Slide 2: We will cover some of these types that are used more readily by Christian groups for ministry.

Slide 4: Key purposes for the Conference Communications Facebook page are 1) share breaking news of special value in the Oklahoma Conference, 2) share important news of the denomination, and 3) provide updates from the voting and activities during the Annual Conference each year. In 2013, this Facebook fan page got the most views in the days following the late May tornadoes.

Slide 5: UMCOR – the United Methodist Committee on Relief – reaches around the world to minister to people in crisis and in need. UMCOR sent truckloads of emergency supplies to Oklahoma after the May tornadoes and is providing funds to help with the ongoing disaster recovery in the state.

Slide 6: “Rethink Church” is an extension of The United Methodist Church’s “Open hearts, open minds, open doors” awareness campaign. “Rethink Church” is designed especially to reach unchurched people. This is a part of United Methodist Communications, UMCOM, based in Nashville.

Slide 7: This is spreading the word

Slide 8: Content is important!

Slide 9: Ask yourself before you post: How will people find your church’s Facebook page?

Slide 10: You want people to share, interact on your Facebook page. You want to post news and information, but Facebook is much more than that. Ask questions, such as: Where did you see God today in your life? What are you praying for? By encouraging people to share, you build community.

Slide 11: This video “5 Steps to Grow Your Facebook Congregation” was produced by United Methodist Communications (UMCOM).

Slide 12: In this form of social media, people share in posts no longer than 140 characters, including spaces between words!

Slide 13: The numbers are growing daily and that is spreading the word!

Slide 15: After your survey, if no one in the congregation tweets, consider another social media tool. If YES, you want to target the younger Twitter audience, then explore the possibilities. To build your audience, provide frequent, relevant and interesting content. Examples start on the next page.

Slide 18: Encourage your Twitter followers to retweet your messages, to expand your community and draw in new people.

Slide 20: It’s not necessary to be active in every social media outlet. Time is precious, especially for a volunteer. Commit to one or two outlets – perhaps Facebook and Pinterest only – and do those well.

Slide 21: Whether you use Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums or websites, proper etiquette can set the tone for how people view your church.

Slide 22:
- **Greetings and salutations:** Not everyone you want to “friend” or “like” will know you. Do not add users without introducing yourself.
- **Avoid unsolicited marketing:** Keep your personal FB account and church FB account separate. Do not abuse the ability to send out mass messages on unrelated topics.
- **It’s not all about the church calendar:** FB is not only about promoting your upcoming program or raising funds; it’s also about building relationships in God’s family.
- **Prayer requests:** If you post something on FB, that is like putting it on a billboard. Be sensitive about details in prayer requests. Consider sending a private FB message to someone requesting prayer rather than posting your prayer, with all its details, on the FB page.
**Slide 23:**
I will follow: When you choose to “follow” other Twitter users, remember to invite them to follow you.

**Keep it short:** You should limit the messages in a Twitter conversation; do not use a Twitter feed as a chat room.

**Give them love:** Don’t overuse Twitter; people’s time is precious. Build them up; don’t waste their time.

**Slide 24:** The value of the videos you post will be apparent by the number of views.

**Slide 25:** Before you post video and photographs from your church’s events online, use these best practices.

**Slide 27:** A blanket media release may be signed during a back-to-school event every fall or every year in January. Keep the signed copy in the church office. Let people know you are videotaping or taking photos for Web content. Don’t use a person’s image if the person objects. Don’t forget to provide a media release for visitors.

**Slide 28:** Work with church staff and volunteers to identify who the people are and how to get in touch with them. If you do not have permission, do not post the photo. This is not a case where it is better to ask forgiveness than permission. Even on Facebook.

**Slide 29:** Follow copyright rules.
Social Media Workshop

Some examples of church Facebook pages

- Oklahoma City St. Luke’s UMC Facebook page
- Oklahoma Conference Communications Facebook page
- UMCOR Facebook page
- Rethink Church Facebook page

Facebook

- In 2013, there are over 1 billion Facebook users.

Facebook

- 23 percent of Facebook users check it 5 times or more daily.

Facebook

- With Facebook and any Social Media, the content has to fill the needs of your congregation.
Facebook
• Ask yourself before you post, “Why would someone look at this content?”

Facebook
• Find and nurture a connection with individuals in your congregation.

Facebook
• What should you put on social media? Something that is worth making a remark about.

Facebook
• Instead of broadcasting your story ... ask a question.

Facebook
• Instead of telling people what you think ... invite them to give their opinion.

Facebook
5 steps to grow your Facebook congregation

Twitter asks, “What are you doing?” Should your church answer?
Twitter

• In 2013, more than 230 million people use Twitter monthly. However, sheer numbers do not mean your church should get into Twitter. Like any communications tool, Twitter requires a well-thought, well-executed strategy.

• Identify followers.
The first step to a Twitter plan is to see if anyone in your congregation uses it. If no one in your congregation uses Twitter, you probably don’t need to go any further. If a few members say “yes” or you want to target the younger Twitter audience, then explore the possibilities.

