

WRITING GUIDELINES

The purpose of Writing Guidelines is to provide professionalism, clarity and consistency to Bothell United Methodist Church's publications and printed materials. The guidelines should be followed unless there is a specific reason for deviation.

CHURCH NAME

When referring to the church, please refer to it as *Bothell United Methodist Church* or for informal or subsequent use, *Bothell UMC*.

There are many churches whose name begins with the letter "B", so the abbreviated name BUMC is easily confused with another church that may not align with our beliefs and practices. For this reason, it is recommended that BUMC not be used. Instead, the church should be referred to as Bothell United Methodist Church or simply Bothell UMC if a shorter name is needed.

CHURCH GROUP AND MINISTRY NAMES

Many Bothell UMC Ministries have specific names, but on first reference, it is advised that you identify the ministry by the "identifying" name. For example: *UMW* refers to Bothell United Methodist Women but someone new to the church may not know what it means. On subsequent references you can use *UMW*.

SITE REFERENCES

Locations for ministries, events and programs should be referenced by the room number or name.

Some locations are proper names and should be capitalized:

- Narthex
- Sanctuary
- Chapel
- Youth Room
- Fellowship Hall
- Lounge
- Library
- Education Wing
- Choir Room
- Nursery
- Ann Blackburn Outdoor Chapel
- Fireside Room
- Family Room
- Children's Church Room

ABBREVIATIONS

Be consistent within the same material.

Examples of accepted abbreviations that may be used in print and on the website are:

- ext.

- am or pm (no periods but with a space after the time and the am or pm)
- email (no hyphen, do not capitalize)
- vs.
- No.
- Rev.
- WA
- If using an acronym for a program or group, make sure to spell out the name on first reference. For example: United Methodist Women (UMW), Building Better Moms (BBM), Bothell United Methodist Youth (BUMY)

CAPITALIZATION

Do capitalize:

- All references to the supreme being
God, the Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Messiah
- Common organizational terms and ministry names
Finance Committee, Church Council, United Methodist Men
- References to religious events *the Creation, the Exodus, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection*
- The word "Bible"
- A noun followed by a number *Room 220*
- Name of a specific space in the facility
Narthex, Sanctuary, Church Office,
- Days of the week
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
- Titles of publications or musical works
Selling Swimsuits in the Arctic by Adam Hamilton or Handel's Messiah
- Words with 4 or more letters in a headline or subhead in bulletin or newsletter. In other publications and on the website, it is acceptable to capitalize only the first word.
- Capitalize the words Special Needs
Bothell UMC's Special Needs Sunday School class is offered at 9 and 10:30

Do not capitalize:

- Entire words (no ALL CAPS)
- Seasons of the year - *spring, summer, fall, winter*
- "email" in middle of sentence.
- "biblical" "scriptural"

Job Titles

- Capitalize specific job titles preceding a person's name *Senior Pastor DJ del Rosario*
- Lower case titles following the name *DJ del Rosario, senior pastor*
- Do not capitalize job descriptions *small group facilitator Valerie Naas*

PUNCTUATION

Comma Usage

- After a descriptive element *Sunday, October 21,*
- To separate month, day and year *November 27, 2001,*
- To separate a phone number and extension *For information, call 913-897-0120, ext. 2014.*
- After introductory elements (a prepositional phrase)
Before we can make a final decision, we will pray.
- Between two independent clauses joined by a conjunction
(An independent clause has subject and verb and can stand alone as a sentence.)
The fall festival is October 21, and your family is invited.
- Before “and” or “or” in a series of three or more items. *Please bring donations of coats, sweaters, and jeans.*

Hyphens and Dashes

A hyphen (-) is shorter than a dash (—).

There are two lengths of dashes: the en dash (–) and the em dash (—)

Hyphens:

- When writing for the website, **only use hyphens**. HTML code does not recognize dashes. If you need a longer dash, use two hyphens.
- Hyphens are used for compound words and modifiers. *[All-church Gathering]*

En dash:

- Use the en dash when expressing starting and ending time in print. *9:30 –11 am*
- (Most keyboards have a shortcut for the en dash.)

Em dash:

- An em dash is usually used in place of a comma, semicolon, colon, or parenthesis.
Late Night Men’s meets every Tuesday—mark your calendar.
- (Most keyboards have a shortcut for the em dash.)

To hyphen or not to hyphen – Is it sign up or sign-up? Set up or set-up? Here’s a simple rule of thumb:

- When used as a verb, do not hyphenate.
[Sign up in the Narthex this weekend. Come set up for worship.] •
When used as a noun or modifier, hyphenate.
[Sign-ups will be next weekend. The sign-up table will be in the Narthex. The set-up was completed on Saturday.]

Quotation Marks

- Use quotation marks around topics or themes.
“Beyond Tuna Casserole” is the topic of the next Suppers and Speakers.
- Periods and commas always go inside the closing quotation mark. *The price tag was marked “Sold.”*
- The dash, the semicolon, the question mark and the exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
The program is titled “Who is God?” Are you attending the program titled “God Is”?

Semicolon

- Use a semicolon between independent clauses that are closely related when not joined by a conjunction.
Trunk or Treat Fall Festival is October 21; mark your calendar!
- Use a semicolon when one or both independent clauses have internal commas and a misreading might occur if a comma also separated the clauses.

STYLE

As a general rule of thumb, Bothell UMC will lean toward standard US usage in grammar and punctuation (as opposed to standard British usage).

Spacing

- Use one space after a period, semicolon, or colon when preparing text to be printed, put into the *Witness*, or e-news, or uploaded to the website.

Numbers

- Spell out numbers one through ten; use figures for numbers 11 and above.
- Use all figures when they need to stand out for quick comprehension.
- When the day follows the month, use the cardinal figure — March 6 (not March 6th)
- Express whole numbers without adding a decimal or zeros. *The cost of an audiotape is \$3 (not \$3.00).*
- Spell out a number when it begins a sentence.
- When expressing time “on the hour,” zeros are not needed to denote minutes. *The retreat will be held from 7–9:30 pm.*

Underline

- Typically, no underlying in text, except for title lines.
- No underlining on the website, as this is the format for hyperlinks.

Italics

- Italicize titles of complete works that are published as separate items, such as books, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers.
- Italicize titles of movies, plays and musical pieces such as hymns, anthems, titles of special music, preludes and postludes.

Inclusive References

- Avoid gender specific words like “he,” “she,” “man,” and “mankind.” Instead, use words like “humanity,” “people,” “person,” or “he and she” together.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA TERMS

Internet—proper name, refers to worldwide network of computers, capitalize

website—one word, do not capitalize.

email—abbreviation for electronic mail; one word, no hyphen, do not capitalize

online—reference to material available on the website

Constant Contact—proper name, refers to the provider of our weekly e-news

e-news-hyphenated word indicating weekly news sent out to members via Constant Contact

TIPS FOR WRITING FOR THE WEB

1. People don't read web pages, they scan them.
2. Write for the reader, not yourself. Ask "what are they looking for, what do they need to know?"
3. Inverted pyramid method of writing
4. Brief sentences; clear, concise prose
5. Highlight key words
6. Short paragraphs
7. Subheads
8. Bulleted and numbered lists
9. *Write, then cut what you've written in half.*