# ST. ANDREW SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Online social platforms continue to transform the ways in which people and organizations interact. As such, these platforms exert an influence over people's perceptions and understanding of St. Andrew and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The goal of this policy document is to help staff and laypeople of St. Andrew become better equipped to use these powerful communication tools to enhance our ability to be the church.

## DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

As used in this document, "social media" refers to blogs, forums, and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and SnapChat, among others.

> "Social Media" is **social**, a platform and opportunity to have conversations and build relationships, and it is **media**, a channel for broadcasting information and promoting ideas and events.

These tend to live in tension:

The more you engage in conversation, the less space you have to broadcast information.

The more you broadcast, the less people want to listen and engage in conversation.
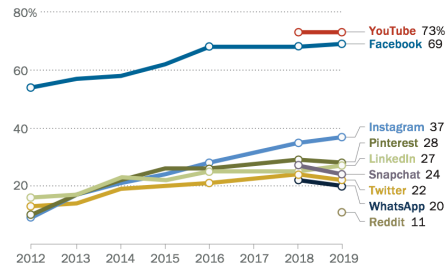
| UPSIDE | DOWNSIDE |
|---|---|
| ■ Connect with people. | ■ Arguing with people. |
| ■ Get real time news and events. | ■ Get fake news and events. |
| ■ Get opinions on current ideas. | ■ "Hot takes" on current ideas. |
| ■ Focus on what's important. | ■ Distraction from what's important. |

# MATURE PLATFORMS[1]

Statistics on the use of social media in the United States in 2020:

- 223 million Americans use social media. This is unchanged in 4 years.
- Facebook and YouTube are the biggest platforms, by far.
- Twitter is smaller than people perceive it to be, and shrinking in relative size.
- Young people no longer drive growth and new social platforms.
- Usage is evening out among age groups.

**Facebook, YouTube continue to be the most widely used online platforms among U.S. adults**

*% of U.S. adults who say they ever use the following online platforms or messaging apps online or on their cellphone*



YouTube 73%
Facebook 69
Instagram 37
Pinterest 28
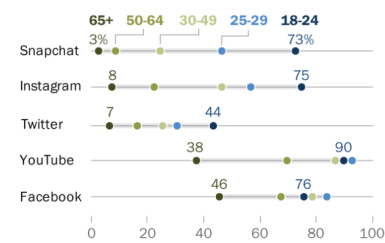LinkedIn 27
Snapchat 24
Twitter 22
WhatsApp 20
Reddit 11

Note: Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat and WhatsApp. Comparable trend data is not available for Reddit.
Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.
**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

**Snapchat and Instagram are especially popular among 18- to 24-year-olds**

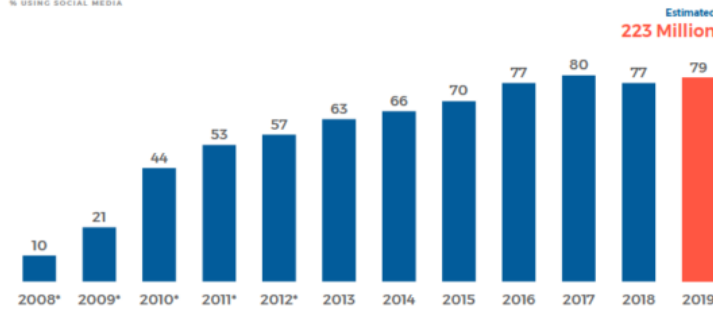*% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they ever use ...*



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.
**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

**Social Media Usage**

TOTAL U.S. POPULATION 12+
% USING SOCIAL MEDIA

THE INFINITE DIAL 2019



Estimated
223 Million

2008* 10
2009* 21
2010* 44
2011* 53
2012* 57
2013 63
2014 66
2015 70
2016 77
2017 80
2018 77
2019 79

*2008-2012: EVER USE FACEBOOK, TWITTER, OR LINKEDIN

#SocialHabit    THE INFINITE DIAL © 2019 EDISON RESEARCH AND TRITON DIGITAL

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[1] *Data from https://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-media-research/social-media-usage-statistics/ and Pew Research, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/*

The goal of St. Andrew social media is to enhance and protect St. Andrew United Methodist Church as representatives of the gospel of Jesus, including the brand and message of the church, the privacy of our employees, and the health of our community.

The purpose of these guidelines is to enhance the ability of representatives of St. Andrew, including staff and laypersons, to make appropriate and respectful decisions about work-related interactions with others on the Internet.

## Our Goal: Enhancing Relationships

St. Andrew is committed to supporting the privilege and ability of its community to interact responsibly online. Our hope is to enhance our ability to share and learn from one another online as an expression of what it means to live together in community.

