

Purpose

This document establishes policy and procedures governing use of social media by staff and leaders at Crozet United Methodist Church.

Application

This policy applies to social media accounts of Crozet UMC, it's leaders and staff.

Introduction

Social media plays a vital role in our mission and ministry. At Crozet UMC, it is our responsibility to ensure that what we post as a church, and as individuals, advances Christ and not hinder the Gospel. As a staff member or leader, people note how we interact on social media. Although Crozet UMC does not control personal accounts, people will hold Crozet UMC accountable for what we as individuals post, like, and share.

Guidelines

- **You Represent Crozet UMC:** Disclaimers or not, you represent Crozet UMC. A disclaimer can be useful, but even then, what you post is just as much a reflection of Crozet UMC as what you do in your personal life.
- **Be Accessible.** Reply to people. Accessibility is one of the most important things we can give to those we lead. Don't feel the pressure to reply to absolutely every person but make your best effort to engage.
- **Be Personal.** Don't overshare personal issues and use appropriate discretion but show a little personality. Be authentic.
- **Don't Just Talk. Listen.** Social media gives us an unprecedented ear into the lives of our congregation. Listen to their joys, pains, and moments of crisis.
- **Use Common Sense:** Respect confidentiality. Refrain from speculation. Do not disclose non-public information or the personal information of others.
- **Mind Your Manners:** Treat advocates and detractors with the same respect. Avoid posting materials and comments that may seem as offensive, demeaning, inappropriate, threatening, or abusive. Respectfully withdraw from discussions that go off topic or become profane.
- **The Internet Is A Public Space:** No matter how obscure, assume that everything you post will be read by our advocates and detractors.
- **The Internet Remembers:** What we post, even if deleted or retracted, is archived and lives on in cyberspace.
- **Copyright Applies to What We Post:** Observe copyright law when posting online.
- **Be Careful When Posting Still or Video Images of Children:** Ensure Crozet UMC has a written or electronic release before you post a picture or video of a minor child at a church function.

- **Not Everything on The Internet Is True:** Verify questionable content before sharing it.
- **Pray Before You Post:** If you are wondering about the acceptability of your content, chances are it's a bad idea to share. Stop and pray before you post.
- **Don't Air Personal Grievances and Frustrations:** Social networks are never a good place to air personal irritations. Unfortunately, social networks are breeding grounds for passive-aggressive behavior. Rise above that. If you have a conflict with someone, please respect yourself (and them) enough to work through it in person.
- **Sarcasm Does Not Translate Well.** Be careful how you use humor. Respect your audience. Be thoughtful. Don't allow your conduct to hinder someone's spiritual growth.
- **When in Doubt, Go Positive.** Whether you're responding to a snarky comment, frustrated with a company, or trying to decide if you should write about something that's bothering you, you'll never regret taking the high road (and sometimes that road is not saying anything at all).
- **When Things Go Wrong, Ask for Help.** In the event of a problem or crisis, contact the Communications Director or Senior Pastor before responding to any posting or comments.

Social media is a powerful tool we can use to showcase the Gospel and tell the Crozet UMC story. It offers an opportunity to inform, influence, and engage audiences in Albemarle County and throughout the world. However, as staff, leadership, and believers we have a responsibility to ensure we build up the Body of Christ in all we do.

⁹ But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹² But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:9-12 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)