

Lower Susquehanna Social Media Guidelines

Social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for Lower Susquehanna Synod members to connect, share, and engage with each other and the broader community. These guidelines are designed to ensure that our online interactions reflect our Lutheran-Christian values, promote healthy communication and engagement, and maintain a sense of respect and unity within our synod.

1. Encourage Deeper Relationship Building:

- Share content that aligns with our Lutheran-Christian faith and values.
- Uplift and support others through encouraging messages, prayers, and positive comments.

2. Respect Privacy:

- Seek permission before sharing personal photos, stories, or information about other congregation members.
- Avoid posting confidential or sensitive information related to church matters.

3. Exercise Respect and Civility:

- Be respectful and civil in all online interactions, especially when discussing sensitive topics.
- Refrain from using offensive language, engaging in personal attacks, or promoting divisive content.
- Comments that include insults, ridiculing, bullying, direct accusations, threatening tone or obscenity will not be tolerated.
- If discussing sensitive topics, maintain a spirit of love, empathy, and understanding.

4. Verify Information Before Sharing:

- Ensure the accuracy of information before sharing it on social media.
- Be cautious about sharing unverified news or rumors.
- Solicitation of money, goods or services that do not support LSS ministries (congregation, synod, or churchwide) is not permitted.

5. Protect Children and Vulnerable Individuals:

- Refrain from sharing images or information about children or vulnerable individuals without consent from their guardians.
- Report any inappropriate or suspicious online behavior concerning children or vulnerable individuals to church leadership.

6. Report Concerns and Misconduct:

- If you encounter inappropriate or disrespectful behavior within the synod's social media platforms, please report it immediately to the Office of the Bishop at 717-652-1852 for appropriate action.
- Address concerns privately rather than engaging in public disputes.

7. Livestreaming and Recording

- To protect the privacy and safety of children, the best practice for a church is not to post photos or recordings of identifiable children, including images of children during the children's message in worship service, even to private Facebook or other social media groups.
- Congregations should consider fixing the camera either directly on the minister or towards a different, neutral location.
- Congregations livestreaming and/or posting recorded worship online should incorporate the ELCA's *Best Practices for Recording and Livestreaming* found here:
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Guidance-for-Recording-Live-Streaming-ELCA.pdf?_ga=2.198207087.1169834714.1694437054-2116457482.1579095589.

By adhering to these Social Media Guidelines, we can create a positive and respectful online environment within our synod. Our digital interactions should reflect our Christian faith, promote unity, and spread the love and message of Christ to the world.

**POLICY ADOPTED BY LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 18, 2023
SC23.11.70.**