Bethel Mennonite Church

Detailed Communications Plan

Current Version

Updated June 16, 2021

Major Components of the Plan

1. **Messages from the Pastors**
   a. General content categories
      i. spiritual input
      ii. pastoral care
      iii. what activities they are involved in and with
      iv. issues facing our community/neighbourhood
      v. issues facing the church
         a) Within Bethel
         b) Within the broader Church
   b. Content Development
      i. Pastoral Team
         a) the Pastoral Team will discuss and determine together the nature and the focus of the desired messages from the pastors
         b) on a regular basis (at least bi-weekly) one member of the Pastoral Team will prepare a short message of no more than 300-400 words.
         c) the message will be submitted to the editor after it has been written
      ii. Content Editor
         a) will work with the Pastoral Team to develop consistency in the format, writing style, etc.
   c. Communication mediums
      i. Bethel E-Newsletter (formerly Bethel Communications email blast)
         a) this will regularly be the medium used to communicate the message from the pastors.
      ii. Social Media
         a) this will regularly be the medium used to communicate the message from the pastors to our youth, young adults and young families and others when considered appropriate.
   d. Desired audience interaction
      i. "one to many"

2. **Reporting on the Work of the Church at Bethel**
   a. General content categories
      i. Deacon Ministries
         a) Caregiving
         b) Faith Community Nurse

        c) Hospitality/Community Life

        d) Youth, Young Adults, Young Families

        e) Other: Pilgrim Group, Bethel Financial Advisory, Bethel Place Worship, Ushers

    ii. Education

        a) Bethel Kids

        b) Adults

        c) Library

    iii. Witness

        a) Community ministries

        b) Mennonite Voluntary Service

        c) Other

    iv. Worship

    v. Support Services

        a) Finance and Administration

        b) Personnel

        c) Property

        d) Communications

        e) Gift Discernment

        f) Pastor Congregation Relations Committee

    vi. Legacy Fund

b. Content development

    i. Committees/working groups

        a) on a regular basis each committee/group will assign a committee member to prepare a short article on their particular ministry immediately following their meeting

- no more than 300-400 words
- can be a past item, ongoing work, or something that will happen in the future
- the short write up could have links to more extensive information
- the pastoral team contact person for each committee will be actively involved in determining what is to be reported upon.
- the article will be submitted to the editor

    ii. Content Editor

        a) cleans up what is submitted

        b) works with the committees/groups to develop consistency in the format, writing style, etc

c. Communication mediums

    i. Bethel Website

        a) this medium will capture, on a regular basis, all of the news on the work of the church at Bethel

        b) use of this medium

- ongoing reporting in real time

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- all news is categorized and stored by the respective ministry and support service.
- utilize the available technology so as to provide for a lively presentation of the latest news/stories and upcoming events
  i. the Lead Pastor, in conjunction with the rest of the pastoral team and the Editor, will determine what is reported upon here and communicate this to the Web Administrator.

    ii. Bethel E-Newsletter
- a) this medium will "push the news" that is important to highlight in any particular week
  - the Lead Pastor, in conjunction with the rest of the pastoral team, will determine what is to be included and, together with the editor, will determine the final wording, using the content found on the website.

d. Desired audience interaction
  i. "one to many" for both mediums

3. **Reporting on the Work of the Broader Church**
   a. Specific organizations
      i. Mennonite World Conference, MC Canada, MC Manitoba, MCC, MDS, CMU, Westgate, Bethel Place, Brethren Mennonite Council
   b. Content development
      i. The Administrative Assistant will obtain the relevant current news from the organizations in a manner similar to how she currently does this.
   c. Communication Mediums
      i. Bethel Website
         a) List the various organizations and provide a direct link to their respective websites
         b) set up a bulletin board on the website to capture the relevant current news
      ii. Social Media
         a) Will be used to connect and interact with area churches and connected organizations
      iii. Bethel E-Newsletter
         a) have a regular weekly feature on the work of the broader church which will highlight certain important current news and provide a link to the bulletin board on the Bethel website.
            - the Lead Pastor, in conjunction with the rest of the pastoral team, will determine what is to be included and, together with the Content editor, will finalize the wording
   a. Desired audience interaction
      a. "one to many"

