

# **St. Cecilia Parish Policy for Communication**

The following policy applies to all forms of external communication at St. Cecilia's.

## **PURPOSE OF POLICY**

1. To maximize best practices for the use of all channels of communication including social media and other electronic communications channels.
2. To ensure all communications reflect the values of our parish.
3. To ensure that all St. Cecilia ministries and programs have appropriate opportunities for and frequency of communications to parishioners regarding ministries and parish programs.
4. To minimize the risk to St. Cecilia's reputation that can be caused by improper and unauthorized external communications.

## **PARISH TELEPHONES, E-MAILS, PARISH OFFICE**

THE PARISH OFFICE is open from 9:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Thursday and staff members scheduled to be on-site answer phones when they are working in the office. When a staff person is not able to answer directly, callers will hear a schedule of services and a list of voice mail extension numbers for parish staff members. The phone voice-mail number and e-mail address of each member of the parish staff are also published in the parish bulletin and on the parish website. Members of the parish staff are responsible to respond as promptly as they are able.

The Parish Administrative Assistant serves as system administrator for our parish's telephone system. Incoming voice-mail messages are regularly retrieved and forwarded from the parish's main telephone line and also from the e-mail address of our parish's general email information address.

## **SENDING EMERGENCY MESSAGES TO THE PARISH**

To notify or inform the parish of an emergency situation by phone, the phone message on the introductory greeting will direct a caller to a dedicated voice-mail extension: #45. These messages will be forwarded to the pastor and pastoral associate who will make a response as soon as possible.

## **EMERGENCY NOTICES FROM THE PARISH**

Changes in published or regular program or service changes/cancellations will prompt the creation of a message on the in-coming parish phone line. An application system (currently using *Mail Chimp*) to send emergency E-mail notifications to parishioners who have subscribed for these and other periodic notices with details of upcoming community events has also been established. A next step may be to develop a more rapid text message system. The parish's Communication Coordinator and Administrative Assistant work together to manage the personal contact information which parishioners supply to make delivery of this information possible in a timely manner.

## **CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

When a significant event or grave situation occurs at St. Cecilia parish, it is important to communicate the unexpected or significant event or grave situation to the pastor and archdiocese

office immediately. These may include, but are not limited to natural disasters, accidents with injury, law enforcement or firefighter notification and response at the parish, a death, serious misconduct by staff, etc.

Communication from the parish office regarding unexpected events or serious incidents will also be channeled through the office of Communications in the archdiocese.

### **PARISH CENSUS RECORDS AND PARISH DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The Parish Administrative Assistant records and maintains the official sacramental records for the parish and also manages the parish's census information and contribution records. We strive to be vigilant in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of parish members who share this personal information with us.

A Parish Pictorial Directory has also been periodically published in collaboration with a private company. Portraits of parish members and their families along with addresses and other contact information provided by our members have been published in these directories. This information is not to be made available to individuals, businesses or agencies for marketing or other forms of solicitation and such usage is expressly forbidden. Parish members will be alerted when any such breach of confidence occurs or is attempted.

### **EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

1. Individuals within St. Cecilia communicating to other individuals within and/or without the church are using or assuming the name and reputation of St. Cecilia. Church email should be restricted to church business and activities.
2. Email sent using @stceciliasp.org addresses should include complete sender identification such as an identifying signature which includes, name, official title, phone extension and email address, plus the church name, address, contact information and website.
3. As a rule, group emails should generally be sent using blind copy or distribution lists in order to prevent unauthorized sharing of email addresses.
4. Forwarded emails should be edited to eliminate originating distribution lists unless permission to share addresses has been granted.
5. Email is used (currently via the Mail Chimp application) to regularly send communications to parishioners in addition to announcements in the bulletin about parish events and funerals (when permission is granted).
6. The Communications Coordinator will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests for announcements to be included in the parish wide email.
7. We use email addresses (provided by parishioners) from our database. Email addresses are also added from the new parishioner registration forms. Parishioners always have the option to opt out. Bulletin announcements run periodically informing parishioners to contact us to be added or removed from distribution.

