MARYLAND

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Communication Guide

CONTENTS

WHY HAVE A COMMUNICATION GUIDE?

INTRODUCTION

Our Media & Communications Ministry oversees what you read, touch or click at Maryland Community Church.

This document is an integral part of MCC's effort to help people take one step closer to Christ. It provides guidelines designed to help effectively communicate the mission, vision and values of Maryland Community Church in logos, print, electronic and online media. How we communicate with each other and our audience brings the message to life. A consistent stylistic approach will have a positive impact on the overall excellence of our church.

WHY HAVE A COMMUNICATION GUIDE?

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Effectiveness
Requires a partnership with staff and ministry leaders to facilitate good stewardship of resources. It's not about dogmatic ideas and rigid principles, but about harnessing the power of our message to enhance the experience.

Consistency
Each communication piece is a valuable tool with the opportunity to unify or dilute all communications church-wide, depending on the quality of the information and how it is organized.

Clarity
We aim to simplify everything our audience sees or touches to make engaging at MCC easier and more rewarding in every aspect. We simply want to help them take one step closer to Christ.

Growth
We are committed to excellence in our print and electronic communication tools to help people take one step closer to Christ. These tools are consistent to our brand at Maryland Community Church.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

For answers to issues not included in this guide (or for exceptions to principles listed) consult the Communication Department.

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EVENT SCHEDULING AND PROMOTIONS

INTRODUCTION

There is a tremendous pace of ministry happening at Maryland Community Church. To get the word out and ensure we are providing the best "wow" experience for our guests, it is necessary that everyone is "moving their oars in the same direction, in unison."

Complete the following steps for every event, class, team opportunity or other announcement.

EVENT SCHEDULING AND PROMOTIONS

STEP ONE:

Approval Pastor Discussion (required)

• Ministry Leader meets with Approval Pastor to review the potential event (event goal, within budget, calendar availability).

• If deemed a viable event for Maryland Community Church, then an Event Request Form should be completed together by the Ministry Leader and the Approval Pastor.

EVENT SCHEDULING AND PROMOTIONS

STEP TWO:

Submit a Facility Request (through F1GO Calendar) only after your event has been approved by an MCC pastor.

- A Facility Request begins online at mccth.org/workroom - and directs you to F1GO. (You will be prompted to login, select the calendar, review available dates and then click on the "+ Event" button in the upper right corner to make a facility and/or resource request for your event.

- **What is F1GO?** FellowshipOneGo is the online data management software that MCC also uses to track and schedule all events & resources used at each of MCC's campuses.

- NOTE: Staff members are the ONLY users who can submit event & resource requests. Ministry leaders should submit requests through the Approval Pastor associated with the ministry.

- Outside events require approval by the Senior Leadership Team. Once approved they can be scheduled through the Office Manager.

- F1GO asks for basic event information including dates, rooms needed, A/V needs, tables/chairs, room setup, and a basic description.

- Do NOT move to STEP THREE before you have scheduling confirmation. Contact the Facilities Manager, Doug Hall, with any questions.

EVENT SCHEDULING AND PROMOTIONS

STEP THREE:

Publicity and Registration Request Form

- Only AFTER you receive calendar approval can you complete the Publicity and Registration Request Form. Contact the Facilities Manager, Doug Hall, if you wish to verify your approval.

- This form is where you request publicity materials (ie. graphics, slides, flyers, etc), and registration form requests. This is also where you can request specific communication outlets such as social media posts, email ads, and verbal announcements.

- If your event requires online registration you can select necessary fields for the special information you want to collect through the registration form. Events requiring registration will need a two to three-week turnaround time prior to your registration beginning. This ensures that we have enough time to create your registration form.

- For more information about MCC's online registration process, contact Danna Miner, Office Manager at dannarae@mccth.org.

EVENT SCHEDULING AND PROMOTIONS

OTHER INFORMATION:

Developing collateral and promotional materials

- Make sure all promotions, correspondence or any other communication materials (online and off) adhere to the standards and guidelines in this Communication Guide as well as the MCC Style Guide.

- Make sure you receive approval before hanging or distributing material. All unapproved promotional material will be removed without notice.

