Hillcrest Church of Christ
Social Media Guidelines

It's exciting to see so many members of the Hillcrest family communicating online! Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc. are an incredible way to share your faith journey, get to know other ministry leaders, learn, chronicle your life, and generally connect with people you wouldn't otherwise. As we work together to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ, here are a few tips to keep in mind as we use "social media" in our ministries and in our Hillcrest activities:

- *You're amongst friends—sometimes*. As much as your blog, Twitter stream, Facebook page, etc. might feel like your cozy home on the Internet where friends stop by to catch up, it's really a public space. People can land on your page from a Google search and read just one post and completely misinterpret the intent of the communication. And that post or content will live on forever in the "on line world", long after you've forgotten about it. So, think of your web space more like your front yard and less like your family room.
- *Spread news, don't break it*. It's great (and helpful) when we can use our personal web spaces to share the wonderful things God is doing at Hillcrest. But it's important that the news is released at the appropriate time and place. Make sure what you talk about online is ready for public consumption and please be aware of confidential issues or topics.
- *Detract? Distract? Neither*. Most of us know what's going to detract from the mission of Hillcrest and stay far away from that territory. Therefore, please be sensitive to things that could distract from the mission and goals of Hillcrest. While you might post about something that is 100% accurate-and true to our beliefs-that post can still draw unwanted attention to the church and take substantial time to manage and explain. If you're in doubt, you're surrounded with strong leaders who'll be happy to help you figure out what is appropriate and whether something falls into that "gray area".
- *Ask questions*. If you want to spur conversation about a topic, think about open-ended posts and questions, not opinions. Be careful to not use Hillcrest social media to self-promote regarding personal cause(s).
- *Be smart*. From a legal perspective, you're responsible for what you post on social media. Please make sure you follow copyright rules and any other relevant laws. Remember to always seek permission before you post pictures or any other personal information of others. Be particularly mindful of video and music clips. And when it comes to Hillcrest content, a good rule of thumb is "point, don't post," meaning that it's better to link to the content on our established communication channels rather than posting it on your blog or site.
- *Disclaimers or not, you represent*. Yes, a disclaimer is a good idea. But even with that, what you say in your tweets, on your blog, and on your Facebook page is just as much of a reflection of the church as what you do in your personal life. Please don't link to your personal site from Hillcrest communication, and don't speak on behalf of the church.

- ***When in doubt, go positive***. Whether you're responding to a comment, frustrated with a vendor, or trying to decide if you should write about something that's bothering you, you'll never regret taking the high road (and sometimes that road is not saying anything at all). If something becomes negative or has the potential to become negative or antagonistic, please let the Hillcrest leadership know so they can help if needed
- ***Respect others***. At all times, remember to treat others with respect. You should never post "anything" that would be offensive. Think through the comments you post and the messages that will be shared before hitting submit. Words have the ability to lift up and also tear down. We are in the "lifting up" business.

Your presence on the web is an extension of your personal ministry, and we can't wait to see how you continue to use it to communicate the one-of-a-kind individual God created you to be.

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