

Digital Church Starter Kit

Notes and Resources

DigitalPulpitSupply.com

send questions to: info@digitalpulpitsupply.com

What are we doing in today's meeting?

- THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR - mindset
- Thinking about the non-tech-y questions that have to be answered first
- Thinking about a robust ministry (with digital help)
- Let's talk TECH
- Answer some questions, gather others for "office hours" - <https://zoom.us/j/205533066>

When it comes to going digital, do exactly the things you told your congregation to do ...

- Remain calm
- Learn from the people who know more than you
- Make decisions about what's right for you, based on above information
- Reach out and care for (inreach, outreach) in ways that do not jeopardize anyone
- Use individual and collective gifts, resources, privilege, knowledge, etc to help

What questions do we need to answer?

- What kinds of ministry do we need to be doing? *Pastoral care, worship, teaching, fellowship, compassion ministries, etc.* And what is most important about those ministries?
- What are the needs/concerns of people in this time? *Illness, anxiety, grief, economic concerns, isolation, overwhelm, lack (actual and perceived), uncertainty, tribalism/bias/racism, etc.*
- How can we "live out loud" - modeling for the larger community what it looks like to remain connected, hold one another accountable, and care for one another?
- How can we adapt our ministries in light of new recommendations and mandates? What do we adapt? What do we start? What gets left behind?
- Who are the folks we want to make sure to minister to? *The people who aren't on Facebook? The people who don't have computers? The children and youth? The folks in care centers?*
- What is our "call to action" (CTA)? What do we actually want people to do? Can we point them toward purpose? Can we empower them for ministry in these times? Do we need them to set up recurring giving? Do we want them to learn something new (tech)?
- How are we going to teach those for whom this will be new and awkward and scary?
- What are we putting in place that will serve our ministries and our congregation members well after the crisis is over?
- Who is our team? Who do we know who is active in photography? Who are the church sound techs? Who is able and willing to lead if the pastor is ill? Who does podcasting in your community? Who are the musicians? Who has a video camera, laptop, iphone or ipad that you can borrow? Who in your congregation loves social media? Who is your "I'll do anything you need me to do" people?

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Keys to a robust ministry when you're out of your depth: CURATE and COLLABORATE

- Don't reinvent the wheel! If someone else is doing a cool thing and doing it well - and if it seems to be a good fit for your folks - point them to it!
 - Veggie tales on YouTube (find a video that goes with this week's scriptures) - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChddokv0fxIN3BS-KZpxFfA>
 - Illustrated Ministry (free weekly faith resources for children of all ages) - https://www.illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve?ck_subscriber_id=136889469
 - List of churches that livestream full worship services. If your ministry during this time doesn't include formal worship, or is a dramatically modified worship (just a sermon, Zoom Sunday School, etc.) give them the additional option of participating in a livestream from another congregation that streams their full worship.
 - https://www.dropbox.com/transfer/AAAAAKNuVIIx1cdPQR2z6bhfskX_4jnzjcf4vli4ZsHp3g6zTIB6eik (Digital Pulpit Supply - free sermon videos)
- Consider having a dedicated landing page on your website with resources for your congregation: WPCBelleville.org/ChurchAtHome
 - What are people going to need for Sunday morning? *Link to bulletin? Link to online giving platform? Children's time video link? Links to YouTube videos of songs you'll be singing (not your original stuff - link to a version you like)? Sermon notes? Scripture texts (with links to online Bible)? A statement (or video) from the pastor about what to expect in worship on Sunday morning? A detailed "how-to" for getting connected to your worship platform? Forms to submit prayer requests? Printable children's bulletin or activity sheet? Some "what to do if the stream crashes" information.*
 - Who should they call for help? *Who is the Stephen Ministry contact? Who is the resource person for compassion funds ministry? What are the community resources?*
 - What are other ministries people (your congregation AND the larger community) might need right now? *A list of online AA meetings?*
 - Links: If you don't embed your stream, link to where your stream will be and list a schedule of when you'll be live. Links to all your social media networks.
- Who can you work with to ease the burden and overwhelm?
 - The digital world removes geographical boundaries. How can 5 small churches spread across the nation create worship together? How can 5 small churches all in the same town create worship together without having to be in the same room?
 - Embrace the flexibility this unfortunate situation offers! People already expect worship will HAVE to be different. How can you make the difference meaningful by working with people, offering resources you might not otherwise have access to?
 - Collaboration may feed you, as well. Don't forget your own needs for community and connection. What are you doing during this time that feeds your soul?