- All promotional methods and church-wide communication are coordinated through the Communications Ministry (in collaboration with the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, and Media & Communications Pastor)

- All promotion requests will be considered for announcement in the communication vehicles listed in the Promotional Procedures of this Communication Guide based on timeliness and scope. If you have a special request or idea for promotion email it to Scott Telle, Media & Communication Pastor, at stelle@mccth.org.

EVENT SCHEDULING AND PROMOTIONS

HOW IT WORKS - *START TO FINISH*

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE:

IDEA ➜ Pastor Approval ➜ Facility Request (F1GO Calendar) ➜ Event Approval (F1GO)
➜ Publicity & Registration Request Form (the details) ➜ Event is promoted!

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

The Communication Ministry's goal is to serve Maryland Community Church by *strengthening* the communication between ministries and the Body.

The desire of MCC is to promote any good work or Godly cause; *however*, due to the limited space and resources we are only able to promote those events that have **significant ministry support and involvement**.

Our goal is to support MCC in its mission of **helping people take one step closer to Christ**.

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

1. Our Media & Communication Department is here to help you publicize your event. We are happy to assist you in formulating your promotional campaign and help identify the various mediums available for use. You are urged to plan your calendar for the year and then contact the Approval Pastor as soon as possible.

   *Before contacting the Media & Communications Pastor, you must ensure that your ministry and/or event has been approved through your Approval Pastor and you have received confirmation that your event has been approved for the MCC events calendar. Please discuss the goals (and obstacles) of your event with your Approval Pastor before requesting promotions.

2. This Maryland Community Church Communications Guide has been created to assist in all forms of advertising and promotion, and must be followed when using MCC brands in any form of promotion.

   The MCC Style Guide has been created to insure all MCC communication is consistent and stays true to the "MCC Brand."

3. The following are possible mediums available based on the MCC Communication Grid (see page ?).

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

AVAILABLE COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS

A) **Pre-Service Slides**
request should be made four (4) weeks prior to the date the slide announcement is to be shown. The maximum length of each slide is 15 seconds. Pre-service slides are made based upon the MCC Communication Grid unless preempted due to special circumstances which will be approved by the Executive Pastor and the Media & Communications Pastor.

B) **Posters and Signage**
Posters are <u>not</u> to be placed on the walls, glass doors or columns throughout the building without approval from the Media & Communications Pastor. In most cases the Pre-Service Slides have replaced the general use of posters. In some cases print material may be placed at Connect Central as an alternative.

C) **Video in Sanctuary**
requests should be made to Scott Telle, Media & Communications Pastor, at least four (4) weeks prior to the desired viewing. The Executive Pastor and Worship Pastor must also approve use of a video. Length of these videos will typically not exceed 2-3 minutes. Please ensure your event is eligible for a video by referencing the MCC Communication Grid before requesting a video.

D) **Connect Central**
Print materials such as job postings, applications, approved community based events and the like can be made available through Connect Central.

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

E) **Ministry Tables**
Ministry tables are considered resources and must be requested using a Facility Request - mccth.org/workroom. Approval for ministry tables are based on available space at each campus and scope of your event. Only basic 8.5"x11" signage is provided by the Office Support Staff for your table. If additional signage is needed submit a Publicity Request - mccth.org/workroom. IMPORTANT: Ministry tables should be staffed before, during and after EVERY SERVICE. Please do not simply layout materials to be displayed alone.

F) **Verbal Announcements** (during Services)
Requests should be made as soon as possible and must be approved by the Media & Communications Pastor and the Executive Pastor prior to being announced. These announcements must pertain to the entire Body or be an outreach effort based on the MCC Communication Grid. No announcement regarding fund raising will be made without the consent of the Senior Leadership Team. Each verbal announcement will only be made on a max of two (2) weekends excluding Easter/Christmas service times and any approved MCC special initiatives/events (example: Global Leadership Summit, etc). Please consider using the other promotional avenues to publicize your event or activity.

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

AVAILABLE COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS

G) **Website**

A great effort is made to keep the mccth.org website current with information and events. This is an excellent method for registration of special events and programs in your ministry.

Material for your ministry or event should be submitted using the Publicity and Registration Request Form at least two (2) weeks prior to placement on the website - mccth.org/workroom.

