

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Northern Chautauqua
Companionship on life's sacred journey

Guidelines for Using Email within UUCNC

Adopted by the Executive Board of the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Northern Chautauqua, (UUCNC), Fredonia, NY, in October 2012

Email is an efficient tool for coordinating within a group. It is the fastest, easiest method for planning an event or reviewing a document and is the preferred method for such coordination within UUCNC.

Email is an inappropriate method for communications regarding personal relationships or personal feelings. Humans have evolved many non-written methods of communicating. Those methods become increasingly important as the stress level increases and they do not translate well to email. Moreover, email offers a sometime-irresistible temptation to make hurtful statements. We feel safe behind our email walls and do not consider the damage that our words may cause. With these observations in mind, please observe the following guidelines when exchanging email within the UUCNC community:

1. Assume that all email will become public. Do not put anything into an email that you would not be willing to post on the congregation's bulletin board.
2. Never forward email in a manner that was not anticipated by the original author. If you are not sure whether the original author intended that you further distribute their material then ask their permission.
3. Do not use email to discuss your relationships with other persons. Talk about relationships face-to-face (best) or over the phone (if necessary).
4. Do not use email if you have negative emotions about a situation you believe needs to be addressed. Often the negative emotions are misunderstood in the email medium, even if the emotions are not expressly stated, and such emails often spiral out of control. If you have negative emotions about a situation then talk with the person face-to-face or over the phone.
5. If you receive an email that violates #3 or #4, respond with the simple statement that "I do not think that this situation can be handled well using email. When can we meet for a discussion"?