### **PARISH BULLETIN**

1. Bulletin notices must be submitted no later than 9:00am on the Wednesday before they are to appear in the church bulletin. Due to space limitations, priority will be given to parish sponsored events. Early deadlines due to holidays will be published in the bulletin.
2. Items to be considered for publication in the bulletin should be submitted:

- a. via email to [bulletin@stceciliaspm.org](mailto:bulletin@stceciliaspm.org)
  - b. delivered in written format to the Parish Office
3. Bulletin announcements may be edited for space.
4. Bulletin inserts are kept to a minimum – generally for a parish event such as Oktoberfest or the annual parish event and are at the discretion of the Communications Coordinator.
5. Bulletin ads are preferably used in lieu of inserts for other events and are determined by space availability and at the discretion of the Communications Coordinator.

### **PARISH WEBSITE**

1. St. Cecilia's has one authorized website, **[www.stceciliaspm.org](http://www.stceciliaspm.org)**, to represent its ministries, events, activities, staff members, and parishioners.
2. Individual ministry web pages should link from the **[www.stceciliaspm.org](http://www.stceciliaspm.org)** website and not utilize independent domain names or routing. Individual ministry leaders should submit content to be posted to the web editor with direction on which ministry webpage it should be posted.
3. The web editor strives to ensure the website meets the needs of visitors, members, and friends of the Church.
4. All page details are handled by and communicated by the communications staff.
5. The parish bulletin is uploaded to the website weekly.
6. The parish website includes links only to non-commercial sites that are not in conflict with the parish mission and goals (such as USCCB, Catholic Relief Services, Vatican Radio and Catholic Charities among others).
7. In posting photos, it is St. Cecilia's policy not to identify children under the age of 18. Permission is required prior to posting any photos of children under the age of 18. If at any time an image appears on the parish website that a parent or parishioner wishes to be removed, they should contact the parish office, and it will be removed immediately.

### **VIDEO RECORDING AND POSTING OF PARISH EVENTS**

Occasionally, video recordings of presentations and parish events are posted on the parish website. It is not permitted for individuals other than the parish communications staff to upload materials on our website. It is our policy to inform parishioners in attendance that a recording is being made with the intention of posting it. It is also our policy to seek the permission of anyone presenting to have the session recorded and posted. While we may store the recordings elsewhere, we make the presentation available on-line for one month.

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

A format for sharing prayer requests and concerns is available on our parish website and a notice also appears regularly in our parish bulletin about sharing this information with staff/volunteers via phone message. Some of what we receive will be incorporated as possible in our intercessions at worship. Others will be directed to staff or volunteers for a pastoral or prayerful response. Despite our best intentions "to bear each other's burdens," we also want to be respectful of privacy or a family or individual's readiness or desire to communicate sensitive and personal information. We are not qualified nor is it appropriate for us to attempt to answer questions about difficult health diagnoses, the progression of disease or complicated

family/personal problems. We need to rely on members who want to share information to inform staff directly to help determine appropriate steps.

### **MINISTRY INVITATION/APPEAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. The parish bulletin and website should be the primary tools used to communicate ministry events to the parish and recruit new members. Ministry invitations are of a slightly longer nature, where a more personal ministry appeal is desired. These usually consist of a representative from the group coming forward to make the announcement.
2. Ministry appeals are permitted on rare occasions.
3. The request should be submitted to the communications coordinator for review and approval three weeks prior to the desired announcement date.
4. The appeal must be prepared in writing and submitted with the request to [bulletin@stceciliaspj.org](mailto:bulletin@stceciliaspj.org) or brought to the parish office.
5. Ministry appeals will be done after the prayer after Communion.
6. If a scheduling conflict occurs that would prohibit making the desired announcement, the staff representative will contact the requester to make alternate arrangements.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AT MASS**

1. The purpose of the Mass is to worship God and be nourished in the Holy Eucharist. The rubrics provide that brief announcements may be made after the prayer after Communion. Therefore, it is this parish's policy to provide for announcements to be made at that time, but also to take care that those announcements are both relevant and, as the rubrics instruct, brief.
2. All announcements will be made by the presider, cantor or lector. The announcements will be approved by pastoral staff.
3. Announcements are limited generally to twice per event. The week prior to the event, an announcement of an explanatory nature (the event is coming up) may be made. On the week of the event, an announcement indicating that action is currently required with regard to the event (i.e., register now, buy your ticket now, etc.) may be made.
4. Announcements should be kept to one or two short sentences and must be submitted **no later than 9:00a.m. on the Wednesday** of the week prior to the announcement date.
5. Announcements submitted later will not be accepted except in extreme cases (such as an emergency relief effort). Staff reserves the right to edit announcements for length. If a scheduling conflict occurs that would prohibit making the desired announcement, the staff representative will contact the requester to make alternate arrangements.
6. When appropriate, all announcements will be made at all weekend masses.
7. If the announcement corresponds to a need for which the parish has a pastoral responsibility (e.g., a need for catechists, appeals, etc.), the parish staff may elect to announce this more often or may elect to have a more personal appeal by the celebrant.

