



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

Community of Christ Social Media Ethics Statement

What is an ethics statement?

An ethics statement provides general guidance. It may offer guidance in three ways:

1. provide rules or limits for behavior
2. name goals, values, or principles that define desirable or responsible action
3. describe quality of individuals or interactions expected for a community

An ethics statement may use any or all of these approaches to guide responsible action.

Community of Christ Social Media Ethics Statement

The mission of Community of Christ is to proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace. Social media provides opportunities for self-expression, community building, witness and education, faithful disagreement, and fulfillment of Christ's mission. Social media, which provides ways to make relationships and engage in dialogue, has tools to promote or diminish Christ's mission.

The purpose of this ethics statement is to affirm for Community of Christ disciples and priesthood that Christ's calling is lived out in all aspects of our lives including interactions on social media. Priesthood members and disciples of Jesus should consider the following guidance when using social media. The five elements of this guidance work together and should not be applied separately when applied to interactions and relationships on social media.

1. **Promote Community**

Do my responses and the media I share promote healthy lives and relationships in community?

Social media provide ways to express ourselves. We share through words, images, music, and video. Disciples of Jesus are encouraged to use social media to promote shared life in Christ. This includes celebrating life, praising God, praying with and for others, and bearing positive and prophetic witness.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God....

— Romans 12:2 NRSV

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

— Matthew 7:12 NRSV

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

— John 13:34-35 NRSV

2. **Empower Others**

Do my response and the media I share promote and build the worth of persons?

What we do on social media, like what we do in all relationships, can build up or tear down. Often, Paul instructs disciples of Jesus to focus on what builds up Christ and others.

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

— Romans 14:19 NRSV

Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

— Ephesians 4:29 NRSV

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

— I Thessalonians 5:15 NIV

3. **Affirm Diverse Perspectives**

Do I—or anyone—have a complete perspective? Do I trust that the Spirit moves in and through diversity, guiding us toward God’s purposes? Have I listened to understand others who disagree?

Social media offer ways to discuss matters that affect our lives, families, community, and world. Discussions can lead to common consent and faithful disagreements. Whether building common consent or having faithful disagreement, disciples of Jesus are called to love one another, be quick to listen, use nonviolent language, and not think of themselves more highly than others.

...do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become servants to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

— Galatians 5:13b-14 NRSV

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.

— James 1:19-20 NRSV

...now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal, there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

— Colossians 3:8-11 NRSV

4. Courageously Challenge

When I challenge ideas or differ with others, what are my motivations? Whom does it benefit? Can I say clearly what shapes my feelings and point of view? Am I vulnerable to others? Can I offer a constructive alternative?

Disciples of Jesus are called to be a prophetic people and follow his example on social media. Through the Gospels, we see Jesus' disruptive and healing interactions with others. Before his prophetic ministry, Jesus was drawn into the wilderness to be tested and to discern. After, filled with the Spirit, his ministry drew controversy welcoming outcasts, forgiving sinners, confronting hypocrisy, and challenging worldly assumptions about power in word and action. Also, he was vulnerable to others' judgment. We are called to use words and actions that disrupt as well as heal to point to God's will and be vulnerable to judgment. We seek constructive alternatives for this world by discerning God's will together.

Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness (justice), and all these things will be given to you as well.

— Matthew 6:33 NRSV, adapted

You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness. Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ's vision of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue peace. There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially alert to these influences, lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called.

— Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a-c

"For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye,

but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye?"

— Matthew 7:2-4 NRSV

5. Engage Others in Christ's Mission

Do the things I share engage others in Christ's mission of compassion, invitation, justice, and peacemaking? Am I proclaiming Christ and promoting communities of joy, hope, love, and peace?

Social media open new ways to create community and pursue peace. They hold new opportunities to invite others to Christ and fulfill Christ's mission. Disciples of Jesus are encouraged to find new ways to create pathways of peace and build community.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

— Isaiah 6:8 NRSV

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free...."

— Luke 4:18 NRSV

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

— I Corinthians 9:19-23 NRSV