People primarily come to church through recommendations in networks and relationships. This means we emphasize social media as:

1. A means for our people to stay connected to community.

2. A means for our people to share their church and their faith with others.

3. An opportunity to advertise to new people to discover and join our community.

This can be summarized as: **community first, invitation second, and advertising third**.

As with the rest of our marketing strategy,
St. Andrew social media is **relationship-focused**.

Think of church-related social media accounts according to two categories: church-wide communication and ministry-level communication.

## Church-Wide Accounts

These include all accounts that bear the church name but not the name of a specific ministry.

**These are managed by St. Andrew Creative.**

Here is a list as of February 9, 2020, with follower accounts:

- Facebook Page - 3,099 followers
- Instagram - 797 followers
- Twitter - 490 followers (ceased new posts as of July 2018)

### Management of Church-wide Accounts

St. Andrew Creative manages all church-wide social media accounts as one of several communication channels of the church. It is the responsibility of St. Andrew creative staff to post on behalf of the entire church.

Church-wide accounts are subject to rules and guidelines enacted to manage and maximize communication and marketing of the church as a single brand. For more on use of church-wide accounts, see St. Andrew Creative.

## Ministry-Level Accounts

These include all accounts that bear both the church name and the name of a specific ministry. These are managed by the individual ministries of St. Andrew. Examples include:

- Salt and Light Choir
- Lift Podcast Facebook Page
- St. Andrew Students Facebook Page

### Management of Ministry-Level Accounts

Respective ministries each manage their own ministry-level social media accounts. Staff and laypeople represent both their ministries and St. Andrew as a whole. Each includes the brand and communication health of the church. As such, in the event of potentially controversial or harmful public communication on ministry level accounts, the pastoral staff and/or St. Andrew Creative may intervene to assist with messaging and appropriate responses.

Here are a few Dos and Don'ts for being a good representative of St. Andrew and a good online citizen.

## DOS

1. **Represent Christ and the St. Andrew community.** When posting, consider both what your post says about St. Andrew, about you, and about Jesus. How might your ministry and others' perceptions about Christian faith be affected by what you are posting?

2. **Be authentic.** We encourage you to be a real person and not worry about parroting a "company line". None of us are perfect, and that's good - our humanity is part of what will attract others to Jesus.

3. **Be attentive.** Look for opportunities to do ministry when on social media. Pay attention to the ways people interact with you, positively and negatively.

4. **Be clear.** Choose clear over clever. Being funny may help sharing, but tone may not translate well. Additionally, when posting about St. Andrew as an individual (not on a church-wide or ministry-level account), please be clear that your views do not necessarily represent the views of the church. A link or follow may be considered an endorsement.

5. **Be pastoral.** Consider the pastoral needs of people with whom you interact online. Ask our manager or a pastor how to best answer difficult pastoral or theological questions.

6. **Engage with others.** Talk to your followers, care for them, and pray for them.

## DONTS

1. **Don't argue.** Do not respond to online trolling; if trolling activity repeats or intensifies, deleting and blocking may be an appropriate response. Contact St. Andrew Creative for assistance if needed.

2. **Don't curse.** This includes both full words and acronyms such as WTF or OMG. Err on the side of caution.

3. **Don't post personal stuff.** This includes addresses, phone numbers, and email.

4. **Don't post political.** Political-related posts can become both a PR concern and a legal concern. More importantly, it can divide the church and turn people away from Jesus.

5. **Don't post without verifying.** When using people's photos, acquire a signed photo consent form for any close up photos of individuals. If posting about the event, check name, date and link information before posting. If you mention someone, confirm their title/status: pastor, director, member, etc.

6. **Don't forget that Internet is a permanent record.** Every pastor and church not only influences the reputation of the church but, ultimately, Jesus.

When in doubt, leave it out.

## Handbook Guidelines

*The following is reprinted from the St. Andrew Employee Handbook, as of 2-9-2020*

The Church encourages employees to share information with co-workers and with those outside the Church for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provides inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public and, therefore, St. Andrew has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

1. **Off-duty use of social media.** Employees may maintain personal websites or web blogs on their own time using their own resources. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the Church considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas. St. Andrew expects all employees' personal social media activity should align with the Christ centered values of the Church.

2. **On-duty use of social media.** Employees may engage in social media activity during work time provided its content and views expressed align with the values of the Church. The Church monitors employee use of company computers and the Internet, including employee blogging and social networking activity.

