

## Pastoral Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines are recommended for consideration when Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) ministers use any form of social media. IMMC generally views social media positively. Social Media is a useful and often necessary means of communication. We recognize the desire of many IMMC ministers to participate in online communities and support this form of networking within healthy boundaries.

Social media includes, and is not limited to, creating or contributing to personal web sites, blogs, social networking sites, and texting.

In situations where these guidelines do not provide specific definition for how ministers should answer or respond to specific social media questions, ministers are encouraged to consult with peers or IMMC leadership. Err on the side of caution.

We commend to you the following guidelines for your consideration as you interact through social media and other forms of electronic communication.

With love and prayer,

Ministry Credentialing Team:

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## Pastoral Social Media Guidelines

**Be selective:** There are a variety of digital communication platforms available. Use the medium that most closely matches your current message.

**Be responsible:** Social media blurs the lines between professional and personal communication. Recognize that what is communicated via social media represents your congregation, whether or not that is intended at any given time.

**Be smart:** A social media post is potentially visible or can be shared to the entire world and can be shared by others without your permission. Therefore, assume that what you write is public and could remain public indefinitely.

**Identify yourself:** For the sake of authenticity and transparency, all social media posts should be identified with your given name.

**Respect the privacy of others:** Do not publish personal information about others or photos without their explicit permission. In the case of minors, seek parental permission.

**Be respectful:** When posting an opposing opinion online, do so with civility and respectful language.

**Be trustworthy:** Do not post information shared in confidence with you.

**Be legal:** Comply with copyright laws when uploading and posting images, music, or articles.

**Be safe with children:** Do not initiate digital conversation with minors.