ONLINE WORSHIP BEST PRACTICES

**COVID-19 Pandemic Responses**

**The Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island**

**April 7, 2020**

**Some Things to Consider**



The ability to deliver meaningful, engaging worship has nothing to do with all the bells and whistles. Simple and basic can deliver.

What is “authentic” worship online for you and your faith community?

* What is your ‘why’?
* Consider your ‘who’?

**Helpful Websites & Other Info:**

* **Zoom Pro account** is $20/month with an optional extra of $67 for toll-free phone line. Cancel anytime. Increase your security to keep out hackers by using a password and/or waiting room in your set-up options.
* **Go-to-Meeting** – Approx. $40 including the call-in feature.
* **Facebook Livestream** – free, but not as interactive.
* **iMovie -** editing software for macOS, iOS devices (Apple)
* **Worship Platforms & Instructions** – Visit our *Diocesan COVID-19 ‘Worship Resources*’ page
* **Music licensing** is required when offering live or recorded worship music. Public domain (older) hymns may be used if you are the ones playing/singing. If you are sharing recorded music owned/performed by someone else you still may require their permission or a license even if they are in the public domain. Live-stream music add-on for CCLI is approx. $60/year.
* Recommended sites:
  + **Hymnary.org**
  + **freebibleimages.org**
* **Need help with technology?**

See: Tanya Moxley, Jack Risk, Katie-Taylor Flynn, Douglas Beck

*(To contact e-mail: lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca)*

**Invite Welcome Connect in Virtual Church - *Adapted Notes***

*(Written by Greg Syler – March 28, 2020 – ECF Vital Practices)*

****INVITE:** How do people know *where* you are worshipping now that you’re online? How have you informed your parishioners? How have you invited others? How and *how often* are you encouraging parishioners to invite people they know? Consider these communication tools: Roadside sign, poster on church door, e-mail notices, parish website, Facebook page, community webpages, phone messages, etc.

**WELCOME:** To what are we welcoming people? How do our virtual gatherings inspire a sense of welcome? To what are we welcoming people? What if a newcomer popped into this Sunday’s Zoom church? Are we communicating a vibrant, mission-focused gathering of disciples of Jesus if the audio is hard to hear and the camera is so distant in our Facebook live sessions?

**WELCOME:** At the beginning show a few PowerPoint slides with music playing – featuring things like Zoom how-to’s; some background on today’s scripture texts or the theme of the day; information about other virtual formational gatherings (Bible studies, coffee times, prayer groups, etc.); Your worship schedule; outline the options for giving Offerings; trivia and jokes; and your website address. (Similar to a movie theatre when they play reminders and commercials before the program starts.)

**CONNECT:** Giving. Let those who attend Virtual Church know they can still give, and continue to encourage generosity in sharing time, talent, and treasure. Make a case for giving: tell a short ministry story about how your congregation makes a difference in people’s lives. Update your website’s online giving links, including Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR). Encourage people to make phone calls and connect with those who may be alone, struggling and anxious during this pandemic.

**CONNECT:** While folks are comfortable at home, take your time with prayer, and praying, and learning the habits of real intercessory prayer. Encourage participants to Un-Mute their microphone and/or type their prayers into the Chat box. Participants on Facebook live can also “Comment” their prayers, and the Officiant can read those prayers aloud.

**CONNECT:** Growing. What are the next steps for participants in their walk with Christ this week? Invite and explain briefly and clearly how to join a gathering for spiritual enrichment. An online bible study? Something to read? A coffee and chat group? Remind people about the next worship gathering and encourage them to prepare in some way. Now that so many have a whole lot more time to read and ‘inwardly digest’ things – now is a great time to invite people to go deeper and grow in their faith.



**How to Move from Broadcasting to Interacting - *Adapted Notes***

*(Written by April Karli - March 27, 2020 – Fresh Expressions)*

Focus on designing a liturgy with elements that invite interaction and participation. Allow as many voices as possible.

****Participation in this kind of liturgy is a form of discipleship. It teaches what 1 Corinthians 14:26 says, “When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.” The word liturgy means “the work of the people.”

Consider how to maintain the same level of engagement. Technology can create disconnection and shorten attention spans. And we didn’t want the online version of our liturgy to be created for consumption. We hope for participation — for **connection.**

Since we are not able to physically be together, hold space for emotional connection. After the sermon, participants may be asked to reflect in silence for two minutes. Following the silence open it up for anyone who wished to share. Songs and words of encouragement spontaneously flowed, including from our teenagers! Later, during the Prayers of the People, many shared the burdens they’re carrying.

Prayers of the People - some participants may be unmuted to share prayer requests, others in the Chat box. Share the burdens they’re carrying.

Offering - link to your online giving page, PAR, etc.

Despite the digital medium, levels of connection, engagement, and participation can be high. Achieve this by deliberately making space for people to share, and by being willing to have moments of awkwardness and imperfection. Highly relational communities, like families, have both!

**ZOOM Technical Aspects**

* We made sure everyone who would be reading on screen had some basic information: a) good front-facing light b) camera at eye level c) mic check before liturgy.
* Have someone act as liturgy producer, making sure everyone knows their role and that liturgy flows well. The producer acts as the host of the gathering, muting and unmuting the mic of whoever is talking. This person can also facilitate the post-sermon sharing time and the prayers of the people.
* Participants were asked to type into the Chat box when they had something to share during the reflection time or Prayers of the People. The host called on them and unmuted their mics in order, making sure everyone was able to share. This kept multiple people from being unmuted at one time.



**ENGAGING CHILDREN**

* Plan a song just for kids, and invite them to participate - sing and dance.
* Read the children a Bible story.
* Assign them an activity and ask them to report back in some way. Send photos, e-mail, Facebook posts, etc.
* Dean Paul Smith (Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax) has been mentioning some children by their first names during Sunday online worship. They’ve been sharing their artwork with him and he has been commenting.

**Cheat-Sheet for an Online Participatory Liturgy Using Zoom:**

• Review your order of worship and look for ways to include multiple people.

• Ask someone to act as “producer,” running slides, muting and unmuting people.

• Use Zoom’s “Meeting” Function

• Involve kids

• Involve multiple people as speakers – discussion

• Leave time for silence and contemplation

• Leave time to share prayer requests

• Remind people to give online or through PAR

