

**RESOLUTION # 2016 -10 (Revised for Adjourned Session)  
RESOLUTION TO 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION  
Resolution Relating to Computer Network and Internet Access Policy  
Presented by the Communications Ministry Team and the Safe Sanctuaries  
Committee**

**WHEREAS**, computers, computer networks and other electronic devices provide employees and church members access to the vast information resources of the Internet with the intention of increasing productivity and enhancing church-related communication; and

**WHEREAS**, there is also justifiable concern that they can be misused, potentially violating laws, ordinances or other church policies, garnering negative publicity for the church and potentially exposing it to significant legal liabilities:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that all local churches in the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference require all users of church computer equipment and networks to comply with and sign the following policy.

**Persons Responsible for Presenting Resolution:** Rev. John Bletsch and Rev. James H. Wilkin

**COMPUTER NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCESS POLICY**

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of these pages include offensive, sexually explicit and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive content. Additionally, having an e-mail address on the Internet may lead to receipt of unsolicited e-mail containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk, and the local United Methodist Church of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference (the Church) is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet. To minimize these risks, your use of the Internet at the Church is governed by the following policy:

**PERMITTED USE OF INTERNET AND CHURCH COMPUTER NETWORK**

The computer network is the property of the Church and should primarily be used for legitimate business and ministry purposes. The Church will decide what are legitimate business and ministry purposes. Users are provided access to the computer network to assist them in the performance of their jobs or for participation in their ministries. If Users access the Internet for personal reasons such use should be governed by the restrictions detailed below. All Users have a responsibility to use the Church's computer resources and the Internet in a professional, lawful and ethical manner. Abuse of the

computer network or the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including possible employment termination, and civil and/or criminal liability.

## **COMPUTER NETWORK USE LIMITATIONS**

### **Prohibited uses**

The Church's computer network may not be used to disseminate, view or store pornographic text or images, or any other unauthorized materials. Employees may not use the Church's Internet connection in excess for the purposes of gaming or entertainment if it impacts their ability to carry out their assigned duties or impacts another employee or ministry functions. Additionally, you may not use the computer network to display, store or send (by e-mail or any other form of electronic communication such as bulletin boards, chat rooms, Usenet groups, etc.) material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful. Furthermore, anyone receiving such materials should notify their supervisor immediately.

### **Illegal copying**

Users may not illegally copy material protected under copyright law or make that material available to others for copying. Users are responsible for complying with copyright law and applicable licenses that may apply to software, files, graphics, documents, messages and other material you wish to download or copy. Users may not agree to a license or download any material for which a registration fee is charged without first obtaining the express written permission of the Church, or it is within the understood prerogative of their assigned role and responsibilities at the church.

### **Communication of confidential and/or personal member information**

Unless expressly authorized to do so, Users are prohibited from sending, transmitting or otherwise distributing confidential and/or personal member information, data or other confidential information belonging to the Church. Unauthorized dissemination of such material may result in severe disciplinary action as well as substantial civil and criminal penalties under state and federal laws.

## **DUTY NOT TO WASTE COMPUTER RESOURCES**

### **Accessing the Internet**

To ensure security and avoid the spread of viruses, Users accessing the Internet through a computer attached to the Church's network must do so through an Internet firewall or other security device. Bypassing the Church's computer network security by accessing the Internet directly by modem or other means is strictly prohibited unless the computer you are using is not connected to the Church's network.

### **System Passwords**

Unless expressly authorized to do so, users are prohibited from sharing or distributing passwords to the church's network, computers or internet accounts.

### **Frivolous use**

Computer resources are not unlimited. Network bandwidth and storage capacity have finite limits, and all Users connected to the network have a responsibility to conserve these resources. As such, Users must not deliberately perform acts that waste computer resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to, any of the following examples when done in excess or inappropriately: sending unauthorized mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the Internet, playing games, engaging in online chat groups, uploading or downloading large files, accessing unauthorized streaming audio and/or video files or otherwise creating unnecessary loads on network traffic.

### **Virus detection**

Files obtained from sources outside the Church, including disks brought from home; files downloaded from the Internet, newsgroups, bulletin boards or other online services; files attached to e-mail; and files provided by other users or vendors may contain dangerous computer viruses which may damage the Church's computer network. Users should never download files from the Internet, accept e-mail attachments from outsiders or use disks from non-Church sources without first scanning the material with Church-approved virus checking software. If you suspect that a virus has been introduced into the Church's network, notify the Church immediately.

### **NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY**

Users are given computers and Internet access to assist them in the performance of their jobs. Users should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the Church's computer equipment. The computer network is the property of the Church and may be used only for Church purposes. Provisions shall be made to protect confidential communications between the pastor and members and constituents.

### **Waiver of privacy rights**

Users expressly waive any right of privacy in anything the User creates stores, sends or receives using the Church's computer equipment or Internet access. The User consents to allow any authorized Church personnel access to and review of all materials created, stored, sent or received by the User through any Church network or Church Internet connection.

### **Monitoring of computer and Internet usage**

The Church has the right to monitor and log any and all aspects of its computer system including, but not limited to, monitoring Internet sites visited by Users, monitoring chat and newsgroups, and monitoring file downloads and all communications sent and received by Users.

### **Blocking sites with inappropriate content**

The Church has the right to utilize software that makes it possible to identify and block access to Internet sites containing sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate in the workplace.

**Acknowledgement of understanding**

I have read and agree to comply with the terms of this policy governing the use of the Church's computer network. I understand that violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination and civil and criminal penalties.

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Local United Methodist Church

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Signature

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Date

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Printed name