Social networks, when used effectively, are a great way of communicating what's going on in your ministry. However, because of their reach, care must be taken in how they are established and used. Below are some guidelines on how social networks should be used within the ministry of Campus.

It is important to realize that your personal use of social networks is really a portrayal of your position and the ministry of Campus. People who follow you will not see the distinction of your personal life and your role in the church. Therefore, it is important to think through the message you are sending through these networks. A good guideline to use is, "If you wouldn't send it from your Campus email address, don't post it to a social network."

Please realize the posting of inappropriate content to these networks could have consequences on your leadership position at Campus, whether that position is a paid position or a volunteer position.

Social networks can be a huge communications boost to your ministry. If implemented incorrectly, they can also work against the mission of the church and cause more harm than good. Before creating a social network outlet for your ministry, we ask that you talk through your plans with the Communications Team Lead. The Communications Team Lead will help you ensure that:

- The mission of your social network does not work against the established mission of the Campus social networking strategy

- You have a plan on how to keep your social network active over a long period of time (an abandoned social network is a bad representation of the ministry). The Communications Team can work with you to help you understand the best way to keep a social network going over time.

- Tips and tricks on making your social network a success have been shared with you.

Social networks are a way for volunteers and attendees to share their enthusiasm for the ministry of Campus. They can be an immensely powerful tool, but they can also produce unintentional harm. Most of this harm comes from the fact that often they are seen by the community as "official" communications tools to others. That, along with the fact that we do not have control over what is posted can lead to a hijacked communications plan.

When it comes to these networks, we ask for your help in two ways:

1. Guide your volunteer's energy into established Campus social networks. If your ministry has one, get them involved. If you do not have one, pass them on to the Communications Team Lead, who will work to get them plugged into our Campus social networks. Do not encourage them to start new networks without talking to the Communications Team.

2. If the network has already been established, please notify the Communications Team immediately. The Communications Team will work with them to communicate that the network is a "Fan of Campus" and not an official Campus social network.

Your help with this is crucial if we are to make the most of social networking.

These best practices are to help equip Campus staff and council members who maintain personal blogs and/or post on other people's blogs. These recommendations provide a roadmap for constructive, respectful, and productive dialogue between Campus bloggers and their audience (whoever that may be). We consider these to be "best practice guidelines" that are in the spirit of our culture and in the best interest of the church, whether you blog or not. We encourage you to follow these guidelines:

BE RESPECTFUL
Be thoughtful and accurate in your posts and be respectful of how others may be affected. Even if your site is published under your name, is entirely personal, and does not mention Campus Lutheran Church or your role at Campus, readers will inevitably connect your personal life to your church life. Be sure to include a disclaimer prominently on your home page that states your opinions are personal. To avoid any surprises, please make the Communications Team aware of your blog's existence.

PRIVATE FEEDBACK
Not everyone who is reading your blog will feel comfortable approaching you if they are concerned their feedback will become public. To maintain an open dialogue in which everyone can comfortably engage, welcome "off-blog" feedback from colleagues who would like to privately respond, make suggestions, or report errors without having their comments appear on your blog. Bloggers want to know what you think. If you have an opinion, correction, or criticism regarding a post, reach out to the blogger directly. Whether privately or on their blog, let the blogger know your thoughts.

LEGAL STUFF

When you choose to go public with your opinions via a blog, you are legally responsible for your commentary. Individual bloggers can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. You blog (or post on other people's blogs) at your own risk. Outside parties can pursue legal action against you for posts (probably not a high risk in our line of work, but you should be aware).

USE COMMON SENSE

Do not disclose any information that is sensitive, confidential, or in any way proprietary to Campus Lutheran Church or its members.

PRESS INQUIRIES

Blog postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a Campus-related blog posting, we have trained backup available to you. Contact the Communications Team.