Macedonia Baptist Church Social Media Policy

As we seek to utilize contemporary on-line communications tools, it is imperative that we communicate carefully and thoughtfully. Macedonia is providing guidelines so that all its members and staff can utilize these tools in a manner that is consistent with the desires of the Church. This policy provides ways to communicate clearly and concisely while protecting the Church and its members from unintended or undesirable exposure.

Purpose of Policy

1. To maximize best practices for wide-ranging delivery of the Good News and sharing information concerning the church via mass media and electronic communications channels.

2. To minimize the instances of improper, inaccurate, and unauthorized communications.

Social Media Defined

For the purpose of this policy, Social Media is defined as internet or mobile digital tools and systems used to share and/or receive information or conversation.

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I. Church Website

1. Macedonia has one authorized website, www.macedoniaofalbany.org, to represent its ministries, events, activities and members.

2. The web team writes copy, selects graphics, locates suitable links, and provides assistance to users of the site.

3. The web team will upload additional content or links requested or suggested by members of the church if such content supports an event, project, or issue approved by the Communications Ministry.

4. The web team and website developer ensures that the website, website pages, and all links function properly.

5. The web team strives to ensure the website meets the needs of visitors, members, and friends of the Church and works with the developer to expand usage of the site.

6. Special stories, pictures and information from the bulletin are added to the site weekly or as necessary.

7. Home page details are handled by the web developer and communicated by the web team

8. Website user feedback is handled daily by the church clerk and web team. It is forwarded to appropriate staff members for follow-up as needed.

II. Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, etc.

1. The designated Communications Ministry members are responsible for managing content and frequency of updates for social media and monitoring commentary on social media sites such as the official Macedonia Facebook page, Twitter and community blogs.

2. Social media site content represents current and upcoming events, news, and commentary related to the activities of Macedonia Baptist Church.
3. No social media sites are to be created by individuals in the name of Macedonia Baptist Church without prior approval.

4. The intent of social media for the church use is to give witness to the Good News in a way that is open, transparent, and safe for all users and to share church events.

III. Spokespersons

Only authorized Macedonia staff spokespersons such as the Pastor, Director of Operations, and designated Communications Ministry members may communicate directly with members of the media on behalf of the church. It is in the best interest of the church to maintain relations with the media in a pragmatic manner, and respond to their legitimate inquiries.

1. All media requests should be recorded accurately. Media requests include inquiries for interviews, commentary and information, and include all media – TV/Radio, newspapers, magazines, local/national media, internet sites, etc.

2. Authorized Macedonia spokespersons will respond on behalf of the church, or assist in identifying the appropriate person from staff to handle the response.

3. Members who are approached by the media should be instructed to direct all media calls to the appropriate staff spokespersons or communications personnel.

4. All media calls are to be reported to the communications staff for follow-up and archiving. Provide the reporter's name, media outlet and telephone number, the anticipated publication date, and the subject of the story.

IV. Prohibited Use of External Communications

1. Church communication may not be used for partisan political messages. Association, representation or endorsement of, or by, any political candidate, party, or campaign, whether actual, inferred or implied is prohibited.

2. No aspect of church communications may be used to promote any activity resulting in financial gain of a staff member, church member or business without prior approval.

3. Unauthorized websites, blogs, social network sites, direct mailings, and use of the church name and/or logo are not permitted.

V. Practical Guidelines Regarding Church Social Media and Your Personal Pages

1. If you blog or discuss topics or activities related to the church, be upfront and explain that you are speaking or writing as an individual. Otherwise, people may perceive you to be speaking or writing on behalf of Macedonia.

2. One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and people do not always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, stay cool. Express your points in a clear, loving, and logical way. Don't pick fights. Remember that you are a Christian and your language and attitude should be "Christ-like". Correct mistakes as soon as they become known. If you encounter disparaging remarks about the church, please let our Communications Team know as soon as possible. They will review it and respond appropriately.

3. Uphold Macedonia's values and its brand by adhering to the following guidelines:

   a) Only those authorized by Macedonia Baptist Church may use the church's logos, so be sure not to include them in your personal blogs or postings.
   b) Always demonstrate loyalty to the church and to each other.
   c) Be sensitive when linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content. Do not blindly attach a link to your communication. Be sure to review the contents of the link first to ensure that the material displayed in it is appropriate.
   d) Avoid creating competing web properties with the church's official web presence. For example, posting official MBC media or communications on your site without it being published on Macedonia's official web presence.

4. Protect Confidential Information and Relationships

Online conversations and postings are not private. Be aware that what you post online may be around for a long time, even after you delete it, and can be potentially shared with, or viewed by, others. Therefore keep these precautions in mind:

a) Avoid identifying and discussing others, including church members, visitors, or staff - especially any pastoral details such as hospitalizations, deaths, health concerns, or counseling engagements. If you have a personal matter to discuss with someone or about someone, it is advised that you discuss it in person or by phone.
b) Obtain permission before posting pictures of others or before posting copyrighted material.
c) Take proper care not to purposefully or inadvertently disclose or distribute any information or intellectual property that is confidential or proprietary to Macedonia Baptist Church. Be sure that what you are sharing has been published in some other official form of church communication.

Note: This policy may be amended as necessary

Macedonia Communications Ministry
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