

Resources for Congregations

Being the Church without walls

Background

As Covid-19 continues to spread, faith communities around the world are making adjustments to how they worship and work in order to protect their members as well as the communities they serve. In addition to modifying how we worship and encouraging good hygiene amongst those who gather, we also need to minister to those who are at home. As people who are accustomed to gathering around tables, breaking bread and sharing the peace, conversations about virtual worship seem foreign. Those with compromised immune systems may find themselves in exile in their own homes for weeks at a time. How shall we respond?

Framing

Developing ways of connecting with those who are quarantined or who are socially isolated may also teach us ways of reaching out to those who shy away from church walls. Experiments in virtual worship, education, mission and outreach may offer deep insights into how we might be the church in this century beyond this present crisis.

Ideas

- Provide a conference call (audio/video or both) that connects members, especially those who are in social isolation or quarantine on a daily basis. Use this time for individuals to check in, voice their needs and pray for one another.
- Choose your platforms based on your needs. If your community values the sermon, streaming on Facebook makes sense. If they value the prayers of the people, the interactive nature of Zoom or other videoconferencing is a better option.
- Consider posting sermon resources (articles, links to appropriate stories, etc.) on your church's website or Facebook page as way of engaging members in scripture.

Resources

- www.zoom.us offers free hosting for up to 40 minutes/100 people. Several members of Cayuga-Syracuse attended an online meeting/training about how to utilize Zoom for worship. A recording of this meeting will be available soon, and a link will be posted on our Facebook page as well as in the e-newsletter when it becomes available.
- Shareable resources are available via subscription. If there is interest in the Presbytery providing these resources to churches, please contact Karen (kchamis@cayugasyracuse.org) Check out resources for children at www.illustratedministry.com; visual resources at sanctifiedart.org (wonderful for worship!). Looking for videos... check out <https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/producers/423/salt-project>.

Share your ideas with your siblings! How are you discovering new ways of reaching others virtually? Contact kchamis@cayugasyracuse.org to share your story.