

## Social Media Basics

Valerie Lefever Hughes – ALCM 2013, Valparaiso, IN

---

Yes, social media is different than (and not a replacement for) in-the-flesh interaction. But it can accomplish things we can't do in person.

### Why use social media?

- to share information
- to connect to others, whether you know them offline or not
- to share with large groups of people at one time
- to stay connected with those from whom you are separated by a great distance

### Facebook

*News Feed* what you see when you log in; sortable by "top stories" and "most recent"

*Timeline* your personal information feed; includes everything you post and anything in which someone tags you

*Group* forums for discussion and conversation based around an interest or group; can be opened or closed.  
e.g. Lutheran Church Musicians, Summer Breeze Neighbors

*Page* an 'official' profile of an organization or public figure

To be "friends" with someone, both parties must choose to be friends. You can "like" a page without needing an approval from the page. Some groups you can join without approval (open); others require an administrator's approval (closed).

Be smart about what you post, and pay attention to how you've set your privacy controls.

### Using Facebook for your church:

- Great way to share photos of events! And every time someone likes or comments on a photo, it shows up in their news feed and is seen by all of their friends.
- If you send out an email using a platform like Constant Contact or MailChimp, you can share it to your Facebook page (or other social media platforms); then it is seen by people who might not be on your email list but have liked your page.
- A last-minute call for help: Anyone want to help with this Saturday's Habitat for Humanity build? Meet at church at 8am to carpool! Or ... Communion assistants and lectors are needed for Christmas Eve liturgies at 7 and 11pm; can you help?
- In short, anything that gets people interested, shares info they might not otherwise receive, and evokes responses. Keep posts short, and walk the line between pithy and engaging. Facebook is generally not the place for cerebral reflections!

## Twitter

*Handle* your Twitter username; e.g. vlhughes

*RT* re-tweet. Re-broadcasting someone else's tweet so that it is also seen by all of your followers.

*@* used to call-out handles/usernames. Creates a link to that profile.

*#* hashtag, used to categorize keywords or phrases, making searches for easy. No spaces allowed.  
e.g. #ELCA, #snowpocalypse

Also used humorously to offer commentary on what's just been said:

Just got reamed out for playing a djembe during the traditional service. #morecommunionwineplease

On Twitter, you "follow" others, and others can follow you. It does not require mutual agreement as "friending" on Facebook does. Twitter has a 140-character limit – the same limit as an SMS message.

### *Using Twitter for your church:*

- Like Facebook, short and simple. Does not tend to invite as much feedback – Twitter is often best to put news out, not gathering responses.
- Single pictures or Vine clips
- Links to articles or other pages of interest
- very in-the-moment

**Other common social media platforms:** Google+, Vine, Flickr, Pinterest, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Yelp