

Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas Electronic and Social Media Communications Policy (2016)

Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas values the potential good that comes from personal web pages, social networking pages, blogs, texting, instant messaging, email and other forms of electronic social networking/communication. Simultaneously we recognize that misunderstanding, personal offense, hurt, legal exposure and damage to our church community can potentially accompany use of these mediums. The Apostle Paul instructs that *“Everything is permissible but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”* With the principles of 1 Corinthians 10:23-33 in mind, all church employees and lay leaders are to abide by the following communication guidelines:

Ensure Integrity: Your electronic communications should be consistent with the teaching of scripture and the values of Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas. Don't say anything online that you wouldn't say in-person as a representative of the church (Proverbs 10:9). If a public dialog gets heated, stop using a public forum and make the conversation private (Matthew 18:15-17). Ministry leaders are expected to have the foresight to anticipate, within reason, how their words and/or actions may be perceived by their audience and to those under their care.

Offer a Disclaimer: When you are in a position of church leadership, people don't easily distinguish between your personal and professional behaviors. Your name and the church are always linked in people's minds. As such, all personal web pages, social networking pages and blogs (in which you are personally identifiable) should feature the following disclaimer: “Please know that these are my personal views and not necessarily those of Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas.”

Promote Credibility: Make sure your facts are correct; in proper context and that your positions are justifiable (1 Corinthians 13:5-7). Respond to those who disagree in a spirit of love and grace (Luke 6:28-30). Avoid using a “stream of consciousness” writing style (as it can easily be misinterpreted or taken out of context). Do not use electronic communications to resolve interpersonal conflicts that are best handled face-to-face.

Keep Confidences and Avoid Libel: Be extra careful that your communications do not inadvertently share confidential information (we sometimes deal with a lot of confidences in church work). Know that with any public postings you are legally liable for what you say. Laws governing slander, libel, defamation and copyright apply. Outside parties can pursue legal action against you for your postings.

Don't Engage in Polarizing Political Speech: To be effective, Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas must maintain a position of being able to speak into people's lives. If people in the community view Mosaic as a political ally for any side, we lose that platform. Some teaching of scripture may occasionally line up with the

platforms of various political parties. However, as a church we are not to take a viewpoint aligned purely with a political ideology. Further, we are to be careful not to act in a way where we are *perceived* as being aligned with one party politically. (For more information on the position of our church on [political issues](#), see the position paper under “About Us” at our website.)

As a non-profit organization, the government does not tax Mosaic as if it were a business. Because of this, however, there are certain restrictions placed on non-profit organizations such as ours. For instance, we cannot endorse or support political candidates. Nothing in your public communications should lead people to believe that Mosaic is endorsing a political candidate or party.

Respect the Church and its Staff: Since electronic communications are public (or easily made public), we expect you to be respectful to the church and our leaders, employees, volunteers and members. Staff should be aware of the electronic communications use by lay leaders working under their authority in order to provide guidance and accountability.

Respect Your Time: All time and effort spent on your personal communications should be done on your personal time and should not interfere with your job duties, work commitments or responsibilities.

Respect Our Beliefs: When working for a church, it is important to remember that employment decisions will be made based upon our Christian beliefs. Your personal website should not display or offer inappropriate images or content that reflects personal opinions or life-style choices that are contrary to Mosaic’s beliefs or the teaching of scripture. For this reason, we encourage you to first seek guidance from your supervisor if you have any questions.

Electronic Communications are Teachings: The Teaching Pastors are under the authority of, and accountable to, the Elder Board with respect to what they teach. For other pastors and teachers, electronic communications can also be considered “church teachings”. As such, they too have accountability to senior leadership to ensure all teachings are true and doctrinally sound. All who teach in the church should run potentially difficult teaching past their supervisor or church leadership prior to publication.

Limited Expression in Written Words: Remember that written words can easily convey the wrong message. Written words do not have the “non-verbal” channels that accompany face-to-face communication. Missing are body language, facial expressions and tone of voice that can help ensure proper context. As such, re-read everything prior to sending. See if there is any possibility of misunderstanding. Every year the church deals with many relational problems brought on by poor word choices or communications sent in anger/haste. THINK & PRAY BEFORE YOU PRESS “SEND”!

Church Logos: Do not use Mosaic's logos/slogans on your communications or reproduce church material without first obtaining written permission. The XP can provide such permissions.

Communicate as if Your Words are to Be Published in the Local

Newspaper: A good tool for determining what is correct communication is to behave as if the local newspaper were printing your electronic communication for all to see. If you wouldn't want your actions/words to be seen on the front page, you may not be handling the situation properly.

Failure to Follow Policy: If a staff person or lay leader is found in violation of this policy, Mosaic's Leadership Team or Elder Board may request that you temporarily confine your social media commentary to topics unrelated to the church. In rare cases, Mosaic may request that you temporarily suspend your social media activity altogether if it believes this is advisable to ensure compliance with church regulations or other laws. In addition, any staff person who uses electronic communications to disparage the name or reputation of the church, its practices, or its pastors, officers, employees, volunteers or members could be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Mosaic understands the benefits that come from electronic communications and social networking. It is not our desire to create consternation or dampen creativity when it comes to the use of these mediums. At the same time we recognize the tremendous potential for hurt and misunderstanding that go with these mediums. We trust that by following these guidelines and common sense you are able to both reap the rewards of electronic communications...and avoid their potential pitfalls.