



St. James' Episcopal Church

knowing and serving God by serving others

3768 Germantown Pike, Collegeville, PA 19426

610-489-7564 www.stjames-episcopal.org



Communications Policy and Guidelines





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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to establish guidelines for all communications created within and for St. James' Episcopal Church, Collegeville, Pennsylvania.

This Communications Policy and Guidelines Document is also intended to encourage communications that reflect our values, and to ensure effective systems that can:

- Provide timely information about St. James' activities, events and programs within the church and in the larger community;
- Welcome members, friends, visitors and the public to participate in St. James' activities;
- Allow coordination of activities and external publicity;
- Encourage open, respectful communication among individuals in the church;
- Provide information about events and activities that fit with St. James' values.

1.1 The Church's Name

The legal, proper and correct way to write the name of our church is as follows:

St. James' Episcopal Church

This may be shortened to **St. James'**. Please note that the apostrophe is **always** used in the name of the church.

1.2 A Word on Style

Please refer to the St. James' Style Guide (see Appendix 1) for proper use of our logo, tagline and ministry logos. This can be made available to you through written request via the Director of Communications, at office@stjames-episcopal.org.

Please note, as indicated in the style guide, final approval of communications must be approved by the Director of Communications.



2.0 Communications Committee

As an advisory committee of the Vestry, the Communications Committee is responsible for assisting the Director of Communications as deemed necessary in aspects of both internal and external communications for St. James'. This includes all media, especially print and electronic.

The Communications Committee is also available to support parish-wide needs from communications resources including:

- Proofreading
- Preparing ad copy
- Website content development and management
- Facebook content development and management
- Internal and External signs
- Assembling Bi-monthly internal newsletter material, *The Epistle*

Each subgroup is headed by a coordinator with roles and functions described below at the discretion of the Director of Communications.

2.1 Website Management

The responsibilities of the Website Management Coordinator are as follows:

1. Maintain St. James' website including content, look and feel, and functionality.
2. Work with all stakeholders to ensure respective content is current and accurate.
3. Diagnose Website operational problems, make corrections and restore functionality.
4. Create and maintain reports and analyses utilizing available reporting tools.

2.2 Epistle Editor

The responsibilities of *The Epistle* editor are as follows:

1. Assemble articles, advertisements and calendars for the bi-monthly newsletter.
2. Layout newsletter in a user-friendly manner using appropriate graphics where applicable.
3. Proof-read
4. Save newsletter as a .pdf file and email to our congregation in a timely manner.
5. Print 20 black and white, stapled copies for the church foyer table.

2.3 Facebook/Social Media Coordinator

The responsibilities for the Facebook/Social Media Coordinator are as follows:

1. Create content for upcoming activities, meetings and events to promote St. James'.
2. Use software available to create ads for St. James' events and activities.
3. Schedule timely posts regularly to keep St. James' current.



4. Make designs/ads available for use on all sites including but not limited to the website, *Happenings*, the bulletins and *The Epistle*.
5. Work with the Director to ensure consistent theme (brand) across all internal and external publications.

2.4 YouTube Coordinator

The responsibilities for the YouTube Coordinator are as follows:

1. Create content from previous sermons, events, upcoming activities, stewardship campaign material, etc. and maintain St. James' YouTube account.
2. Make sure all content is consistent with St. James' mission/message.

2.5 Vestry Liaison

In addition to the above listed volunteer positions, a Vestry liaison will sit on the committee to facilitate communication between the Vestry and the committee/Director.

All budgetary items and larger internal and external communication projects will be presented to the Vestry via the liaison.



3.0 Privacy Policy

1. Individual street addresses, phone numbers, or personal email addresses of parishioners shall not be published or provided to anyone without permission. Inclusion of a street address or an email address in the body copy of a submission will be considered implied permission.
2. No photographs showing recognizable faces (whether or not they are parishioners) will be published in any St. James' materials or on the website if an opt-out photo release form has been turned in. This form can be found on our website.
3. No information about any visitor to St. James' website will be stored or sold. If applicable, financial information submitted will be transmitted on a separate, secure site.
4. No individual emails, addresses or phone numbers may be used in a "mass" mailing without prior consent from the Director of Communications or the Rector.



4.0 Parish Newsletter – *The Epistle*

4.1 Basic Information

The purpose of *The Epistle* newsletter is to communicate with members and the community about St. James' activities. *The Epistle* is typically published bi-monthly in the third week of the preceding month. Exceptions include the September edition and the summer edition (June, July & August). Articles for submission are due to the editor by the 15th of the month prior. For example, for the October/November edition of *The Epistle*, articles are due by September 15th and the newsletter will be published in the third week of September for upcoming October and November events and activities.

