

UUSOChat/Social Media/Realm Guidelines

The purpose of UUSOChat, social media, and/or the interactive aspects of Realm are to offer UUSO congregants opportunities to exchange messages with each other in a manner consistent with our Covenant of Healthy Relationships and our Mission. These communication channels are meant to build connections, community relationships, and trust. These are monitored by UUSO staff and/or congregational leaders.

As such, there are some basic guidelines which we are all agreeing to each time we use UUSOChat/social media/Realm. Any person who does not follow the guidelines may lose the privilege of using these channels of communication. This may include having the person's messages reviewed by a moderator before being posted, or temporarily or permanently removed from the UUSOChat/social media/Realm media.

In addition, congregants are strongly encouraged to not post disparaging things about the congregation, fellow congregants, staff, and/or the minister on their personal social media.

Guidelines for UUSO interactive communication channels:

1. Use caution when discussing items. Information posted on UUSOChat/social media/Realm is available for all to see. Ask yourself: Does this violate confidentiality, someone's privacy, promote a rumor, erode trust in the congregation, or undermine leadership in any way? If in doubt, leave it out.
2. You are welcome to post an occasional promotion for an event of interest to our community, personal items you wish to sell or give away, or tips on good vendors for services or goods when someone is requesting this type of information. However, repeated promotion of a particular commercial enterprise or community event is not appropriate. UUSO has a public Facebook Marketplace group for the congregation to sell services or goods.
3. The discussions on UUSOChat/social media/Realm are meant to stimulate conversation, not create contention. Avoid "flaming" which includes the making of derogatory comments, ridicule, excessive sarcasm, or innuendo.
4. All defamatory, abusive, profane, threatening, or illegal materials or language are strictly prohibited on UUSOChat/social media/Realm.
5. Think about whether a particular discussion should be moved "offline" because it is relevant only to a few people, should be directed to a leader of UUSO for resolution, starts to overwhelm everyone's inbox, or is better conveyed by phone or in person since vocal tone and body language are often needed to avoid misinterpretation.

These guidelines, inspired by best practices of many other UU congregations and social media, were compiled by the re-energized Visitor Connections Team, in consultation with Rev. Rachel Baker, April 2021.