resources.

# Press Releases

## News Articles

### Statement of Purpose

Press releases are communication tools used to reach a wider audience through the use of carefully crafted messages distributed to the press and other mass media entities for publication in newspapers and magazines or announced on radio and television broadcasts and or other and public communication forums.

A press release should address a specific issue, cause, or event and communicate a key message supported by proof points. Determine what the objective of the release is, who it is intended to reach and what the message should say. Be simple, clear, concise, positive, and accurate. Make sure the press release is newsworthy.



### Responsible Parties

Individuals are responsible for the content and truthfulness of the press releases they submit. Press releases should be reviewed and approved by the church Pastor, or other officially appointed spokesperson. The *approved Press Release* shall be submitted directly by the church office.

### Guidelines

- ◆ Write a detailed outline of the release focused to the target audiences. Develop a headline that sells the story. Make sure your facts are correct, timely and relevant to the target audiences. The writing style should be simple, declarative and understandable to the audience.
- ◆ Ask for permission to use names and other personal information of those individuals mentioned in the press release.
- ◆ Provide support material about the event, cause or activity where possible.
- ◆ Use the attached “boilerplate” template for writing church releases.



### Meeting With The Press

Call the newspaper or television station and ask the editor if she/he might be interested in writing an article or covering an event.

The press release should be developed before you call the news media. Be prepared, you may need to submit the press release immediately.

Give the press a day or two to read a news release. Call them back and ask if they received it, and have any questions. Follow up, but don't be annoying.

Be positive when dealing with the press. Get excited when talking about your story, article or event.

Everyone likes a compliment, even reporters. Call when they have done a particularly good job. Or, send them a thank-you note.

If unsure, do not write it in the article; less is best.

**(See reverse – *template / outline* for developing a press release)**

## Press Release Template / Outline

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**Second Congregational Church of Boxford**  
**United Church of Christ**  
**173B Washington Street**  
**P.O. Box 508**  
**West Boxford, MA 01885-0508**

### **For Immediate Release**

Contact: The Reverend Laura A. Gronberg  
978-352-2127  
Office@secondchurchboxford.org

[Communications Administrator]  
978-352-2127 (Church Office)

### **[Title or Heading of News Release]**

[Sub-head – announcing main purpose of news release]

West Boxford, Mass, <DATE> – <Introductory paragraph>

<Main Body Copy>

### **About Second Church**

Second Congregational Church, of Boxford, United Church of Christ, 173B Washington Street, P.O. Box 508, West Boxford, Massachusetts 01885-0508, at

<http://www.secondchurchboxford.org>, is

**<COPY NEEDS TO BE WRITTEN AND APPROVED BY CHURCH PASTOR>**

# Critical/Emergency Contact Plan

**On occasion, it may be necessary to contact members and friends of Second Church in order to provide a timely and/or critical announcement.**

Personal announcements involving joys and concerns, loss or tragedy are included in a worship service when appropriate but some announcements may be time-sensitive and require that alternate methods of communication be utilized.

Such announcements may include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Death of church member/friend
- ◆ Serious illness or accident of church member/friend
- ◆ Special event cancellation/postponement
- ◆ Church meeting cancellation/postponement
- ◆ Severe weather-related event that necessitates a change in church activity

## **Responsible Parties**

We are blessed to have several methods of communicating critical and timely information. The most effective choice of media shall be the method(s) that is deemed most appropriate by the church Pastor in consultation with the church Moderator and when appropriate, the Chair of Trustees.

These established and effective media (in order) include but are not limited to:

- ◆ E-News /E-Mail
- ◆ Telephone
- ◆ Web Site
- ◆ Local News Media and Emergency Communications Center

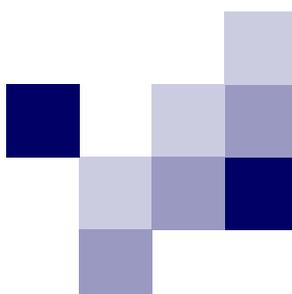


## **Guidelines**

Critical announcements/information should be sent to the church office and when necessary, directly to the church Pastor.

The Pastor will determine the most effective means of communicating the announcement in consultation with the Communications Administrator. In cases such as a death, serious illness or family tragedy, adhering to this procedure allows sensitive information to remain private until proper parties involved have been contacted and permission to release information has been granted. In other cases, information will likely be communicated more accurately by adhering to this procedure. Therefore, unless authorized, personal calls and emails, for example, to pass on such information should not be implemented until the event announcement has been publicized by the church office.

Whenever possible, critical/emergency announcements will be made known to the church staff ASAP and notice to the congregation will be sent by E-News within 24 hours.



# Summary Chart

## Identity & Photos

**YES** = Permitted following established guidelines

**NO** = Not permitted

	<b>The Messenger</b>	<b>Church Web Site</b>	<b>Annual Report</b>	<b>Press Release or Articles</b>	<b>Announcements Info. Tables &amp; Bulletin Boards</b>
<b>Individuals' Names</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<b>Individuals' Names (with personal information)</b>	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED	NO (UNSECURED SECTION)	NO	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED
<b>Photographs Adult/Child (no names or pers. info.)</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<b>Photographs Adult/Child (with names or pers. info.)</b>	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED	YES * PERMISSION REQUIRED	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED	YES PERMISSION REQUIRED
<b>Identity of Article or Information Source/Author</b>	YES REQUIRED	YES REQUIRED	YES REQUIRED	YES REQUIRED	YES REQUIRED
<b>Authorizing Party</b>	COMM. ADMIN. AND/OR PASTOR				

\* Exception: staff & special event speakers