

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Social Media Community Guidelines

Council approved June 17, 2021

As part of its mission to share the love of Jesus through compassion, inclusivity, creativity and learning, St. Mark's is active on social media. We strive to ensure that the content we share is consistent with our values—including being compassionate, respectful and factual—and does not infringe on copyright, intellectual property or confidentiality. To protect the privacy of individual members and friends of St. Mark's we will only follow and tag other organizations and entities.

We currently have Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube accounts. St. Mark's greatly values when people share and comment on church life on St. Mark's or their own social media accounts. We wish everyone to have a good experience and feel heard, respected and safe on St. Mark's social media. For this reason, we have the following short list of guidelines for our social media community (the people who follow or participate in our social media). They apply to all our social media accounts.

1. We draw on social media channels' official terms of use and expect our community to do the same. Social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter have terms of use or terms of service to ensure behavior on the sites is appropriate, which generally means respectful, safe, legal and constructive rather than destructive. We use those terms in assessing questionable comments or activity on our channels.
2. We encourage and greatly value input from the St. Mark's community, but we do not allow inappropriate content and behavior, and we reserve the right to remove such content and to block the poster. Such content and behavior includes:
 - Profane, defamatory, offensive or violent language.
 - Posting deliberately disruptive statements meant to hijack comment threads or throw discussions off-track, including persistent negative and one-sided comments that continue despite St. Mark's staff reaching out to address comments or concerns.
 - Hateful or discriminatory comments regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or political beliefs, or to harass any individual or group.
 - Links or comments containing sexually explicit content or material.
 - Discussion of illegal activity.
 - Spam, link baiting or files containing viruses that could damage the operation of other people's computers or mobile devices.
 - Acknowledgement of intent to stalk an individual or collect private information without disclosure.
 - Commercial solicitations or promotion.
 - Violations of copyright, intellectual property rights or confidential or proprietary information.

- Content determined to be inappropriate, in poor taste or otherwise contrary to the purposes of St. Mark's social media accounts.
3. We distinguish between critical comments and inappropriate ones.

We recognize that only God is perfect, and we welcome feedback on areas where social media community members feel we have fallen short or could improve. Our policy is when we observe such a comment we try to reply promptly via the channel. If the issue is not simple we may suggest offline contact, which can be a more constructive way to resolve complicated concerns. While we truly welcome all feedback, however, we consider persistent negative, one-sided comments inappropriate after we have reached out to resolve the concerns, and thus reserve the right to remove such comments and block the poster.

4. The goals of our social media accounts are to:
- foster deeper relationships between all members of the congregation at St. Mark's and periodically provide them with useful resources, important church updates, and inspiring messages and other content;
 - promote special events at the church and the work of our various ministry teams to others both within and beyond the walls of St. Mark's;
 - engage with and learn more about neighborhood organizations, businesses, and residents in the Western Addition;
 - identify opportunities for service to and collaboration with our neighbors; and
 - spread the message of St. Mark's as a Christian community of radical welcome and care for all.

In particular, we seek to align our presence on social media with the Annual Goals for the congregation as articulated at our Annual Meeting. For 2021 those goals are:

1. Provide faith-building opportunities in order to deepen friendships among children, youth, and families, and to create stronger intergenerational relationships between all members of the congregation.
2. Build consensus with the congregation of St. Mark's regarding space requirements for future developments and provide a comprehensive list to the Martin Luther Tower development team.
3. The congregation will seek actively to become antiracist through our public witness against racism, evaluation of St. Mark's policies and practices, and collaboration with outside groups in pursuit of social justice and racial equity.

The Director of Operations has oversight for all social media activity. The Administrative Assistant and Media Consultant along with designated volunteers from among the members of St. Mark's, at the direction of pastoral leadership and the Director of Operations, are responsible for posting and coordinating content across all of our social media platforms. Our plan is to post content that aligns with the goals outlined above 4 to 5 times per week. St. Mark's is open to posting content

on behalf of its members; however, posts from members must fall within the guidelines specified below. All requests for posting must first be vetted by the pastoral leadership of St. Mark's.

- St. Mark's does not post political statements or ads.
- St. Mark's will post prayer requests only with the expressed permission of the person mentioned in the prayer.
- St. Mark's may post in support of members' businesses at a member's request and at the discretion of pastoral leadership.
- St. Mark's reserves that right to choose which posts will be pinned on social media pages.
- St. Mark's may post other personal messages and requests for support from members of the congregation at the discretion of the pastoral leadership.
- St. Mark's will only post photos or images that may reveal a member's identity if a signed and dated photo release form has been submitted prior to posting.

To make a post request, please email info@stmarks-sf.org

5. We aim to respond promptly and effectively on social media, subject to our circumstances as a nonprofit with a small staff.

While we greatly value and encourage active engagement in our social media, the amount of time we can spend monitoring all numerous social media channels is limited by resources. If you have an urgent or sensitive matter, please consider emailing or telephoning us through the contact information on our website. Our main email address is info@stmarks-sf.org and the main telephone number is (415) 928-7770.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Social Media Policy

Council approved June 17, 2021

1. Purpose

This Social Media Policy is designed to:

- help prevent disclosure of St. Mark's confidential information through the use of social media;
- clarify the parameters for official St. Mark's spokespersons to communicate on social media;
- identify the risks associated with directly associating your personal social media presence with that of St. Mark's;
- clarify the parameters for personal St. Mark's employee and St. Mark's representative social media communications; and
- reflect our legal obligations.

