

The Invitation

The South Carolina Conference Media/IT Team is encouraging better participation in social media at Annual Conference this year. Social media can enhance the way that we interact together in Florence. It can help others in South Carolina, and throughout the United Methodist connection, to follow our Annual Conference from wherever they are. And, as an added bonus, maybe this could be the perfect occasion for some of us to give social media a try for the first time, or to learn how to better utilize it as a ministry tool.

Whatever the case, you are invited to join us in the world of social media during the 2014 Annual Conference in the following two ways:

(1) Follow the official SC Annual Conference accounts.

Get the play-by-play on everything from worship and teaching, to reports and debates, by following [@umcsc](#) on Twitter. Check the Facebook page (facebook.com/scumc) for highlights and summaries each day. And keep track of [@umcsc](#) on Instagram to enjoy the sights and sounds of Conference. When in doubt, track the hashtag **#umcsc** to stay up to date on what everyone is sharing.

(2) Share quality content during Conference.

Create a new account, or use an existing one, to post about Annual Conference, and be sure to label your posts with the hashtag: **#umcsc**. Even if you're already a social media pro, be more intentional during Conference to add quality to the conversation. Remember, the official SC Conference social media accounts will be looking for good content to quote and retweet, so we need everyone to contribute. That includes sharing about the "unofficial" side of Conference, too, like everything from Bocce Ball to the 5K race.

For Beginners

If you're new to social media, start by visiting the websites of several different platforms or apps. Try them out, explore, and don't get overwhelmed. For tips on what to share or not to share, here's [a good article from Relevant Magazine](#). For some more best practices in social media from United Methodist Communications, [read here](#).

Again, at Annual Conference we will be focusing on three of the major platforms: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Each of these platforms lets you choose which other users you want to "follow" – whether it's people you know or just someone or something that interests you – in order to get updates on what they're sharing.

Platforms

Facebook is a social networking sight that connects you with friends, family, co-workers, organizations and businesses. It's the most popular of all and has a multitude of features from video chat to photo-sharing to blogging.

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing platform. Using your smart-phone, it allows you to upload media directly to Instagram so that others can follow a visual log of your life and events. It also gives you the option to use filters to enhance your photos.

Twitter is a micro-sharing platform which limits each of your posts to 140 characters or less. These brief little updates are called “Tweets.” Twitter revolutionized the use of hashtags to categorize what you share.

Interaction

A hashtag is essentially a word or phrase (with no spaces), preceded by the “#” symbol, which allows users to label their content (e.g., #AmericanIdol, #badhairday, #UMC). It means that users can search for a certain topic by hashtag, and then you can interact with what other people are posting about that topic. Facebook and Twitter both use hashtags in a similar fashion. Remember, the hashtag for Annual Conference is #umcsc.

Like the hashtag, on any of these platforms you can also label your content with other people’s user names or “handles.” Usually, these are denoted by the “@” symbol. That way, you can call someone else’s attention to your posts, or have a dialogue with them. For instance, if I want to talk to LeBron James about how the NBA play-offs are going, I might tweet: “Come on, @KingJames, let’s see some more rebounding. #NBAPlayoffs #LeBron.”

Common Hashtags and Handles

Here are some of the labels, topics, organizations, and people to be on the lookout for during 2014 Annual Conference:

	<u>Hashtag</u>	<u>Handle</u>
SC Conference <i>and/or</i> 2014 Annual Conference	#umcsc	@umcsc
The global UMC	#umc	
General Conference 2012 <i>or</i> 2016	#gc2012 #gc2016	
The Advocate	#advocatesc	@advocatesc
Focus on Children in Poverty in SC	#pray4kids	
United Methodist Women <i>or</i> Men	#umw #umm	@umWomen
United Methodist Volunteers in Mission	#umvim	@UMVIMSEJ
The Rethink Church campaign	#rethinkchurch	@umrethinkchurch
SC Conference Connectional Ministries	#ccm	
Council on Finance & Administration	#cfa	
United Methodist Communications		@UMcommunication

United Methodist News Service

@UMNS

United Methodist Reporter

@umreporter

Church and Society

@GBCSUMC

UMCOR

@UMC_UMCOR