

Social Media and St Andrew

Strategies, Guidelines, Best Practices, and Guidelines

Vision for Social Media Use:

St Andrew Lutheran Church is an ELCA congregation whose “social media presence is one ... with congregation members and staff contributing regularly in ways that enhance community and help make connections between members. This helps to make visible the real community that gathers on Sunday morning and during the week, and makes others want to get involved more or consider joining.”¹

Social Media at St Andrew

Social media is an essential tool for ministry and fellowship that enables members of St Andrew to connect with the church and each other. Engaging our congregation’s members on social media extends the community that gathers for worship into the rest of the week and integrates “church life” into daily life. Social media is a way for St Andrew to share announcements, photos, videos, and prayers in a relevant and timely way. It is a way to tell the story of our church and for our congregation to be regularly reminded of Christ’s love for them.

St Andrew Lutheran Church understands that the world of technology keeps changing. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that we embrace modern methods of communication and sharing information. However, we also understand that some modern methods of communication require regulation so that they can be more effective. We ask all our staff, volunteers, and members to read and thoroughly understand the following social media policies. We expect all the staff of St Andrew Lutheran Church to behave responsibly on social media and treat all people with respect.

St Andrew presently uses Facebook, YouTube, and the Church App to augment email and the church website as a means to connect, worship, socialize, and exchange ideas. Other social media platforms that are presently not in use include Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. This document is meant to broadly define how all forms of social media are to be used in ways that are consistent with our mission, values, and core beliefs.

St Andrew Social Media Strategy

The people of St Andrew Lutheran Church first worshipped together on September 7, 1952. St Andrew is a Reconciling in Christ congregation. All are welcome regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, education, income, or family status. We are called to provide a safe space in the community as we break down barriers of isolation. Our core values are God Care, Earth Care, Community Care, Neighbor Care, and Self Care. We believe that our employees can uphold these values by behaving responsibly on social

¹ Based on ELCA Social Media & Congregations: Planning and Procedures
<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Congregational-Communications-Tools>

media. St Andrew's social media strategy is one component of our overall congregational communication plan, which includes all the ways that we interact with our members and the community, such as mailings, email, the church website, and social media.

Communication Strategy

- Email is the official way to communicate with the congregation using the church database. Email is how the congregation receives information from the pastors, staff, and lay leaders (from Weekly News to Worship links to Grace Notes from the Lead Pastor).
- The St Andrew website² is another way to disseminate information to the congregation and is an important tool for evangelism and outreach to the community outside the church walls.

Social Media Strategy

- St Andrew maintains an official Facebook Page³ that enables our church to create an authentic and public presence on Facebook that is visible to everyone on the internet by default. Any person on Facebook can connect with the St Andrew Facebook page by becoming a fan, which allows them to receive updates from our News Feed and interact with them. The St Andrew Facebook Page is a supplemental communication path for those in the congregation who choose to use Facebook. Only authorized St Andrew staff can post to the Page and these Posts contain a limited subset of church information.
- The primary means of sending St Andrew worship links is via email, which is allowed under music licensing. Currently, worship links cannot be posted to the public FB Page, nor the website, because the streamed services contain licensed music (music not in public domain). St Andrew could post worship links to the public sites if appropriate streaming licenses were purchased from CCLI and/or One License. The Worship Committee is presently obtaining information on these streaming licenses.
- The St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton Facebook Group⁴ was created in December 2008 by a lay member of the congregation to be an "extension of the narthex", where the congregation could continue their discussions throughout the week. This independent group requires Administrator approval to join.
 - Facebook Pages are designed to be the official profiles for entities (such as St Andrew), while Facebook Groups are the place for small group communication (e.g. St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton). For example, the official Grateful Dead Page has 1.9M followers, while "Deadhead Life" is a private Group of ~82,000 Grateful Dead fans who make an average of 500 posts/day about a variety of topics.
- In 2020 the St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton Facebook Group administrator made the group private, which made posting of worship links to services containing licensed music legal under copyright law.
- Content from the St Andrew Page can be shared by the staff who are members of the St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton Group as posts to the Group. Further, new posts

² (<http://www.standrewlutheran.com>)

³ <https://www.facebook.com/StAndrewLutheranBeaverton/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/standrewlutheran/>

(announcements, photos, issues, related content) can be made by any Group member, they are included in the News Feeds of all members, and members can interact and share with one another from the group.