### **DISPLAY TABLES**

1. St. Cecilia sponsored ministries may promote their programs or conduct sign-ups in the Link on Saturdays and Sundays before and after mass. Arrangements should be made through the parish office in advance.
2. All display materials are the responsibility of the individual ministry and should be monitored by a member representing the ministry or program. The parish is not responsible

for items left or displayed on tables. It is the responsibility of the ministry to remove displays no later than one week after the program or event.

3. Selling of goods is not permitted in the Link (allowing for existing permitted uses). Parish ministries conducting fundraising activities may contact the parish office for an acceptable location to set up a table or booth.
4. Selling of goods by outside vendors or non-ministry-related companies or individuals is prohibited.

### **POSTING OF INTERIOR SIGNS/MATERIALS**

1. Information posted on bulletin boards and/or the parish grounds must be reviewed and approved by the parish communications coordinator (all materials should be brought to the parish office for approval). The staff representative will also write an "expiration date" on the posting, after which the sign will be removed. Due to limited bulletin board space, not all materials can be posted.
2. Approved information will be posted on the bulletin boards in the gathering space or on the grounds by parish staff members only. Unapproved information will be removed.
3. Nothing is to be taped/pinned to the inside or outside of doors, walls or windows of the church. Outside banner space is limited and must be requested through the parish office and receive the Pastor's approval at least two weeks prior to the date requested.
4. No flyers may be placed on the windshields of vehicles.
5. Informational brochures or booklets are not to be left for distribution in display racks or on tables in the parish entry-way or links without prior authorization of parish staff.

### **OUTDOOR BANNERS AND SIGNAGE**

1. In general banners and outdoor signs are discouraged. A notable exception has been the annual parish dinner and event. Other requests will be decided by the Pastor.

### **PRINT ADVERTISING**

1. The Parish Administrative Assistant or Communication coordinator works with the bulletin publisher to oversee print advertising, in the parish bulletin. The publisher periodically solicits advertising revenue from area businesses or service providers.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA, i.e. FACEBOOK, TWITTER & BLOGS**

No social media sites should be created by individuals not employed by St. Cecilia or set up using a personal email account. St. Cecilia does not at present utilize any social media platforms. Social media for parish use is never to be used to establish private communications between parties.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY**

1. It is expected that photography during the mass and special events be limited and discreet. Photographers should be aware of the sacred environment, being careful not to take photos or move in a way that distracts the participants in the congregation.
2. No photos may be taken that disrupt the flow of the liturgy.
3. Photographers are never allowed in the sanctuary or on altar steps
4. Congregants should not leave their pew during mass; photos are taken from the pew.
5. No tripods should be used or set up during mass in any of the aisles.

6. Flash photography is permitted before and after the mass only.
7. Photographers are not permitted to stand in the main aisle of the church to impede procession or recession or visually distract from liturgical action taking place in the sanctuary or assembly areas. .

### **PRESS RELEASES**

1. Press releases are coordinated by the communications and pastoral staff
2. Press releases may also be written by ministry or program volunteers; however, they must be approved by the parish communications coordinator before being released to the media.
3. Press releases promoting upcoming events require four weeks lead time.. Staff members are responsible for reviewing and returning releases written to the writer in a timely manner to meet publisher deadlines.

### **PARISH LIBRARY AND SOFT ROOM RESOURCES**

Books, publications and recorded materials are made available for use in the Library area of the upper Link and in the Parish Soft Room.. Parish staff or a Parish Library Team selects materials and coordinates their circulation. Materials may be purchased or donated specifically for these purposes, but we do not simply accept unwanted items from households or promotional material from commercial or partisan vendors.

