# THE CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA, BERWYN
# Parish Communications & E-mail Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules for official electronic communication at the Church of Saint Monica. Excessive and/or indiscriminant sending of e-mail will cause parishioners, both active and inactive, to ignore their e-mail and may reflect poorly on the parish.

E-mail holds great potential for cost savings and an ability to reach people quickly. However, the most effective means of mass communication also safeguard the privacy rights and respect the time and interests of the recipients. Therefore, the following guidelines are provided to promote appropriate use of e-mail, as communications are increasingly conducted by way of e-mail and other electronic means.

**COLLECTION OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES:** The Church of Saint Monica, Berwyn maintains data records on current and former parishioners which may include e-mail addresses, among other sensitive information. The Parish Staff safeguards and takes seriously their role in stewarding and protecting private information of all Saint Monica Parishioners, including their e-mail addresses.

**PROHIBITED USES:** Bulk e-mailing may not be used for personal purposes, nor to send commercial advertising, charity or other solicitations, political statements, or offensive material. Events occurring outside the parish will not be publicized or sent using our parish e-mail system without special permission of the Pastor.

**E-MAIL APPROVAL PROCESS:** All drafted e-mail must be approved by a member of the Parish Staff in the Parish Office, without exception.

All mass e-mails (utilizing general contact or specified lists) must be approved first by the staff liason for the related e-mail communication (e.g., Family & Youth Director, Music Ministry, Religious Education, etc…) and then final approval for content, formatting and design is approved by either Frank Orman, Coordinator for Parish Communications or Father Charles Zlock, Pastor.

**HOW E-MAIL IS SENT:** The Church of Saint Monica, Berwyn utilizes two professional, e-mail service providers, (ESP): ConstantContact® and Flocknotes®. These are companies that specialize in e-mail communications by managing bounces, unsubscribes, complying with spam laws while professionally managing the method in which e-mail is sent, satisfying large internet service providers like Verizon, Comcast and Google. In addition, these services also analyze the results of our e-mail outreach.

Both services have an "opt-out" option, in which e-mail recipients may notify the ESP that they no longer want to receive e-mail from the Parish. This cannot be overridden or disputed on the Parish end and the result is final unless the recipient then re-subscribes themselves. The unsubscribe option is utilized frequently by parishioners when e-mails become 1.) too frequent and 2.) deemed irrelevant. Parish e-mail databases and bulk lists may **never** be utilized and sent using regular e-mail platforms like Outlook, Gmail, etc…

**FREQUENCY:** Mass e-mails are most effective when they are complete with all relative information, hyperlinks, registration options, and related and attached forms. Special "Save the Dates" and very general information can be included in other e-mails scheduled to be sent from the Parish Office. **Therefore, the frequency of specific e-mails for various departments or parish efforts should not exceed one per month. Ideally, the norm should be every six to eight weeks, sent on the same day at the same time.**

**AVOIDING ATTACHMENTS:** The best way to distribute information is via text in the body of the message. Attachments should be avoided for several reasons: 1.) they are less likely to be read; 2.) they may take up too much space in the recipient's inbox; 3.) they are potential harbors for viruses or other malware. In lieu of attachments, senders can insert links to a page (or pages) as a .pdf document on the Parish website.

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