Some Background

As use of the internet has grown becomes more mainstream, many concerns have arisen over access to personal information on the internet. Websites and most public posting forums are and are meant to be totally public. Any information posted there is released into a wide domain in which you have very little control over how the information is used. Search engines and automatic programs (known as robots or spiders) can read and collect information from an incredible number of web sites in a short time.

Concerns and issues have often been inflated into fears by print media to the point where many people are very concerned about using the internet. Even though most of the personal information available in the internet is also publicly available elsewhere, there are still common (and valid) concerns related to the ease of access and collection of information.

Some of the current concerns that are prevalent include:

- **Unsolicited (unwanted) Email**
  Unsolicited and generally unwanted junk email (SPAM) is a huge annoyance to most people, to the point that many states have considered ways to make it illegal and email providers must implement extensive filtering to attempt to cope. This is generally commercial but can concern anything. Many people are careful about letting their email addresses become widespread to limit SPAM.

- **Harassing Personal Contacts**
  This can include all sorts of undesired personal contacts, whether hate-mail, personal harassment, stalking or pedophilic advances toward children or youth. This is probably more often initiated in chat forums than regular websites. (We believe that this is much more rare than the media would portray, but it does concern many people and is still an important issue to consider)

- **Identity Theft**
  Gathering of personal details of others for various kinds of fraud has become more prevalent in recent years.

Please be aware, that while we don't post home addresses, there are a number of websites that provide white pages, or extensive listings of mailing addresses. There are also a number of *people-finder* type sites that help in locating people and their names, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. These sites have many sources of data and you can probably assume that you're in there somewhere.

United Church of Cloverdale Privacy Policy

We have several basic groups of people that might be listed or referred to; staff, adult members, youth and guests. Information of concern includes names, email addresses, phone numbers and photos. Home addresses are never posted on the web site and rarely in the newsletter.

1. **For staff**, we list names, email addresses, and office phone numbers. We do not list staff home phones or cell phones unless specifically asked to do so by that particular individual. It is important that people be able to contact the staff and that most access is through the office.
2. **For adult members**, we often list names when they are a contact for some group or activity that we are covering on the website or in the church newsletter. We do not list email addresses unless specifically given permission. We list sometimes phone numbers in the church newsletter, but not directly on the web site. It is assumed that members have the church directory or can call the office for phone numbers.
3. **For youth and children**, we generally do not list full names. We also do not list email addresses or phone numbers. Photo captions do not include full names and often do not include names at all. This is more to protect them from the more dangerous types of people that can and do use the net to contact and take advantage of young people. (See below regarding photos posted on the Web Site.)
4. **For invited speakers or guests**, our policy is the same as for adult members.
5. United Church has a **printed member and ministry directory** with names, addresses, email, etc. which is only available to members and friends. It is periodically distributed in print at the church. To request a copy or to add your information to this directory contact the church office. This directory is not available online.
6. United Church has a **printed monthly newsletter** that is available online as a PDF document. The newsletter is uploaded as an intact document (including the member contact information that is present that month). Since the text of the document is not present in the HTML of the website itself, this document would not be read by the robots and spiders mentioned in the preceding "Background" section.
7. When using **photos** of UCC events, members, etc. online, either directly on the website or in our photo albums we use the following guidelines:
   o Photos and names of children under 18 will NOT be used without parental or guardian permission.
   o Including photos in our site is a privilege for us, and we intend to respect and honor it. Photos are almost always of people in public spaces, at public events.
   o We try not to post anything that would be embarrassing, objectionable or hurtful to anyone in the photo. If we know someone is shy about such things, we ask them before posting the photo.
   o Applying other parts of our general privacy policy, we don't put full names of children or youth as captions with photos, and we minimize how often we use full names of adults.
   o We will gladly provide credit for who took a particular photo if desired by the photographer, and we would certainly honor any copyright wishes or restrictions.
   o We will gladly remove any photo immediately upon request.

   Please note that we have no control over individuals who might copy or capture a photo image and repost it elsewhere, and are not responsible for the actions of others.

   In any case, if you see a photo that includes you or your child and would like it removed from the site, we would be glad to do so. Just notify the webmaster with the details.