

Social Media Policy

Definitions

Social Media: For the purposes of this policy, the term social media includes websites, interactive online accounts such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, photo-sharing accounts such as, but not limited to Instagram, Flickr and Picassa, video-sharing accounts such as YouTube, TikTok, and Vimeo, online blogs and discussion forums.

Staff: Any person or persons who receive remuneration or pay from St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church

Volunteers: Any person holding a ministry position or assisting with a church program or church sponsored activity and not receiving remuneration from the church.

Vulnerable Adult

A person who, because of (their) age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by persons in position of authority or trust relative to (them).¹

Youth: Any person younger than 18 years of age.

Purpose of the Church's use of social media

Social media affords many opportunities to connect with people within the congregation and the community as well as with interested persons throughout the world to build networks for engagement, education and spiritual growth. It allows church members and adherents to participate in church activities when travel, illness, work commitments and other factors prevent them from attending in person and thereby connect with the St. Stephen's Presbyterian Ottawa ("St. Stephen's") Church Community. Additionally, social media promotes the values and mission of the church and the programs and services it provides.

¹ Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Leading with Care* Policy

Conduct of Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers posting to any social media are expected to:

1. Be professional, responsible, and respectful in all their communications.
2. Refrain from posting any confidential and sensitive information, personnel issues, work conflicts or personal grievances.
3. Only post what is public information, knowing that nothing posted is ever really lost or confidential.
4. Keep messages affirming and in line with St. Stephen's values and mission statement
5. Recognize that they represent the congregation's ministry and ensure that postings are appropriate to the mission.
6. Add their initials to posts made on a church account to which several persons have administrator status.
7. If there is any question, uncertainty or concern about the proper nature of a post, consult with a member of session before posting.
8. Provide their username and password for any church social media account to the office and/or system administrator. Refrain from giving the username and password to any unauthorized person.
9. Acknowledge that posts to the church's social media accounts are subject to the oversight of the Session.

Conduct of members of the public responding or commenting to posts on the church's social media sites

1. Readers are welcome to respond, either agreeing or disagreeing with a post, but are expected to be respectful of the opinions of others.
2. Those submitting a comment are wholly responsible for the content of their comments.
3. Rants, rages, bashing, derogatory comments, profanity, comments that provoke discrimination or hatred of others, libelous or otherwise unlawful, abusive, immoral or obscene materials are not permitted and will be immediately removed from the site. If this is a repeated offence, the user will be barred from the site.
4. Erroneous information will be addressed by a polite response giving factual information in the comments.
5. If the posting is the result of an unhappy or negative experience, the site administrator may wish to rectify the situation and propose a reasonable solution. Depending on the nature of the "complaint", this may be done in the comments or taken off-line.
6. Responses by the administrator to comments should take into consideration transparency, citing reputable sources, timeliness, and a professional and compassionate tone.

7. Corporate members of the group may be removed if their corporate identity is inconsistent with the values of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (e.g., pornography site)
8. When members of the public are invited to comment or respond to a social media site (e.g., Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, blog), the policies regarding their conduct should be communicated on the social media site.

Privacy and Protection of Youth and Vulnerable Adults

1. Identifiable images of youth or vulnerable adults should only be posted with the written consent of a parent or guardian, using **St. Stephen's Presbyterian Ottawa Privacy Release Form**. The completed form is to be kept on file in the church Business Office.
2. Do not identify the persons, other than staff and church leadership, in an image by name without their parent/guardian's express permission.
3. Do not post the email addresses or phone numbers of persons, other than staff and church leadership, unless they have provided them for inquiries about a program or service.
4. When working with youth, young adults and/or vulnerable adults, remember that adults have more power in online relationships.
5. Depending on the nature of the group, accept either all or no requests from youth to join the group.
6. For discussion groups, set up a group account that all members of the group or congregation can join.
7. Refrain from using a personal social media site to communicate with youth or vulnerable adults and their families.
8. Refrain from sending private messages to youth or vulnerable adults. Either copy their parents or post to their wall. Group emails are permissible, but parents or responsible adults should be copied on all such communications.
9. Where personal information such as name, email address, and user name are collected as part of the sign-up process for an online community, this information will not be shared with other parts of the church or with any outside parties.
10. When persons register for a program or an online community, they will be given the opportunity to indicate that they do not wish to receive communications unrelated to the program or online community.
11. All online transactions will be completed using a secure, online billing process such as PayPal.
12. Communications from the church sent via email should include specific instructions on how to unsubscribe from further emails.
13. Information concerning any individual's birthday, age, wedding anniversary, illness, death, marriage, prayer requests or praises are not appropriate for posting.

Livestreaming of Services and other Events

1. Signs will be posted at the entrances to the sanctuary as follow: “Please note that this service/program is being livestreamed to the Internet.” Alternatively, a slide could be included at the beginning of each program/service, with this information.
2. Livestreamed services will remain archived on the St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church Ottawa web page, Facebook page and St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church Ottawa YouTube channel for one month.
3. Livestreaming should be preceded by a slide displaying the name and logo of the church, the title of the service or program and the date. It should commence with the official welcome from the Minister or Master of Ceremonies.
4. Youth and youth participating in the service should only be identified by their first name unless permission is given to use the full name by the parents of the minor.
5. Should a youth or adult member assisting with the service not wish to be filmed, livestreaming should show only a slide with the text of the service component or the title of the musical piece.
6. When outside performers or guests are performing at St. Stephen’s, the filming of the sessions should only begin after the gathering music has been completed, unless express permission is given by the performing group AND the copyright of the music being played belongs to them. Music performed during a St. Stephen’s Ottawa worship service is protected under section 32.2(3) of the *Copyright Act* and the Christian Copyright Licensing Interesting (CCLI) license.²

Review of policy

Session Elders will review this policy annually or as needed and make changes as necessary.

² It is important to note that a performance that is not part of a Worship Service such as during a fundraising concert may require a separate copyright licence. Therefore, any event organizer should verify the requirement to obtain a licence from the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN).