

Social Media Policy

Governing Staff Use of Social Media - Trinity Lutheran

Trinity supports participation in the online community through social media. Positive practices in social networking can broaden the communication within the church and our community. The following best practices and guidelines provide practical advice for using social media and compliance to this policy is an expectation.

Guidelines

Social Media includes but is not limited to personal websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, email, texting, message boards and other kinds of virtual media. Trinity recognizes the value of social media and encourages the church staff and volunteers to utilize this as a communication tool for our ministry. Therefore, we ask that staff and volunteers observe the following policy to preserve the integrity and minimize any risk to our church.

Protect Confidential Information and Relationships

- Always demonstrate loyalty to the church and to each other. Avoid identifying and discussing others, including church members, visitors or staff. Pastoral details will always remain confidential such as hospitalizations, deaths, health concerns or counseling engagements unless given proper approval to communicate.
- Online conversations and postings are public information. Know that what you post online may be viewed by anyone and could create liability to Trinity.
- Obtain permission before posting pictures of others or before posting copyrighted material.

Personal Use

- As a staff member or volunteer of Trinity, you are seen by our members and outside parties as a representative of the church. Therefore, it is important to realize that your personal use of social networks is a portrayal of your position and the ministry of Trinity.
- Be honest and represent Trinity ethically and with integrity. What you post on social media is ultimately your responsibility and you are legally responsible for your comments.
- Trinity permits the use of social networks and communication on social media sites. Time and effort spent on your own personal social media should be done on your personal time and should not interfere with your job duties or work commitments.

Use good judgment

- Trinity does not allow the posting of content that could be detrimental to the church or access to inappropriate websites. Be sensitive to linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content. Be accurate in what you post and ensure that you have correct information.

- Respect your audience. Social media aims to create dialogue and people won't always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, refrain from communicating these differences on a public forum. Opt for a face-to-face conversation if needed. These might include political views and the church's stance or policy on certain topics. Opinions posted on social media that could detract from the church's ministry are not permitted.
- Whatever privacy settings are used on social sites, always assume that anything could be read by anyone at any time. It's important to think through messages before posting on social networks.
- Protect yourself on social media. Don't give out personal information about yourself, your location, your surroundings or your home address. As a staff member at Trinity, you have a higher public profile so you should take precautions to keep yourself safe.

Uphold the Trinity Brand

- Only those authorized by Trinity may use the church's logos or brand. Church staff or volunteers will need permission from a pastor before publishing on social media sites. Church logos are not to be included in personal blogs or postings. Report any misuse of Trinity's logo or brand.
- Content on social media can be time sensitive. Refresh media content, respond to questions, update information regularly and correct information when appropriate.
- Media postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a posting on your personal blog, social network or on an official church blog, please contact a pastor.

DO NOT INCLUDE IN POLICY

Social Media Agreement

I am representing the congregation on any social networking site such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, or other social media sites. I understand and agree to comply with the following:

- I will use my own name;
- I have read the social media policy and best practices;
- I understand that I represent the congregation's ministry and my postings will be appropriate to the mission;
- I will keep all confidential and sensitive information private and will not post such information;
- If I have a question, uncertainty or concern about the proper nature of a posting, I will consult with my supervisor and leadership before posting
- My interactions on social media is affirming and broad-minded rather than combative or controversial.
- I will uphold Trinity's guidelines for its brand;
- I understand that any violation of the social media guidelines could have consequences on my employment at Trinity Lutheran Church.

Signature

Date