

# **Social Media Policy**

## **Zion Lutheran Church, ELCA**

### **1. Purpose**

Zion Lutheran Church ELCA wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. Employees have the responsibility to use the church's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing policies. This policy provides guidelines and standards for employees and volunteers regarding the use of social media for communication.

### **2. Policy**

Zion Lutheran Church ELCA will determine, at its discretion, how its web based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy reflected in Zion's Social Media Policy. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA social media sites may be modified or removed at any time and without notice, as described in this document. Social media accounts are considered an asset and administrator access to these accounts must be securely administered in accordance with current policies. All social media web sites created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's or volunteer's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to the Zion Lutheran Church ELCA.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media web sites sponsored, established, registered, or authorized by the Zion Lutheran Church ELCA. This policy Zion Lutheran Church ELCA covers the private use of Zion Lutheran Church ELCA's social media accounts by all employees and agents, including its employees, Board members, and volunteers.

### **4. Definition**

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Social networking sites/mobile apps such as Facebook, and Twitter
- b. Blogs
- c. Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
- d. Video and photo sharing sites such as YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Snap Chat, and Flickr
- e. Wikis, or shared encyclopedias such as Wikipedia

### **5. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA Staff/Agents/Volunteers Rules of Use**

Zion Lutheran Church ELCA employees with administrator access are responsible for managing social media websites. Staff and volunteers wishing to have a new social media presence must submit a request to the Pastor to ensure social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. All approved sites will be clearly marked as a "Zion Lutheran Church ELCA" site and will be linked with the Zion Lutheran Church ELCA website ([zionlutheranifalls.com](http://zionlutheranifalls.com)).

No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of Zion Lutheran Church ELCA unless authorized. Administration of all social media web sites must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.

Zion Lutheran Church ELCA social media accounts accessed and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties may not be used for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to Zion Lutheran Church ELCA employment relations matters or for personal financial gain.

No social media website may be used by Zion Lutheran Church ELCA or any employee or agent to disclose private or confidential information. No social media web site should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential, or sensitive, contact the Pastor.

When using social media sites as a representative of Zion Lutheran Church ELCA, employees will act in a professional manner. Examples include, but are not limited to, adhering to all policies and using only appropriate language. Content creators must be aware that content will not only reflect on the writer, but Zion Lutheran Church ELCA as a whole, including board members, employees, and other agents. Information posted must be accurate and free of grammatical errors. Requirements for posting include:

- a. Not providing private or confidential information, including names, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
- b. Not negatively commenting on community partners or their services.
- c. Be aware that all content added to a site is subject to open records/right to know laws and discovery in legal cases.
- d. Always keep in mind the appropriateness of content.
- e. Comply with any existing code of ethical behavior.

## **6. Guidelines for Public Postings**

Comments, posts, and messages are welcome on the Zion Lutheran Church ELCA social networking sites. While the church recognizes and respects differences in opinion, all such interactions will regularly be monitored and reviewed for content and relevancy. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA staff with administrative rights will not edit any posted comments. However, comments posted by members of the public will be removed if they are abusive, obscene, defamatory, in violation of the copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate or incorrect.

The rules for public posting are as follows:

- a. Comments and posts should be church related.
- b. Duplicate posts from the same individual will be deleted.
- c. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA discourages individuals from posting personal information and reserves the right to remove any personal information.
- d. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA is not responsible for user-generated content. A posted comment is the opinion of the user only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement or agreement by the Church.
- e. Spam and commercial content will be removed, along with posts or comments used for campaigns, religious, commercial, or fundraising interests.
- f. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA follows a notice-and-takedown procedure for complaints of copyright violation under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.
- g. Posts containing offensive, obscene, threatening, or abusive language, or hate speech are strictly prohibited and will be deleted.
- h. Users may report concerns. Staff will review those concerns as soon as possible and reply.

## **7. Personal Social Media Use**

Zion Lutheran Church ELCA respects employees' rights to post and maintain personal websites, blogs and social media pages and to use and enjoy social media on their own personal devices during non-work hours. Employees and agents must act in a prudent manner with regard to website and internet postings that reference Zion Lutheran Church ELCA, its personnel, its operation, or its property. Employees and others affiliated with Zion Lutheran Church ELCA may not use a Zion Lutheran Church ELCA brand, logo or other Zion Lutheran Church ELCA identifiers on their personal sites, nor post information that purports to be the position of the Church without prior authorization.

Zion Lutheran Church ELCA employees and agents are discouraged from identifying themselves as Zion Lutheran Church ELCA employees when responding to or commenting on blogs with personal opinions or views. If an employee chooses to identify him or herself as a Zion Lutheran Church ELCA employee, and posts a statement on matters related to Zion Lutheran Church ELCA business, a disclaimer similar to the following must be used:

*These are my own opinions and do not represent those of the Zion Lutheran Church ELCA.*

Occasional access to personal social media websites during work hours is permitted. Employees should review the Ownership section of this policy (below).

There may be times when personal use of social media (even if it is off duty or using the employee's own equipment) may overlap workplace use and become the basis for employee coaching or discipline. Examples of situations where this might occur include:

- a. Cyber-bullying, stalking, or harassment
- c. Release of confidential or private data. If there are questions about what constitutes confidential or private data, contact the Pastor.
- d. Unlawful activities
- e. Misuse of Zion Lutheran Church ELCA-owned social media
- f. Inappropriate use of Zion Lutheran Church ELCA's name, logo or the employee's position or title
- g. Using Zion Lutheran Church ELCA equipment or work time for extensive personal social media use.

Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are complex. If there are questions about what types of activities might result in discipline, please discuss the type of usage with the Pastor.

### **8. Data Ownership & Privacy**

All social media communications or messages composed, sent, or received on church equipment in an official capacity are the property of Zion Lutheran Church ELCA and will be subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. Zion Lutheran Church ELCA maintains the sole property rights to any image, video or audio captured while an employee is representing the Church in any capacity. The Church retains the right to monitor employee's social media use on church equipment and will exercise its right, as necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication.

### **9. Policy Violations**

Violations of this Policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action as described in the Zion Lutheran Church ELCA Employee Behavior Policy.

Approved by Zion Lutheran Church Executive Committee and Council

05.25.2021