

Social Media Policy

The Church of St Matthew, hereinafter referred to as the Church, understands that social media can be a way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. Social media is also an effective tool that can further the work of our church, form collaborations, quickly provide communications and build community. There is a clear distinction between professional and personal social media such as websites, social networks, and other digital technologies. The Church has established this policy for the appropriate use of social media to assist employees, volunteers, parishioners and followers of the Church.

The Church has designated Social Media volunteers who post social media as directed by and with oversight by the Parish Administrator.

General Guidelines

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the Church, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

All Church employees and volunteers are required to follow the Social Media Policy regarding the use of professional and personal websites, social networks and weblogs, etc. This policy supports other related Diocesan policies, including Acceptable Technology use and the Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for all Clergy, Religious and lay Ministers. This policy reflects and supports the Church of Saint Matthew's mission of inclusion, diversity and acceptance of all.

Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely reflects on the Church or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who worship at and/or volunteer/work on behalf of the Church may result in a consequence. For employees this may include disciplinary action. For others, this may result in being banned from posting comments or other items on the Church's social media.

In general, everyone who works in and/or volunteers for our church should use sound judgement and common sense when taking part in social media. Comments and posts should be reflective of Christian charity and take place from a good will and/or faith perspective.

Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow parishioners, customers, social media followers, suppliers or people who work on behalf of the Church. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve complaints by speaking directly with your Parish Administrator or Pastoral Parish Council than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. If you do decide to post complaints or criticism, be respectful and avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile environment. Any posts/comments made on the Church's social media that are determined to be malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating or disparaging, or that might constitute harassment or bullying will be removed.

Be honest and accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false. Inaccurate or false information posted on either the Church's social media will be removed.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

- Do not create a link from your social media site to a Church social media site without first obtaining permissions in writing from the Parish Administrator.
- Express only your personal opinions. **Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Church.** If the Church is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and

open about your connection to the Church and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the Church, parishioners, or those working on behalf of the Church. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Church of St Matthew.”

Minimum Requirements for the Church of St Matthew Social Media

- All social media sites established by the Church should be approved and registered with the Parish Administrator in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council.
- Social media site volunteers must be adults and approved employee/volunteers of the Church of St Matthew and those who have completed the approved safe environment training
- There must be at least two site administrators for each site to allow for rapid (24-48 hours) response and continuous monitoring and updating of the site.
- All social media submissions must be reviewed and approved by the Church’s Parish Administrator prior to posting.
- All social media of the parish must be regularly reviewed by the Church’s social media volunteers and/or Parish Administrator to ensure it is not in conflict with current standards, policies and Catholic teachings.
- The Church will have a centralized location for passwords, sites and site addresses that are confidentially maintained by the Parish Administrator and Social Media volunteers.
- Church employees and volunteers should use public, official websites and email to conduct Church business or ministry to the extent possible.
- Church employees and volunteers should not use personal email or websites such as Facebook or Twitter to advertise official church programs or to communicate with those receiving ministry unless prior approval has been obtained from the Parish Administrator. However, there may be times Church members may be encouraged to post/share Church fundraising and/or community events on their personal social media accounts. It is appropriate to do so in these circumstances.
- Avoid mention of inappropriate content such as alcohol, vulgar language, inappropriate dress, opinions contrary to teachings of Catholic Church or that may be construed as having sexual overtones.
- Do not respond to communications deemed inappropriate. Make and keep a copy of such communications and notify the Parish Administrator when necessary.

- Friend or connection requests to minors should not be initiated by adult representatives of the Church. Any message, verbal or text that is sent to minors should always be from the standpoint of a professional relationship with the minor.
- Social media settings will be set at a “no tagging” option and visitor options limited to commenting only and not posting pictures or videos.

Media contacts

Unless specifically authorized and designated, no employee or volunteer may speak to the media on behalf of the Church of Saint Matthew. All media inquiries should be directed to the Pastoral Administrator.

For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the Pastoral Administrator.