

The First Congregational United Church of Christ of Appleton, Wisconsin

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Social Media definition: Electronic platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, or similar, that allow for reciprocal interaction between individuals.

Electronic Communications definition: Electronic Communications include email, texting and any additional application or website which allows for direct and potentially private communication.

General Social Media Policy

In order to extend the life of the congregation, enhance communication and develop participation of young people in the life of the church and its ministry, First Congo will authorize certain employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy to manage the church's website and Social Media channels.

No party shall create a website or Social Media site in the name of, or purporting to represent, the church without the explicit, written permission of the Authorized Clergy or Program Director most directly involved with the ministry. When an employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy, acting in their capacity as a representative of the church, leads or coordinates activities using Social Media, the Program Director or Authorized Clergy must review all electronic materials for appropriateness of content. These electronic materials may include Web pages, Facebook, email and similar means. At First Congo we define Children as anyone age 17 or younger. Connection is defined as friending, following or in any way linking profiles together.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy who manage public pages on behalf of church programs are responsible for monitoring communications and assuring that appropriate conduct is enforced in conversations. The employee or volunteer shall:

- As possible, post a link to this Social Networking Code of Conduct on all official Social Media pages of First Congo.
- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the Code of Conduct.

Each employee, volunteer or Authorized Clergy who leads using the resources of Social Media shall:

- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their Children's interactions through electronic channels with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind Children how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.

- Authorized Clergy or Program Directors shall notify parents/guardians of any new electronic channel of communication upon initiation, and provide parents/guardians the opportunity to participate in said electronic channel.

Communication with Children

Due to the attendant risk of Electronic Communications with Children, especially the inability to supervise, the following standards shall apply.

- All Electronic Communications with Children and Vulnerable Adults in general must follow First Congo's Code of Conduct. Social Media and messaging with Children shall be limited to logistical matters, e.g., setting meeting dates, times, places or investigating matters of pastoral concern. When concerns regarding safety, legal matters or inappropriate discourse arise, the parents or legal guardians of the perceived victim shall be notified.
- On websites such as Facebook, Twitter or MySpace, all social networking communication with Children on behalf of the church must take place within the context of First Congo's official electronic channels.
- Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy shall not use personal social networking profiles or personal blogs to message with Children of the church to whom they are not related.
- Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy with personal profiles on social networking sites may not make any type of connection through Social Media with Children of First Congo to whom they are not related.
- Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy are allowed to communicate directly with Children of the church using a church or personal email account, First Congo electronic newsletter, or text messaging service, provided that the Child's parents are copied on all communications. Employees, volunteers and Authorized Clergy may make phone calls to Children directly only after receiving parental permission.