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Live-streaming is NOT for everyone! Using technology doesn't necessarily mean streaming!

- Texting platform - how does this foster pastoral care and information exchange?
- Email platform - for information disbursement, but can also be a way to minimize isolation. Include a video from the pastor. Include selfie videos from others in the congregation telling what they've been up to, etc.
- Video calls - use for pastoral care and help minimize the sense of isolation. Use platforms like Skype, Facetime, Zoom for one-on-one check-ins.
- Let people see behind the scenes - record a video or "go live" on FB, Instagram, YouTube, etc. when your setting things up for worship, when you're outside for a walk, when you're getting ready to video the children's time for the coming Sunday, etc. See what you're doing helps them feel connected. Here's a fun one, though now outdated:
https://vimeo.com/395567549/f55727f5f9?fbclid=IwAR2YFxdhrsM7PEgdW0igqBX_VkVZDDCpcLFRPq5NhqIoavyQ8CWEjMoNGds
- Do a daily lectio divina for youth or younger adults LIVE on Instagram.
- Explore other fun apps: Create a congregation "group" in Marco Polo and use it to help the congregation stay connected to one another. Build fun engagement opportunities (Bible quiz, church trivia, etc) in Kahoot for the youth. Use SnapChat or WhatsApp or other messaging platforms to connect.
- Upload a modified "children's time" to YouTube. Do a Zoom meeting with the children of the congregation (and their parents, of course!) and do a special "Children's Church" ... if kids are home from school, you can even do it daily!
- Have a daily storytime for kids on Zoom. Pastor or children's ministry person can read a book with some theological themes. For ideas see: Storypath.upsem.edu
- NOTE - when you're interacting online with youth or children, make sure that parents are in the communication loop and there should always be AT LEAST two adults with access to the accounts you're using. Digital is the same as in person: don't be alone with a kid.
- NOTES on Zoom: if you're interested in using Zoom as a platform for ministry during this time, I recommend the following:
 - How to create community on Zoom (a google doc and great "how to"):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/13gelvJjto135PEzLqc_jR6rWIic7OB4P5YSeBeKQW8I/edit?fbclid=IwAR0N_X1spq83K7i1PPnXvr1x2098who-W56YIS_-lZFQ0wJ_b37eyKRZyH0#
 - Connect with former PC(USA) Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, who has been leading workshops on Zoom and is now meeting every Monday to provide tech and collaborative support. Use the link to see previous videos and good resources, as well as registering for upcoming workshops/meetings with him:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/204670224114691/>

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If I haven't talked you out of live-streaming yet ... let me try one more time.

- Streaming is trendy, but it's not the best option for every single congregation. DON'T do it just because everybody is talking about it or somebody (even a denominational official) recommends it.
- The most important thing is that your ministry during this time be a good fit for your congregation. What do they need most from the church right now? What are their technical abilities? How can we NOT add to the overwhelm many may already be feeling?
- Can live-streaming be true to who your congregation is? If you have a strong commitment to being liturgist-led, how will you accomplish that? (A live Zoom meeting may be better for this than streaming.) If congregational singing is really important to your congregation, you're going to need to figure out how that happens. If they aren't big fans of singing when they're actually in the sanctuary, why are you bothering to get that music streaming license? Is the congregation going to be bothered if the worship is led from someplace other than the sanctuary or if the pastor is not in her robe? What are the touchpoints that will provide consistency and comfort to your congregation? Can live-streaming help with that? Or do you need to choose a different way to go about that?

