

## **Erwin United Methodist Church Photography, Videography, & Social Networking Policy**

**Purpose:** In order to preserve the sacredness of services, assure privacy, maintain confidentiality, and honor the wishes of individuals regarding the posting of church-related pictures and information, the following general guidelines shall apply to all social networking media, including but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Wiki and web pages, for all Erwin United Methodist Church staff, members, visitors, and volunteers when posting information, photos, and/or videography from church services, church events, and church-related ministries:

### **Part I: Rationale for Opt-Out/Do Not Post or Publish**

1. Individuals, (whether staff, church members, church visitors, and/or church volunteers) are personally responsible for the content they post and publish online. We live in an age where information can quickly be shared around the world in a matter of seconds. What is published on a social media network, such as Facebook or Twitter, can be viewed (not only by the intended recipient), but also by any individuals who have access to that person's account.

2. Online behavior should reflect the same, if not greater, standards of honesty, respect, safety, and consideration as those we use face-to-face. If an EUMC member, volunteer, visitor, and/or employee want to post pictures, videos, and/or share information about other EUMC members, volunteers, visitors, and/or employees, please assure that the individual(s) are open to and have given their approval for such sharing.

To this end, the church will maintain a file of members who have "opted out" of all EUMC social media posts and all information/photo/video sharing. Therefore, prior to sharing any information, photos, and/or videos, please check with the Church Office to assure you are not posting information, photos, and/or videos of those who have submitted a "*Do Not Post or Publish*" request.

3. If you have been granted permission to post photos, videos, and/or other information about individual church members on your social media account, never post last names, addresses, or phone numbers. Use common sense and common courtesy to protect confidentiality, assure privacy, and maintain safety.

### **Part II: General Church Guidelines for Photography/Videography during Worship/Church-related Services**

1. In regard to photography/videography during church services, Erwin UMC will adhere to the following guidelines:

- No photos or videography should be taken during the Sacraments of Baptism or Holy Communion. For baptisms, the Pastor will encourage the family to return at the end of the service to take photos in front of the baptismal font after the rest of the congregation has exited.
- Photos/videos will not be taken during the sermon, Scripture reading, altar prayer, or at other highly sacred parts of services when members are prayed for during commissioning; prayed for when received as new members; etc.
- For other parts of worship services, church services, and church-related events where pictures are permissible, those taking pictures/making videos are asked to please be as discreet as possible and assure they do not disrupt the service and/or impair the line of sight for congregants. Here again, they are asked to check with the church office to determine if anyone in their photos has submitted a "*Do Not Post or Publish*" request. If so, the person(s) should not be included in any EUMC postings, press releases, or social media.
- Videography for funerals will be at the family's discretion.
- Photography and/or videography is allowed for weddings. However, couples should work with their photographer and Pastor in advance to assure that the service will not be disrupted, and that line of sight for congregants will not be impaired by equipment and/or photographers. To help maintain the sacred nature of the ceremony, couples are encouraged to take the bulk of their photos after the service concludes.
- ***See the attached addendum for more specificity regarding times when pictures/videos are appropriate.***

2. EUMC will publish a weekly note in the Sunday worship bulletin to let congregants and visitors know that pictures/videos are sometimes taken and posted of portions of weekly church services and events. We will also make the policy available at the beginning of the Vacation Bible School, the Children's Choir season, the Fall kick-off for youth events, and at other key times to inform parents of the opt-out form. For those who do not want pictures, videos, and/or other information posted about themselves or their children, they may complete the "*Do Not Post or Publish*" request, and submit it to the Church Office.

**Erwin UMC: “Do Not Post or Publish” Request**

Please do not post or publish any photos, videos, and/or other personal information on church social media, church publications, and/or church press releases regarding our participation in worship services and/or church-related events for the individuals listed below.

I understand that the Erwin United Methodist Church will make every effort to exercise due diligence in honoring my request.

Signature of Individual/Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name(s) of any other family members who are also opting out of postings/publications:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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**For Office Use Only:**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Filed by (initials): \_\_\_\_\_