Design changes or special requests for pages other than the events page should be given to Scott Telle, Media & Communications Pastor by emailing stelle@mccth.org.

H) **Weekly Email**

A weekly email has been established to assist in promotion of events, ministry news and concerns affecting the Body at Maryland Community Church. Request for inclusion should be submitted using the Publicity and Registration Request Form at least two (2) weeks prior to the desired date of distribution - mccth.org/workroom. The weekly email may be used for a maximum of two (2) weeks per announcement unless otherwise approved by the Media & Communications Pastor.

I) **Giving Stations**

Giving stations have been provided just outside the Sanctuary at each campus. No other form of collection boxes will be allowed without approval from the Senior Leadership Team.

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

AVAILABLE COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS

J) **Small Groups**
Any communication to small groups must be approved by the Discipleship Pastor and Media & Communication Pastor.

K) **Mobile App**
The Mobile App includes all event information listed on the MCC Website. Events highlighted under the "Sundays" tab coincide with any verbal announcements made from the platform any given Sunday. Any special communication using our Mobile App must be approved by Scott Telle, Media & Communications Pastor.

L) **App Notifications**
The mobile app is set up with categories based on specific ministries, and each notification should clearly fall under the appropriate category.

The "general" category is reserved for special service times, winter weather alerts, daylight savings time and other ALL CHURCH notifications only.

See the **"App Notifications Guidelines"** section of this document for how to process and protocols for sending notifications in your ministry.

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

M) **Flyers, Brochures, and Sign-up Sheets**
All print material displayed anywhere on an MCC campus must be created by MCC office staff or approved by Scott Telle, Media & Communications Pastor. <u>NO print material is to be taped to any wall/surface, left on automobiles during services, or otherwise distributed or displayed without prior approval</u>. Any flyers or other material being displayed without approval will be promptly discarded without notification.

N) **All other forms of mass communication not listed above MUST be approved by the Media & Communications Pastor prior to use.**

Mobile App: Push Notification Guidelines

How To Send A Notification

The MCC mobile app has the ability to send push notification alerts to those who have downloaded it. Each user needs to *enable notifications*, and then *select their preferred ministries* listed under settings in the app (see the ☰ link in top left of app).

How To Send a Notification
Notifications can be submitted one of two ways:
1. **Publicity Request** (mccth.org/workroom) - you can select notifications from the available options.
   a. Include specific wording (140 character limit)
   b. Include date/time to send
2. **Request through email** - request a notification by emailing the Media & Communication Pastor directly.
All notifications sent out should be approved by the Communications Department.

Best Practices for Push Notifications

Time of day* - <u>ONLY</u> send notifications between:
 • Weekdays, 9am and 8pm
 • Saturdays, 10am-8pm
 • Sundays, 8am-8pm
Be wary of sending messages too frequently.

Frequency
Remember that quality beats quantity. The ground rule is simple: **send a push notification when you really have something to share.** Ask yourself how valuable the information will be to your users, if it is useful to your entire audience or if you need to target only a specific group for instance.

Mobile App: Push Notification Guidelines

Best Practices for Push Notifications

Write an attractive text
Keep it short and catchy. Imagine push notifications as similar to tweets, they need to be direct and get straight to the point. Your users must immediately understand the value they will get upon opening the push. Don't leave it up to your users to understand what you want from them. Use a clear Call To Action if you want a response.

Expiring notifications
Notifications stay in each users' inbox until they are manually removed. The Communications Dept. will automatically remove your notification after your event unless otherwise noted.

MCC COMMUNICATION GRID

Level	Criteria	Available Support		Examples

A	**All Church Events**
	All Departments Involved
	(75% of weekly attendance)
		• Pre-Service Slides
		• Website
		• Verbal Announcements
		• Social Media Ad
		• Weekly Email Ad
			• Video
			• Ministry Table
			• Mobile App Notification
			  (needs approval from
			  Med/Comm Pastor)
				Select Sermon Series
				Christmas Eve Times
				Easter Services
				Small Group Launch

