

Community in a Season of Social Distancing

Don't assume everyone is comfortable or equipped to use electronic communication like email, Facebook, ZOOM or Skype.

- Do you already have a list of who receives information via electronic media? Check by phone with those who aren't on such a list and find out what options they have available for electronic communication.
- Consider sending mail via the postal service to those who don't use electronic communications. Short notes, cards, comics, devotional material, etc. will be appreciated.
- Perhaps asking those who have chosen to self-isolate to make phone calls, send cards or notes to others in isolation will give purpose and joy to one another.
- Is there a group of folks in your church who can be on-call to receive or make phone calls from/to those feeling isolation, fear, anxiety, and loneliness?

Invite participation of those connecting remotely to worship.

- Find ways to prepare and invite participation in songs, litanies, scripture, and other liturgical practices.
 - Send the order of worship out before the worship service so people can follow along.
 - If using video conferencing technology, remind people ahead of time to mute their microphones unless they are participating. Instruct folks who call in by phone how to mute their voices as well.
 - It is ok to experiment with the best ways of singing and reading together. It will likely work best for everyone to be muted to avoid delays and echoes but, who knows, it may sound like Pentecost if everyone participates with mics on!
 - If you are having communion, invite folks to have communion elements ready ahead of time. Orange juice and fish crackers work just fine!
- Assign worship responsibilities ahead of time. Other participants can serve as worship leader, scripture reader, children's story teller, etc.
- As much as possible, speakers should look into the camera, speak to the camera, etc.
- Intentional gestures and hand movements can be meaningful or distracting depending on how they are done. If serving communion, use as many natural and intentional movements as possible. Break the bread so that it can be seen. Hold the chalice up long enough for it to become a centering piece for the congregation. Invest as much "holy intention" as you would if the congregation was in the sanctuary with you.

Experiment and be Creative

- Virtual spiritual direction and prayer.
- Video stations of the cross.
- Create a Power Point worship service using religious art and scripture.
- Invite children (who are likely going to have lots of home time) to create stories, art, Lego worship, poetry, music, videos, etc. that could be shared