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4. **Bethel Family Notes**
    a. General Content Categories
        i. births, deaths, illnesses, celebrations
        ii. tributes to Bethel members who passed away
        iii. personal messages/faith stories/devotionals
        iv. other stories of or from Bethel members
    b. Content Development
        i. Administrative Assistant
            a) will prepare on a regular weekly basis the information of births, deaths, illnesses, celebrations, with input from the Pastoral Team
            b) the draft content will be forwarded to the Content editor.
        ii. Communications Committee
            a) will prepare on a regular basis the content for tributes to Bethel members who passed away and other stories of or from Bethel members, with input from the Pastoral Team and the Administrative Assistant
            b) the draft content will be forwarded to the Content editor
    c. Communication Mediums
        i. Website
            a) Bethel Family Notes will be in the Members section of the website if they contain personal information. The purpose of putting them in the Members section is that this will allow Bethel members to easily access the information while safeguarding the information. Bethel's privacy policy can be referenced for further clarification.
            b) Stories from Bethel members can also be hosted in the Members section if deemed sensitive, however, if the author approves, the content could also be used on the public side of the website.
        ii. Social media will be used for those who follow Bethel on Instagram or Facebook
            a) to draw attention to Bethel's announcements and events
            b) to connect and interact in the direct messages with Bethel members or those who are interested/have questions about Bethel
            c) to draw people to Bethel's website for announcements and more information
            d) to invite people to join Bethel's live-stream worship services by posting reminders and invitations with the direct link to the YouTube videos
        iii. Bethel E-Newsletter
            a) this medium will "push the Bethel Family news" that is important to highlight in any particular week
            b) The Lead Pastor, together with the pastoral team, will determine what is to be included and, together with the Content editor, will finalize the final wording, using the content found on the website.
    d. Desired audience interaction
        i. "one to many" and "one to one"

5. Message from Church Council

    a. General Content Categories

        i. the issues Council is dealing with

        ii. important decisions made at congregational meetings

    b. Content Development

        i. Church Council Executive

            a) the Executive will discuss and determine together the nature and the focus of the desired messages from the Church Council

            b) on a regular basis (or as required) one member of the Executive will prepare a short message of no more than 300-400 words.

            c) the message will be submitted to the Content editor after it has been written

        ii. Content Editor

            b) will work with the Executive to develop consistency in the format, writing style, etc.

    c. Communication mediums

        i. Bethel E-Newsletter

            a) this will regularly be the medium used to communicate the message from the Executive.

    d. Desired audience interaction

        i. "one to many"

Notes to the Communications Plan

    1. Bethel E-Newsletter

        a. Production process

            i. All content will flow to the Content editor, as described above, who will perform the edits as required.

            ii. The Content editor will put the desired content into the template of the newsletter and forward the final version to the Lead Pastor for final input and approval.

            iii. Upon receiving approval of the final edited draft, the Content editor will forward the final draft of the newsletter to the Administrative Assistant to place within the Mail Chimp. She will then send it out

            iv. details of the worship service should be a regular reporting item.

        b. Format

            i. The format and order of the various components of the Bethel E-Newsletter will be identical each time it is issued to make it easier for people to absorb the content

            ii. the look should be consistent with the look used for the website

            iii. make effective use of color and pictures to enliven the content.

            iv. use consistent means of linking to other information/documents found on the website

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      c. Timing
          i. Weekly, on Thursday or Friday at the latest.

2. Website
    a. Orientation to the new website features and updates
        i. The Communications Committee will develop a strategy to formally introduce Bethel to any new features or major updates to how the website functions. This strategy should consider the following:
            a. use the on-line worship service forum, along with other platforms
            b. prepare pre-recorded video sessions for future use and demos.
            c. focus on getting from the old to the new.

3. Branding
    a. A common brand toolkit or template will be developed
    b. Design principles will be introduced.

4. Other
    a. Current bulletins and announcements
        i. The current version will be phased out as these are effectively replaced by the communication process listed above. A simple one- page, double sided, folded hard copy version will be produced for all attendees of our in-person worship services.
    b. Ongoing phone calls (in-person, texts, or Robocalls – as appropriate)
        i. will continue as required in the manner that they are currently being done.
    c. Regular mail
        i. will be used to provide required information for those people who do not have access to computers
    d. Printed communication:
        i. flyers, posters, brochures, invitations will continue to be used

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