

Hardin Valley Church of Christ Social Media Policy

General principles:

- As members of Christ's body, what we communicate in any form represents Jesus to the world. We are His image bearers. John 17:18-21
- God is Love; therefore, all our communication should reflect His love. 1 John 4:8
- God's word is truth; therefore, all our communication should reflect biblical truth. I Timothy 3:15, John 17:17
- God's Spirit resides in us; therefore, all our communication should reflect the fruit of the spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control. Gal. 5:22-23
- We are members of the Kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah; therefore, our support, devotion, and allegiance should be to Him first. Col. 1:13. That allegiance should be reflected in our all our communication. Eph 4:25-32

The above should apply whether we are using our own accounts and equipment or making use of accounts or digital equipment supplied by HVCOC. There are, however, additional restrictions when use is being made of HVCOC provided accounts or digital equipment or when acting on behalf of the church or one of its ministries. These are set forth below:

A. HVCOC provided digital equipment or accounts may not be used by anyone to:

1. Promote a private commercial interest or political cause.
2. Promote a charitable cause which is not part of or under the supervision of a ministry of HVCOC.
3. For a purpose which is not lawful.
4. Depict inappropriate material, material which could reasonably be construed as malicious, racist, ethnically denigrating, sexist, or abusive.
5. Promote a theological position that is likely to cause contention or contrary to current published positions of HVCOC without obtaining prior approval.
(Published theological positions are found on the HVCOC website (hvcoc.org)).
6. Access inappropriate internet sites.

B. As noted above every member of the body of Christ should appreciate that their conduct, either good or bad, reflects Jesus to the world. There is a heightened duty when an individual is being supported in their work by financial resources specifically gifted to the body for the accomplishment of its work. Therefore, as a condition of employment with HVCOC:

1. You must not post or cause to be posted any digital material which is unlawful.

2. You must not post or cause to be posted any digital material which is or would be reasonably perceived as obscene, malicious, racist, ethnically denigrating, sexist, or abusive.
3. You must not publish or cause to be published any digital material with the intent and purpose of challenging a published theological position of HVCOC. (Published theological positions are found on the HVCOC website (hvcoc.org)).
4. You must maintain separate personal digital media accounts for conducting personal business.
5. You should, when practical, refrain from using personal accounts or equipment to conduct HVCOC business related to your employment.
6. You should when practical, refrain from using HVCOC provided equipment and accounts for conducting personal business.

C. A violation of any of the provisions of sections A or B is/are grounds for discipline including dismissal.

D. Violations of any of the provisions of sections A or B by volunteers may result in denial of access or use of digital equipment or accounts or removal from a ministry position.

E. General guidance for all members of HVCOC:

1. All interactions on social media should be conducted in a respectful and courteous manner, avoiding the use of offensive language, discriminatory remarks, or any behavior that would be contrary to Christian principles.
2. We all should refrain from engaging in posting about controversial topics that may adversely affect the church's image or create division within the congregation.
3. We all should exercise prudence when participating in discussions on social media platforms. We should be cautious when discussing topics such as politics, social issues, and contentious theological debates. As individuals, we have a right to express our personal opinions. As Christians, we should always be mindful of the potential impact the expression of our opinions may have on the church's reputation and unity. Remember that the Spirit of Christ lives in you.

G. Definitions:

1. **Digital equipment** – electronic devices used to disseminate digital communication.

2. **Digital communication** – The act or process of communication whether audio, video, or in writing to be disseminated through the use of the internet or world wide web.
3. **Digital media** – The essence of the digital communication whether audio, video, image(s), or written letters, symbols, and numbers which purpose is the dissemination of its content to others.
4. **HVCOC digital accounts** – accounts acquired under the name of HVCOC, purchased for use by HVCOC or acquired with funds belonging to HVCOC for the purpose of enabling or the creation, production, or dissemination of digital communication.
5. **Inappropriate internet site** –
 - a. a site located on the internet which solicits or offers illegal images, actions, or substances or supports illegal activities.
 - b. a site whose purpose is to depict pornographic images.

BIBLICAL PASSAGES ABOUT COMMUNICATION

- Proverbs 12:18 - There is one who speaks rashly, like a piercing sword; but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- Proverbs 15:4 - The tongue that heals is a tree of life, but a devious tongue breaks the spirit.
- Proverbs 20:3 - Honor belongs to the person who ends a dispute, but any fool can get himself into a quarrel.
- Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 - Don't pay attention to everything people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you, for in your heart you know that many times you yourself have cursed others.
- Matthew 5:13-14 - You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.
- Matthew 12:36 - I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak.
- Matthew 28:19-20 - Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember. I am with you always, to the end of the age.
- Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
- Romans 14:19 - So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another.

- 1 Corinthians 8:13 - Therefore, if food causes my brother or sister to fall, I will never again eat meat, so that I won't cause my brother or sister to fall.
- Ephesians 4:25-32 - Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. . . No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.
- James 1:19 - My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.
- 1 Peter 3:14-16 - But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them or be intimidated, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame.

Some content was taken from:

1. <https://www.pastortheologians.com/articles/2020/8/28/pastor-your-church-needs-a-social-media-policy>
2. Social Media Policy of Campbell Street Church of Christ.