B	**Individual ministry key event** One time event (not weekly programming) Entire Department Involved Limited to 2 events per ministry/year (25-50% of weekly campus attendance)	• Pre-Service Slides • Website • Verbal Announcements • Social Media Ad • Weekly Email Ad	• Video (needs approval from Med/Comm Pastor) • Ministry Table • Mobile App Notification	Women's Retreat Iron Sharpens Iron Adventure Weeks Men's Annual BBQ Volunteer Banquet
C	**Important ministry event** One time event or weekly Each ministry limited to 1 per month Two promotions per year (15-25% of weekly attendance)	• Pre-Service Slides • Social Media Post • Weekly Email Ad • Website		Youth Back to School Bonfire College Cookout
D	**Other ministry events, seminars & classes** Non MCC ministries 25+ people involved (Less than 25 people is a meeting)	• Pre-Service Slides • Website		Individual Classes Care Groups Total Money Makeover

VERBAL ANNOUNCEMENT PROTOCOLS

THREE WEEKS OUT:

Request Verbal Announcement

- Requests should be made using the Publicity and Registration Request Form found at mccth.org/workroom. (Links to F1GO calendar)

- Only level A & B events will be considered for a verbal announcement unless other approval is given by Media & Communications Pastor.

- Fundraising: No announcement regarding fundraising will be made without the consent of the Senior Leadership Team.

- Each verbal announcement will run up to two (2) weekends excluding Easter/Christmas service times and any approved MCC special initiatives/events (example: Global Leadership Summit, etc).

- Verbal announcements are placed on the Google Document labeled by the appropriate date.

VERBAL ANNOUNCEMENT PROTOCOLS

OTHER INFORMATION:

Making changes to a verbal announcement

- All requests or changes to verbal announcements MUST go through Scott Telle, Media & Communications Pastor for approval. If changes are made Scott will communicate these to Brett King, Worship Pastor (plus Paul, Dan and the host for that Sunday) to oversee any Sunday programming changes.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Print Materials

• Always include the Maryland Community Church logo on every public piece. (Reference the MCC Brand Style Guide for logo use guidelines.)

• Every piece should cover the most important questions our audience asks: "What's in it for me?" Then follow up with the necessary basics of: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How (call to action).

• Any publication that will be viewed by more than 25 people should be proofed by the Communications department for effectiveness, consistency, clarity and overall design quality.

Mass Email Guidelines

• All mass emails (emails to more than 50 people) must go through the Communications Department to make sure we are in compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act. Also, we want to make sure that our email domain is not applied to any SPAM blacklists. We want to make sure that your email campaign is effective by reducing the overall number (quantity) of emails an attendee of Village View receives on a normal basis.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

THINGS TO WATCH

There are several areas of writing that are neither right nor wrong, yet still must be consistent. Read through this section to familiarize yourself with MCC's grammar, style and spelling conventions.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Avoid in general, particularly when referring to events or groups.

- Example: Maryland Community Church (not MCC or Maryland) - MCC is the preferred abbreviation. Please use the whole name when first mentioned in any document.
  - Avoid using only Maryland as it can get confusing, especially to new attenders.

SENTENCES

- Choose active versus passive writing. Passive voice lowers the readability and clarity.

- Example: Mark decided (not "It was decided").

TITLES

- All titles are to be in italics for easier readability (rather than underlined or with "quotes").

- Example: J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*

GENERAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

DATES

• Drop reference to year when appropriate. Don't abbreviate. Always include the day of the week.

• Example: Tuesday, March 9 (not Tues., March 9, 2015)

TIMES

• Should be written consistently and completely. Use am/pm, lowercase without periods.

• Example: 6:00pm (not 6PM), 7:00pm - 8:30pm (not 7 to 8:30p.m.)

• Example: 12:00pm (not 12 noon), 10:00pm (not 10:00 tonight)

PHONE

• Separate with periods instead of dashes. Use lowercase "x" for extension with no space. Due to new requirements from phone companies, always include the 812 area code.

• Example: 812.234.7100, not 812-234-7100

• Note: NEVER publish ministry partners personal phone numbers in Maryland Community Church communications. Always use an MCC phone number and extension.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

WEB & EMAIL

• Use lowercase for all web addresses. It is appropriate for an email or web address to be underlined when it is used as a clickable link.

• NEVER hyphenate URLs or email addresses as it can add confusion and break the link.

