

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DAYTON, OHIO ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy

Anonymous communications shall be given no credibility

Authority

A footnote to Section *D-14.0205 Credibility of Witnesses, Book of Order* (in the section relating to evidence in a Disciplinary Hearing) states: “Reliance on anonymous assertions is repugnant to fair and orderly process”.

The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Ohio affirms the repugnancy and destructiveness of anonymous communications. Church employees and officers should not be burdened with the words of someone that refuses to engage in productive discourse.

In addition, in accordance with the attached U.S. Postal Service safety recommendations, if a piece of mail bears no return address or has a return address that cannot be confirmed as legitimate, it should be considered suspicious.

Procedures –

1. Any suspicious piece of mail received (e.g., an envelope without a return address) whether received by office staff or by church employee or volunteer (at home or at work) should be retained, unopened and presented to the Church Business Administrator (or other designee appointed by the Head of Staff). The Business Administrator (or designee) will determine if the suspicious mail can be safely opened (in accordance with the attached U.S. Postal Service recommendations). If it is determined to be safe to open the piece of mail, the Business Administrator will open it, quickly scan it to determine if the suspicion of anonymity is correct, and, if correct, then destroy the letter.
2. In the case of electronic transmissions (email), any message that is suspected of being anonymous should be deleted without reading. The recipient should inform the Business Administrator (or designee) of the event.
3. In the case of anonymous telephone calls, the recipient should disconnect courteously. The recipient should inform the Business Administrator (or designee) of the event.
4. The Church Business Administrator (or designee) may maintain a record of the receipt of any anonymous communication, if desired or necessary.
5. In general, no effort will be made to determine who might be initiating the anonymous communications. However, if the recipient feels threatened or harassed, the Personnel Committee should be consulted to determine if any action (e.g., legal measure, tracking of email, piece of mail or phone calls) is warranted.

A MESSAGE FROM THE POSTMASTER GENERAL October 23, 2001

The U. S. Postal Service places the highest priority on the safety of our customers and employees and on the security of the mail.

We want you to know we are doing everything possible to make sure the mail is safe, and we need your help. Your security and peace of mind are paramount to us.

John E. Potter

What should make me suspect a piece of mail?

- It's unexpected or from someone you don't know.
- It's addressed to someone no longer at your address.
- It's handwritten and has no return address or bears one that you can't confirm is legitimate.
- It's lopsided or lumpy in appearance.
- It's sealed with excessive amounts of tape.
- It's marked with restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential."
- It has excessive postage.

What should I do with a suspicious piece of mail?

- Don't handle a letter or package that you suspect is contaminated.
- Don't shake it, bump it, or sniff it.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Notify local law enforcement authorities.