Evangelism and Communication
St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
July 24, 2024

CHURCH WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA
Guidelines and Responsibilities

General Purpose
At St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church, we know that the website, online social platforms, including social networking services (such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube), livestreaming, podcasts and blogs are constantly transforming the way we interact. We also recognize the importance of the Internet in shaping the public view of our church.

The Evangelism and Communication Team is committed to supporting the congregation's right to interact responsibly and knowledgeably through social media. As the Internet is a primary method of communication, there is an increased opportunity to reach a wider audience through the church website and social media. These channels enable viewers to be more aware of church content, to share that content with friends and family, and to maintain closer contact with the church and its leaders. Web technology makes it easier for individuals to locate the church and find specific information of interest.

Guidelines for Sharing on Social Media
The Evangelism and Communication Team and the Congregation Council reserve the right to direct its members to avoid certain subjects and remove inappropriate comments and posts. St. Matthew social media sites are monitored on a regular basis.

What Gets Shared:

- All contributions should represent the congregation's ministry, and any postings must be appropriate to the mission and core values of St. Mathew Evangelical Lutheran Church and the ELCA.
- Any statements made online should use common sense and be supported with factual evidence, written knowledgeably, accurately and professionally.
- Any contributions shared with those who manage online and social media platforms that are deemed appropriate and are consistent with our social media guidelines.
- It is the responsibility of the leader, committee chair, member, etc. to share information intended for social media.

With Respect and Privacy Rights:

- Honor the privacy rights of our rostered leaders and staff. There are times when information is good for the congregation but not the public. (i.e. Pastor's, Deacon's, and Office Administrator's vacations: Notifications put them and their homes at risk.)
- Protect our Youth.
    - There are times when it is not appropriate to share youth events on social media. Communicating certain information to more than just the families whom it affects is a liability.
    - When livestreaming youth (Children's Sermons or youth events), we must be overly cautious about protecting their safety, and from exposing unintentional derogatory shots.

    o   Families are asked to complete a "Photo Release" form as an added measure of safety and consent for the youth of our congregation. We are prohibited from posting pictures without parental approval.

Website Responsibilities

The website is managed by the Evangelism and Communication (EC) Team of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church. Ultimate responsibility for the website lies under the auspices of the church's Congregation Council (CC) and the webmaster.

I.   The **Congregation Council** has general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation. and in this case, how the website represents the church to the world. It is responsible for enforcing and updating these General Policy and Content Guidelines. The CC Secretary is the sole source and authority for sharing official council and governing documents with the webmaster to be posted on the "Members" section of the website.

II.   The **Evangelism and Communication Team** is responsible for the contents of the pages published on http://www.stmatthewmedina.org and abides by the highest standards of quality. The EC Team is committed to ensuring privacy, including copyright issues. The team operates under the assumption that all works are protected by either copyright or trademark law unless conclusive information indicates otherwise. In the case of unauthorized uploads, downloads, or links, the offending material will be removed immediately.

      The EC Team is committed to ensuring the accessibility of its website and internet to people with disabilities. New and updated web content produced by our organization meets accessibility guidelines put forth by WCAG (*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)*. The Evangelism and Communication Team will review the website's accessibility on a quarterly basis.

III.   The **Webmaster**, with the help of EC, is responsible for:
•Overseeing the web site's major design and function
•Ensuring a consistent look and feel throughout the website
•Ensuring logical and consistent navigation throughout the website
•Monitoring the health, usage, stability, and security of the website
•Receiving and posting timely material (text and photos) from staff, leadership and church members
•Updating the site on a frequent basis

St. Matthew Lutheran Church has created these Church Website and Social Media Guidelines and Responsibilities under the guidance and regulations of the "ELCA Social Media platforms and content: best practices for congregations" and the "Media Relations: Best practices for congregations". All of these best practices guidelines can be found on the ELCA website at www.ELCA.org