INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to give staff and lay ministry leaders clear guidance on communicating church messages, news, and updates, in order to promote efficient lines of communication through the entire church. It is also intended to give clarity to which communication tools are designed for which functions, and consequently, which messages. The following are the current tools we are using to communicate the majority of our messages and information.

**Bulletin** – The Sunday morning bulletin is designed guide worshipers through the service. The *Life in Community* insert, included each week, is our primary tool for communicating written announcements on Sunday mornings. Special inserts may be added on occasion.

**Verbal Announcements** – Verbal announcements, made from the pulpit each Sunday morning, give special emphasis to upcoming church events that have previously been publicized through other written media.

**Welcome Center** – The Welcome Center, located at the atrium entrance on the lower level, is primarily for visitors on Sunday morning. Greeters at the Welcome Center are available to answer questions or to direct visitors to requested print or digital resources for getting to know GEECC. It is secondarily a location for special event flyers.

**Website** – Our primary vehicle for communicating general church information to potential visitors. The website is secondarily a resource for the congregation to find upcoming church event details, to communicate with the office (e.g. staff contact info, online forms, etc.) and to find resources (e.g. Sunday School handouts, download/stream sermons).

**Newsletter** – The church newsletter, called *Covenant Currents Online*, is intended to update subscribers on church happenings. The newsletter serves two main purposes. First, it is a hub from which readers are directed to other online church resources, including the website, prayer list, ministry updates, and the church blog. Secondly, the newsletter is a vehicle for communicating how the ministry of GEECC is making an impact.

**Facebook Page** – The church Facebook page is intended to broaden our reach to a wider public audience. Facebook posts should generally made to announce special events and to highlight ministry stories. Whereas the newsletter is intended to direct our internal audience (i.e. the congregation and those familiar with us) to other locations, our Facebook page is intended to direct the public audience to other locations.

**Church Blog** – The blog has three strategic purposes. First, it provides a new medium for people of GEECC, of all ages, to share stories of how God is at work in their lives. Secondly, it is a sort of window through which the public may see how we seek to live our faith, in our personal lives, in our commitment to one another, and in our service to the community. The third purpose is to provide readers with tools for continued growth in maturity of Christian faith through reflections and links to resources.
The following is a list of guidelines for getting a message out to any of our various audiences. These are intended to optimize the flow of communication through the office, so that the whole church is communicating accurately and consistently. In order to guide the strategic vision for communication, Pastor Mike has been appointed as “editor-in-chief” of church communications. If you have any questions not answered in the following guidelines, please contact Pastor Mike.

1. **Source** – Whenever possible, communication requests should come directly from staff or ministry team leaders. This helps to ensure that requests are legitimate, so that the administrative assistant does not have to verify requests.

2. **Channel** – Send communication requests to the appropriate staff member. This document provides that information.

3. **Content** – Send all content—both text and visual content—to staff in its complete form. **Do not send basic details of events to staff, requesting that they compose a message or search for an appropriate visual aid.** Content may be edited at the discretion of the Pastor Mike for the purposes of visual and messaging consistency. Any significant changes to content should be approved by the original author.

4. **Facility Use** – When planning and communicating an event, make all facility requests through the administrative assistant to ensure availability. If a conflict arises and one party did not process a request, that party is expected to make other arrangements.

5. **Email Blasts** – Mass emails (or email blasts) are limited to regularly scheduled messages and urgent or time-sensitive news updates (deaths, cancelations of major church events, or other emergency news that relates to the congregation). Regularly scheduled messages currently include *Covenant Currents Online* and the Prayer List. Newsletters particular to a ministry area may be incorporated into *Covenant Currents Online* or the church website. Such requests may be made through the administrative assistant.

6. **Making Communication Requests** – Requests for communications may be made by following the guidelines for each medium listed below:
   - **Written Announcements** – Written announcements appear on a bulletin insert each week and should be publicized no more than three times. Requests for written announcements on a Sunday may be made through the administrative assistant by 12:00pm on Wednesday.
   - **Verbal Announcements** – Verbal announcements occur on Sunday morning during worship and should be made no more than twice. Requests for verbal announcements may be made through the administrative assistant by 12:00pm on Wednesday.
   - **Welcome Center** – The Welcome Center is available for publicizing church-related events only. Please do not put ads or flyers for other organizations on the Welcome Center counter. Requests may be made through Gale Cederberg.
   - **Website** – Requests for adding to the website may be made through Pastor Mike.
   - **Prayer List** – The prayer list sent out every Wednesday. Requests for additions to the prayer list may be made through Diane Brown by 12pm on Tuesday.
   - **Newsletter** – *Covenant Currents Online* is published bi-weekly on the first and third Friday of each month. Requests to submit an article, ministry update, announcement or any other communication through *Covenant Currents Online* may be made through Pastor Mike by Wednesday at 12pm.
   - **Church Blog** – Requests for church blog entries may be submitted to Pastor Mike either via email or through the online form located on the church website. To guide the vision of the blog, Pastor Mike has editorial discretion. Any significant changes should be approved by the original author.
   - **Facebook Page** – Requests to post on the GEECC Facebook page may be made through Pastor Mike.
In order to communicate strategically, we need to know 1) who are target audiences are, 2) what we intend to communicate to them, and 3) which tool will best communicate our message. We have identified three key target audiences, described in the following ways:

- **Congregation** – This is anyone who is somehow engaged in the life of GEECC, whether as members, regular attenders, associate members, or family of the above. We may use the metaphor of family for this audience.
- **Visitors** – These are any who are part of the broader public but who have engaged GEECC in some way, either by visiting us on a Sunday morning or via our website and social media. We may use the metaphor of friends for this audience.
- **Public** – This is the broader audience who, unlike visitors, has not actively engaged GEECC. With regards to our communication strategy, a large segment of this audience is “virtual,” that is reached through digital media.

The purpose of identifying our audiences is to get a general idea of to whom we are communicating what message and through which medium. In general, we want to communicate who we are (identity) to our visitors, what we do (mission) to the public, and how carrying out our ministry priorities at any given time is making a real impact (vision) to the congregation. The following chart summarizes the tools and messages we will generally use to communicate to the various audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Primary Target Audience</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcements (written and verbal)</td>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td>What is happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>General info (within two clicks) and who we are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>What we do as an organization and how one can get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td>How what we’re doing is making a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>How God is actively at work in our life together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, our goal is to create consistency in our message, both visually and verbally. Throughout 2012 we identified several things to guide us in creating a consistent message. The following chart shows the language that is currently shaping our message. All lay and staff leaders are encouraged to use this language to inform the messaging of each ministry area.

**Identity**
- Neighborhood Church
- Multi-generational
- Covenant ethos
- Missional

**Mission**
- Love God
- Love Others
- Make Disciples

**Commitments for 2013**
1. Cultivating and sharing Christ-centered culture
2. Building up our next generation
3. Outreach to our community