

Codes of Conduct for Social Media, Websites, Blogs and other forms of Electronic Communications

These guidelines are offered as a synthesis of best practices. They include material compiled from church entities, for-profit corporations, and non-profit organizations. Suggestions and comments are welcome at chris@firstuusanidiego.org. In this document, "church personnel" is defined as anyone—minister, intern, lay employee, or volunteer—who provides ministry or service or is employed by an entity associated with the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego.

Social Media

Our websites and social media properties are designed to help welcome people to our religious community and help them learn more about our churches, our many community activities and about Unitarian Universalism in general. We want people to have a good experience when they are visiting our properties. Anything that supports this aim is encouraged, provided it does not violate our basic terms of use. The simple rules of thumb are to keep on-topic and be respectful of others, but to be clear we thought it useful to spell out a few things that are outside what we'd accept.

By using this site, you agree that you will not post, publish or submit as work any of the following material:

- Material that infringes the copyright of another person (plagiarism, or passing off other peoples material as your own) or copyright material not referenced or acknowledged.
- Unauthorized posting of personal information (names, address, phone number, email etc.) of other users.
- Material that contains vulgar, obscene or indecent language or images.
- Material which defames, abuses or threatens others.
- Statements that are bigoted, hateful or racially offensive.
- If we disagree with other opinions, we will do so respectfully.
- We will reply to comments, where appropriate, as promptly as possible.
- We will link to references and source materials directly as often as possible.
- Material that advocates illegal activity or discusses illegal activities with the intent to commit them.
- No Flaming; there is a difference between voicing a legitimate concern or grievance and simply badmouthing or some other form of written abuse of someone or some service. These will be deleted upon discovery.
- Posts or other material which is deemed inappropriate by the site administrators or appropriate team managers will be deleted upon discovery. Users who violate these terms may be blocked temporarily or permanently.
- Any person actively using these sites is implicitly agreeing to these rules regardless of whether they have been read or not.

Please consider the following best practices when engaging with other people online:

- Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego is best represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on all of us.
- Respect your audience. The right time to jump in to a conversation is when your contribution, answers a question, provides useful information, solves a problem or provides comfort.
- You are personally responsible for the content you publish on any form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy, as well as ours. Always respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- Identify yourself and your role at company when you discuss First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego or First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego-related matters. Make it clear that the views expressed are yours and do not necessarily represent the views of your employer.

Personal Websites and Blogs

Some church employees who maintain personal websites and/or weblogs, or who are considering beginning one, have asked about the church's perspective regarding these sites. In general, we view personal websites and weblogs positively, and respect the right of our employees to use them as an avenue of self-expression and outreach.

As an employee of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego, you are seen by our members and outside parties as a representative of the church. Therefore, as in all areas of daily life, a church staff member's personal website or weblog may be construed as a reflection on the church, whether or not the church is specifically discussed or referenced. If you choose to identify yourself as a First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego employee or to discuss matters related to

the church on your website or weblog, please bear in mind that, although you may view your site as a personal project, some readers may assume you are speaking on behalf of the church.

In light of this possibility, First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego expects our staff to observe the following important guidelines:

Notify Your Supervisor. If you currently have a personal website or weblog, or are considering starting one, be sure to discuss this with your supervisor. Also, if you have any questions, feel free to share them with your supervisor.

Include a Disclaimer. On your site, please make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. To help reduce the potential for confusion, we recommend you prominently display the following notice, or something similar, on the homepage of your site:

I work at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. Everything here, however, is my personal opinion and is not read or approved before it is posted. Opinions, conclusions and other information expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego.

We recommend a disclaimer if your site is published under your name, even if it is entirely personal and does not mention First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego or your employment, as readers may connect your personal life to your professional life.

Respect Confidentiality. You must take proper care not to purposefully or inadvertently disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. Consult your supervisor for guidance about what constitutes “confidential” or “proprietary” information. Be sure that what you are announcing has been in the church publications, on the website, or announced from the pulpit before posting it. Otherwise, check with your supervisor. Any employee who violates our policies regarding confidentiality will be subject to serious discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Respect the Church and its Staff. Since your site is a public space, we expect you to be respectful to the church and our leaders, employees, volunteers and members. Any employee who uses a personal website to disparage the name or reputation of the church, its practices, or its ministers, interns, officers, employees, volunteers or members will be subject to serious discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Respect Copyright. Do not use First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego’s logos on your site or reproduce church material without first obtaining written permission from the Director of Operations.

Respect Your Time. All time and effort spent on your personal site should be done on your personal time and should not interfere with your job duties or work commitments.

Follow the Employee Handbook. As with other forms of communication, do not engage in personal, racial or sexual harassment, unfounded accusations, or remarks that would contribute to a hostile workplace.

Use Common Sense. Use common sense in all communications, particularly on a website accessible to anyone. What you say on your site could potentially be grounds for dismissal. If you would not be comfortable with your manager, co-workers, or the executive team reading your words, do not write them.

These policies will continue to grow and evolve along with our communications and activities online. Please feel free to contact Chris Christenson at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego if you would like to contribute to the development of these policies.