

New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ
Communications and Media Policy Draft

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I. Preamble

All communications on behalf of the Conference, Horton Center, the Granite State Association, or any ministry or program thereof that utilizes Conference communication systems must be consistent with the Conference Mission Statement and the actions of the Conference Annual Meetings. Should there be questions about such consistency, they may be clarified by the Communications and Events Coordinator and/or the Conference Minister. Any communication that is inconsistent will be removed and the person or group who authored the communication required to submit a clarifying retraction.

II. Definitions

- "Conference": The New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ
- "Communications Team": The Communications and Events Coordinator under the supervision of and in coordination with the Conference Minister
- "Accounts": Any digital account, communication platform, financial account, or other representation that bears the name, image, and/or likeness of the New Hampshire Conference, or serves a purpose of aiding in communications of the Conference

- "Administered" or "Administrative Function": Refers to accounts that are:

a) Hosted on, created with, maintained by, or utilized through access of Conference-owned technology or systems licensed by the Conference

b) Maintained with login credentials and top-level permissions accessible to the Communications Team

c) Subject to content moderation and engagement management by the Communications Team

d) Listed with the Communications and Programs Coordinator and Conference Minister as points-of-contact

III. General Policy

All individuals, local churches, associations, Conference bodies (including ministries, groups, committees and task forces) and all other entities must obtain the express approval from the Conference Minister or Conference Board of Directors to do any of the following:

- Use of the New Hampshire Conference name, letterhead, trademarks, logos, employer identification number (EIN), or any other Conference identifier

- Creation, maintenance and operation of accounts bearing the name, image, and/or likeness of the New Hampshire Conference, including but not limited to social media, websites, financial accounts, and vendor accounts

- Reproduction or dissemination of materials and resources for which the New Hampshire Conference holds copyright, except as permitted by the Fair Use provision of the U.S. Copyright Law

IV. Branding

The New Hampshire Conference Brand Guidelines Document, approved by the Board of Directors, shall be used as the principal instruction document for external communication design for the Conference, or whenever the Conference name is referenced or used. Ministry Teams and Mission Groups are encouraged to partner with the Communications Department to develop branding that aligns with Conference Guidelines. To the extent practicable, at minimum a short-form version of the Conference Logo shall be used in all branding and communications.

V. Accounts

A. Creation and Approval

The creation of any account shall be by permission and in concert with the Communications Team, where a review of terms and conditions will take place, as well as a process determined for administrative function capabilities.

B. Credentials Management

When written permission has been granted to open an account in the name of the New Hampshire Conference, or for the benefit of the Conference, all login and user credentials, such as name associated with the account, contact information, username, password, PIN, and credit card or payment information, as well as changes or updates to accounts, must be shared with, or made available upon request to, the Communications Team.

C. Administration and Oversight

All accounts shall be administered by the Communications Team. Exceptions shall be made only on a case-by-case basis and shall be at the discretion of the Communications Team.

VI. Digital Communications

A. Conference-Created Content

Access to accounts and platforms controlled by the Conference is provided as a function of the New Hampshire Conference for the benefit and furtherance of its ministries, churches and their church members, community, and other stakeholders. Communications with such accounts controlled at the conference level shall be at the discretion of the Conference.

B. Submitted Content

Content submitted for publication may be edited or changed as deemed appropriate by the Communications Team. Substantial changes shall be communicated to the content creators prior to publication to allow for the opportunity to withdraw their submission. Minor edits, such as appending, summarizing, and reformatting, which do not alter the meaning, will be performed as needed.

C. Platform Selection

The specific platforms used in communications work will be determined by the Communications Team, balancing budgetary allowances, staff resources, and other considerations. Additional platforms may be utilized and online communities may be facilitated at the discretion of the Communications Team to further the mission of the Conference.

VII. Email Communications

The Communications Team shall have authority to grant leaders of Conference Ministries Team, Mission Groups and affiliated ministries access to cloud products and email capabilities upon request, to the extent that it is helpful to the work of these groups and administratively practicable. Any individual granted access to conference email systems shall be informed about restrictions on making statements to media on behalf of the conference and encouraged to partner with the Communications Department to amplify and distribute official messaging and information.

VIII. Copyright

The posting or publishing of any material or resource bearing a copyright requires advance written approval or permission from the copyright holder and proper attribution made in the post or publication, except as permitted by the Fair Use provision of the U.S. Copyright Law.

IX. Image Release

Photos, videos, or other images of actual persons may be posted or printed on materials only after signed release forms (opt-in) have been obtained from all individuals depicted. Exceptions to this policy include:

- images in the public domain
- "stock" images for which a royalty has been paid or permission to reproduce has been granted
- images obtained in an active recording environment (such as live streamed events, videotaped church services or educational webinars) where participants were made aware of the recording (by public signage or written notice) and were provided with a means to "opt-out"
- group images obtained by verbal consent where a means to "opt-out" was provided
- images obtained in a public place, which is defined as "any place to which the public or a substantial group of the public has access and includes, but is not limited to, streets, highways, and the common areas of schools, hospitals, apartment houses, office buildings, transport facilities, and shops". (Note: a church building would not be considered a public place based on this definition.)

X. Digital Accessibility

A. Commitment to Inclusion

The New Hampshire Conference is dedicated to advancing inclusion by ensuring all hosted content is accessible to the greatest extent possible, considering available staff, financial, training, and knowledge resources.

B. Content Accessibility

The Communications Team will continuously evaluate and improve content accessibility, striving to meet the highest standards of inclusivity for users with visual, auditory, and cognitive impairments.

C. Training and Development

The Communications Team will engage in regular development education and training regarding digital accessibility. The insights gained from these training sessions will be used to implement and enhance accessibility measures within the Conference's digital content.

XI. Community Guidelines

A. Respect and Kindness

All interactions on Conference communication platforms should be edifying for the life and ministry of the church, reflecting the core values of respect, kindness, and inclusivity, and being respectful even in disagreement or potentially controversial discussion.

B. Content Moderation

Posts, comments, and shares shall be moderated by the Communications Team or designated staff personnel to ensure they align with the Conference's values and policies. Additional guidelines and community standards governing use of Conference Systems or engagement with Conference Platforms can be implemented at any time by the Communications Department.