



LCiGB Communications Strategy

“In the beginning was the Word...” (John 1:1)

The LCiGB Communications Strategy sets out the goals we wish to achieve within the context of the church, and the action plan for achieving those goals. It should be read in conjunction with the LCiGB Communications Policy, a separate document, that provides the formal guidance and the official rules for communicating in the LCiGB.

The LCiGB’s communications strategy is set in the context of the nature and character of the church, its congregations and membership. It takes account of the mission of the church and objectives established by the Council of the LCiGB and those expressed by members during meetings, during visitations, and other occasions, e.g. training events, retreats, and socials. It seeks to place the strategic aims in the context of the resources it has available, the character of the church and the nature of its membership.

The strategy contains the goals and objectives that are internal, but includes those that are placed in the wider external context, in particular in the relationships that the church has established, and continues to establish, nationally and internationally, including in the context of Porvoo and the relationship with the Church of England.

It is hoped, through this strategy, to raise awareness about the importance of good communication and establish:

- more communication,
- high quality communication,
- timely and responsive communication,
- informative communication,
- inclusive communication,
- good stewardship through communication.

Introduction

The Lutheran Church in Great Britain is committed to an organisational environment that encourages moral, loving, responsible and professional behaviour. We believe that in all areas of communication in the church, it is everyone’s responsibility to communicate in a manner that is consistent with high principles and good stewardship, i.e. responsible, professional and legal, and in a way that does not compromise the confidentiality, security or rights of the LCiGB or its staff or members.

Why does the LCiGB need a communications strategy?

For some years, the LCiGB membership has expressed a need for more and better communications to ensure that everyone is informed about developments in the church and about church-related matters and events, both internal and external. Congregations and members wish to be made aware not only about what others are doing, but about opportunities to build relationships and friendships and to learn about each other.

They also wish to be better informed about what is expected of them in relation to their responsibilities, including in relation to the central church and their obligations. Increasingly the central church office receives requests for help with the requirements of UK regulatory



bodies, with regard to managing a church organisation, e.g. employment issues, data protection, annual reporting, financial procedures, safeguarding, etc.

The LCiGB needs a plan to address growing needs in the area of communication. The LCiGB wishes to provide informative, rapid, up-to-date communication in a range of methods and styles, so that it can meet the needs of its diverse membership. This must be done in the context of limited resources both centrally and in congregations. The risks of not addressing communication in the LCiGB, particularly in the context of rapid growth in IT and internet-based communications, may be considerable. If the church ignores current and future trends, it will lose contact with members and with non-members, in particular with youth (and many others) and the way in which they engage in communicating through digital and social media.

What does the LCiGB want to do?

The LCiGB seeks to

- increase communication, both internally and externally;
- use quality communication to help to achieve its mission;
- inform members and non-members about church-related activities and events;
- establish and strengthen relationships through good communications between members, congregations and the central church, with sister churches and others;
- communicate effectively ecumenically;
- communicate inclusively and effectively within the diversity of the LCiGB, e.g. youth, elderly, with national and cultural groups;
- raise awareness about the effects of good and bad communication, i.e. ensuring correct and appropriate styles and forms of communication within the diversity of the LCiGB;
- inform pastors, trustees and responsible persons in congregations about church related matters, such as legal requirements, regulatory issues in the UK, etc.;
- create and build continuity with and for the congregations in the LCiGB;
- establish good communication procedures and practice through the provision of basic ground rules for communicating, particularly in the use of public media and digital communication networks, e.g. web site, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, etc.
- evaluate and mitigate risks in communications, i.e. those that might cross legal boundaries, or cause misunderstandings, hurt or harm.

What are the challenges that good communications face in the LCiGB?

1. Resources are limited, in terms of knowledge, skills, time and finance to address central and congregational needs;
2. Small numbers of members but including a wide age range in the membership, from young children to the elderly;
3. Multilingual membership, including different language groups, with some non-English speaking members;
4. Multicultural and multi-ethnic backgrounds, with different communication styles and expectations;
5. Large geographical distance between congregations, i.e. limits occasions for direct contact;
6. Wide range of ability and capacity to deal with the digital and electronic communication, including some members who do not use computers, the internet, or email systems;



7. Limited knowledge and capacity to engage in, monitor, evaluate or control digital and social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogging, web sites.

What are the realistic aims?

The LCiGB seeks to establish increased and better communications through providing:

1. An up-to-date and informative well-designed web site that links to all congregations' sites;
2. A web site that provides resources for responsible individuals and members, and for congregations to use, that not only inform but also that provide tools for achieving good practice, in particular regarding good stewardship;
3. An established database of members – addresses and email addresses, skills, and volunteering capacity – to ensure widest possible communication and stewardship coverage (including a method for monitoring and updating);
4. A regular newsletter in both hard copy and electronic form, that can be sent out widely either by post or email;
5. A Facebook page that informs about events and seeks to engage members and non-members in church-related matters and events;
6. Materials to raise awareness and provide information about stewardship, and the role that communication plays in good stewardship.

Who are the stakeholders in the LCiGB?

Communication matters to everyone in the LCiGB. Key players in communicating, however, are identified as:

- Pastors, and pastors-in-charge
- Trustees and office holders
- Staff and Volunteers
- Sunday School teachers
- Committee members
- Members, in particular those that represent congregations at Synod

Development is urgently needed in the following areas

- Website – redesign, modernising, data updating and repopulation of data, interactive pages (intranet)
- Emailing – establishment of a database of stakeholders and members
- Facebook – more active page, with guidelines about content
- Newsletter – regular newsletter, with regular columns for congregational events, news, informative articles, spiritual input, etc.
- Stewardship materials – printed and electronic, training course materials, etc.
- Guidance about use of public and social media, legal issues and boundaries, what is acceptable or unacceptable types of communication.

Guidance and regulations

As a registered Charity and a registered Company limited by guarantee, the LCiGB is obliged to consider and follow the regulations that apply to this type of organisation. The LCiGB



takes seriously the guidance for good practice that is issued to Charities and Companies and abides by the regulations that apply to them.

In the UK, we also are obliged to following the statutory regulations, as found in the following:

- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright/p01_uk_copyright_law
- Data Protection Act 1998
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/18/contents>
- Human Rights Act 1998
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>
- Equality Act 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

This strategy was adopted at a meeting of the LCiGB Council on 10.10.15