

"Think About Your Emails"

Unfortunately, I must report that UUCM members have sent angry, hurtful emails to our minister, and to one another. Some of these emails have been shared with me, and I am deeply saddened by their complete disregard for the covenantal relationship we are in with our minister, our staff, and each other.

I sent out an angry, hurtful email myself this summer, that I read the next day and felt compelled to apologize for, so I feel I have room to speak to this.

I have a post-it note on my desk with this acronym on it: (Thanks to Candy Shirey)



It reminds me that EVERY email should be edited AT LEAST once before it is sent, to answer these questions. Let's keep things simple and focus on the last question.

After you have composed your email, ask yourself, "Is this KIND?"

If it is not kind, it should not be sent to anyone in this congregation. Period.

If it cannot be edited to be kind, with a loving curiosity about how the recipient might receive it, it should not be sent to anyone in this congregation.

If it cannot be edited to reflect loving kindness back to the recipient with the intention to remain in or return to right relationship, it should not be sent to anyone in this congregation.

No one. Not our minister. Not our staff. Not a member. Not a friend.

We have been isolated from one another for so long. I know it is uncomfortable to feel you're being left out, don't know what's going on or what "everyone" is thinking. But please do not assume that governance of our congregation is happening without due diligence!

It's time to step away from our keyboards and reach for our telephones. When we hear each other's voices, we re-establish the bonds we have formed, and are perhaps less likely to speak with the anger that we are so willing to allow into our emails. Scheduling time for a phone call shows respect for each other's time and allows for more space to reflect on what really needs to be said.

It's time to speak to one another face to face. There is less opportunity to misunderstand someone's intentions when you are sitting with them looking into their eyes, and you're less likely (hopefully) to lash out in anger or frustration. If you are comfortable enough to meet with family and friends at restaurants and coffee houses, then it's time to have in-person conversations with one another, instead of firing off hurtful emails. Schedule a time to meet, and a place where all involved will be comfortable.

We MUST remain kind. We must BE a community others will want to be part of. And sharing a little love with all those currently doing the work wouldn't hurt either!

Let's remember who we are, and who we want to be together. Let's move forward with renewed patience, and the commitment to remain in right relations with one another as we make our way through this challenging time.

In Faithful Service,
Marti Kennedy