

Vista Grande UCC Social Media Policy

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on media/social media by employees and volunteers of Vista Grande Community Church, United Church of Christ and its related ministries/teams/committees/Task forces/Auxiliary organizations/other groups ("Vista Grande UCC"). For the purposes of this policy, media/social media means any method for on-air or print media or online publication and commentary, including but not limited to VGCC's website, blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace, television, radio, print, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail, communication devices and the internet.

Vista Grande UCC employees and volunteers are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Vista Grande UCC employees/volunteers are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as a Vista Grande UCC employee/volunteer (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment/association in a personal blog on topics unrelated to Vista Grande UCC). Before engaging in official church related social media, employees/volunteers must obtain the permission of the Social Media Team.

Notwithstanding the previous section, this policy applies to all uses of media/social media, including personal use, by Vista Grande UCC employees/volunteers who are Pastor(s), or those whom the Social Media Team or the church designates as representatives of VGCC.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that Vista Grande UCC employees/volunteers must otherwise follow.

Setting up Social Media

Assistance in setting up church related social media accounts and their settings can be obtained from Vista Grande UCC's Social Media Team. Your profile on church related social media sites must be consistent with your profile on the Vista Grande UCC website or other Vista Grande UCC publications. Profile information may be obtained from the Social Media Team.

Confidential Information

Approved by Steering Committee 5/9/2012

As with any use of social media, care should be taken to guard confidential information. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, things such as unpublished details about others, their personal lives, easily identifiable personal information such as addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, personal financial information, or any information that could be deemed personal, etc.

Protect your own privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the Vista Grande UCC website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

When using social media for church purposes use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for or attend Vista Grande UCC. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details. If in doubt, don't post.

Respect copyright laws

It is important that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including Vista Grande UCC's own copyrights. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to provide a link to others' work.

Respect your audience, Vista Grande UCC, and your coworkers/co-volunteers

The public in general, and Vista Grande UCC's employees/volunteers and audience, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, comments that could be perceived as offensive, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, profanity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy. Use your best judgment and be sure to

make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of Vista Grande UCC. If in doubt, do not post.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about Vista Grande UCC in the media, you may point that out within that media. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct. Bring any serious misrepresentations to the head of the social media team.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly and appropriately.

Disclaimers

Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for or attend Vista Grande UCC, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of Vista Grande UCC. The social media team can provide you with applicable disclaimer language and assist with determining where and how to use that.

Social Media Tips

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

Use of all caps is the online equivalent of yelling. Please consider, “Do I mean to yell?”

When the media in use allows spell/grammar check, it is helpful to use it. It allows your meaning to be clear and can even improve language skills.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action or suspension of church related media accounts/access as defined by the social media team.

Vista Grande UCC Social Media Policy

I have read, understood and agree to follow the above stated policies regarding social media at VGCC.

Signature

Date

A copy of the social media policy is available online or may be obtained in printed form upon request.