INTRO LETTER

You might be wondering what role social media plays in the DISASTER RELIEF Mission Project. Maybe it feels like an overwhelming and daunting task, and you’re tempted to skip it completely.

We understand! There’s a lot going on with social media these days. But it’s a remarkable tool for creating relationships and engaging with people online. So, don’t worry. We are going to equip you with what you need to use social media in a meaningful and inspiring way all while encouraging your congregation to participate generously in The Advance Disaster Relief ministries.

So, take a deep breath. This is going to be good.

In this Social Media How-To Plan, we will go over creating a strategy, practical tips and best practices, and the tools that exist to help you.

Ready to get started? Let’s go.
The first thing you need to know about social media is that the best place to start is with the 3 W’s: Who, What, and Why.” Or, what the experts call “strategy.” Starting there makes it easier to focus, plan, and achieve your goals.

**WHO** UMC Leadership Teams and UMC Congregations

**WHAT** The Advance Disaster Relief Projects

**WHY** To create awareness and then encourage our teams and congregations to give and participate generously in The Advance Disaster Relief Projects.

Now, let’s set some goals.

Here are a few common goals for social media posting:

- Spread the word (Create awareness)
- Generate engagement (Through comments, shares, likes)
- Inspire action (Inspire congregants to give generously)

Spread the word, generate engagement, and inspire action by using our Social Media Images that we’ve created for you, and pairing with a pre-written social status we’ve prepared for you.

**STATUS:**
Acts of sharing and kindness are particularly pleasing to God, even when they go unnoticed by others. What are you waiting for? Let’s make the world a better place by making a difference in people’s lives today. Visit our website www.umcmission.org/DisasterRelief to know more about what we do and the many ways you can help.
Setting up your social media posts like this helps create conversation, generates post likes, and inspires post sharing.

The absolute best thing to do on social media is to **remain focused**. If your posts come across scattered and mixed, then your audience will feel the same way. The more focused and intentional you are with your posting, the better the response will be from your online followers.

Make sure you are using as many pre-made social media images and statuses that we’ve provided as you can. You can use a tool like Canva or Adobe Spark to create your own images. Just follow the examples we’ve given in the kit!
**PRACTICAL TIPS & GUIDELINES**

**BE CONSISTANT**
Develop a posting schedule based on accessible analytics from your social platform. Consistency means that you will maximize the number of people exposed to your content.

**USE VISUALS**
People respond better to images or videos on social media. High-quality images and video are more likely to help you reach your goal than a simple text post. If you opt for a video, make sure it’s short (2 minutes at most). Want some great news? We’ve created both social media images and videos for you to download and use!

**CREATE VALUE**
People want to get something out of what you post. They are looking to learn something or feel something. They want to connect emotionally to the stories you post. It’s how we are wired.

**LISTEN AND WATCH**
Take some time to observe and see what your followers are liking or discussing online, and interact with them there. To know how to start a new conversation, sometimes you have to participate in an existing one first.

**STAY FOCUSED**
Use the strategies you identified in the earlier pages like a guardrail for the content you post. If your goal is to create awareness, it might be too soon to try to inspire action. When you spend time listening and watching, then you will better know and feel more confident about when to adopt the next strategy.

**OPTIMIZE FOR MOBILE**
The vast majority of social media users are looking at and interacting with platforms on their mobile device. This is important to keep in mind when you consider the type of post you choose and when to post.
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

FACEBOOK
Facebook is hands down the most well known social platform. It also has the broadest representation of users in terms of age and gender.

INSTAGRAM
Instagram is a social platform that is highly focused on visuals, and very popular with the Millennial generation.

TWITTER
Twitter is a popular social media platform focused on sharing short(ish) snippets of information. You can post photos, videos, and gifs on Twitter.

While Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are largely considered the main platforms, there are many more that exist. A few other effective tools for your church might be Pinterest, SnapChat, and YouTube.

The Social Media Images we’ve created for you can be used on all the most popular social media platforms.

- Create a post on Instagram or Facebook by choosing and uploading your image. Then, copy and paste the pre-written status we’ve provided. Then schedule or post!

STATUS:
This is an encouragement to guard ourselves against selfishness or prejudice that might lead to dissension. Like Christ, we should have a servant’s attitude, serving out of love for God and others, not out of guilt.

Join our movement today.

STATUS:
Acts of sharing and kindness are particularly pleasing to God, even when they go unnoticed by others. What are you waiting for? Let’s make the world a better place by making a difference in people’s lives today. Visit our website www.umcmission.org/DisasterRelief to know more about what we do and the many ways you can help.
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• Create an Instagram Story by using a video we’ve provided or sharing a social media image that you’ve saved to your camera roll.

• Create a post for Twitter by choosing and uploading your image. Then, edit the pre-written status we’ve created for you down to 280 characters. Then, schedule or post!

• Create a post on Snapchat by first saving your desired image on your phone. Then upload to Snapchat by choosing the icon underneath the “camera” button on the Snapchat home screen. Choose your photo and upload! To sweeten the deal, do a “live” Snap for your next story and read the pre-written status which is loaded with lots of good information!

TWITTER STATUS:
The greatest act of love is the giving of oneself for others, just as Christ did when He spent His time here on earth.

How will you show your love for others today?
• Create a post on your website by uploading one of our Social Media Images along with an announcement on your site. Then, log in to your Pinterest account, find the announcement and “pin” the image. Voila! Now the image is creating awareness both on your website and on Pinterest.

• Create a post on your YouTube Channel by uploading one of the videos we’ve made for you. Use the description box to write more about The Advance Disaster Relief Projects.

STATUS:
If you’re seeking ways that you can help your community, contact us at www.umcmission.org/DisasterRelief. We can help you discover several ways you can help make a difference in someone’s life.
Cut down on the amount of time it takes to post to social media by using a posting tool that allows you to post on many social platforms at once. This will save you a lot of time and stress down the road.

Check out these posting platforms:
  - Buffer
  - Hootsuite
  - Co-Schedule
  - Sprout Social
  - Church Butler

All of these tools enable you to pre-schedule posts and also provide helpful analytics about each of your posts.
CLOSING

We hope you can see what incredible potential social media has to spread the word and increase generous giving for The Advance Disaster Relief Projects.

If you stick to your goal, stay focused, and be consistent, then you will yield positive results on social media. If you get lost or overwhelmed, start back at the beginning of this document and spend a little time watching and listening to your followers online.

As a final thought, remember that you are already part of an inspiring and wonderful story in the DISASTER RELIEF Project! By bringing light to the globally important issue of stopping disaster, you are starting a legacy. And that’s a worthy and inspiring place to begin.
For more resources like this, visit umcmission.org/DisasterRelief