• Have a purpose.
Twitter can offer substantive postings if planned and executed well. Use Twitter to create a dialogue. Engage your followers.

• See what the congregation thinks.
In some U.S. churches, pastors use Twitter during worship to add visual interest and interactivity. In Michigan, a church encouraged their congregation to tweet during services. Worshipers saw their tweets projected on screens behind the minister. The church expanded its technology server’s bandwidth to accommodate.

• Be creative.
A New York City church turned the Passion play into a Twitter event. Each character assumed a Twitter identity and tweeted his or her “part” between noon and 3 p.m. on Good Friday. The church advertised their site, allowing people who could not attend services to participate.

• Give thanks.
Oklahoma United Methodists’ OK Circle of Care, provides residential and foster care services to at-risk youth. Its Twitter account manager takes the time to thank each person who signs up to follow the organization.

• Connect to other social media.
First UMC in Orange, Texas, uses its Twitter page to promote upcoming events. It also uses it to publicize when the church’s photo albums have been updated on Facebook. Many social media sites, such as Facebook, allow users to publicize new entries on Twitter with minimal effort.

• Use it for everything.
The West Virginia Annual Conference maximizes Twitter. By providing frequent, relevant and interesting content, it has built a growing audience of followers. Recent tweets have included a plea for counselors at an upcoming workshop; and an announcement about the United Methodist Communications’ Church Marketing Plan.

• In Marion, N.C., Providence UMC talks on Twitter about its upcoming events, writes its mission and summarizes events by announcing, for example, how much money it raised for a local pregnancy center, and thanking participants.
Twitter

- Others tweet about you. Don’t forget your congregation’s tweeters. Steve Burton of Owensboro, Ky., chats about many things on his personal Twitter page, but each week he asks followers to “Come worship with Settle Memorial United Methodist Church . . . on Ustream TV.” Followers can click on the link and see a digital recording of the worship service from their computer.


Other Social Media outlets

- Pinterest
- Foursquare
- YouTube
- Google+
- Instagram
- Yelp
- mass-texting
- Blogging
- Social News Sites: Digg, Sphinn, Mixx, Reddit and Tip’d

Free or low-cost Web-based tools

- Addictomatic
- Animoto
- BrainyQuote
- Clipix
- Flickr Creative Commons
- Wufoo
- Google Internet Stats
- Google Wallet
- LastPass
- Outlook.com (previously Hotmail)
- Present.me
- Quozio
- Ustream
- Scoop.it
- Group/a—user-submitted grouping tool for Google+ Pages
- Hootsuite
- Dropbox
- Evernote
- Linkedin
- Storify

Social media etiquette

Whether you use Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums or websites, proper etiquette can set the tone for how people view your church.

- Greetings and salutations: Whether it is your personal page or the church’s page, not everyone you want to “friend” or “like” will know you. Do not add users without introducing yourself.

Social Media

You may not be able to do a lot of Social Media, but try at least one or two of them.

Facebook

- Avoid unsolicited marketing: If you are in another kind of Facebook group that isn’t church related, do not abuse the “invite” ability and send out mass notices about your church. Stick, for the most part, to the content topics identified.
Facebook

• **It is not all about you:** Do not use your personal Facebook page to “over promote” your church connection. Facebook is about relationships, not fundraising or events in and of themselves. Use your church’s Facebook page for those promotions.

Facebook

• **Be careful to post details of a prayer request:** If people ask you personally to pray for them, they are not asking everyone to pray for them. Remember: If you put it on Facebook, it is like putting it on a billboard. Consider sending a message rather than posting the prayer on someone’s wall.

Twitter

• **I will follow:** Twitter users should be respectful. After you sign up to “follow” certain users, invite them to follow you. Give people time before you decide to stop following them. Be polite. Do not “unfollow” someone who has just started following you.

Twitter

• **Keep it short:** Twitter limits characters in a message just as you should limit the messages in a conversation. Do not use a Twitter feed as a chat room.

Twitter

• **Give them love:** Do not use Twitter for hour-by-hour promotion of you or your church. Twitter is about sending 144-character snippets of interesting information in a rapid manner. It involves ongoing reciprocity—much like personal relationships. Information is like love; it should be given with no strings attached.

YouTube

• **Let YouTube do what it is designed to do.** The value of the videos you post will be apparent by the number of views. Constantly asking others to view your videos is amateurish and annoying.

Posting videos & photos online

Before you post video and photographs from your church’s events online, use these best practices.
Posting videos & photos online
• Always have written permission from a parent/guardian before posting an image of a child (under 13). A blanket media release may be signed during a back-to-school event every fall or every year in January. Keep the signed copy in the church office. Don’t forget to provide a copy for visitors, especially if photos or video were taken during an event.

Posting videos & photos online
• Whenever using video or photographs of anyone—adults or children—to promote the church, seek written permission from the adult, or the parent/guardian in the case of a child. Let the person know they are being videotaped or photographed to promote the church on the Web, and don’t use their image if they object.