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No matter the digital platform you're using, you're gonna want these things:

- Make sure your congregation is set up to receive no-touch offerings, even better if its a platform that allows people to set up recurring giving. Remind people that the work of the Church is still going on and perhaps it has never been more important to make sure we can provide hope and comfort and help to people who need it ... and encourage them to give online.
 - Online giving w Presby Foundation - <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/onlinegiving/>
 - One Great Hour of Sharing give now link - <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/oghs/>
 - Get set up to accept donations on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/help/442078379905129> and <https://www.facebook.com/donate/signup>
- Make sure you are not infringing on any copyrights. Live-streaming, putting words up on the screen, singing in a Zoom meeting, and any other time you're using words or music that you didn't write, you need permission to use it. For liturgies and prayers, the copyright and permission information will be in the book or on the website where you found the text you want to use. For music, it means using public domain, writing it yourself, or having a license.
 - A good overview of copyright intricacies: <https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/administrative-staff-and-finance/documents-and-data/complying-with-copyright-laws/>
 - One License is offering a free license until (basically) Easter - <https://news.onelicense.net/2020/03/13/one-license-offers-gratis-licenses-to-help-cope-with-covid-19-challenges-valid-through-april-15/>
 - WJK info on using stuff in Book of Common Worship and Glory to God hymnal - <https://www.pcusastore.com/Pages/Item/14564/Hymnal-and-Book-of-Common-Worship-Rightsduring-Covid19-Pandemic.aspx?fbclid=IwAR0mUWIJkr1K5zeejRz11tGyYHXIcdg67joTb47HKxXD1M97J8pWZ7wFdw>

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We've heeded all the warnings and concerns, and we're ready to live-stream!

- Roughly this breaks down into 3 parts: Capture, Connect, (broad)Cast
 - *Capture* includes: how you record audio and video, as well as things like lighting, tripods, etc.
 - *Connect* is about how you go from Capture to Cast, so everything from cords/cables to encoders to computers
 - *Cast* (or broadcast) has to do with the platform you're streaming to, and the streaming services you use to get it there.
- Wait. On second thought, I don't want to livestream!
 - Don't panic. Let's talk through 3 simple possibilities.
 - First, the easiest possible way to livestream, with no budget and almost no equipment.
 - Second, a sort of pseudo-livestream, which actually isn't live.
 - Third, the full monty, but still kinda simple. (Am I allowed to use that reference?)
 - For those of you that are geeking out and wanna do something more complicated, resources for the nerds (like myself) are at the end.

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First, the easiest possible way to livestream, with no budget and almost no equipment.

- Use a phone or tablet - choose the one with the best camera. If you don't know which one has the best camera, take a couple of pictures/videos and compare. If you still can't figure it out - choose the newest or most expensive one.
- Choose a location where the wifi signal is strong.
- Keep the camera as close to the action as possible (for sound).
- Figure out a way to hold the camera still. (A tripod, a popmount, some weird phone hack using pencils and rubber bands that you found online. Whatever. Avoid shakes and bumps.)
- Go live natively in the app: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram.
- If you've got a little budget: get a tripod with a phone/tablet attachment, some lighting, a podcasting microphone.
- Make sure you eliminate background noise and weird echos.

Second, a sort of pseudo-livestream, which actually isn't live.

- Pre-record your worship or whatever you want to "live-stream."
- Do any "production" of the video that you want, using iMovie, one of the Adobe video editing apps, or others.
- Post production allows you to add slides, incorporate the audio from the sound board, use overlays with offering information or hymn words, etc.
- When the video is finished, upload it to Facebook or YouTube and schedule it as a "premiere." Schedule it for the time your worship would normally be.
- When people experience it as a premier, the watching experience is the same as it would be in a livestream. Also, it leaves you and your team free to interact with them in the comments.
- You get the benefit of pre-scheduling, so people can request notifications, share it with friend, invite friends, etc. This also allows you to share the link (url) with those who are not on Facebook.

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Third, the full monty, but still kinda simple. Full, but simple, livestream setup.

- THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE A LITTLE VAGUE because there are so many choices and so many factors to how you will want to invest, not the least of which is what kind of equipment you already have.
- Camera with hdmi output. Most likely this will be mini-hdmi, so the cable you'll need is mini-hdmi to hdmi.
- Audio interface to run between your soundboard and your computer.
- Video interface to run between camera and computer. (Most likely with hdmi in and usb out, but this will depend on your computer and your camera.)
- Computer with some serious processing power. Most of the computers we've got laying around don't have (or just barely have) the processing power for live-streaming.
- Software for streaming. OBS Studio comes highly recommended by many. Ecamm is for Mac only and amazing. [OBSStudio.com](https://obsproject.com/) or <https://www.ecamm.com/mac/ecammlive/>
- This guy tells you about the same thing as I just did, but with a bit more technical stuff and some equipment recommendations:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWzRqf73zzg&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

