

LA CRESCENTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Social Media

Drawing all people to God and to each other as disciples of Christ is a core mission of La Crescenta Presbyterian Church. Social media has become an integral part of this outreach, changing the way we communicate the Gospel, witness and worship. In many ways, our online presence is the new front door to LCPC's congregation, where potential visitors and community members get their first impression of what the church stands for — a key step in building stronger, more successful faith relationships.

These guidelines are intended to help LCPC staff and volunteers 1) use new communication tools in ways that serve the church and 2) create a framework that mitigates any risks that can be created by improper use of this technology. We also encourage all LCPC community members to follow these Spirit-led principles in their personal use of social media.

These guidelines, which will continue to evolve as new social networking technologies emerge, aim to provide helpful, practical advice that encourages adherence to these words from the apostle Paul:

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ... Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” — Ephesians 4:2-3, 29

CORE STANDARDS

Individuals creating or moderating content on LCPC's official communication channels must act with sound judgment and the highest standards of integrity, honesty and consideration for others. Members of the LCPC community who share information about church ministries and events are also urged to embrace these core standards:

- LCPC social media forums should be thoughtful and prayerful, welcoming free expression but maintaining standards of civility and respect for the church and its teachings.
- Racist, sexual or obscene speech and any form of harassment is prohibited at all times, and will be deleted immediately from LCPC platforms.
- The privacy of church members, visitors or anyone being served by a ministry of this church must be safeguarded at all times. For example, caution must be used in posting information related to prayer concerns or identifying the location of church members or minors.

- In photos posted on LCPC social media, it is best to allow those pictured to identify themselves. (Further guidelines regarding photos of children and youth are detailed in LCPC's "Social Media and Digital Communication Policy for Minors.")
- Copyrighted material and other proprietary content may not be posted without permission.
- LCPC social media content should remain in line with the Internal Revenue Service's specific guidelines related to political commentary offered by churches and/or clergy. Violations of IRS regulations can result in a revocation of a church's tax-exempt status. (see brief summary of IRS rules related to political activity of churches here: <https://www.churchlawcenter.com/church-law/political-activities-by-churches-whats-permitted-and-whats-prohibited/>)
- Great care must be taken in crafting language and selecting visual elements. Tongue-in-cheek content is often misinterpreted or read as flippant, while direct, brief wording can come across as dismissive or arrogant.
- Accuracy is prized. Posts should be reviewed for factual and grammatical errors, as well as the reliability of any news sources cited.
- LCPC community members who post about LCPC events on their personal social media pages are encouraged to use LCPC's promotional graphics and text to maintain accuracy and consistency. The easiest way to do this is to share an LCPC post to a personal page.
- When the fast pace and transparency of social media leads to errors, corrections should be handled immediately, with honesty and grace.
- It is important to remember that everything posted online, regardless of privacy settings, is permanent, pervasive and public.