

UUWestport Social Network : Description and Ground Rules

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Our UU Westport community is always looking for ways to create more connections among us. The online UUWestport Social network has been created to foster that sense of community. It is meant to provide informal message-sharing by and for our congregants: a virtual 24/7 coffee hour or community bulletin board. This online platform is to be used for unofficial UU Westport community topics of interest and is entirely opt in (you can sign up or drop out as you wish). It is open to member and friends, and we will work hard to screen out anyone who does not have a verified connection with UU Westport. The network will be maintained by a volunteer coordinator.

What is the UU Westport Social network list to be used for? Basically, anything that most things that people want to discuss or ask about, as long as it is in good taste, not overly commercial, complies with further guidelines listed below, and is in keeping with our Covenant of Right Relations. Here are some examples of questions and topics that would be appropriate:

- Looking for a referral on a good plumber or doctor?
- "This week's sermon made me think about a similar story..."
- Want to know if a parakeet is a good pet?
- "My 12-year-old daughter wants to start baby-sitting. Is she too young? What should she charge?"
- What kind of digital camera should I buy?
- Who can I hire to do some landscaping around my home?

Which topics should be avoided? Topics that are really divisive, partisan politics, topics that are unlikely to have any kind of resolution via email, or other matters that are overtly commercial should be skipped. For example:

- **UU Westport Community Politics:** Let's not use this as a tool for complaining or airing our opinions on congregational matters. Let's stick to the spirit with which this online bulletin board is intended.
- **Partisan Politics:** As a group associated with a non-profit, we can't advocate for a particular candidate. We can discuss the issues of the election or send reminders to vote, but we cannot recommend voting for particular people or supporting political parties. According to the UUA advice, we could lose our non-profit status for explicit partisan politics.
- **Overt Commercial Advertising:** Don't post subjects like "DON'T MISS THE SALE AT CHUCK'S MOTOR CARS" (but if Chuck is a UU Westport member, is proud that he's opening his new store, and hopes everyone will come to the private party Saturday - that seems fine to write about - but let's NOT hear from Chuck about his business more than twice per year please).
- **Statements that may have legal consequences.** For example, if there is a query about doctors you might want to avoid saying, "He/she is incompetent and has killed patients."

Who is allowed to join? Only people in our UU Westport community including:

- **Members:** People who have signed the membership book and are committed to UU Westport.
- **Friends:** People engaged with UU Westport through regular attendance, financial support, and/or volunteer involvement as determined by the moderators in coordination with UU Westport Membership Chair.
- **Staff:** People hired by UU Westport to support community activities.

Can I control the frequency of emails? With our online platform, you have the choice of receiving every email at the time it's sent, or a daily digest (a compilation of all the day's emails). You can also choose to have no emails pushed out to you but instead go to the site periodically on your own to see what's been posted.

Dos and Don'ts:

- **Do** practice basic etiquette in terms of language and treating all people with respect and being sure postings are consistent with our Covenant of Right Relations. Emails are generally NOT moderated.
- **Do** sign your name to emails posted to the list. It is important we can identify the sender to connect people together and maintain integrity in our process.
- **Don't** forward emails with private information (like members' emails). If there is something of general interest like an announcement of a public event, please copy the information and paste it into a new email. Forwarding emails can make us more vulnerable to hacking.
- **Don't** send messages with only a link, please provide a brief description about the link. Messages with only a link and no context might be viewed as a virus.
- **Do** confirm any attachments have been scanned for viruses and malware before you attach them to any postings.
- **Don't** click on any links or download any attachments that look odd.

If you violate a ground rule, a coordinator will contact you privately to discuss the issue. Egregious violations may result in removal from the discussion group. We hope you enjoy being a part of this community and the connections and support it provides. And please, if you have any issues about the list or how it works, contact Beth Cliff, this year's moderator.