Parish Email List Policy

St. James' Episcopal Church · parish@saintj.com

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1. Purpose

The parish email list (parish@saintj.com) is a way for members and friends of St. James' to share general information, prayer requests, and community news. This policy explains how the list works, what may be shared, and how messages are reviewed, so that the list stays welcoming, safe, and consistent with who we are as a parish.

2. What the Parish Email List Is, and Is Not

- The list is **open**: anyone, including people outside the parish, can send a message to it (though we don't encourage use by people outside the parish).
- It has over 170 subscribers, including those who are no longer active members of the parish. It only reaches those who have subscribed. It does not reach everyone in the parish.
- It is a supplement to communication. It is **not** the official channel for church communication.

Parish-wide events must not be advertised only through parish@saintj.com. They must also be sent to the church office (admin@saintj.com) so they can be included in the official channels listed in Section 3.

3. Official Church Communications

Channel	Purpose
Weekly emails (MailChimp)	Thursday: comprehensive update on parish activities. Saturday evening: what to know for Sunday worship.
Website (saintj.com)	Primary online source of information for newcomers and long-time members.
Parish calendar (saintj.com)	Full event listing, including Zoom links.
The Window (monthly newsletter)	Posted on the website; print copy available from the office.
Social media and YouTube	Facebook, Instagram, service live-streams and recordings.
Sermon podcast	Available wherever podcasts are found.

4. Moderation

Every message sent to parish@saintj.com is reviewed before release. Moderation exists to:

1. Protect parishioners from spam, phishing, and fraud, since the list is open to anyone.
2. Ensure content is aligned with our baptismal covenant (Section 5).

Messages are released, declined, or returned to the author for revision. Authors whose messages are released will not receive a copy of their own email in their inbox.

5. Content Standards

5.1 The standard: our baptismal covenant

All content must be consistent with the Baptismal Covenant (*Book of Common Prayer*, 1979, pp. 304-305). Three of its vows bear most directly on how we communicate with one another:

- **Respecting dignity:** the vow to "respect the dignity of every human being."
- **Justice and peace:** the vow to “strive for justice and peace among all people.”
- **Loving our neighbor:** the vow to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves”.

In practice, this means messages should build up the community, treat every person with dignity, and avoid language that divides, demeans, or singles out individuals.

5.2 Facts, not opinions

There is a difference between sharing **fact** and sharing **opinion**.

- **Welcome:** facts about an event (what, when, where, who, how to take part).
- **Not permitted:** personal opinions, partisan endorsements, or other potentially divisive commentary attached to an announcement.
- **Not permitted:** content that is derogatory, embarrassing, or that names or depicts any individual in a negative way.

5.3 Two categories of content

Category	Examples	Level of review
Political / social justice	Rallies, advocacy events, public demonstrations, campaigns	Higher scrutiny; facts only
General community	Local events, recommendations, personal items, volunteer needs	Standard review

Example: An announcement of a public demonstration may be released if opinion statements are removed and only the event facts remain.

5.4 Events not sponsored by the church

Flyers and announcements for events that are not church-sponsored are acceptable if **all** content, including visuals, aligns with the baptismal covenant. If a flyer is not appropriate because of its content or imagery, the author will be asked to rewrite the message with facts only.

6. Replying to the List ("Reply-All")

- Replies sent to parish@saintj.com are **not generally released** to the full list. A reply goes to the **author** of the original email.

- **Exception:** a reply with new, relevant information for the whole list (for example, volunteer coordination) may be released.
- **Recommendation for senders:** when emailing a group and copying the parish list, add parish@saintj.com in the **BCC** field so replies do not route to the moderation queue.

7. Review of Borderline Messages

When a message is unclear or borderline:

1. The staff team reviews it and seeks consensus on whether to release it.
2. If staff cannot agree or the message should not be released, **the Rector makes the final decision**.
3. The Rector communicates the decision to the sender and, where appropriate, explains why and offers the option to revise.
4. Questions or complaints about moderation decisions are directed to the Rector.

8. Joining and Leaving the Lists

Members can choose to receive parish@saintj.com messages, the official weekly emails (MailChimp), or both.

- **Weekly emails:** complete the form at https://saintj.com/wp/weekly-e-mail-archive/weekly-updates/ or contact admin@saintj.com.
- **Parish email list:** complete the form at https://saintj.com/wp/parish-email-signup/ or contact admin@saintj.com.
- **Unsubscribing:** use the link at the bottom of any email, or contact the office, at any time.

9. Contacts

Need	Contact
Submit a parish-wide event for official channels	admin@saintj.com
Join or change list subscriptions	complete the form at https://saintj.com/wp/parish-email-signup/ or contact admin@saintj.com
Moderation decisions or concerns	The Rector

10. Review of This Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically by clergy and staff, and updated as needed.

Policy adopted by the Vestry on October 15, 2026.