
Computer, Network, Social Media and Internet Policies

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Raleigh, NC

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Introduction

St. Mark's goal in using the Internet is to improve communication among parish ministries, staff and parishioners; to provide information to a larger audience; and to allow access to the wealth of information available on the Internet.

The Internet and the St. Mark's internal network should be viewed as tools to further the purposes and goals of the parish, which is the work of the Episcopal Church and, more specifically, that of St. Mark's. It is therefore imperative that staff and members conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while using the Internet and all of the network services provided by St. Mark's as well as St. Mark's social media sites.

This policy applies to all church staff, Administrators, elected lay leaders, volunteers, guests, church members, and all internal and external users of St. Mark's network infrastructure.

Definitions

1. The St. Mark's system and network Administrators shall be referred to as "Administrators" or "System Administrators" in this document.
2. "Electronic communications" shall mean all current and future means of electronic communications including but not limited to the following.
 1. Email
 2. Mailing lists
 3. Chat rooms
 4. Bulletin Board systems (BBS)
 5. Social media such as Facebook accounts and Facebook pages
 6. Twitter and similar broadcast types of Internet media
 7. YouTube and other sharing sites of any type
 8. The St. Mark's web site
 9. Telephones of all types, wired and wireless
 10. Fax systems
3. "Network" means the internal St. Mark's network and all of its hardware and software components.
4. "Internet" is the global system of interconnected computer networks. It is a *network of networks* that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of networking technologies.
5. "Network infrastructure" shall mean all current and future hardware and software used to implement the St. Mark's computer systems and internal network along with its connections to the Internet, including but not limited to the following.
 1. All computers including servers, firewalls, personal computers for staff and laptops.
 2. Computer peripherals such as USB hard drives, printers, mice, keyboards and monitors.
 3. Network devices including switches, routers, modems and media converters.
 4. Cables such as telephone cable, network cable and fiber optic cable.
 5. Wireless routers and access points.
6. "Listserv" is a server that provides one or more mailing lists.
7. "List" or "mailing list" is an email list provided by a listserv.

8. "Parish" shall mean St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Raleigh, North Carolina.
9. "User accounts" shall mean any account with an ID and password used to permit authorized access to various components of the St. Mark's network infrastructure, including but not limited to any or all of the following.
 1. Computer login accounts for root and non-privileged users
 2. Email accounts
 3. Social media accounts
 4. The St. Marks web site administrative dashboard.
 5. Access restricted pages on the St. Mark's web site.
10. "Moderated" means a list to which subscribers may post messages, but for which a moderator must approve the messages before they are sent to the rest of the subscribers and placed in the list archives.
11. A "moderator" is the person or persons who moderate, or monitor submissions to the listserv and who may accept or reject list postings based upon their suitability. A moderator may also add and delete subscribers to the various lists on the St. Mark's listserv.
12. "Guest computers" may be static devices such as desktop computers used specifically for guest access. In addition, mobile devices transported into St. Marks such as notebook computers, laptops, netbooks, smartphones, tablets, pads, and any mobile device are all considered to be "Guest computers."

System Administrator Policy

This section pertains to the System Administrators and the tasks they perform to support the computer systems and the network.

1. Administrative oversight shall be provided by the Vestry partner for administration and the Rector.
2. The System Administrators, duly authorized by the Rector and St. Mark's Vestry partner for Administration, shall have full authority to add and delete parish accounts from all computer, network, email, listserv, and social networking accounts, and to perform all other tasks required to install, build, operate and maintain the St. Mark's Network Infrastructure.
3. All St. Mark's System Administrators shall be aware of the sensitive nature of many of the emails, documents, data, and other communications with which they may come in contact. The System Administrators shall operate with the highest level of integrity to maintain the confidentiality and security of all information with which they come into contact.
4. St. Mark's System Administrators who are likely to have access to confidential church or private information may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
5. A System Administrator shall manage all St. Mark's social networking pages.
6. The St. Mark's System Administrators, in consultation with the Rector or other St. Mark's authority when appropriate, shall be the final authority and arbiters of the St. Marks Network and Internet Policy.

Guest Computer Policy

This policy applies to both static and mobile devices used for guest access to the Internet on the St. Mark's campus.

The guest network is a separate network at St. Mark's that provides connection for guest computers to the Internet and includes both wired and wireless connection options. The guest network has no direct connection to the St. Mark's internal network.

