

Communicating the Life and Work of the Church

The Congregation is preparing to move away from the style of Board that includes all committee members with an agenda that is predominantly reporting, to a smaller Council, not made up of committee representatives, and with an agenda that is primarily focussed on discerning the church's mission.

Consequently, the Board will no longer function as a channel of communication among the committees and other groups. In order for such a new structure to be well received by the congregation, it will be essential for the life and work of the congregation to be effectively communicated. If people feel that with the new structure "no one knows what is happening any more," the work of restructuring may be unnecessarily undermined.

We also intend to strengthen the Council and Committees' accountability to the congregation as a whole. This would point to a need for more intentional and consistent communication of the work of the Council and the Committees to the whole membership.

Therefore we need to develop ways (1) to replace the Board as a channel of communication among committees; and (2) more intentionally to communicate the work of the Council and Committees to the congregation as a whole.

1. The General Procedures section of the Committee binders will include a "**Communications Guide**" that explains to Committee Chairs and other leaders how to make most effective use of the presently available channels of communication.
2. **Channels of communication** include, principally:
 - a. the weekly announcement page,
 - b. bulletin inserts,
 - c. worship announcements, including minute spots,
 - d. public media, e.g., *The Camrose Canadian*.
 - e. the quarterly newsletter,
 - f. the annual report,
 - g. bulletin boards and pamphlet racks,
 - h. the website.
 - i. *Monthly Information*
3. **Monthly Information**

We have begun publishing a *Monthly Information* sheet, giving a quick summary of developments in the work of the Board and Committees. It is produced immediately following each Board meeting and distributed the following Sunday, with copies continually available throughout the month.

4. Principles for Effective Communication

- a. **The “multimedia” principle**
Consider publishing information in all or several of the available media rather than just one. This is for two reasons: different media are effective for different types of people; and repetition reinforces the message.
 - b. Include “Communication” as the **final item on the agenda** of every meeting. In other words, after all of the decision-making and planning is done, we should ask ourselves what needs to be communicated, how it should be communicated, and who will be responsible for making it happen.
 - c. **Plan well ahead** so that information is available in time for weekly and quarterly deadlines. (Scheduled events can be posted on the website even a year or more in advance.) Some people need advance notice to get things in their calendars; and it helps other groups to know what is already planned in order to avoid conflicts.
 - d. Always imagine you are **explaining things to a newcomer** with no church background. Times are changing. Many of the people who are new to our church do not know some of the things the rest of us take for granted (e.g., the meaning of abbreviations such as “UCW” or “M&S”, or “White Gift Sunday”, or “Conference”).
5. We will also explain to **the congregation** how to make most effective use of the media listed in # 2 in order to keep themselves informed according to their own needs and interests.
 6. Board Restructuring and Communications Committees will intentionally **monitor communications**, assessing effectiveness and “trouble-shooting” throughout the implementation period for the new structure.