

# Social Media Guidelines for Hamilton Conference The United Church of Canada

February 15, 2017

Social media offer many opportunities for us to connect with others within and beyond our churches, throughout the country and internationally.

When participating in social media, be real. Participation in social media for United Church employees, volunteer leaders and participants involves the same values, biblical principles, ethics, and adherence to policies and legislation that we strive towards living in our day-to-day lives.

Whether you are a United Church paid accountable leader, volunteer or adherent, you represent and are perceived to represent The United Church of Canada in all your interactions.

1. Be respectful and act responsibly in all communications.
2. Protect yourself and others. Be careful about what personal information you share about yourself and others online.
3. Ask permission of people before posting videos or photos of them or tagging them.
4. Regularly monitor your privacy settings as these may change without notice and revert to a public setting without your knowledge.
5. Be diligent in respecting intellectual property (copyright and trademark protected), libel and slander laws, financial disclosure laws, false advertising, etc.
6. Know the boundaries. In social media, the lines between a person's work or volunteer life and personal life are often blurred. Readers may not discern the difference between official comments made for your work in social media or personal comments made on personal pages and blogs.
7. If you post about church-related matters that are within your area of work or volunteer responsibility, it's important to disclose your affiliation with The United Church of Canada.
8. State that it's *your* opinion. When commenting on church-related items, unless you are authorized to speak on specific issues, state that the views expressed are your own.
9. Social media posts and blogs are not the places to air personnel issues, work conflicts or personal grievances with your employer or colleagues. Please use appropriate channels.
10. Hamilton Conference social media are monitored for appropriate and respectful posts. Personal attacks or attacks on religious or political beliefs are never appropriate. Keep your comments related to the post you are commenting on. Please don't post links or cut-and-paste items not directly related to the post or they will be removed.

11. If you spot a potential issue on social media and believe that a response is required from Hamilton Conference or other church bodies, please forward via appropriate channels.
12. Contact the Conference office if you need assistance in responding to a situation on social media or on the internet.

**NB:** Your participation in social media should follow the following United Church policies: Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel; Human Resources Policy Manual: Code of Conduct, Policy 3.1; Social Media Guidelines for People Involved in Youth Ministry in The United Church of Canada; violence and harassment.

The above policies can be found at the following links:

[http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/handbook\\_ethical-standards-practice-ministry-personnel.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/handbook_ethical-standards-practice-ministry-personnel.pdf)

[http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/handbook\\_human-resources.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/handbook_human-resources.pdf)

<http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/social-media-guidelines.pdf>

<http://hamconf.org/violence-and-harassment-in-the-workplace-bill-168/>