The goal of our social media accounts is to:

- foster deeper relationships between all members of the congregation at St. Mark's and periodically provide them with useful resources, important church updates, and inspiring messages;
- promote the work of our various ministry teams to others both within and beyond the walls of St. Mark's;
- engage with and learn more about neighborhood organizations, businesses, and residents in the Western Addition;
- identify opportunities for service to and collaboration with our neighbors; and
- spread the message of St. Mark's as a Christian community of radical welcome and care for all.

2. Applicability

This policy supplements St. Mark's Employee handbook, employee code of conduct and work rules and St. Mark's "Safe Congregation" policy, and also applies to:

- St. Mark's salary and hourly employees regardless of whether the employee is using St. Mark's equipment or the employee's personal equipment, on or off St. Mark's property;
- St. Mark's leadership, including Church Council members and Ministry Team leaders; and
- St. Mark's volunteers.

The designated managers of our social media accounts, with rights to upload or remove posts, are the pastor(s), the Administrative Assistant, the Director of Operations, and the media consultant. Additional volunteers from among the

members of St. Mark's may also be designated from time to time by the pastors to post appropriate content and monitor activity on our accounts.

3. Policy

A. Be Honest - Disclosing Your Identity

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for St. Mark's unless you serve that role as part of your employment. Be forthright about your role at St. Mark's when discussing St. Mark's or related matters on any social media. Make it clear that your views are your own and not reflective of the organization, with a simple disclaimer such as: *Opinions shared are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer [or St. Mark's].*

B. Be Clear - Posting accurate information

Be honest and accurate when posting information, and, if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be retrieved. It is unacceptable to post information that you know to be false.

C. Be Careful - What you share and how you share it

Unless authorized, do not use your St. Mark's email address (*name@stmarks-sf.org*) to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools or other social media venues. Do not use St. Mark's email domain (*@stmarks-sf.org*) to express your personal views.

i. Protecting St. Mark's Information

You should never reveal non-public St. Mark's information on a site accessible to anyone outside of St. Mark's. You also should not comment on social media about information or topics that are confidential to St. Mark's or its employees.

Examples of prohibited disclosures include:

- Financial information
- Management or staffing changes
- Undisclosed personal information about St. Mark's employees, such as their medical condition, performance, employment status, or government identifier/social security number
- Undisclosed information about St. Mark's members

ii. Protecting Other People's Information

Employees may not post member information or any image, document or text that may reveal a member's identity without the member's prior

written consent. **An example of a photo release is attached to this policy.** Sometimes, even general statements about a member can contain enough information for a community member to recognize the member—therefore potentially violating their right to privacy. As you use social media, you should always be mindful of the rights of others.

Many social media sites impose restrictions regarding proprietary information and content; confidentiality; and trademarks and copyrights of others. It is important to be mindful of these restrictions when quoting others or sharing photos, music, videos or other content and not to post material that would potentially violate copyright infringement laws, intellectual property laws, publicity laws, or trademark laws.

D. Be Respectful

Remember that members, colleagues, supervisors and other members of the public may have access to your posts. These individuals reflect a diverse set of customs, values and viewpoints. Offensive, demeaning, abusive or inappropriate remarks (including threats of violence or bullying) are as out-of-place online as they are offline, even if they are unintentional.

We expect you to abide by the same standards of behavior in your social media communications as you do in the workplace, because what you say in your personal social media channels impacts the work environment. Your online communications will not be excused merely because they occurred outside of work hours or off St. Mark's premises.

Think carefully about "friending" co-workers and members on external social media sites. For example, consider whether a friend request may be viewed by the recipient as harassing, intimidating or unwelcomed. Conversely, you should not feel pressured to accept friend or follower requests from those you work with. It's your choice how much you want to combine your personal and professional online lives.

For additional information about St. Mark's policies on appropriate workplace conduct, please see St. Mark's Employee Code of Conduct that can be found in St. Mark's Employee Handbook.

In addition, you should refrain from posting content that may be construed as grossly offensive or of menacing character, or causing inconvenience, annoyance, danger, obstruction or insult.

E. Be Aware

The internet is public, and it has a long memory. Even information you may think you have protected as "private" on some social media sites may be accessed by others, for years to come. Consider everything you post to the

internet as potentially discoverable by anyone. Keep in mind that technology makes it virtually impossible to completely “delete” something online and incredibly easy to send a post to millions of other users. Before you share anything, make sure you will not regret saying it, regardless of who sees it.

4. Violation of Policy

Violations of this Social Media Policy will be carefully reviewed and may result in disciplinary action.



PHOTO RELEASE

I, _____, hereby authorize St. Mark's Lutheran Church to use my likeness in a photograph in any and all of its publications, including but not limited to all St. Mark's Lutheran Church's print and digital publications. I understand and agree that any photograph using my likeness will become property of St. Mark's Lutheran Church and will not be returned.

I acknowledge that since my participation with St. Mark's Lutheran Church is voluntary, I will receive no financial compensation.

I hereby irrevocably authorize St. Mark's Lutheran Church to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute this photo for purposes of publicizing St. Mark's Lutheran Church programs. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photograph.

I hereby hold harmless and release and forever discharge St. Mark's Lutheran Church from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization.

I am 18 years of age and am competent to contract in my own name, or if I am under age 18, a parent or guardian has signed below. I have read this release before signing, and I understand the contents, meaning and impact of this release.

Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

If the person signing is under age 18, we ask that the person sign but there must also be the signed consent by a parent or guardian, below:

I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of _____, named above, and do hereby give my consent without reservation to the foregoing release on behalf of this person.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____