4.2 Submission Process

1. Articles must be submitted to the editor by the published deadline, which is the 15th of the month preceding publication.
2. The preferred method of submitting articles is electronically using the “Communication Request Form” which can be found under Forms on our website. Alternatively, articles may be left in the editor’s mail slot located in the church foyer.
3. Recommended length for most articles is 100 to 300 words. All articles may be edited as deemed appropriate by the editor and/or Director of Communications.
4. Include all information, including contact information as applicable.

4.3 Guidelines

1. All articles are subject to editing for clarity, grammar, punctuation, style or content by the editor.
2. Front page space is reserved for the Letter from the Rector.
3. Examples of topics for consideration include upcoming events, stories of faith, spiritual journeys, mission projects and events, issue-oriented features, etc.
4. Articles addressing fundraising of any nature will not be printed unless the fundraising activity or event has been previously approved by the Vestry prior to publication.
5. No copyrighted material will be published without a copyright release signed by the author and/or publisher or note as permitted by the publisher. All such copyright releases shall be cited.
6. No political messages of any kind will be published.
7. Parishioners’ email addresses will not be included in *The Epistle* unless they are intentionally submitted for inclusion in an article with the individual parishioner’s approval. If the email address is included in the body copy of an article, permission will be considered implied for that purpose.
8. Digital photographs should be high resolution jpg files (300 dpi preferred minimum resolution).
9. Advertisements for ongoing business or professional services will not be published.
10. The editor and Director of Communications will have final say regarding content to be published in *The Epistle* and in bulletins.



5.0 The Website

5.1 Basic Information

The purpose of the website is to be inviting, informative and useful to St. James' members and friends, to potential members, and to the public.

5.2 Content

1. Any member of St James' may submit content for the website using the "Communication Request Form" found on our website which will be reviewed for approval and forwarded to the web administrator as appropriate. Information on the St. James' website should be timely, accurate, useful, and appropriate.
2. The Director of Communication and web administrator will review all content, determine if the content is appropriate for the site, and determine if further approval is needed. The web administrator may modify the content for presentation consistent with the site and for navigability. The web administrator is the only person who can post changes to the site, although a substitute or assistant may be designated when needed.
3. Priorities for content include the following, as determined by the Director of Communications and the Website administrator:
 - A. Rector's message and sermons,
 - B. News of Sunday services,
 - C. Information about ministry areas,
 - D. Information about Christian Education,
 - E. News of upcoming St. James' events and activities,
 - F. Church calendar, including meeting schedules for rehearsals, ministries & committees,
 - G. Contact information and links to suggested websites and blogs,
 - H. Information about the Vestry including meeting minutes,
 - I. Blogs and webcasts,
 - K. History and archival records,
 - L. Information about the church and directions for finding it.
 - M. *The Epistle*
4. Excessively long content may be edited for brevity.
5. No political messages of any kind will be posted.



5.3 Guidelines

1. Announcements and advertisements for events and meetings will not be submitted to the web administrator for posting to the website until they have been scheduled on the church's master calendar. For those events the "Communication Request Form" must have been received and approved by the Director of Communications.
2. Parishioners requesting material to be given to the web administrator for posting must include a removal date for activities and events.
3. Content designated for permanent posting on the website must be approved by the Director of Communications or the Rector.
4. Parishioners' email addresses and phone numbers will not be posted on the website without express permission of the individual parishioner. If the email address or phone number is contained in the body of the message posted, permission is considered implied.
5. The website shall not be used to solicit funds for St. James', its committees, or projects except as approved by the Vestry. The website shall not be used to solicit funds for events or benefactors not directly related to St. James' Church.
6. Advertisements for ongoing business or professional services will not be published.
7. The Director of Communications in conjunction with the website administrator will have final say regarding content to be published on St. James' website.



6.0 Email Communications and *Happenings*

6.1 Basic Information

The purpose of the *Happenings* email is to communicate information about St. James' ministries, business, activities, and other relevant news and activities on a weekly basis to members and friends. *Happenings* email will also be used to communicate changes, memorials and other information of an immediate nature.

6.2 Content

1. Below are examples of the types of messages that may be distributed by the church office through the *Happenings* email list:
 - A. Notices about new *The Epistle* issues being posted on the website and notices of other website changes.
 - B. Weekly church news updates.
 - C. Notices of pastoral care such as hospitalizations or deaths. These emails must be approved by the Rector.
 - D. Notices about church-wide events or programs that have not been well publicized or that need additional emphasis.
2. No political messages of any kind will be sent.
3. In case of an emergency (as determined by the Rector and/or Director of Communications), special broadcast e-mails related to a specific situation will be sent as soon as the basic information has been verified. Examples of emergencies include (but are not limited to):
 - A. Weather-related cancellations/postponements,
 - B. Disaster at the church or involving the greater church family,
 - C. Death of a currently serving Rector, person involved in leadership, or other significant church figure,
 - D. Event of regional, national, or international church-related significance.

