

St. Matthew Catholic Church

Communications Policies and Procedures

- I. These policies will refer to, but are not limited to, the following types of communications at St. Matthew parish:

Parish bulletin	Interior and exterior signage
Mailings	Films/video – internal and external
Phone calls	Social networking
Email communications	Intra and inter-ministerial
Parish website	Broadcast
Press releases	Solicitations
Media interviews	

The pastor is the publisher of all St. Matthew communications.

II. General Communications Policies

- A. Any communications to St. Matthew staff members, parish leaders and/or 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 Communications Office which will determine feasibility and obtain authorization from the Pastor.
- C. Clergy and Pastoral Associate(s) may make direct requests of the Pastor. It is recommended, where possible, to keep the Communications Office informed of such requests.
- D. Parish staff, council members and individual ministry heads should present their requests to the Communications Office. Individual parishioners should present requests to the leader of the designated ministry or to the appropriate staff member.
- E. Disputes regarding communications:
  - 1. Should any particular individual make a request for a communication to the parish that is subsequently denied by the Communications Office, and should such individual believe that the submission of such communication is vital for the parish, they may request a meeting with the Pastor. 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. The request for such meeting should be made in writing to the Communications Office.
- F. Parishioners are encouraged to keep the parish up to date on all of their contact information as it changes.

III. Dissemination of Parishioner Lists, Contact Information

- 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 never 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 ministry leaders, staff and other council members, unless individuals request their information be kept private.
- C. Selected 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. Ministry leaders should have contact information for Pastoral Council members and appropriate staff. Ministry leaders should have contact information for volunteers/members of their ministry for their own use.
- E. The Communications Office will make these lists available as outlined above for the requesting individual.
- F. The Communications Office will also maintain and decide with the Pastor what personal contact information shall be published in the bulletin and on the parish website.
- G. 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.
- H. Clergy, pastoral associate(s), and staff should work closely with the Communications Office to maximize internal and external communications.

#### IV. Communications Within the Parish

- A. Pastoral staff and staff department heads should first use personal contact then written communications when discussing parish situations or problems. E-mail should be avoided.
- B. Disclosing confidential information to those outside of the staff is a violation of diocesan policy and may be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.
- C. Several means are available for communicating with the parish as a whole:
  - 1. Weekly bulletin
    - a. Submit all articles with the Communication Form attached.
    - b. Articles should be 150 words or less, in Word format with Times New Roman size 11 font.
    - c. Articles need to be in no later than Wednesday (11 days before the actual bulletin) by 4:30 p.m.
    - d. Articles should not run for more than two consecutive weeks without permission from the Pastor.
    - e. 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.

- f. Full page and half page articles must be reserved ahead of time and in most cases are on a first come basis.
  - g. Please submit all bulletin articles to the bulletin editor.
  - h. Outside the parish articles will only run when space is available and at the discretion of the Pastor. Parish news will take precedent.
2. Mailings
- a. Mailings to parishioners are to be done at the discretion of the Pastor and coordinated with the Communications Office.
  - 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 Volunteer Coordinator will assist with these mailings. For mail purposes, only the church's PO Box address should be used.
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 Church Office and on the Welcome Desk in the 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 Volunteer Coordinator. 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, on the Welcome Desk and on bulletin boards must be approved by the Pastor/ Communications Office.
  - 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 Communications Office. Includes items the Pastor wishes to be

communicated each week. Also contains pertinent weekly information from the Business Office, Facilities, Human Resources and Faith Formation concerning department activities. A link to the folder with all pertinent office forms is attached to each weekly memo.

- b. Parish e-news: the content is posted by the Communications Office as directed by the Pastor.
  - c. Parish Leader Newsletter: written by the Volunteer Coordinator is to make leaders aware of upcoming activities, deadlines, news about volunteers, etc.
  - d. For privacy reasons, emails should always be sent by the writer to themselves with those on the mailing list blind-copied.
  - e. Mass emails will be sent to all parishioners at the discretion of the Pastor. These will be handled by the Communications Office.
  - f. 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.
6. Interior and Exterior Signage and Bulletin Boards
- a. Requests for exterior signage, large and/or small, are to be submitted to the Communications Office. Requests are then brought to the Pastor for approval; approved Purchase Orders are then submitted to the Business Office. All artwork and verbiage for exterior signs must be submitted with the request. Exterior signs should be general in nature to be used repeatedly for ongoing programs/events.
  - b. Interior signage is limited to bulletin boards and digital signs. Bulletin boards and digital signs are strategically located in all buildings on the campus. Sign design is generated by the ministry and submitted to the Communications Office; the Pastor will review and approve the submitted design. Once approved, the interior sign will be made available for digital display and submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator for posting on bulletin boards.
  - c. No signage is to be posted on doors, windows, walls or bulletin board cases at any time. Meeting times and locations are always available and posted at centrally located information points.

- V. Communications Outside of the Parish
  - A. Website

1. 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 regularly updated by the Communications Office.
  3. Content of the site will be determined by the Communications Office under the supervision of the Pastor. Links to websites other than the official St. Matthew website must post a disclaimer stating that the viewed site is not an official website of St. Matthew.
  4. Information for the website may be submitted by Pastor, staff and/or parish leaders. Information should be submitted in writing, preferably by email with the Communications Form attached, to the Communications Office.
- B. Press Releases: All articles for local media are to be submitted to the Communications Office. Once approved by the Pastor, the Communications Office will send them to specified news outlets.
- C. Social Media: Content is posted and updated by the Communications Office as directed by the Pastor. Sites outside of the official St. Matthew sites must post a disclaimer stating that the viewed site is not an official site of St. Matthew.
- D. 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. All information communicated must be approved by the Pastor.
- E. Solicitations
1. There should be no solicitation on parish grounds, including fliers 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. Fundraising applications can be obtained in the Church 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 each year in June and updated as necessary by the Communications Office. Updates should be reviewed and approved by the Pastor before being presented to the Pastoral Council.

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Pastor's Approval

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Date