



Communications Policy and Guidelines

April 2018

THE HEART BEHIND THIS DOCUMENT

During the past few years, The Sanctuary Church has grown from what would be considered a “small” church to a “medium-sized” church. With this growth, we have experienced many changes in the way we do things. One of those is how we communicate ministry news and events.

As our church has grown, we have received more and more requests from people within our church and outside of our church to publicize events and opportunities using our communication tools, which include our web site, app, bulletin, e-mail, social media and Sunday morning announcements.

Many of these requests come from ministry leaders who want to promote events within our church. Other requests come from people who attend our church, and they want us to promote events they are organizing. Many of these requests are to publicize activities that are for a great cause, and they come from amazing people within our church.

However, as the number of requests has grown, it has become more difficult to distinguish which ones we should promote, how much we should promote them and how. We also noticed that as we talked about events that weren’t part of the ministry areas of The Sanctuary, it became more difficult to distinguish which opportunities were being offered by the church.

In addition, as our church has grown, we are offering a greater number of opportunities and events within our church. We often don’t have space to publicize our own internal events. Promoting events and opportunities that aren’t part of our church has become a challenge because of space, as well as the time and effort it takes to create promotional images and material.

As a result, the Communications Team put together a set of guidelines to help understand what types of events the church will promote, how often we will promote them and what tools we will use. That is the heart behind this document.



FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

The Communications Team uses many forms of communication to inform people of events and vision.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Print material: The Slice, bulletin inserts, postcard invitations and flyers
- Web-based communication: The Slice weekly e-mail, the web site, The Sanctuary App
- Text messaging
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, as well as Facebook advertising and Facebook events
- Signs and banners
- Sunday morning announcements, including video announcements, recap videos, promotional videos and on-stage interviews
- Separate events web sites, such as hopefortheholidays.info, bikersunday.com, and others

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- The Patch
- Community Calendars
- Radio Stations
- Community signs



HOW TO REQUEST COMMUNICATION OF AN EVENT

Ministry directors typically let the Communications Director know of upcoming events during regular meetings.

- Please talk to a ministry director to make sure your event is included in the overall calendar for that ministry area.
- The ministry leader or event coordinator should contact the Communications Director six to eight weeks prior to the event to start the communications process.
- The Communications Director will e-mail you a media plan. Please fill this out and submit it six to eight weeks in advance. For larger events, the Communications Director might request a meeting to discuss details.
- Please reserve a room for your event through The Sanctuary office manager.
- The Communications Team will work on event images that will be used in The Slice, app, web site, social media and announcement slides. The Communication Director will schedule announcements and social media posts, as well as any other print material or signage.
- Communication of events will begin four to six weeks in advance, depending on space.



TYPES OF REQUESTS

The Communications Team regularly receives requests to promote several types of events and news:

- Church-wide events aimed at inviting people who don't regularly attend The Sanctuary
- Church-wide events and initiatives that are created specifically for people who attend The Sanctuary
- Ministry events that appeal to a large subset of The Sanctuary or create an outreach opportunity
- Ministry events that apply to a smaller subset of people
- Events that are coordinated by people who attend our church, but are not sponsored by a ministry area
- Events that are organized by people who don't attend The Sanctuary

We have broken down these requests into two main categories:

- News and events that are organized by The Sanctuary or a ministry area of The Sanctuary: These events go into the regular Communications cycle at The Sanctuary. (See Page 4.)
- News and events that are not part of a ministry area of The Sanctuary: Organizers are welcome to create their own promotional material and make it available. (See Page 5.)



TIERS OF COMMUNICATION

The Communications Team created Tiers of Communication to help explain how and how often we communicate each type of event.

TIER ONE: Church-wide events that we also are advertising to people who don't regularly attend our church.

TIER TWO: Church-wide events and major initiatives in our church. Staffing changes. Events that are geared specifically toward people who are new to our church. Events that take on extra significance because we believe they are key to helping people grow in their walk with Christ.

TIER THREE: Ministry events that appeal to a large subset of our church. Events that create an outreach opportunity.

TIER FOUR: Ministry events that apply to a small subset of people.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Add to web site calendar and event listing				
Include in weekly communication: bulletin, e-mail, blog				
Create image for announcement slides, The Slice and e-mail				
Announce verbally on stage				
Promote on social networking				
Create print invitations and/or flyers				
Create a Facebook invitation.				
Create outdoor signs and banners.				
Promote as lead item in weekly e-mail.				
Create additional ways of promoting internally through video or on-stage interviews.				
Create other internal and external print pieces, as requested.				
Submit to community calendars and radio stations.				
In some case, create a separate web site.				



