St. Paul's Digital Media Guidelines

Need & Purpose of Document
The purpose of this document is to provide ministries and groups within St. Paul's with a set of guidelines and considerations for using digital communications between their members, the St. Paul's church community, and the world at large. These guidelines are not rules and regulations, nor does this document express formal church policy. This document is to serve solely as a resource to group leaders and participants.

Information about Digital Communications
St. Paul's digital communications provide a valuable, inexpensive channel for communicating with the church and the broader community. Digital communications usage within the parish continues to grow and is a key way that we can show we are active in Cary and beyond.

Generally Applied Concepts
While each online service has its own risk factors, a general understanding of the following maxims will be beneficial when considering electronic communications forums:

• **No information transmitted over the internet is truly private or temporary.** ALL information transmitted across the internet is stored in multiple places, and virtually forever. Even services that give the appearance of expiration can be subject to information capture, simply by taking a screenshot of the phone or computer that received the message. Once a message is posted, there is no putting the genie back in the bottle.
• **The same expectations of safety and security that apply to physical meetings and communications within the church also apply to online communications.** Just as the church facility should be a place safe from harassment, bullying, stalking, and confrontation, this must be true of the online communities we establish as well. Online services need to be monitored by responsible parties and appropriate action taken as quickly as possible when the safety, privacy, and well-being of the participants is jeopardized. If the safety of the participants cannot be reasonably assured, then the online community cannot exist.
• **The statement "All Are Welcome" must also extend to digital communications.** We need to not only open our digital communications to all members of each ministry and group, but also be aware of adjusting formats to make them as accessible as possible.

Guidelines and procedures for Church Sponsored Digital Media
- The purpose of church communications is to relay information about the parish to a broad or specific audience. It is intended to show how the people of St. Paul's worship, serve, and grow together. It may also focus on attracting new members to the church.
- St. Paul's Communications Committee and church staff have sole responsibility for editorial policies governing church communications.

- Church communications may not be used for partisan political messages or paid advertising.
- Only members of St. Paul's Communications Committee, vestry, clergy, and staff shall maintain external communications channels on behalf of the parish.
- Only authorized St. Paul's spokespersons such as the rector, staff, vestry, or Communications Committee may coordinate communications with members of the media on behalf of the parish.
- Any external communication from the parish office regarding unexpected events or serious incidents must be approved by the rector or vestry, and follow diocesan guidelines.

Social Media Channels used by St. Paul's

- St Paul's maintains a single website for communications with the Parish. Financial or sensitive information requires a login account. No other website shall be created to communicate to the parish in general.
- St. Paul's Facebook Page is used stream live events, communicate upcoming St. Paul's, Diocesan, and Episcopal Church events and provide reactions to events. Comments are monitored, and inappropriate comments will be removed promptly. Ministry-specific Facebook pages must be approved by the vestry and/or Communications Committee, and include a plan for account management by appropriate ministry leaders.
- St. Paul's also maintains a YouTube channel for posting video content. This account is administered by staff and the Communications Committee.
- Video conferencing is also an option for ministries to consider as a means of conducting meetings or reaching out to the community. Use of a church account for video conferencing can be arranged through staff or the Communications Committee.

Guidelines and Procedures for Ministry Sponsored Digital Media

Any St. Paul's ministries and groups contemplating the establishment of their own online communications forum (with the exception of email lists) are asked to contact the Communications Committee for coordination and guidance to assure that multiple communications outlets are not overlapping or competing with each other, and to assure that each communications outlet serves the mission and vision of the church.

Privacy Considerations and Guidelines

The following guidelines should be considered by any St. Paul's ministry or group requesting a post to social media:

- Posting of Personal Information: It is necessary to have permission to post or publish personal information, such as names, phone numbers, street addresses, or email addresses on media available to the general public.

- Posting of Photos and Videos: Notices that St. Paul's is a public place with cameras in use at certain events appear periodically in church bulletins or newsletters, informing members that the church occasionally uses photos of people and groups on the church website. Members objecting to the use of their photos (or photos of their children) should inform the church office. A list can be maintained of persons who have requested that their photos not be used. This option provides "implied consent" to the use of members' photos. Every effort is made to remove identifying information from photos, such as blurring name tags when possible.
- When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.

Specific guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth

Digital communications for children and youth programming must be approved by staff or committees supervising those areas. Best practices for digital communications for children and youth are established and updated based on Safe Church Training principles and Diocesan guidelines. The Diocesan "Model Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth Appendix B: Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children and Youth" is the best reference and can be accessed through this link. Please contact the Rev. Alice Graham Grant (alice@stpaulscary.org), Associate Rector for Children's and Youth Formation, or the Children's Ministry Committee or Youth Committee, for questions on digital communications involving children and youth.

Children and Youth Identity Protection

We will seek to protect the privacy and identity of all minors in our use of social media. For events that are for minors, such as Episcopal Youth Community (EYC), Pre-EYC and Children's Ministries events, the registration forms should already include a notice of photography / video and require a signature from the parent for written consent. The church office will keep a list of those families requesting that photos not be posted. This list will be shared with Children's Ministries, Youth Ministry, and Music Ministry.

All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry with minors must not post photos or video that identify children or youth by name on any online site or printed publication without the written consent from a parent or legal guardian.