

March 29, 2010

**Communications Policies and Procedures
St. Matthew Catholic Church**

- I. These policies will refer to, but are not limited to, the following types of communications at St. Matthew parish:**
- Parish Bulletin
 - Mailings
 - Phone calls
 - Email communications
 - Parish website
 - Press releases
 - Media interviews
 - Solicitations
- II. General Communications Policies**
- A. Any communications to St. Matthew staff members, parish leaders and/or to all parish members must originate with or be approved by the Pastor (or his appointed representative).
 - B. All requests for communication of information should be presented to the Coordinator of Communications who will determine feasibility and obtain authorization from the Pastor.
 - C. Clergy and Pastoral Associate(s) may make direct requests of the Pastor without first consulting the Coordinator of Communications. It is recommended, where possible, to keep the Coordinator informed of such requests.
 - D. Parish staff, council members and individual ministry heads should present their requests to the Coordinator of Communications.
 - E. Individual parishioners should present requests to the leader of the designated ministry or to the appropriate staff member.
 - F. Disputes regarding communications
 - 1. Should any particular individual make a request for a communication to the parish that is subsequently denied by the Coordinator of Communications, and should such individual believe that the submission of such communication is vital for the parish, he/she may request a meeting with the Pastor or his designate. Such meeting should be arranged in a timely manner (not to exceed 10 business days from the formal request for such meeting) and should include all involved parties.

2. The request for such meeting should be made in writing to the Coordinator of Communications.
 - G. Parishioners shall be encouraged to keep the parish up to date on all of their contact information as it changes.

III. Dissemination of parishioner lists, contact information/Privacy Policies

- A. The Pastor and parish staff should have access, as needed, to contact information for parishioners, including **address, phone numbers and email addresses**. The confidentiality of this information should be maintained and should not be disseminated to any outside source or vendor without authorization of the Pastor.
- B. Pastoral Council members and Finance Council members should have access to contact information of Conveners, staff and other council members, unless individuals request their information be kept private.
- C. Staff members have access to the database and can generate lists of parishioners according to any desired criterion for their use (e.g. members of a ministry or group, newcomers since a particular date, members of a specified age group, etc.).
- D. Conveners should have contact information for Pastoral Council members, staff, other Conveners, and the Ministry Leaders of their committee.
- E. Ministry leaders should have contact information for volunteers/members of their ministry for **their own use**.
- F. The Coordinator of Communications will make these lists available as outlined above for the requesting individual.
- G. The Coordinator of Communications shall also maintain and decide with the Pastor what personal contact information shall be published in the bulletin and on the parish website.
- H. Communications between groups as spelled out above should have no specific regulations except that contact lists should not be exchanged between leaders and individuals that request to be taken off a list should be accommodated.
- I. Clergy, Pastoral Associate(s), and staff should work closely with the Coordinator of Communications to devise an effective internal and external communication plan to maximize job performance

IV. Communications within the parish

- A. Pastoral staff and staff department heads should use written and email communications to the staff as called for in their job descriptions.
- B. Disclosing confidential information to those outside of the staff is a violation of diocesan policy and could result in disciplinary action.
- C. Several means are available for communicating with the parish as a whole:
 1. **Weekly bulletin**
 - a. Articles should be 150 words or less, in Word format with Times New Roman size 10 font.

- b. Articles need to be in no later than Thursday (10 days before the actual bulletin) by 2:00 PM. **Please note the change in date and time!**
- c. Articles should not run for more than 2 consecutive weeks.
- d. Due to the number of articles for each bulletin, it may be necessary to edit some of the wording so that everything that needs to go into the bulletin in a timely fashion will fit. Articles may be postponed from running if time allows so that items that are more time sensitive can be printed.
- e. The bulletin contains one full page and one half page article space on each Sunday except the first Sunday of the month. These must be reserved ahead of time and in most cases are on a first come basis.
- f. Please submit all bulletin articles to Julia Turner at juliat@stmatthewcatholic.org.
- g. Outside the Parish articles will only run space available. Parish news will take precedent.

