

# Pilgrim Statement on Social Media

The number and variety of ways we can connect and communicate online are many and constantly emerging and evolving. We cannot predict the future and what decisions we may face but we can only imagine that this rapidly changing technological environmental will require our church to decide again and again whether and how much to engage with social media. The purpose of this statement on social media is to help current and future leaders of Pilgrim Lutheran Church make decisions about whether or not we would use a particular social media tool, and to what extent. Here follow critical principles and questions to guide and support our decision making.

## **Some opportunities presented by social media**

- Certain social media tools are used by large numbers of people, especially of certain age groups. Engaging with these tools helps us “meet people where they are.”
- Physical distance, poor health, and other life circumstances can make it difficult for people to connect in person. Social media can overcome these barriers (e.g. a person might feel deeply connected to physically distant people and circumstances through a platform like CaringBridge).

## **Principles of “being the church” to guide us in our decision making**

- We affirm that we are a church. Many organizations gather people and build community, but we are a community that gathers in Christ.
- We affirm that our Christian tradition calls us to gather in person – in the flesh – to proclaim the word of God, share in the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, and in general experience the life and grace of Christ together.
- We affirm that our time of worship is meaningful in part because it invites and reinforces counter-cultural behaviors. Whereas our lives can be filled with distraction and multi-tasking, worship invites and reinforces the behavior of being more wholly present: to ourselves, to God, and to one another.
- We affirm that the Gospel of Christ is in many ways counter-cultural – in tension with or opposing dominant views in our society. Because of this, the church is called to be counter-cultural also; not for the sake of being different, but for the sake of the Gospel.
- We affirm that as Christians our work in the world is to love our neighbors. Our faith calls us out into the world, in service to others, through a wide variety of individual and collective actions.
- We affirm that as Lutheran Christians we are a part of a tradition of reform. We recognize that being the church is a living and evolving process where we reinterpret our tradition in the context of “today.”

## **Clarifying questions to support our decision making**

- Will our use of the social media tool strengthen our ability to be the church?
- Will our use of the social media tool inspire and reinforce worship attendance?
- Will our use of the social media tool demonstrate our commitment to a radical Gospel?
- Will our use of the social media tool help us love our neighbors?
- Do our plans take into consideration staff and lay capacity?
- Do our plans take into considerations the DMCA (the Digital Millennium Copyright Act) and other commonly held rules for the use of digital media?