1. The guest network is intended for use by St. Marks and Yavneh staff, and members and guests with church business. It is not intended for entertainment purposes.
2. All guest computers shall connect to the guest network. No guest computer shall be connected to the St. Mark's internal network.
3. Red Ethernet cables shall be provided in appropriate locations for wired access to the Guest network.
4. All wireless access on the St. Mark's campus shall be via the guest network.
5. The wireless portion of the guest network is password protected to prevent unauthorized usage and the password will be changed from time to time. If you have a need to use the wireless network, the Rector, office manager or a system administrator will be happy to provide you with the current password.

Acceptable Use Policy

The intent of the parish's Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that all uses of the Internet are consistent with the purposes of the parish. The policy does not attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behavior by its members. The Internet is an open network in both implementation and spirit. Technical measures could be invoked to constrain Internet use, but they would limit the utility of the Internet. Instead, in any specific situation, each individual's judgment of appropriate conduct is relied upon.

Internet Usage

1. All use of the Internet through parish accounts must be in support of the work of the church and the diocese.
2. Reasonable personal use of the internet utilizing the St. Mark's network is acceptable for the St. Mark's staff, visitors, and vestry when on campus.
3. Any use of the Network or Internet through parish accounts for illegal purposes, or in support of illegal activities, is prohibited.
4. Any use of the Network or Internet through parish accounts to communicate threatening, abusive, sexually oriented/explicit or obscene language or material is prohibited.
5. Any use of parish e-mail accounts, lists or web sites for commercial purposes is prohibited.
6. Any use of parish e-mail accounts, lists or web sites for partisan political lobbying is prohibited.
7. No use of the network or Internet shall serve to intentionally disrupt the use of the network by other users.
8. All material viewed on web sites should be considered copyrighted and not available for reproduction, unless specifically stated otherwise or unless specific permission is granted for reproduction.
9. All ministries, sponsored organizations and offices operating under the auspices of St. Mark's may reproduce all material on the parish Web site, <http://www.stmarks-ral.org>.
10. Parish computer, network, social networking, lists, and email accounts should be used only by the authorized user(s) of the account for the authorized purpose. Sharing of account passwords is prohibited.
11. All communications and information accessible via the Internet should be assumed to be private property. Permission should be received before a user posts information released by other individuals or parishes. Users should also make every effort to validate information and sources before posting information, and to list sources when passing along information received.
12. Any St. Mark's entities that allow children to have access to the Internet must have safeguards to ensure that children can not access inappropriate material.

Illegal Activities

Use of the St. Mark's Network Infrastructure and/or the Internet to abuse or violate the law will not be tolerated. St. Mark's reserves the right to report illegal activities to any and all regulatory, administrative, and/or governmental authorities for prosecution. Illegality includes, but is not limited to:

1. Drug dealing
2. Attempting without authorization to access a computer system or other St. Mark's Network infrastructure.
3. Using the St. Mark's Network Infrastructure to commit any illegal or unauthorized act on any computer or network outside of and external to the St. Mark's Network.
4. Pirating, distributing any type of copyrighted material in violation of copyright law.
5. Gambling
6. Schemes to defraud, including pyramid schemes, chain letters, and Ponzi schemes.
7. Trafficking in obscene material
8. Sending a message or having content that is obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, or indecent with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass another person
9. Threatening bodily harm or damage to individuals or groups
10. Violating U.S. export restrictions
11. Stalking
12. Violating other state or federal law such as the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, or the Economic Espionage Act.

Parishioners should report any such acts to church authority such as the Rector, the Vestry, or an Administrator as soon as they are noticed. Should the St. Mark's church authority be suspect in such acts, such acts should be reported to higher church authority.

Mailing List and Social Media Policy

Mailing lists provide St. Mark's and its leadership, ordained and lay, the means to communicate quickly to various limited or parish-wide interest groups with information pertinent to those belonging to the list or lists.

Social media pages and related communications media such as Facebook and Twitter fall under this policy as the function of rapid communication with parishioners is identical with the email lists.

Keep in mind that we send out an email newsletter, "The Messenger," on the listserv each week to the Parish-News and Messenger lists. You are encouraged to send information you think will be of interest to the parish to the church office for inclusion in The Messenger.

Once transmitted, there is no way to "take back" any email message or posting to unmoderated lists on the listserv. The content of each email message, whether sent to individuals or to a list is the sole responsibility of the author of that message and not of anyone else.

All parish-related lists, conferences, chat rooms, social media platforms and bulletin boards shall be moderated by an administrator. Exceptions to this may be made for PAC lists, however those lists may also be changed to moderated status in the event that they are used in such a way as to violate the St. Marks Network and Internet Policy.