- Presently, St Andrew does not use Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, or any other social media application as a platform for official church communication, but the guiding principles of this social media strategy are meant to be applicable to all forms of social media.

St Andrew Social Media Policy

This Social Media Policy establishes guidelines for responsible online participation on social media platforms by St Andrew staff and volunteer leaders and also seeks to reduce risk to the congregation. St Andrew social media policies address two areas of concern: 1) guidelines for appropriate use, and 2) procedures documenting workflow, roles and activities that support our communication strategy. In addition, this policy discusses the desired relationship between the official St Andrew Lutheran Church Page and the St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton Private Group. An addendum provides suggested guidelines for church and member use of the Group site. Finally, it provides guidance for the creation, use, and destruction of other social media sites by St Andrew staff and volunteer leaders.

Social Media Guidelines

St Andrew Lutheran Church primarily relies on email, the public Facebook Page, and the website for official communication. The use of group sites owned or managed by St Andrew should be minimized and limited to focused groups with a well-defined range of subject matter (e.g. youth or education groups). These groups must be administered and managed by church staff or supervised volunteers and must be accessible to anyone who wishes to participate. The creation and/or management of open forum Facebook groups by St Andrew Lutheran Church is not authorized under these current guidelines.

St Andrew Lutheran Church generally has a positive view towards creating or contributing to personal websites, blogs, social networks, message boards, virtual worlds, and other kinds of social media. Participation by members of St Andrew Lutheran Church and the general public in these open forums is a matter of individual choice and an exercise in free speech. As such, they are independent of St Andrew Lutheran Church and are not subject to control, monitoring, or mediation by the Church.

When Church staff and volunteer leaders use open forum social networking sites, such as Facebook, it is important that they understand and follow the following guidelines to safeguard the integrity and security of the church. Social media sites are usually not private and even if privacy settings are used, sometimes information becomes public. Because of the widespread use and the ease of copying and forwarding electronic materials, it is very important to make sure that no one is exposing the congregation to liability or bad publicity due to foolish or unwise social network postings.

Further, social media posts by employees and leaders may be seen by our members, attendees, and outside parties as being representative of our church. This means that while you may view your online presence as a personal project, many readers will associate you and the views you express with St Andrew. In this light, we ask that you observe the guidelines outlined below, keeping in mind that these guidelines will evolve as new social media networking technologies emerge. As such, this is a living document and part of an ongoing dialog.

Social media policy

1. Every staff member and volunteer leader should be careful when using social media and consider the effects of their actions on other people.
2. Every staff member and volunteer leader should be watchful when sharing and posting private information on social media. Be cautious about identity theft and phishing.
3. If staff or volunteer leaders have websites, blogs, or social media groups, or are considering creating one that could be construed as being associated with St Andrew Lutheran Church, please discuss this with appropriate Church leadership.
4. **Include a Disclaimer:** Personal websites, blogs, or Facebook Groups should display this, or a similar statement on the home page or in prominent location: *“The posts on this site are my own personal opinions. They are not read or approved before posting and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of St Andrew Lutheran Church”*.
5. Always explain that whatever you post on social media about St Andrew are your personal views, unless you have authority to do so.
6. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of St Andrew and all its members. Avoid sharing financial data and other legal information regarding the Church on personal social media accounts. This includes information that will become public but has not yet been announced or posted.

Social media usage at the workplace

St Andrew encourages all of its staff members to avoid using social media at the workplace unless when doing something related to their duties. Excessive use of social media at the workplace affects productivity and such behaviors are unacceptable.

Clarification

All St Andrew staff are required to read and sign the following guidelines regarding the use of social media to document their understanding and acceptance of this policy. Staff and members of the public are encouraged to contact St Andrew via this telephone (503-646-0629) number and email address (office@standrewlutheran.com) if they have any concerns or questions about the St Andrew Lutheran Church social media policies.