6.3 Guidelines

1. Messages for distribution should be emailed to Director of Communications at office@stjames-episcopal.org to be included on the *Happenings* email list. Messages meeting the above criteria will generally be forwarded within one working day of when they were received.
2. The subscriber list created for St. James' *Happenings* emails will be used only for these express purposes. The addresses on this list will not be sold or given to any third party. (See Section 3.0, Privacy Policy)
3. Persons on the email list may request removal at any time by contacting the Director of Communications at office@stjames-episcopal.org stating that they do not wish to receive further messages.
4. St. James' will not intentionally release email addresses via *Happenings* mailings.
5. All electronic email is to be considered as a communication to the public. This means that nothing should be communicated electronically that we would not want



to show up on a public news channel. The following statement must be placed at the bottom of all electronic communications:

PLEASE NOTE: This communication, including any attached documentation, is copyright of St. James' Episcopal Church, Collegeville, PA, and intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed, and may contain confidential, personal, and/or privileged information. Any unauthorized disclosure, copying, or taking action on the contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please contact us immediately so we may correct our records. Please then delete or destroy the original transmission and any subsequent reply. Thank you.

6. Distributing written documents electronically has the same legal effect as duplicating them using a copy machine. Users should exercise care to ensure that copyrighted material is not inadvertently duplicated or distributed without proper authorization.
7. St. James' email systems shall not be used for personal business, personal gain, solicitation of money (other than approved fund-raising notifications), forwarding chain letters, or in support of illegal activities.



7.0 Bulletin Boards, Banners and Posters

7.1 Basic Information

The purpose of bulletin boards, posters, and internal banners is to provide information, attract participation, and convey appropriate images of our active church. Information and artwork on bulletin boards, banners, posters, and fliers shall be consistent with St. James' mission and goals.

7.2 Guidelines

1. The office is responsible for determining and allocating bulletin board space. Areas will be designated for changing displays relevant to pending events and activities. Permanent or systematically rotating space will be identified for the following functions and interest areas:
 - A. St. James' committee business, calendar, and administrative information,
 - B. Diocesan activities and opportunities,
 - C. Religious services information,
 - D. Local Events and activities
2. The office is responsible for overseeing bulletin board postings and maintenance based on Communication guidelines. New types of postings or requests for space may be submitted to the office.
3. Any postings that do not correspond to the above guidelines will be removed.
4. Persons or committees may not directly post notices on bulletin boards. Please provide items to the office to be posted.
5. Bulletin board information should be timely, relevant, and maintained in a way to contribute to the aesthetic and welcoming appearance of the church.
6. Banners of any nature to be displayed anywhere on church grounds must be approved by the Rector and Director of Communications.
7. Banners for church-related events and functions to be displayed at off-site locations must be approved by the Rector, Communications Committee, and Vestry.
8. Posters may be hung for church or church-sponsored events only. Inappropriate posters will be removed.



8.0 Annual Reports and Meeting Minutes

8.1 Basic Information

The Annual Report is an archival document. It is used as a reference to document what happened during a particular time period, or to find out when something happened. The purpose of annual reports and minutes is to provide information about actions and decisions relating to church business and to maintain written records for archival purposes.

Committees are asked to keep minutes or notes about activities undertaken and decisions made, and to provide a copy of those to the Director of Parish Operations in the church office. Minutes should include:

- Name of committee or group,
- Date of meeting,
- Persons present,
- Action taken and decisions made.

8.2 Guidelines

1. Contributions to the Annual Report should include goals, accomplishments, group membership for the calendar year, and information about notable events or speakers. If possible, include plans for next year.
2. All committees are requested to submit contributions to the Annual Report. Relational groups are also invited to submit reports.
3. Preferred contribution is two pages or fewer.
4. The Annual Report will be available on the St. James' website. Printed copies will be available at the annual meeting and are available from the church office.
5. Reports should be submitted as a Word attachment to email if possible. Text within the body of an email or printed copy may also be submitted. Send reports to the Director of Parish Operations at office@stjames-episcopal.org or leave them in the DPO mailbox.
6. Access to annual reports and minutes are available on the website or in the church office.