3. **Respect**. Demonstrate respect for the dignity of the Church, its congregation, its vendors, and its employees. A social media site is a public place, and employees should avoid inappropriate comments. For example, do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenity, or use language that may be considered inflammatory. Even if a message is posted anonymously, it may be possible to trace it back to the sender. Due to the diverse, political and theological opinions of our Church staff and congregation, supervisors reserve the right to request social media posts be edited or taken down if they are found to not be in line with the values of the Church.

4. **Confidentiality**. Do not identify or reference Church employees, congregation, or vendors, without express permission. Employees may write about their jobs in general but may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information. For examples of confidential information, please refer to the confidentiality policy. When in doubt, ask before publishing.

5. **New ideas.** Please remember that new ideas related to work or the Church's business belong to the church. Do not post them on a social media site without the Church's permission.

6. **Links.** Employees may provide a link from a social media site to the Church's website during employment (subject to discontinuance at the church's sole discretion). Employees should contact the Church communications team to obtain the graphic for links to the Church's site and to register the site with the Church.

7. **Trademarks and copyrights.** Do not use the Church's trademarks on personal social media accounts, or reproduce the Church's unpublished material without first obtaining permission from the Communications Director.

8. **Legal**. Employees are expected to comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines, copyright, trademark, and harassment laws.

9. **Discipline**. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

10. *Note*: Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the National Labor Relations Act to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve terms and conditions of employment, such as wages and benefits.

*The following is reprinted from St. Andrew Family Ministry guidelines. These are particularly helpful own regards to online interaction with minors.*

Social networking sites, texting, e-mailing and other forms of electronic communication are a reality in the lives of most of our students. They offer an opportunity to develop and deepen relationships in new ways and are therefore a vital part of youth ministry work. But their improper use can produce serious consequences.

The following recommended practices and guidelines apply commonly accepted principles of healthy boundaries for digital networking and communication. Be mindful that our calling is to meet students where they are; model healthy boundaries; and love and care for students safely.

1. Employee and volunteer workers who want to communicate with minors using text messaging, e- mail, social networking websites or other forms of electronic media must agree to follow the guidelines set forth by the St. Andrew UMC Family Ministry.

2. Ministry workers may not transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful when communicating with each other or with minors involved in ministry activities.

3. Except in an emergency, workers may not transmit any personal information pertaining to a minor without the ministry participant and his or her parents or guardians signing consent forms. This applies to group texting, group e-mail, or any other public method of electronic communication. Personal information may include such things as a minor's name, phone number, e-mail address, or photograph.

4. Use prudent judgment in the time you contact students through social media. The "home phone rule" is a basic rule of thumb to use – normally do not text, chat, or email back-and-forth with students at a time you would not normally call their home phone line, i.e. before 8:00 AM or after 9:00 PM. Be mindful of school hours, do not text or respond to messages during school hours.

5. Implement privacy settings and personal boundaries
   a. When communicating with a student on social media (direct messages) only respond on the Church platform.
   b. Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all students, across all platforms.
   c. Review accessible content and photos frequently.
   d. If a student texts you after hours and it's not an emergency – wait until morning to reply

6. Youth workers who become aware of possible child abuse through electronic media must immediately notify their supervisor. The ministry director and church leadership staff will consult with its attorney and report abuse as required by law.

7. If you choose to utilize any social networking site to communicate with students associated with St. Andrew UMC, invite other St. Andrew workers to view and respond to the content. Parents of students should be aware of and how:

   a. All information, images, or videos shared electronically through public ministry communications channels aren't considered confidential.

   b. When possible, communication should be sent to entire groups, on their wall or in public areas - not in private messages – this includes images

   c. When ongoing pastoral communication are private (ie: Emails, FB Messages, Texting, etc) – Who they are with and their frequency should be disclosed to the parent or a supervisor

   d. Consistency with all students on all platforms is of the utmost importance

8. Any inappropriate material posted in your online groups should be deleted and addressed or reported if necessary.

9. Video Chatting with student is strongly discouraged – if you must, be aware of what you're wearing and of your surroundings.

10. Your emails and texts should communicate facts not feelings. When the content of a received email or text raises concerns or questions share it with a member of the staff, Pastoral team, or supervisor.    Phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are the preferred mode of communication, when responding to emotionally driven communication or pastoral emergencies

11. There are further considerations when using photos and videos of minors for ministry purposes.

    a.   Respect the dignity of every person depicted in an image

    b.   Include a media release statement on a signed consent form

    c.   It is strongly discouraged to attach student names with their image (ie: captions, tagging on Facebook)

12. Ministry workers driving on ministry business are to avoid cell phone use—even hands-free—when transporting children, while driving in heavy traffic, during hazardous weather conditions, or when it violates local law.

13. Ministry workers are never to send or read text messages while driving.