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Tips for Ninja Live-streaming

- Your first 5 seconds are crucial. Most people who come upon your video (whether live or premiered) are either hooked or gone before you hit the 10 second mark. Make sure you're personable (smiling), hospitable ("so glad you're here"), and important (don't miss this because today we're going to talk about ... hopefully something that is meaningful and timely and relevant.)
- If you've set up a landing page on your website, use the "learn more" button on the stream to point people to that site
- Include in your stream (or in the comments or on your landing page) how people can set the live notifications, "see first" feature, subscribe to your channel, etc. (These will vary depending on the platform to which you're streaming.)
- Prep for what happens when "it" hits the fan. (It's not, like, out of the realm of possibility!)
- If you're premiering on Facebook, upload to YouTube, as well, and be prepared to send people to that link if things go wonky. Prep a mass text message or an email that you can send out pretty quick to give people another option.
- Don't just look inward. There are a lot of people struggling right now and the church may not be the first place they look for help ... but it may be just what they need. Make sure whatever you're doing digitally has the capacity to invite others in ... and then, you know, actually invite them.
- If you're talking AT people ... if you're trying to tell them all about you and your church ... if you're stuff looks so polished that you could use it as a Super Bowl ad ... then you're doing it wrong. Make it real. Make it authentic. Make it true to who you are and who your congregation is. Make it about getting to know (and build relationships) with people. Make it about finding out how people are doing and what they need. *Emphasize people over production.*
- Practice! Talk it through with your team. Create a script that everyone can look at. Organize yourselves!
- Facebook and YouTube now have royalty-free music libraries that you can access.

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Resources for the techy folks

● Capture

- Video - Webcam, DSLR, Camcorder, Action camera
 - Camera recs
 - <https://www.creatorbeat.com/cameras/best-cameras-streaming-facebook-live-youtube-live/>
 - <https://vloggerpro.com/best-cameras-live-streaming/>
 - <https://www.boxcast.com/blog/the-best-video-cameras-for-live-streaming>
 - <https://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/5-affordable-live-stream-cameras/>
- Audio - use built in, use podcast mic, use sound system: <https://amzn.to/2TUrTwy> (the microphone I have)
- Don't forget the lighting, tripod, adapter for tripod, etc. (tripod: <https://amzn.to/3b5wNfQ> ; sample adapter for LARGE tablet but won't fit your phone: <https://amzn.to/2QDe0RF> ; decent and inexpensive but not amazing lights: <https://amzn.to/38Wzlvq> or <https://amzn.to/2Wp5p8D>)

● Connect

- Cords and cables
- Audio encoder: <https://amzn.to/38VVhae> (the one we have)
- Video encoder: <https://amzn.to/2wfQMK3> (we don't use this but others I respect recommend this)
- Computer

● Cast

- Software / Services
 - <https://www.sharefaith.com/blog/top-live-streaming-services-church/>
 - [Boxcast](#) – Starts at \$99 per month
 - [Livestream](#) by Vimeo – \$75 per month
 - [TruthCasting](#) – Starts at \$25 per month for small churches
 - [Christian World Media](#) – Starts at \$15 per month
 - [DaCast](#) – Starts at \$19 per month
 - [StreamingChurch.tv](#) – Starts at \$79 per month
 - [Sunday Streams](#) – Starts at \$49 per month
 - [Worship Channels](#) – Starts at \$99 per month
 - [Churchstreaming.tv](#) - 90 days free during covid-19 (\$79/month)
 - <https://www.switcherstudio.com> - using mobile devices
 - <https://restream.io> - multiple platforms at once
- Locations: Where do you want people to see it? FB, YouTube, Website, Roku, Apple TV

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- Quick-stream article <http://hackingchristianity.net/2020/03/covid-19-lockdown-creating-live-streamed-worship-in-3-days.html>
- PTZ Optics book (free) - PTZ Optics sells amazing but expensive cameras and are a GREAT streaming resource. Find their channel on YouTube - <https://ptzoptics.com/church-book/>
- Livestreaming tutorial video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWzRqf73zzg&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>
- The Audio/Video/Livestreaming professionals that I trust with my life: Philip Houser - 573-739-1111 - philip@dni-inc.com; Phil Mahder, 314-602-4890. Philmahder@gmail.com