Posting videos & photos online
• If you already have video or photos, backtrack to get the permissions you need BEFORE you post it online. Work with church staff and volunteers to identify who the people are and how to get in touch with them. Then ask for permission to post their image online, with written permission for children. If you do not have permission from everyone, do not post the photo. This is not a case where it is better to ask forgiveness than permission.

Posting videos & photos online
• If the video or photo was not taken by you, make sure you have permission to post it by the person who did take it. Also, be careful about reposting videos and photos you find on the Web—make sure you’ve identified the owner of the video or photo and have the owner’s permission before reposting.

Posting videos & photos online
• If you already have the video or photo, backtrack to get the permissions you need BEFORE you post it online. If you do not have permission from everyone, do not post the photo. This is not a case where it is better to ask forgiveness than permission, especially in light of safety concerns about children.

Posting videos & photos online
• Post videos and photos without identifying the people. If you must identify people, use first name or first name and initial only. Even on Facebook. Be sure to tell people in the photograph that the images may be posted on Facebook before adding the image to the church’s page. Also, check for other types of identifying information. Do documents on a desk contain personal information? Frame the shot to exclude those items.

Posting videos & photos online
• Work with your church’s communications committee to create a policy specific to your church and tell your congregation what the policy is. Seek legal advice when creating your policies.

Posting videos & photos online
It is great to promote the things your church is doing. However, it’s important to be safe and respectful of the members of the congregation and visitors.
Social media etiquette handbook

SUMMARY: Whether you use Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums or websites, proper etiquette can set the tone for how people view you and your church.

Completely avoiding social media etiquette pitfalls is difficult because it is such a personal world and users’ opinions are subjective. However, you can limit the chances of embarrassing or annoying people by using common-sense guidelines.

Along with adhering to your church’s official online communications policy, consider the following:

Facebook

- **Greetings and salutations:** Whether it is your personal page or the church’s page, not everyone you want to “friend” or “like” will know you. Do not add users without introducing yourself.
- **Avoid unsolicited marketing:** If you are in a Facebook group for “NFL fans,” do not abuse the “invite” ability and send out mass notices about your church. Stick, for the most part, to the content topics identified.
- **It is all about you:** Do not use your Facebook page to “over promote” your church connection. Facebook is about relationships, not fundraising or events in and of themselves. Use your church’s fan page for those promotions and more.
- **Put it in the vault:** If people ask you to pray for them, they are not asking everyone to pray for them. If you want to share your prayer with others, ask the individual who requested it. Remember: If you put it on Facebook, it is like putting it on a billboard. Consider sending a message rather than posting the prayer on someone’s wall. It may be better to respond by a personal e-mail. Keep private things private.

Twitter

- **I will follow:** Twitter users should be respectful. After you sign up to “follow” certain users, invite them to follow you. Give people time before you decide to stop following them. Be polite. Do not “unfollow” someone who has just started following you.
- **Give them love:** Do not use Twitter for hour-by-hour promotion of you or your church. Twitter is about sending 144-character snippets of interesting information in a rapid manner. It involves ongoing reciprocity—much like personal relationships. Information is like love; it should be given with no strings attached. The effort is not genuine if you have an ulterior motive.
- **Keep it short:** Twitter limits characters in a message just as you should limit the messages in a conversation. Do not use a Twitter feed as a chat room.

YouTube

Let YouTube do what it is designed to do. The value of the videos you post will be apparent by the number of views. Constantly asking others to view your videos is amateurish and annoying.

Social News Sites

When using social media news sites such as Digg, Sphinn, Mixx, Reddit and Tip’d, maintain your professional persona. Stay on topic with your submissions, be respectful in your comments, and be a give-and-take participant — reciprocating votes and not repeating posts.
Blogging

• **Give sources their due:** Using commentary and ideas from others in your blog keeps things interesting. However, don’t use content from another blog without attributing (and linking to the original source).

• **Add variety:** People don’t want to read about the same thing over and over. Current events provide an ongoing resource. When news is slow, consider writing about a personal experience or observation that offers insight, meaning or a glimpse behind the scenes. Don’t repeat a blog entry even if it’s been a while since you’ve written about it. Readers will remember and think you can’t come up with original material.

• **Be humble:** While blogs certainly are good places for personal opinion, don’t overdo it. You will come off as boorish if you don’t acknowledge the valid opinions of others. If you are wrong, acknowledge the wrongdoing and focus on the lesson you learned.

In general, it is a good idea as a church leader to do the following.

**Limit frequent mass communication.** Encourage church members to share birth announcements and other news on a designated Web site page or Facebook posting rather than having them e-mail everybody in the church directory. Similarly, avoid multiple mass messages from the pastor or church staff, i.e., “It’s fundraising time again!” Use mass broadcasts only when vital information must be distributed quickly.

**Make online information accessible.** Not everyone participates in social media at the same level. Your church website can close this gap. Think about your home page as the front page of a newspaper, and the group Facebook pages, RSS feeds and blogs as the special “sections.” Provide links to these and explain how people can register and use these social media tools. (A short-course or overview might be good for a Sunday morning or midweek evening program.)