### **PROHIBITED USE OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

1. **PARTISAN COMMUNICATION.** Church communication may not be used for partisan political messages. Association, representation or endorsement of, or by, any political candidate, party, or campaign, whether actual, inferred or implied is prohibited.
2. **ADVERTISING.** No aspect of church communications may be used to promote any activity resulting in financial gain of a staff member, parishioner, or business, with the exception of sponsored advertising which supports the cost of printing the Sunday bulletin.
3. **UNAUTHORIZED COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS.** Unauthorized websites, blogs, social network sites, direct mailings, and use of the parish name and/or logo are not permitted. Only members of St. Cecilia communications pastoral staff shall maintain or authorize external communications channels on behalf of the parish.

### **MEDIA RELATIONS**

Only authorized St. Cecilia staff spokespersons, such as the Pastor and parish staff, may communicate directly with members of the media on behalf of the parish. It is in the best interest of St. Cecilia to maintain relations with the media in an open, pragmatic manner, and respond promptly to their legitimate interests.

1. All media requests should be recorded accurately and passed on in the following order: 1.) Pastor, 2.) communications staff or, 3.) trustees? Parish Community Council? Media requests include inquiries for interviews, commentary and information, and include all media – TV/Radio, newspapers, magazines, local/national media and internet sites.
2. Authorized St. Cecilia spokespersons will respond on behalf of the parish, or assist in identifying the appropriate person from staff to handle the response.
3. Ministry volunteers are not authorized to speak to reporters without advance knowledge and coordination with the appropriate staff spokesperson or communications personnel.

Volunteers who are approached by the media should be instructed to direct all media calls to the appropriate staff spokespersons or communications personnel.

4. All media calls are to be reported to the communications staff for follow-up and archiving. Provide the reporter's name, media outlet, email address and telephone number, the anticipated publication date, and the subject of the story.

#### **ST. CECILIA COMPUTER, INTERNET & WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY POLICY**

1. Computer and Internet access is a service provided on campus to the staff, and only parishioners, volunteers and visitors of St. Cecilia authorized by them and is intended for parish-related purposes. Use of St. Cecilia's computers, network or wireless service should not cause incremental expense to St. Cecilia parish, nor should St. Cecilia resources be wasted. Users should not send mass mailings or run private businesses at the expense of St. Cecilia parish without proper permission. When accessing the computer, network, and Internet at St. Cecilia's, all existing local, state, federal laws as well as St. Cecilia policies must be followed including those that deal with intellectual property protection, privacy, sexual harassment, data security, and confidentiality.
2. Each person using St. Cecilia's computer or Internet access shall identify themselves honestly, accurately, and completely when corresponding or participating in interactive activities such as discussion boards, social media, instant messaging, etc.
3. Computing and Internet resources must not be used to knowingly violate the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, city, province, or local jurisdiction in any material way.
4. All users have no right of ownership or expectation of personal privacy to their Internet usage, including personal computers or laptops while on at St. Cecilia's. St. Cecilia reserves the right, without notice, to limit or restrict any computer or Internet usage.
5. Offensive content may not be accessed, displayed, archived, stored, distributed, edited, or recorded using the St. Cecilia parish printing or computing resources. Offensive content includes, but is not limited to, pornography, sexual comments or images, profanity, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any content that can reasonably offend someone on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, veteran status or any protected status of an individual or that individual's relatives or associates. Any content that may be interpreted as libelous, defamatory or slanderous is prohibited.
6. Computer or Internet access shall not be used to run a personal business, gamble, conduct political campaigns, for personal gain, or to take part in any prohibited or illegal activity.
7. No user may use St. Cecilia's computers or Internet access to post messages to web message boards, chat rooms, "weblogs," "listservs," or other Internet communication facility, except in the furtherance of St. Cecilia-sponsored ministries or mission.
8. No one may use St. Cecilia facilities or technology to knowingly download or distribute pirated software or data. Any software or files downloaded via the network or Internet may be used only in ways that are consistent with their licenses or copyrights.
9. No one may use St. Cecilia facilities or technology to monitor use of computing resources by any other individual, or perform any probing, scanning, "sniffing," or vulnerability testing.
10. No one may use St. Cecilia computers or Internet access to deliberately propagate any virus, worm, Trojan horse, trap-door, or back-door program code or knowingly disable or overload any computer system, network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.

11. No one may install, remove, or otherwise modify any hardware or software for the purpose of bypassing, avoiding, or defeating any filtering, monitoring, or other security measures St. Cecilia parish may have in place, except as otherwise provided by St. Cecilia parish policies.

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