



COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Welcome to St. Paul's Episcopal Church Twitter page.

While we are excited to hear your thoughts and experiences, please remember that this is a moderated community and all content is reviewed prior to being published. We encourage your participation, but also want to help keep our social media content reflective of the love of Christ. We reserve the right to correct misleading information or delete comments at our own discretion.

We will make every effort to provide valuable and helpful information and resources. However, St. Paul's Episcopal Church and its employees who participate in our Social Media disclaim any liability for damages of any kind whatsoever that arise out of the use of information posted.

COLLEGIALITY

Just like communicating within the church, it is never a good idea to make disparaging comments about members, clergy, our ministry in social media. When it comes to use of social media, support your colleagues and be respectful of other clergy and other opinions. Please do not post any personal information that may lead a troll to use this outlet for theft or other criminal activity. When commenting on current events from social issues to church politics, clergy should strive to maintain their prophetic voice; while, at the same time maintaining the ordained covenant to uphold the Episcopal Church and its social practices, leadership, polity, and ministry.

To give your opinions, especially on hotly debated topics, can be construed as making a statement on behalf of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. It is smarter to say nothing at all especially if you are inclined to make a statement contrary to St. Paul's theologies. If you are contacted by the media regarding a current event topic, please refer to St. Paul's program staff. St. Paul's does not endorse any comments made by its employees, unless they are an authorized representative of the Church. All unofficial statements and viewpoints expressed in the comments are strictly those of the commenter alone.

Please be aware that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has very specific guidelines related to political commentary offered by churches and/or clergy. Clergy and church representatives are encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between a prophetic voice and keeping the church's tax exempt status intact as violation of IRS regulation can result in a revocation of church's tax exempt status. Refer to www.irs.gov for more information.

DISCRETION & CONFIDENTIALITY

Be judicious in your online conduct and speech. Use discretion by refraining from sharing confidential information from meetings or personal interactions with others that could cast St. Paul's Episcopal Church or any other relationships in a bad light.



TWITTER

Content that is shared over social media networks must be done solely by the individual who will be held accountable for what is shared if confidentiality is broken. Because of this and other concerns, social media is never an appropriate medium through which to counsel parishioners - even in private messages, text messages and emails. Move counseling conversations to an appropriate venue.

Ask yourself: Is this the appropriate venue for this conversation?

LOCATION SHARING

Social Media that allows one to “check in” at one’s current location should be used with discretion. Checking in refers to making one’s location known via a social media outlet. Never check-in (i.e. disclose the location of) anyone who has not expressed their permission to be checked in. Additionally, when posting on Social Media, be discreet in tagging persons who are in the same location as you are; rather, use hashtags as a means of facilitating conversation. Remember that when you check-in others, especially ailing parishioners, you may be breaking HIPPA laws and creating other confidentiality issues.

Using social location platforms is a tool to raise awareness about your church’s location, including worship and other events. It also serves as an accountability tool for when clergy are not in their office (i.e. holding drop by office hours at local coffee shop).

RESPECT PRIVACY

Please be respectful of your own privacy and the people you serve. Also, help the people you serve be sensitive to the privacy of others. Social Media is an excellent way to share the good moments and the sad moments in our lives, but we are called to be especially mindful of how people respond to hearing news in such a non-personal manner. Also, it is not appropriate to share someone else’s concerns or joys without their consent. To post a prayer concern without her or his prior permission is a violation of clergy ethics and HIPPA guidelines. For more information on HIPPA guidelines, please visit: <http://www.hhs.gov/>

BE ACCURATE

Review content you are posting for factual and grammatical errors. You may consider using Google, local and national news websites, and Snopes.com to check “news” before you share it with others.

BE SAFE

Be careful when posting or following links that are shared with you while on Social Media that come through email that lead you to external websites. These are often phishing ploys to get information about you or your friends. Protect yourself and your friends by being careful about what you click on or post on a wall.



ABOUT HASHTAGS

Creating accounts on major social media platforms is a great way to share information with people about upcoming events at your church. It is also a great way to invite people— both congregants and the community.

The use of hashtags is a great way to facilitate conversation and connection. You can do this by adding a hashtag at the end of a post. Hashtags allow people to choose whether or not they would like to participate in a conversation or reveal their involvement in an event or subject matter. Hashtags can be searched and allow users to see what others are saying about a topic, person, event, etc.

Note: Hashtags can be publically searched and viewed by anyone who chooses to engage the conversation. Social location applications create entries for every public place, including churches. St. Paul's will make every effort to "claim" and customize our church's entry on each platform to ensure it reflects our congregation. Examples of websites that do this include Google's maps.google.com, [Facebook.com](https://facebook.com), foursquare.com, loopt.com, yelp.com, and others.

SAFE SANCTUARIES

St. Paul's Episcopal Church is charged to create and employ church policies and procedures for the protection of children (birth -11 years), youth (twelve -18 years) and vulnerable adults (18+ years old with any mental, physical, situational or age-related condition that renders them vulnerable to the decisions and care of others). These Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures are meant to reduce the risk of abuse to such persons within the community and the Church. Given the increased use of technology and social media in the life of the church and its individual members, churches and conferences have a responsibility to define social media policies that uphold the covenant to create Safe Sanctuaries for children, youth and vulnerable adults. To this end, St. Paul's affirms the following:

- We will utilize technology, the Internet and all social media tools to promote Christian community and the building up of authentic relationships.
- We will protect the privacy and identity of all persons under 18 years of age and all vulnerable adults in online writings, postings and discussions.
- We will maintain appropriate relational boundaries with minors.
- We shall not engage in the creation, viewing or distribution of pornography.
- We shall not engage in, encourage or condone cyberbullying.
- We shall educate young people in the effective ways of using social media and technology to live out their Christian witness in what they write, post, share, and view.
- We cannot accept comments or other information from individuals under the age of 13. For more information about the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), visit <http://www.ftc.gov>.



OTHER WEBSITES

For your convenience, St. Paul's social media posts may contain links to other websites, or may refer you to other web sites. Those other sites may be operated by companies affiliated with St. Paul's Episcopal Church or by other third party companies not affiliated with us (collectively, "Third Party Websites"). Third Party Websites are not operated by St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The privacy and security policies of the Third Party Website may differ from the privacy and security policies of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

SPAM

Content posted for the purpose of driving traffic to a particular website for personal or monetary gain is not appropriate and will be deleted.

VIOLATION OF SECURITY

Any such violations may result in criminal and/or civil penalties against you. St. Paul's Episcopal Church may investigate any suspected violation and if a criminal violation is suspected, we will cooperate with law enforcement agencies in their investigations. Under no circumstances shall you: (a) misrepresent your identity or affiliation in any way; (b) restrict, discourage, or inhibit any person from using this Page, disclose personal information obtained from this Page, or collect information about users of this Page; (c) reverse engineer, disassemble or decompile any section or technology on this Page, or attempt to do any of the foregoing; (d) gain unauthorized access to this Page or computers or websites connected or linked to this Page; and (e) launch or use any automated system, including without limitation, "robots", "spiders", or "offline readers", that access this Page in a manner that sends more request messages to our servers in a given period of time than a human can reasonably produce in the same period by using a conventional web browser.

INDEMNIFICATION

You agree to indemnify St. Paul's Episcopal Church from any third-party lawsuits, claims, demands, damages, liabilities, and costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees) arising out of your use of Social Media, or a breach or alleged breach, of the covenants, representations or warranties of these Terms.