

UUA Social Media Policy

DEVELOPED BY UUA COMMUNICATIONS, FINAL DRAFT JANUARY 2024

In alignment with our Unitarian Universalist values and principles and as a faith community, UUA Communications seeks to support an ongoing experience of Beloved Community, as described below, in our digital and social media spaces, including on Facebook, X [formerly Twitter], Instagram, and YouTube. The UUA affirms the free and responsible search for truth and meaning and the open exchange of ideas on our social platforms.

The UUA's Communications staff team develops and shares content on these platforms aligned with UU values on various topics relevant to the UU community. In doing so, we recognize our responsibility to work in alignment with principles of equity, accessibility, justice, and inclusion, striving to create welcoming, safe, and respectful social media spaces. As the national headquarters of the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition, we know we also have an opportunity to model emerging practices.

Topics, Tone, and Themes

The audiences for UUA social media content are varied and nested. UUA social media channels are open spaces and so members of the public, including leaders in other faith traditions and media representatives, can engage with our content alongside loosely affiliated UUs, UU religious professionals and lay leaders. In this way, UU messaging is always nested within a non-UU context.

Social media managers on the UUA Communications staff team employ a "UU+" approach with content sharing, where Unitarian Universalist values, practices, and interests are centered while striving to be relevant to non-UUs as well so that we can always broaden and grow our audiences. For content specifically designed for outreach to non-UUs, social media managers will de-emphasize the UU tone (which can include theme, writing style, and word choice), but remain aligned with UU values in terms of positions and topics.

Regardless of the specific audience, UUA social media managers strive to convey a supportive, welcoming, and loving tone around topics that are spiritual in nature and amplify our moral voice on issues important to public witness, using a trustworthy and factual approach. We apply this approach across all institutional channels and for both pastoral and prophetic messages.

UUA mission priorities, including social justice priorities, are the primary guide for choosing the topics we share on social media. Data on content engagement, including potential for growth in engagement, informs strategic decisions about when and how to present digital content for these missional topics.

Credits and Copyright Practices

UUA social media managers are committed to legal, ethical, and inclusive practices with the content we share. We follow legal requirements and copyright guidelines regarding recognition of intellectual and creative property, and third-party content. In content created within the UUA Communications staff team, the original author, artist, or creator is attributed visibly on any social media post or image, in

video credits, or in an audio file, or in the accompanying framing text when the piece of content is shared.

Not all art, images, or other media always require direct credit of the creator and industry standards support sharing this type of content without direct credit. When content of this kind, created by individuals or groups outside of the UUA Communications staff team, is shared on UUA institutional social media channels, UUA social media managers indicate the source of the image or content using this label: PC: [Name of Source]. Sources typically include organizations like Black Lives UU, UUMFE, or Religions for Peace, for example.

UU congregations and/or affiliate organizations are welcome to use any of the content shared on UUA platforms freely and without credit to the UUA, as long as that use is in alignment with UU congregational or organizational programming, like Sunday worship, small group ministry, or justice advocacy. UUA digital content is not to be used for sale or otherwise for profit.

Commenting and Comment Moderation

The UU community online and any others are welcome to engage directly with UUA content shared on any of our platforms, in alignment with settings available on each platform. Social media managers on the Communications staff team actively review comments out of a commitment to supporting an ongoing experience of Beloved Community. We moderate commenting to ensure that comments do not cause harm or use hateful speech, that irrelevant or spam content is not shared, and that the space is not misused or employed for something other than its intended purpose.

We reserve the right to make use of platform settings which allow review and removal of comments that we determine are in violation of our commenting policy. We also reserve the right to block individuals or accounts that are in violation of our policy or that we determine to be creating an unsafe environment for the community. We remove comments that are irrelevant, harmful, untrue, or represent a misuse of the commenting space.

When circumstances warrant the issuing of an important announcement or resource at a time when the organization is not staffed to monitor ensuing comments, UUA social media managers reserve the right to adjust post settings so that viewers cannot comment on the post. When commenting on a post appears to be creating ongoing harm, we reserve the right to turn off commenting as well.

Understanding that the nature of social media platforms is conversational, we are committed to limiting comments only when necessary due to staffing or concerns about harm.

UUA FACEBOOK COMMENT MODERATION

In response to a need for the UUA to share ongoing information related to escalating violence in the wider world and given the increase in extensive discussion on the UUA's Facebook page, social media managers on the Communications team have developed the following set of specific practices to guide comment moderation on this platform:

When legitimate people/accounts* express harmful, irrelevant, untrue, or inappropriate statements, social media managers will hide their comments. If necessary, we will follow up with the individual via direct message on Facebook.

When legitimate people/accounts* continue to use harmful, irrelevant, untrue, or inappropriate language after having a comment hidden, social media managers hide the comment and, whenever possible, follow up with a direct message stating that further conduct of this kind will result in being blocked from commenting.

When discussion in the comments of a Facebook post become heated, social media managers will comment on the post to remind people of our commenting policy and/or share a general warning that harmful language may result in removal of comments and possibly being blocked from commenting on future posts. When we block a legitimate person/account* from posting to our page, social media managers will send a direct message to the person letting them know they have been blocked.

*Legitimate people/accounts are understood here to be Facebook users with accounts set up to engage with Facebook according to its intended use. This population is distinguished from trolls or bots, which are Facebook accounts held under fake identities or are used primarily to cause confusion or to harass other account holders on Facebook.

In contrast to legitimate people/accounts, troll or bot accounts will have their comments or other content removed by social media managers upon initial violation of commenting policy. Data is collected on troll and bot accounts, and they are reported to Facebook, but direct messages are not sent to these entities.

Errors, Corrections, and Feedback

UUA social media managers are committed to sharing content that accurately reflects Unitarian Universalism, UU values and practices, and institutional positions of the UUA. When an error is recognized, we strive to correct it quickly and with transparency – without deleting the post. We are committed to humility and growth in our approach to this work and we are always learning alongside our online community. Any corrections made to UUA social content will, whenever possible, be visible within the post itself.

Feedback on the UUA's social media management, including corrections to content, can be sent to info@uua.org.