Church Staff Guidelines Regarding the Use of Social Media

When I am representing the congregation on any social networking site such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, or similar sites, I understand and agree to comply with the following:

- *I will use my own name;*
- *I understand I represent the congregation's ministry and my postings will be appropriate to the mission;*
- *I will keep all confidential and sensitive information private and will not post such information;*
- *(insert if applicable) I have read the congregation's policies on use of the internet and social media; and*
- *If I have a question, uncertainty or concern about the proper nature of a posting, I will consult with my supervisor and leadership before posting.*

Signature by employee

Social Media Procedures

This portion of the St Andrew social media policy describes the procedures that we will use to support and sustain our use of social media.

Our primary concerns regarding the use of social media are for privacy issues and appropriate behavior. Use a password-protected service as a way to share directory information, photos with captions, and other sensitive media only among members. St Andrew uses Facebook as means to establish a more open community presence, but we need to monitor its use to make sure that member privacy is respected. This involves common sense concerns:

- Don't post images of children without the consent of a parent or guardian
- Don't caption photos with full names of children (even if there is consent)
- Don't post member e-mail addresses or phone numbers
- Help protect members from fraud.
- Make sure that church staff and volunteer leaders are using church computers appropriately.

Copyright⁵:

All St Andrew Lutheran Church (SALC) environment names, copyrights, and trademarks are the property of SALC and should be used according to our guidelines.

⁵ Wording for disclaimers and copyrights adapted from Our Saviours Lutheran Church Social Media Policy and Guidelines (Naperville, IL) -accessed via *The Ultimate List of Social Media Policies for Churches & Ministries* (<https://socialchurch.co/social-media-policies-churches-ministries/>)

- The St Andrew Lutheran Church website and Facebook page are officially associated and linked with SALC and all information and posts by authorized staff and personnel are the property of SALC. As noted below, whenever possible, all electronic content originated by SALC should be first posted to the church website and/or the official Facebook page.
- When posting to other websites, pages, or blogs, it is permissible to embed or link SALC-owned videos, graphics, or other materials, including program or line-cut video from services or events, if they have been publicly posted on SALC-owned websites, blogs, or social media sites, such as the official Facebook page. In all cases, SALC should be credited for the materials and the credit should include “© <year created> St Andrew Lutheran Church, and the speaker/author.” Otherwise, SALC-owned material should not be posted on other sites.
- It is permissible to use up to 250 words of SALC print media (unedited and within a personal commentary, or within other quotations) from any published SALC work on personal websites and posts. SALC should be credited for the material and the credit should include “© <year created> St Andrew Lutheran Church, and the author.”
- Posts of content that is the property of another individual or entity should be avoided without written permission to ensure that the use of the material is legally permitted. This is an individual responsibility; SALC cannot provide legal advice regarding copyrights.

Approach:

Email and the St Andrew Website and Facebook page are the currently preferred ways for SALC to get announcements out to members. In addition to collecting updates for publication in the Sunday bulletin or congregation newsletter, of email communication, a best practice is to make a wall post on the congregation Facebook page as soon as information about some event, deadline, news item, or update is received. The ELCA notes that the best posts are ones that also invite members to comment. The ELCA further states that the ideal site has members posting announcements and reminders themselves.

At this time, it is our policy that announcements related to official church services or business, official church groups (e.g. Nifty Notters, Silver Saints, youth groups, etc.) be submitted to St Andrew staff for posting by authorized personnel to the SALC wall page. The Church Council may want to explore the option of allowing individuals to submit posts to the SALC wall page that are held until they are reviewed and released by authorized personnel.

As appropriate, members of the staff are encouraged to share posts or cross-post information from the SALC website and/or Facebook page to private Facebook groups (e.g. St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton), and other social media sites to help further the mission of the congregation, as well as to encourage the general public to participate in worship and other activities at St. Andrew Lutheran Church. Postings to such private groups on behalf of St Andrew Lutheran Church should contain the aforementioned copyright information. Personal posts by SALC staff and volunteer leaders should include an appropriate disclaimer.

