

## **Social Media/Web Site Policy for the Penn West Conference, UCC**

*Adapted from resources provided by the Rev. Eric Anderson of the Connecticut Conference, UCC*

The World Wide Web can be a marvelous source of information to be used for beneficent purposes. That same information can also be used in ways that are inappropriate or detrimental to the church, its members, and friends. As a Conference of the United Church of Christ, we aim to establish policies about our website and social media use that support the ministry and mission of the church and do not detract from it. Toward that end, we intend to:

- Honor copyright and trademark laws.
- Disclaim operational responsibility for events not affiliated with our Conference.
- Verify that hyperlinks that are shared are consistent with the church's mission.
- For the protection of individuals' privacy, clearly disclose the use of any information gathered via the World Wide Web.
- Report illegal activity on the Conference website or social media venues directly to the civil authorities.
- Refuse publication of materials that run counter to the Conference's mission.
- Verify the safety of downloadable materials.
- Correct any errors of significance that are discovered in as timely a manner as possible.
- As much as possible, obtain the consent of any adults whose images we post in any World Wide Web setting, and take down any such images as quickly as possible upon request.
- Use discretion when sharing any images of minors and obtain a signed consent form for sharing any images of youth aged 18 or under.
- Clarify lines of accountability: Authority to modify the Conference website or distribute materials on behalf of the Conference via social media or e-newsletter rests with the Conference itself. Any volunteers who are given permission to make such modifications are accountable to the Conference Staff, who is accountable to the Conference Minister, who is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- Adopt the following practice on advertising: Advertising, in which a party pays the Conference for promotional space on any of our World Wide Web venues (website, e-newsletter, social media, etc.) is limited to Mission Partners and Local Churches. Such advertising must be requested in writing (either electronically or in hard copy) and permission for it must be given by the Conference Minister and the Officers of the Board of Directors. The Conference routinely (especially in its e-newsletter) promotes events sponsored by groups whose mission is aligned with the Penn West Conference. Such promotion of events is different from the kind of advertising described earlier, but requests for such event promotion should also be put in writing (either electronically or in hard copy) to the Conference Office.