Twitter
The world, 140 characters at a time.

Concordia Theological Seminary
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What is Twitter?

INTRODUCTION

Twitter is a website made for the purpose of sharing short blurbs of information. Posts in Twitter are called "tweets" and are a maximum of 140 characters (similar to a text message). It is commonly used for sharing current activities ("I'm waiting in line at the store"), thoughts ("I like puppies.")), or alleviating boredom for cell-phone users ("Mr. Johnson's class is SO boring!!").

Although it has these varied social uses, it can be useful for the ministry in a number of ways. One consideration is that Twitter has a limited audience. However, within that audience, it can be quite effective in a culture that is flooded with too much information.

It is important to note that Twitter has very limited security settings. By default, all of the information you publish on Twitter is available to the Internet public.
How Can I Use Twitter in Ministry?

SOME IDEAS

*Announcing events*-Because Twitter is designed for sharing short pieces of information, it is ideal for making quick announcements to your church community. For example, "Come to the Word on Wednesday dinner and Bible study starting at 6." *Informing of short-notice changes*-Twitter can also be useful when an event gets canceled at the last minute. Once again, keep in mind the limited audience.

*Easily sharing information with a community*-Brief announcements can be shared via Twitter. Because of the impersonal nature of Twitter, it is best to keep these to facts ("The food can drive collected ... cans of food!"), rather than more sensitive things like prayer requests and the like. (It’s not that you can’t share prayer requests via Twitter, but know that there’s NO privacy to them, which is often a concern with such things.)
How Do I Get Started?

SIGNING UP AND USING TWITTER

1. Go to www.twitter.com
2. Click on the "Get started now" link, and enter your information. When choosing a username, keep in mind that this is how other Twitter users will find your information.
3. To make a "tweet," write in the box labeled "What's happening?" This will now be seen by anyone who is "following" your Twitter account.
4. You can change different settings about your account in the "Settings" page in the upper right portion of the page. Some notable features include:
   a. Account
      i. "Protect my tweets" - Allows you to limit the viewing of posts to only those Twitter users you specify.
      ii. Notices - These options allow you to be notified when a Twitter user begins following (subscribes) to your Twitter account.
   b. Profile
      i. Picture - This is an icon that can be used to make your tweets stand out among a list of others. Using an easily recognizable icon, like a picture of your church, helps users to quickly identify that the information is from you.
      ii. Web - This is a good place to put a link to your church's website.

Because Twitter functions like an announcement board, it can be useful to share the same information on your church's website, thus broadening the audience. Twitter has a utility that will generate HTML code for viewing your latest tweets. It will appear on your website as a small isolated box.

1. While you are logged into Twitter's website, at the bottom, choose "Goodies."
2. Choose "Widgets" and then "Widgets for...My website."
3. Choose "Profile Widget" If you have difficulty loading the page, try loading it in Internet Explorer.
4. Under Settings, enter your Twitter username
5. Under Preferences, you can change functional settings such as how many recent tweets to display or whether to have a scroll bar.
6. Under Colors, you can change the colors of the widget to match the website it will be put into.
7. Under Dimensions, you can adjust the size of the widget so that it fits best in your website.
8. Finally, choose "Finish and Grab Code." Copy that code to your church’s website (or have someone who knows what he/she is doing do it).