9.0 The Calendar

9.1 Basic Information

The church calendar provides information about events and activities and serves as a reference for staff, parishioners, and outside groups to reserve use of building space.

9.2 Guidelines

1. Requests for reservations for use of building space must be submitted to the Director of Parish Operations via the “Building Use Request Form”. The Director of Parish Operations will place events on the church calendar.
2. Requests should be submitted as far in advance of the event as possible. Requests may not be accommodated if space is not available.
3. Requests should be submitted on the “Building Use Request” form, available from the church office.
4. Pertinent dates in the Sunday Bulletin are taken from the master calendar.
5. Calendar entries for activities other than routine meetings should include a brief description of the purpose and use of the space.
6. Calendar requests for non-church events must be approved by the Director of Parish Operations. If a rental contract is required, the contract shall be signed before the event will be reserved on the calendar.



10.0 Advertising, Brochures, Banners, and Displays

10.1 Basic Information

Advertising, brochures, banners, and displays increase awareness of St. James', provide information about the church, and encourage participation in activities.

10.2 Guidelines

1. Content shall be compatible with St. James' mission and principles.
2. Placement and display will be in venues or locations that do not conflict with St. James' values, unless approved by the Vestry for a specific purpose.
3. Paid and unpaid advertising will be coordinated by the Director of Communications and the Communications Vestry Liaison.
4. Decisions about priorities for use of communications funds allocated in the general church budget will be determined by the Director of Communications with advisory input from the Communications Committee.
5. Content and design of brochures for programs, activities, events or other purposes must be submitted for review by the Director of Communications with advisory assistance from the Communications Committee to help ensure compatibility and consistency of quality in St. James' communications materials.
6. Use of St. James' banners and advertising at non-church events must be approved by the Director of Communications or the Vestry.
7. All advertising, brochures, banners, and displays shall use approved logos and branding.
8. All advertising, brochures, banners, and displays shall use the full church name, address, phone, and website address.



11.0 Worship Communications

11.1 Basic Information

Worship Communications include all communications used during the worship service (e.g., service bulletins, news and events, announcements, etc.). These guidelines are intended to assure meaningful, succinct communications within the worship service so that the largest weekly gathering of the congregation gains information about St. James' programs and mission; and that messages are delivered in ways appropriate to worship and allotted time available.

11.2 Guidelines

1. Announcements should be limited to events or concerns of the highest importance and/or time sensitivity.
2. Announcements at all services should be made by the Clergy or by a Vestry representative. Committees may make special announcements through a committee member. The congregation may be invited by the Rector/Clergy to make announcements as appropriate.
3. The Sunday bulletin should contain information relevant to the worship service and to those participating.
4. Bulletins are prepared early in the week to allow for *Happenings* information to be sent on Wednesdays. Late entries may be added if time and room permit.
5. Any changes to those assisting in worship on published lists should be called or emailed to the church office by Monday 9AM. (e.g., changes in ushers, greeters, acolytes, etc.).
6. Announcements in the Sunday bulletin are printed as space is available.
7. Priority will be given to announcements that are:
 - A. Directly related to the St. James' community,
 - B. Time sensitive, the announced event is normally within the next three weeks,
 - C. In the office well in advance of the event.
8. Announcements must be in the church office preferably by email on the Monday (by 9AM) prior to the Sunday it is to appear.
9. Special Inserts will be reviewed on a case by case basis and will be printed only for the most important events or activities open to all members of the parish. The format for inserts will be compatible with the format of the Sunday bulletin (an insert will be 7 x 8 ½ inches). Insert copy must be in the church office 10 days prior to the Sunday the insert is to appear.



12.0 Publication of Prayers

12.1 Basic Information

St. James' is a praying congregation. In an effort to keep our prayer life active and our prayer list updated, prayer requests are generated from our Pew Cards, and from those specifically requesting prayer and giving permission for posting. The current list is kept in the church office and updated each Monday, or as special requests are received. Our worship bulletin is the venue for our most recent prayer list.

As a praying and caring congregation, we seek to balance our desire to be in prayer for one another and for the world with our commitment to maintaining the utmost confidentiality with those who do not want their information shared publicly.

12.2 Guidelines

1. General prayer concerns are those concerns received through pew cards secured during collections at Worship services.
2. First names only will be published in the weekly bulletin and prayer list to protect identity of those being prayed for.
3. Err on the side of privacy and confidentiality in all communication.
4. Prayer lists will be automatically removed at the beginning of each month. New pew cards will need to be filled out to continue a long-term prayer request.
5. If a request arises of an urgent nature, the office may be contacted and will add the request as room and time permits. Bulletins are prepared early in the week and may not be added until the following week.