It is important to recognize that the use of social media, electronic online worship, and other online events and activities, which have been necessitated by the COVID 19 pandemic, will be a permanent part of St Andrew Lutheran Church. This is a positive outcome in that St Andrew now has an increased range of opportunities for congregational participation, including continued access to worship activities by those who are unable to be physically present. However, it should be recognized that any action taken to limit the opportunity of any individual to participate in official St Andrew online/social media/digital/electronic activities or events is a form of discipline. As such, Chapter 15 of the St Andrew Constitution outlines the process that must be followed in disciplining individuals and states that the authority to discipline members of the church is specifically limited to the pastoral staff.

Publication schedule

Email and the St Andrew website are the primary tools for communication with congregation, as well as tools for outreach to those looking for a church home. Announcements of services and events as wall posts on the Facebook page should be made on a regular basis, in coordination with other modes of communication. As noted above, timely wall posts of deadlines, events, news, and other information, are encouraged. Other posts by affiliated St Andrew groups should be solicited via email, the church newsletter, as part of announcements in worship services, and other communication channels to create a more timely, vibrant, and rich set of posts on the public St Andrew Facebook page. Sharing and cross posts between the website, Facebook page, and Facebook group is encouraged, with appropriate labeling and disclaimers.

Moderator schedule

As long as information for newsletters, emails, websites, and the Facebook page are gathered, edited, and processed by church staff, no formal moderator schedule is required. If an ability for individual posts to the official Facebook page is implemented, it is recommended that the posts be reviewed and released by authorized personnel.

A place for members to reflect on their faith

The St Andrew Lutheran Church Beaverton Facebook group has been a place for members and friends to reflect on their faith for almost 12 years. It serves as a place for "member care" and as a "fellowship" group where people can post reflections, event images and videos, and questions for member response. This group has had a positive impact on communication within the church and it is an important adjunct to the official St Andrew page. As part of this formal policy, we will request that this private group be renamed "Friends of St Andrew ...", to emphasize the fact that this is an independent group that is not officially owned by the church. We will also request that the site display an appropriate disclaimer of its independence and that all appropriate Facebook tools be utilized to encourage members to comply with recommended rules, guidelines, and policies for postings made on the site. We strongly recommend that St Andrew staff and volunteer leaders do NOT participate as moderators or mediators for this private group.

Recognizing that St Andrew information is disseminated through various media (print, email, official FB page, etc.), sharing of posts from the official site to the Private Group is acceptable,

under the proviso of including appropriate attribution. While SALC information may be shared via this group, the site will continue to state that it is a private group that does not officially represent the Church. Further, as an independent site, members have the right to exercise free speech in their postings, in the same way that they can write letters to newspapers, or post to other blogs and sites. Recognizing that misunderstandings may sometimes occur, the voluntary members of this group are advised to follow the same Matthew 18:15-17 process for reconciliation that is contained in the St Andrew Constitution.

Future action

The subgroup recommends that a permanent Social Media committee not be formed, and if any future issues arise that they be dealt with by an ad hoc committee. However, it was noted that some members may want to become more involved in developing and promulgating appropriate social media – this is something that could be an opportunity for volunteering and outreach. The subgroup also recommends that St Andrew procure the appropriate music streaming licenses to allow worship links and materials to be posted on public site, with appropriate attribution statements.

Addendum

Suggested Social Media Statement & Guidelines for Private Groups

The [insert name here] is private group for the members and friends of St. Andrew Lutheran Church of Beaverton, Oregon to [insert purpose].

As a private group, the posts on this site are the personal opinions of the participants and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of St Andrew Lutheran Church.

Guidelines

1. Be Kind and Courteous

We're all in this together to create a welcoming environment. Let's treat everyone with respect. Kindness is required in all posts and comments.

2. No Hate Speech or Bullying

Make sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed, and degrading comments about things like ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, education, income, or family status will not be tolerated.

3. No Promotions or Spam

Self-promotion, spam and irrelevant links aren't allowed.

4. Please refrain from partisan politics or issues of controversy within the ELCA or St Andrew.

There are many other avenues for these types of discussions and debates such as online political forums and face-to-face conversations.

Social media sites are monitored by 'moderators' who may remove comments/posts that violate guidelines. To maintain a clear separation between the Group and the Church, moderators should NOT be member of St Andrew staff or a voluntary leader, including : members of the church council, ministry staff, support staff, or church administrators.