

***Social Media Guidelines***  
***for***  
***Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill***  
***Alexandria, Virginia***

**Introduction**

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill (hereinafter Immanuel) uses social media to share events in the life of our community, to build relationships, to foster learning, to pray, and to evangelize to members, those in our community, and those who are in relationship with us through social media. These venues include our parish website, Facebook (open and closed sites), YouTube, and likely additional platforms in the future.

Social media, a vital part of our society, changes rapidly. These guidelines help employees, volunteers, and parishioners use social media in ways which reflect the values and standards of Immanuel's community, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, and the Episcopal Church of the US. We are subject to the same courtesies, laws, professional expectations, and guidelines when interacting online as we would be interacting in-person, including those of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention guidelines of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

**Content – What to Post/What Not to Post**

1. The Internet is *public* space with a long, if not almost eternal, memory. Digital communications are *not confidential*. This includes email sent to Church accounts and messages sent through Facebook and other social networking sites – even if the message is sent to a Church employee's personal account.
2. When posting consider the audience and the purpose of your post:
  - a. Is what you are posting of interest to a loving and accepting Christian Episcopal community?
  - b. Does it reflect the mission and ministry of Immanuel and the Episcopal Church?
  - c. Does it enrich and build our community?
  - d. Does it create appropriate opportunity for reflection and thought?
  - e. Is it unnecessarily inflammatory?
  - f. Could it be misconstrued to create hurt or discord within the community?
3. Identify yourself and be honest about who you are. When you post, especially when you post pictures or items in your role as an employee or volunteer, you represent Immanuel. Should there be a matter requiring an official statement on behalf of Immanuel, the Diocese of Virginia, or the Episcopal Church, only the Diocesan Bishop, the Rector of Immanuel, or their designees are empowered to make such official statements.
4. Conduct in the virtual world applies as in the physical world. If you wouldn't do it or say it in face-to-face interactions with another, it's likely not an appropriate post. Respect the dignity and diversity of views of members of our social media communities.
5. Use common sense – no embarrassing pictures of people; no derogatory, demeaning, racially inappropriate, or abusive language; respect the privacy of off-line conversations; acknowledge differences of opinion; and recognize that Immanuel's social media platforms are *not* an appropriate forum to air personal or public disagreements.
6. Do not tag pictures of people unless you have permission to do so. We recommend only tagging yourself. *Never tag or give the names of children* on any Immanuel social media site.

7. Do not post addresses or phone numbers of individuals. If an event is happening at a private residence, simply direct people to contact the Parish Office for more information.
8. Respect copyright and fair use: When posting articles, quotations, and links, share the author or give appropriate citation.
9. Immanuel is a tax-exempt organization per 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This means that none of Immanuel's "earnings may inure to any private shareholder or individual." In addition, the church may not be a political action organization, i.e., it may not attempt to influence legislation *as a substantial part of its activities* and it may not participate in *any campaign activity* for or against political candidates." Therefore postings on all Immanuel social media platforms should not contain products or services endorsements or content that may be construed as political lobbying or solicitations or contributions to political candidates, parties or entities. Immanuel social media platforms may not contain links to any sites for political candidates or parties or use the platforms to endorse or oppose political candidates or specific legislation.
10. Immanuel has the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display content posted to social media sites and the right to create derivative works from postings, edit or modify such content and use such content for any Immanuel purpose. Content posted to Immanuel's social media sites may not be re-posted or otherwise used *for commercial or political purposes*.

#### **Administration – Who can post**

1. The Rector, Director of Music Ministries, Communications Steward and/or their designees will be the official social media presence of Immanuel. Designees (e.g. "web masters") will function with the knowledge and concurrence of the Rector and the Vestry.
2. These people are responsible for keeping all User Names and Passwords safe and secure and abiding by the Social Media Guidelines of this parish, this diocese, and the Episcopal Church. Passwords shall be changed regularly by the appropriate person. No new social media account will be open as an official account of Immanuel (including committees and small group accounts) without the consent of the Rector or Senior Warden and approval of the Vestry.
3. Active members of the parish involved in certain ministries (for example, the Episcopal Youth Community, EYC) who wish to set up social media accounts for a particular ministry should request input from the group/ministry about the need and use for such an account, gain approval from the Vestry, including who will be the administrators and what purpose will the social media presence serve, and, upon approval, share all User Names and Passwords with the Parish Office.
4. Contact the Parish Office to verify any emergency situations including weather-related delays or cancellations. Social media platforms may or may not have the most current information.

#### **Special rules for children and youth**

1. All email directed to children or youth will copy parents/guardians.
2. All social media sites and accounts directed to children and youth shall be closed or private (but not hidden) groups and include at least 2 unrelated adult administrators as well as the Rector and one other vestry member, all of whom have completed POSM training.

3. Social networking groups for children and youth will be open to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians must give consent for children and youth to participate in such a group and will be notified that, if they do not join the group themselves, they may not be privy to all communications between advisors and their children or youth.
4. Adult leaders and volunteers and former youth members who “age out” of or are no longer engaged in the children’s and youth programs or who leave the parish community will be removed from these sites.
5. Pictures of children and youth should be posted *only* with the express written consent of the parents/guardians (see Attachment A as an example of parental consent). At no time should children or youth be tagged or otherwise identified on Immanuel social media sites or on the personal social media sites of Immanuel employees or volunteers.
6. Any email, video chat, Facebook chat, or similar electronic conversations between and adult and a young person should be archived or saved when possible.
7. Any material on a site that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should immediately be reported to the clergy and/or appropriate authorities as directed in the Diocese of Virginia policies and the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

#### **What happens if people don’t abide by these guidelines?**

1. These Guidelines apply to all members, volunteers, and employees of Immanuel and are part of any letter of agreement signed by employees.
2. Inappropriate posts will be deleted by the administrators, and a second inappropriate post will result in the user being blocked or, if an administrator, losing posting privileges.
3. If the guidelines of this policy are violated by any member or social media user, the Rector or social media administrator of said platform has the authority to prohibit further interaction by the offending user or users through the social media platforms of Immanuel.

#### **Policy Updates**

Social Media is a quickly changing medium. Listen, evaluate, adjust, and experiment with social media. Be flexible and patient as we learn how to integrate social media into the regular ministry of the Church.

The policy will be updated to reflect growth in the parish’s use of social media. For that reason, the policy may be updated at any time without notice, and each time a user accesses a social media site, the new policy will govern usage effective upon posting.

***These Social Media Guidelines have been approved by the Vestry 12 December 2017.***

Attachment A

Immanuel Church-On-The-Hill

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH (EYC) REGISTRATION  
2016-2017

Sunday School starts after the 9:15 service and continues until 11:00. If you have a child in Sunday School please pick up them outside their classroom.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's E Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's E Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Are there foods or other serious allergies that might require immediate medical attention that we might need to be aware of? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, provide details please \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the event of an emergency what is the best way to reach you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOS/IMAGES:** I understand that Immanuel Church-On-The-Hill will sometimes record images, sound or video of parish events for use in promotional material, and on Web sites owned and/or operated by Immanuel Church-On-The-Hill. Last names are not printed with photos of children or youth. Please indicate by checking the box, if you do **NOT** want images of your child published.