• We now prefer web, website, web page, and so forth—with a lowercase w. But capitalize World Wide Web and Internet.

WORDINESS

• Avoid it and eliminate unnecessary phrases or adjectives. If the sentence makes sense without it, you should take it out. A clear, concise writing style is preferred over a wordy, flowery style.

• Example: phrases like "for more information" and "a time of" can generally be omitted.

PUNCTUATION, SPELLING & GRAMMAR

Most professionals know the difference between a subject and a verb; however, many errors continue to appear in writing. This section describes the grammar, word choice, punctuation and spelling errors that occur most often.

APOSTROPHE

- Avoid using apostrophes in plurals. Example: CDs, URLs, FAQs, 1990s, etc.

BULLETS

- Maintain consistency in the type of bullets used in a given document.

CAPITALIZATION

- Avoid all caps, except for emphasis. It gives the impression of YELLING.

- Capitalize pronouns when referencing the Deity (God, Father, Holy Spirit, He, Him, etc.).

COMMAS

- In lists of three items or more, eliminate comma before and/or.

- Example: He went to the store, post office and dry cleaner. (not "He went to the store, post office, and dry cleaner.)

PUNCTUATION, SPELLING & GRAMMAR

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

HYPHENS

- Make every effort not to hyphenate words.

- Add hard return if necessary to avoid. NEVER hyphenate websites and email addresses.

NUMBERS

- Spell out numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and above.

- Example: one, two, three (not 1,2,3) or 10, 11, 12 (not ten, eleven, twelve)

- Example: six-week series (not six week, or 6 week or 6-week)

EXCLAMATIONS

- Do not overuse!!!!!!!

PUNCTUATION WITH QUOTES

- The period and the comma always go inside the quotation marks. The dash, the semicolon, the question mark and the exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence

IMPROPER AT A GLANCE

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

AFFECT/EFFECT

· Affect means to influence.

· Effect means to result.

ALLUDE/REFER

· These two words are not interchangeable. Allude means an indirect mention; refer means a direct mention.

E.G., I.E.

· e.g., precedes an example, whereas i.e. means that is and simply restates what you just said. Always place a comma directly after e.g. and i.e.

IMPLY/INFER

· To imply is to suggest or indicate, although never to express. To infer is to conclude from evidence.

INSURE/ENSURE

· Insure means "to provide insurance for" and is the only meaning for this word. Ensure means "to make clear or certain."

VOICEMAIL AND EMAIL

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

GENERAL RULES

- Check your email inbox and voicemail at least once per day and respond within 24 hours to a request (business days only). If you are on vacation or will be unable to respond in a timely fashion, either set your out of office message on or make sure someone else is monitoring your emails.

- Reply to every message that originates from a person. Delete general solicitations and advertisements.

FORWARDING

- If you are forwarding to someone else for a response, copy that person in your reply and reference his or her email address.

- Forward to one person only for requests needing follow-up and CC other contacts as professional courtesy only. Monitor responses to original message. Follow up in one week if no response is received.

- When forwarding, make sure contact will be available to answer it in a timely fashion.

VOICEMAIL AND EMAIL

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

FORWARDING (cont.)

- Never forward to or distribute personal email address in replies. Always use a church email address vs. a home-based email address.

- Always include a phone number when recommending people call someone.

- Always include the URL address (web link) in the message when recommending a place on the Web.

- Use staff titles in email responses. For example, "Jim Pendleton, Student Pastor, will have the answer to your question."

- Include the correct signature format when replying to all messages. This can be found in the MCC Brand Style Guide, and you can see how to set it up by watching the video available at mccth.org/ workroom.

- NOTE: Custom fonts in email and on the Web will not display properly if the viewer does not have the font installed on their local computer. Therefore, please limit the use of fonts in email to Arial and Helvetica.

VOICEMAIL AND EMAIL

MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

REMEMBER

- You may be the first and only contact that someone has with the church.

- Your goal is to connect people directly with a resource and not necessarily another person.

- Avoid adding in the middleman when possible.

ASK YOURSELF

- Instead of connecting people to the church staff, how can we connect them with each other?

- Instead of making people wait for us, how can we give them the tools that empower them to do things themselves?

HELP

FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

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