EXTERNAL EVENTS

The Communications Team receives requests to promote events that are not part of a ministry area of The Sanctuary. These typically fall into two categories:

Events organized by people who attend our church

- We will include these opportunities in our weekly e-mail **if we have space**.
- Organizers are welcome to promote the event by writing a post on The Sanctuary's Facebook page.
- Organizers can send a personal e-mail to their Sanctuary contacts.
- Organizers are welcome to create their own promotional material and place it on the Info Table. (The Sanctuary reserves the right to opt **not** to display this information based on whether the content fits within the mission and vision of The Sanctuary.)

Events organized by people who do not attend our church

- Organizers are welcome to create their own promotional material and place it on the Info Table. (The Sanctuary reserves the right to opt **not** to display this information based on whether the content fits within the mission and vision of The Sanctuary.)



WHAT ABOUT ANNOUNCEMENTS?

The Communications Director creates an ongoing schedule of announcements on Sunday mornings. If you would like to request that an event is announced on stage, here are a few things to know:

- We try our best to limit announcements to **three events per week**.
- We schedule announcements **four to six weeks in advance** to ensure we are focusing on the tiers of communication.
- News and events that appeal to **a wider audience** will be announced more often than those that impact a smaller subset of our church community.
- We only announce events from stage if they impact **at least 50 percent** of our church body.
- We typically begin announcing major church-wide events **four to six weeks in advance**. We announce smaller ministry events **two to three weeks in advance**.
- Depending on the **time of year and the number of events on the calendar**, sometimes smaller events will be announced more and larger events will be announced less. The Communications Director makes a judgment call based on all of the upcoming events.
- If you would like to request an announcement, please do so **four weeks in advance**. This helps us ensure we do not have to “bump” a previously scheduled announcement out of the planned rotation.
- If you are planning an event, please submit a **Media Plan** to the Communications Director **six to eight weeks** in advance.



BIRTHS, DEATHS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

The Sanctuary is a community church, and we love to spread the news about personal events happening in our body, such as births, deaths and prayer requests.

A few years ago, we were able to include news of major life events, as well as prayer requests in our weekly e-mail. As the volume of these requests increased, we had to make judgment calls about what type of news and prayer requests to include.

In addition, our regular weekly e-mail is distributed to a large audience each week. Many people on this list have only attended our church a few times. We did not want to fill a guest's inbox with news about people he or she does not know. We also did not want to violate the privacy of anyone in our church body by sending prayer requests to people they do not know.

In an effort to treat all of these prayer requests and announcements equally, we have created a "prayer request" e-mail list using our member directory. We add people to this list once they indicate on their tear-off section that they are a "regular attender."

Anyone who is a regular attender can send an e-mail to this list to announce a prayer request, birth, death, or meal sign-up. This can be done through our web site by clicking here: https://thesanctuarychurch.ccbchurch.com/group_detail.php?group_id=39 or by clicking on the **Prayer Request** tab on The Sanctuary app.



WHAT ABOUT EMERGENCIES?

As in any church, we know that emergency situations will happen that do not fit into any of the major categories outlined in this guide.

On rare occasions, our church will experience a tragedy or need to communicate news that does not find a neat place within these guidelines. At times, the Communications Director will make a judgment call to give special treatment to an event or news that is unusual because of its nature or scope.

Examples could include:

- The death of a pastor, staff member or member of his or her immediate family
- A tragedy, such as a fire, shooting, kidnapping, tornado or accident
- An event in our church body or community that impacts a large number of people

In these situations, the Communications Director will consult with the pastor and elders to make the best decision possible on how to communicate this news to the church body.

MINISTRY EVENT MEDIA PLAN

Ministry:

Event name:

Event date:

Contact person:

Please describe the event:

What is the heart and vision behind it? (For example, to help people within our church to connect, to provide an opportunity to invite friends, to help people grow deeper in their faith, to have fun.)

What would you consider a “win” for the event? What are your goals for the event? (For example, 100 people in attendance, people asking for prayer, 50 percent of the people in attendance are from outside the church body.)

What is the main message/feel you would like to convey through the image or announcements related to the event?

Please submit this document online: <https://thesanctuarychurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/34/responses/new>