2. Mailings

- a. Mailings to parishioners are to be done at the discretion of the Pastor or authorized department heads.
- b. Parish leaders may send mailings to members of their group as approved by the pastor and with budgetary restraints. Leaders may request mailing labels and use of the postage machine for these mailings. The Coordinator of Communications will help with these mailings.
- c. For mail purposes, only the church's PO Box address should be used. The Post Office will no longer deliver to the street address.

3. Phone communications

- a. Lists of parishioner's phone numbers shall be distributed and used according to the guidelines in Section III above.
- b. Parishioners' wishes to keep numbers unlisted except for parish business shall be honored.
- c. Occasional use of "phone blasts" to send a specific message to all parishioners will be at the Pastor's discretion.

4. Other printed communications

- a. Newcomer Packets are available in the parish office and on the Welcome Desk in the church narthex. These packets are designed to help newcomers get involved and they contain information about all aspects of parish life. Contents are changed and updated as needed by the Coordinator of Communications. Parish leaders may

request ongoing or special items to be included, as space allows.

- b. Other publications, such as handouts for a particular mass, may be created with the permission of the Pastor.
- c. Material on display in the narthex and on the Welcome Desk must be approved by the Pastor.
- d. Printed materials and books, as well as guest speakers, used by parish groups must be pre-approved by the Pastor.

5. Email communications within the parish

- a. **Weekly Staff Memos:** Written by the Coordinator of Communications. Includes items the Pastor wishes to be communicated each week. Also contains pertinent information from the business office, facilities, human resources and Faith Formation; dates of staff vacations and birthdays. Staff members, especially department heads, are asked to submit information to be included.
- b. **Parish Leader Newsletter:** as needed, from the Coordinator of Communications, purpose is to make leaders aware of upcoming activities, deadlines, news about volunteers, etc.
- c. For privacy reasons, emails should always be sent by the writer to themselves with those on the mailing list blind-copied.
- d. **Mass emails** will be sent to all parishioners at the discretion of the Pastor. These will be handled by the Coordinator of Communications.
- e. All email, directed to a St. Matthew address, either personal or business in nature, is the property of St. Matthew Catholic Church and not the individual to whom the email is addressed.

V. Communications outside of the Parish

A. Website

- 1. Purpose: The St. Matthew website has been established to provide information about worship opportunities, parish ministries, and activities to both parishioners and visitors to the site.
- 2. The website is currently hosted by Catholic Web and regularly updated by the Coordinator of Communications.
- 3. Content of the site will be determined by the Coordinator under the supervision of the Pastor.
- 4. Information for the website may be submitted by Pastor, staff and/or parish leaders. Information should be submitted in writing, preferably by email to the Coordinator.

- B. **Press Releases:** All articles for local media are to be submitted to the Coordinator of Communications, who, with the approval of the Pastor, will send them to specified news outlets.
- C. **Media interviews:** Interviews with any member of the media about anything pertaining to St. Matthew Catholic Church or the Diocese of Charlotte should be conducted only by the Pastor or his designated representative.

D. Solicitations

1. There should be no solicitation on parish grounds, including flyers on cars in the parking lot. Only pre-approved fundraisers by parish groups are allowed. These may be limited to a certain number each month. Fund-raising Applications can be obtained in the Parish Office and on the website.
2. Lists of St. Matthew parishioners should not be distributed or used in any manner other than for parish business conducted by the parish.
3. St. Matthew Catholic Church does not permit any door to door solicitations of cash or checks for any purpose.

VI. Communications Policy Updates: These policies should be reviewed yearly and updated/changed as necessary. This should be part of the yearly report by the Coordinator of Communications to the pastor and Pastoral Council. Potential changes should be discussed at that time. Recommendations should be made and these should be reviewed by, and accepted or rejected by the Pastor.

Approved: _____

Date: _____