Acceptable Use Guidelines for lists and Social Media

1. Lists and social media pages are for St. Mark's members only. Some exceptions may be made for specific lists implemented and managed by St. Mark's for community outreach such as the New Hope Road Faith Communities list.
2. Former members of St. Mark's may only be members of the Messenger list.
3. Some lists are restricted to members of that group only, such as the Vestry and other, similar lists.
4. Most lists will only accept posts from the rector, office manager, or list administrators. Any attempt to post to those lists may be either rejected with a notice or discarded with no notification.
5. Some lists, such as the Parish Area Care (PAC) group lists, are membership restricted, but members of the lists may post messages to the lists to which they belong. These lists are generally unmoderated but may be moderated at the discretion of an Administrator.
6. The Administrators may appoint as they see fit, specific members of certain lists such as PAC lists the ability to add and delete subscriptions and to moderate said lists.
7. Any member of the Parish-News list may post to it, but all messages will be held by the listserv until they can be approved by a moderator. Prayer requests should be sent directly to the Rector, rector@stmarks-ral.org, or the church office office@stmarks-ral.org rather than to the Parish-News list.
8. Prayer requests may be sent directly to a PAC list to which the person making the request belongs.
9. Messages to the Parish-News list should be restricted to the following.
 1. Pastoral communications
 2. Time sensitive announcements/reminders about upcoming church activities and community events of interest to church participants
10. List members may remove themselves from the list any time. In addition, a message is sent out on the first day of every month providing members with information regarding how to "unsubscribe", or be removed from the list.
11. Violators of the Acceptable Use guidelines will be contacted by a list Moderator or an Administrator and may be removed from the Listserv. This may mean all lists to which one belongs, not only the one on which the infraction occurred.

Good manners

Good manners are important on lists and social media in part because we cannot see the visual cues we have when talking face to face that indicate whether the other person may be joking, sarcastic or serious. Follow these suggestions to ensure that your on-line personality is in line with your in-person personality.

1. Use common sense when posting to a list or sending an email using "Reply." Be aware that you usually have two options: responding through the list or to a member personally. The content of your message should determine which of these you choose.
2. If you set an auto-responder while you're out of the office, please temporarily suspend your list mailings or include a rule to not respond to St. Mark's emails.
3. Typing in ALL CAPS is considered shouting. Use caps only to EMPHASIZE a word or concept; another way to emphasize a word or phrase is to put *asterisks* or -dashes- around it.

Proscribed activities

Unacceptable activities on any St. Mark's list or social media site include but are not limited to the following. You should also refer to the St. Mark's Communications Guidelines at the URL listed previously.

1. Trolling, i.e., posting controversial messages aimed specifically at generating controversy and not honest discussion.
2. Mail bombing, inundating the list with many messages and no serious intent to correspond.
3. Signing up someone else to the list, without their knowledge or consent.
4. Flaming sending angry email messages to others. Vigorous debate is encouraged, but if it threatens to become an argument, just agree to disagree and let it go. If necessary, wait 24 hours to reply to a message to ensure that you can respond appropriately. Please remember to show respect for the worth and dignity of every person.
5. Adult material or links (URL's) that lead to Adult Material are prohibited. Our lists and social media sites are for all of our members. The participation of our young adults and minors is both encouraged and expected. The moderators and administrators will determine what constitutes "Adult Content."
6. Abuse of the Service. Abuse of service is any deliberate action by a list member that damages the computer system that manages the list, or the computer systems of other list members.

Legal Rights of Others

Abuse of the legal rights of others will not be tolerated on any St. Mark's mailing list or social media site. Examples of unacceptable activities in this regard include:

1. Posting private information about another person without their consent.
2. Infringing intellectual property rights.
3. Defaming a person, business, or other organization.
4. Knowingly making available code which will have a deleterious effect on computers (computer virus, worms, Trojan horses, etc.)
5. Harassing, Stalking, or electronically abusing other list members.

Limitation of Liability

Neither St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Raleigh, North Carolina, nor the Administrators or list Moderators accept responsibility for any claimed damages, including incidental and consequential damages, which may arise from the use of the St. Mark's network infrastructure, or any mailing list or any social media service or site. The administrators, list owners and moderators reserve the right to remove any message from social media pages or to ban any list or social media page member, if (at their sole discretion), they feel it is necessary. This in no way implies editorial control or legal responsibility for materials posted by list members of any electronic communications medium.

This document was created using the following web sites as a starting point and modified to meet the requirements of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Raleigh, NC.

- St. William's Catholic Church, Round Rock, TX: <http://www.saintwilliams.org/node/2224>
- First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, Unitarian Universalist, Stow, MA: <http://fpc-stow-acton.org/Policy-fpcforum.html>
- Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, KS: <http://peacepreacher.wordpress.com/documents/e-mail-list-use-policy/>