

**General Policy on Use of Social Media
And Electronic Communications
Green Street United Methodist Church, 13 Green Street, Augusta, Maine**

Introduction

As an ever increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices and email can enhance communication, faith sharing and deepen relationships.

The following recommended practices and guidelines apply principles of healthy boundaries and safe church to the virtual world of digital networking and communication. They are intended to raise awareness of issues and open doors of conversations with ministry teams. We encourage all ministry teams to discern together the following guidelines, considering the nature of your ministry and being mindful that our calling is to meet people where they are; model healthy boundaries; and love and care for them safely.

Hereafter, “Green Street”, “Green Street UMC”, “we” and “our” shall refer collectively to Green Street United Methodist Church located at 13 Green Street in Augusta, Maine, U.S.A., its staff, and its representatives unless otherwise specified. The words “should” and “must” indicate suggested and mandatory conditions in this document, respectively

The role of Green Street UMC’s social media sites regarding children and youth is addressed separately in an addendum to Green Street’s Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINED

Social media refers to the use of internet and world wide web-based and mobile technologies to advance interactive communication—both public and private uses—including but not limited to instant messaging, texting, e-mailing, networking, blogging, and video chat.

We recognize that social media is always evolving and changing; therefore, this living document will be revisited annually as new outlets of social media emerge, and others fade. Listed at the end of this document are definitions of various social media outlets that are currently used by Green Street UMC.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

All Green Street UMC policies, including harassment, confidentiality and software use policies, apply to the use of social media.

Green Street UMC’s official social media participation is managed by the (social media team, an individual, a ministry committee, etc.). This (team, individual, committee) is responsible for regularly posting information on the ministry’s behalf and for monitoring and responding to posts on these pages.

Green Street UMC employees and representatives who misuse the Green Street UMC’s social media resources in ways that violate the law or other church policies are subject to disciplinary action.

Green Street UMC shall have zero tolerance for bullying of any person on any of its social media sites, but especially for bullying of minors.

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COMMUNICATION

Social media is an excellent way to quickly share both good and sad moments in a person's life with a large number of people. However, as with all forms of communication, users should be respectful of the privacy of others. This is particularly the case with youth and children's ministry leaders. Leaders should be especially mindful of how information is presented in such a permanent medium, and should never share news about another person without their express prior consent.

ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The following individuals shall have access to Green Street UMC's social media accounts, including passwords and log-in data.

- Pastor
- Administrative Assistant
- Social Media Coordinator
- Lay Leader(s)
- Committee Chairs
- Others on a case-by-case basis.

Each church related social media site, group or page must have a minimum of two unrelated administrators, who are included in the preceding list.

CONTENT

Content for Green Street UMC's social media accounts shall conform to our practices and policies for all written material distributed by Green Street UMC.

The following individuals shall be responsible for generating content for Green Street UMC's social media accounts.

- Pastor
- Administrative Assistant
- Social Media Coordinator
- Lay Leader(s)
- Committee Chairs
- Others on a case-by-case basis.

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In the event that an individual is unable or prefers not to post content she or he may forward the content to the Social Media Coordinator for posting.

Posted content should not disclose sensitive or confidential information, unless the person that the information concerns has given written consent to share such information.

Individuals responsible for content should refrain from posting photos of individuals or identifying the individuals on the ministry's official social media pages without their express written consent which may be given by e-mail or texted in addition to hand written or typed notes.

Individuals responsible for content must respect copyright and fair use laws, making sure that they have permission or authority to use content before posting it. Simply giving credit to the author will not protect the church from a possible copyright infringement claim.

Content of an abusive, pornographic, violent, racist, insulting, or otherwise offensive nature is contrary to Christian values and shall be removed from any Green Street UMC's social media site, group or page upon which such content is posted. The Social Media Coordinator will monitor these accounts on a regular basis, removing such content when found, or reported to the Social Media Coordinator. If any posted material appears to be illegal (such as child or elder abuse, etc.), she or he must contact the Pastor and other appropriate church and/or law enforcement authorities with all due haste.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS IN USE

Facebook Twitter Pinterest Google+ Instagram

Hootsuite (for scheduling posts)

Google.com (for online tools such as Google Drive)

ADOPTED BY GREEN STREET UMC CHURCH COUNCIL ON 06/09/2015