

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Approved May 8, 2013

### **Purpose**

Acton Congregational Church believes that the proper use of social media can be an effective way to share the good news of our faith, and to enhance communication among our employees, members, friends, and the wider community. While the use of social media can be a valuable tool, it also poses certain risks that are addressed in these guidelines.

### **Scope**

These guidelines apply to all employees and volunteers who are acting on behalf of the church. In addition, employees are required to comply with Policy 2.4, Use of Communications and Social Media, contained in the Employee Handbook.

### **Definition**

Social media include all external electronic websites or software applications that allow posting of content that is viewable by a broad audience. Some examples include:

- Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn
- Any interactive area of a website that allows comments, questions, personal web sites or blogs, bulletin boards, chat rooms, wikis, virtual environments, or other Internet forums.

Given the continuing evolution of technology, the above list is not exhaustive and is meant only to be illustrative.

### **Use of Social Media**

Be aware that online conversations and postings are not private and may reflect negatively on the reputation of the church. What you post online cannot be deleted and may be shared with others. Therefore,

- ACC expects that communications will be respectful, with no use of profanity or vulgar language.
- Confidential information about the church and its members should not be displayed or discussed online.
- Written permission must be obtained from the parent or guardian of a minor child before posting a picture of the minor in accordance with ACC Safe Church policies.
- Adult members who do not want their photos displayed on ACC-sponsored Social Media may submit a form attesting to such to the Church Administrator. The Church Administrator will maintain such records and make his/her best efforts to

ensure that those members who "opt-out" are not included in any ACC-sponsored social media photos.

## **Personal Accounts**

Individual personal accounts should be used to communicate with personal friends, families, and peers, and not with church members or youth or children.

## **Church-Sponsored Accounts**

- Employees or volunteers may not speak on behalf of the church unless specifically authorized to do so by the Senior Minister and/or his designate.
- Digital communications by employees or volunteers with youth or children should be by church-sponsored closed group accounts only. Such accounts must be monitored by designated administrators (Church Administrator/Youth Minister). Adults should not accept or request "friending" with minors except to a church-sponsored closed group account. When youth or advisors are no longer part of the the group, they should be removed from the account.
- Ministers who want to connect with adult church members should do so via a group account that all members may join. If ministers receive a "friend" request to their personal accounts, they can direct church members to the group account.
- When a minister terminates employment with ACC, he or she should close any ACC-church specific social network account(s) to which he or she belongs.

## **Inappropriate Content**

Any inappropriate content posted on church-sponsored accounts should be reported to the administrator of the account and promptly removed from the site. The administrator should contact Safe Church if he or she has any concerns that the content may violate Safe Church policies.<sup>1</sup> If any posted material indicates that a minor is or has been abused or neglected, the administrator must contact Safe Church immediately.

## **Use of Copyrighted Material**

The use of copyrighted material without permission can expose the church to legal liability. Do not use copyrighted material without obtaining the written permission of the author.

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<sup>1</sup> Safe Church policies are found on the Member section of [www.actonc.org](http://www.actonc.org), and the Safe Church Committee can be reached by emailing the chair at [SafeChurch@actonc.org](mailto:SafeChurch@actonc.org).