

## CULTIVATING CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

During these difficult and uncertain times, we know it's hard to be separated from your community – especially your community of faith. COVID-19 has derailed our usual schedules, routines and worship practices, and we're all struggling to find new ways to lead and connect. While there may be some learning curves, technology offers us countless opportunities to fill the spaces between us – creating unity while apart. Here are some ideas for staying connected.

### CONTINUE WEEKLY SERVICES ONLINE

While podcasts and online sermons are not the same as a traditional in-person worship experience, digital services are wonderful alternatives in these unique circumstances. Whether it's a livestream or prerecorded video from a leader's living room or your place of worship, virtual gatherings help communities of faith maintain their priorities and a sense of normalcy that comes from gathering weekly for song, prayer and fellowship. Be sure to leverage your email and social platforms to let members know about these virtual gatherings, and make the recordings available on your website afterward for those who may not be able to join live – and for sharing with those who live in other parts of the world.



### HOST VIRTUAL WORSHIP AND PRAYER MEETINGS AND SPECIAL TALKS

Facebook Live, YouTube™ and other platforms lend well to live worship and communal prayer as well as special talks about top-of-mind topics. (The Gospel Coalition recently offered a lecture on peace in times of suffering and uncertainty from Pastor Tim Keller's living room in New York City.) Also, don't forget about the youngest among your congregation! Create simple but special messages just for children – even reading a storybook with a reassuring message.

## PHONE A FRIEND

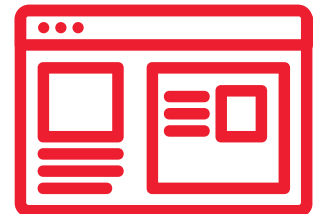
Even a quick phone call can have a lasting, positive impact, and it's an easy way for leaders and members to check in with each other, offer encouragement, uncover urgent needs and even pray together. Voicemails are also effective for demonstrating care and concern and reminding people that they are not alone – plus, they can be saved and replayed later for a boost amid moments of discouragement.



## CREATE A RESOURCES REPOSITORY

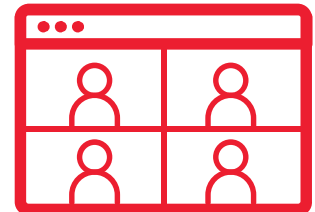
Your website is the ideal place for resources specific to your faith community, your city and the world, including:

- ✓ Sermons, teachings, devotionals and other resources to women, men, children and people in recovery
- ✓ A contact form that allows your members to communicate specific needs
- ✓ Links to important local, state and federal government agencies and health and human service organizations, including the CDC, the WHO and other resources like counseling and financial services
- ✓ Service opportunities, such as local businesses, restaurants and nonprofits that need support or deliveries that can be made to members and health care and essential workers serving on the front lines



## MAKE TIME TO BE SOCIAL

Even in these serious times, laughter and levity have their place. Facebook Events, GroupMe and WhatsApp™ make it easy to schedule get-togethers, and platforms like Google Hangouts™ provide the venue. Thanks to these portals, it's still possible to gather for a faith-based study, book or movie club; to play online games; and to have dinner with friends and family.



Although we cannot be together in person, we are in this together – and together is how we will get through.

Church Mutual® understands what you are facing and is here to help. Lean on us as a resource as you navigate this uncharted territory. Please reach out to a Church Mutual Risk Control Team Member with questions your organization is facing: [riskconsulting@churchmutual.com](mailto:riskconsulting@churchmutual.com). To access coverage-related information, [start here](#).

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