



Coronavirus Tip Sheet

A guide for churches on how to prepare for unexpected closure

3/6/2020

Overview

With public health concerns leading to forced and voluntary closures in the next few weeks, your church may be wondering how to maintain communication with your attendees. People may not be gathering in large groups, but they still need a tangible connection with their church. It is more important than ever that your messages be able to reach your community.

This tip sheet is intended to help you develop a high-level strategy for how to connect with your people when you're not able to meet together regularly. You'll need a plan that includes your communications and your weekend message delivery.

This guide will help you get started so you can meet this weekend's critical functions.

Communications

Your current toolset for bulk communications and social media will be a primary way to push messaging out to your attendees. This includes informational updates, links to your website, and engagement-oriented posts.

Email

In addition to updating your content plans, you'll want to keep in mind that your bulk emails may take additional time to process. When sending to thousands of people at once, these communications can take hours to complete.

In preparation for these emails, make sure you have the correct data views and lists made for your audiences.

Social Media

Use your social media channels to drive people to your website for the latest information. Keep your most up-to-date information on your site, rather than giving those details on your social platforms so that old messages do not continue to get traction on social media, which could be confusing.

Website

Your website will be a critical part of this plan. We recommend that you consider these three points.

Alert Bar

The front page of your website is your virtual front door. Post an emergency message near the top of this page and make sure it stands out from the rest of the content. You might also consider a pop-up message to make sure it is impossible to miss.

This message needs to indicate the dates and status of this weekend's services (cancelled, pending, online only, etc), along with the date and time the message was last updated, and a link to a landing page with more information.

Here is an example of an Alert Bar.

Rock Solid

JESUS

Jesus changes everything

SUNDAYS AT 8, 9:30 & 11AM

[Visit Us](#)

[Watch Online](#)

Landing Page

You'll need to create a landing page where you can have more complete information. Consider including:

- A written message from your pastor
- A quick video message from a pastor (see below for some tips)
- A statement from the local health department (in the case of forced closure)
- Links to government resources such as
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>
 - State and County Departments of Health
 - More Information on Coronavirus: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/expert-answers/novel-coronavirus/faq-20478727>
- Details about and links to your online services
- Contact information for your organization during this timeframe
- Adding updates chronologically from the bottom of the page up. If your site is powered by Rock, you can use content channels for this functionality.

Here is an example of a landing page.



Video Update from Pastor Tim

March 5, 2020, 6pm



What to Know

As of 3/5/2020 at 6:30pm

- Sunday services will be held online only.
- We are suspending all midweek on-campus ministries for the next two weeks.
- Opportunities to serve are available on the serve page.

Video

Your attendees will appreciate an immediate message from your pastor. This does not need to be polished. Timing and authenticity are more important than production value for this type of video. If you have a studio that is set up and ready to go, feel free to use it. However, you can still put out a meaningful and timely message without a studio.

You can film this short 2- to 5-minute video with a mobile phone. For the best quality video on a phone, you'll want to use a phone tripod. If you do not have a tripod, you can set the phone on a hard, stable surface. The goal is to avoid movement during filming. The background is less important than the message so try to select a background that is not too visually distracting but don't worry about a lack of professional backdrop for this video.

You can quickly and easily host this video on Wistia or YouTube and manually embed it into your website landing page.

Below we have more information on tools to create videos.

Weekend Message Delivery

Getting your weekend content to your attendees is critical. This includes your adults, students and kids. Your pastors in each of these areas may want to create and post content for their ministries. You may also want to consider discussing giving if your attendees typically give during in-person services.

On-Demand Recorded Services

While there may be a desire to have live streaming on day one, this is more technically challenging, therefore on-demand may be your best first step. These pre-recorded services will be a primary method that your attendees use to connect with your church. You can use your current podcasting technology to continue to post your messages on your website. This includes filmed messages that are uploaded to your video hosting provider and embedded on your website's podcast or messages page. Hosting providers to consider for your recorded messages include:

- Wistia: <https://wistia.com/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/>
- Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/>

If you do not have this technology in place yet, you'll want your service programming and IT teams to focus on getting this in place as soon as possible. If you are a church that runs on Rock, you can reach out to a Rock Partner and the Rock Community for help in getting these features activated in your Rock instance and available on your website. Rock also has a plug-in available for Wistia-hosted videos that provides integrated analytics.

Live Stream Services

Once you have an on-demand strategy in place, you can work on tackling live streaming. The challenge here is that all potential issues will be live. If you are not currently set up for live streaming your services, you may want to get a team together to start working toward this, but don't make this initiative your primary one just yet. It will take some practice to get this right and you don't want to launch with live streaming services that are poorly executed. You'll want to check out Vimeo's Live Streaming service: <https://vimeo.com/features/livestreaming>

Do not forget to include on-demand content delivery as well, since many people are used to consuming content this way and may not hit your live-streamed services at the right time.

Creating Video Content

You will need some basic equipment to connect with your attendees during mandatory or voluntarily public closures. The basic package below will get you started for your quick videos, and you can add to this list over time if you would like to.

Basic – Mobile Phone Recording

Don't underestimate the power of your everyday handheld video recorder – your mobile phone. Today's phones are also incredible cameras. With a small investment in some supporting

equipment you'll have everything you need on hand for a professional quality, affordable video studio.

Two tips to keep in mind are, use a tripod and don't use your phone's digital zoom as it could result in pixilation issues.

Essential Equipment

- Mobile Phone Tripod (\$51): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00K0P047E>
- Mobile Phone Tripod Phone Clamp (\$12): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0169SORDW>

Optional Equipment

- Lavalier Microphone (\$62): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00EO4A7L0>
- Microphone Cable Adaptor (\$15): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00L6C8PN0>
- Headphone Adaptor (\$9): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LXJFMGF>
- Light Kit (\$160): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B06XW3B81V>
- External Battery for Phone (\$50): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01JIWQPMW>
- Backdrop Stand Kit (\$69): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07YC95HB6>

Intermediate – Introductory Camera

If you're ready to move past the mobile phone to a dedicated video camera and studio for the first time, we recommend that you keep it simple. You'll have several camera options and can also take this opportunity to upgrade your additional studio pieces.

Camera Options

- Sony A6100 with 16-50mm Lens (\$698): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07X71JK4L?th=1>
- Refurbished Canon M50 (\$470): <https://shop.usa.canon.com/shop/en/catalog/refurbished-eos-m50-ef-m-15-45mm-f-35-63-is-stm-lens-kit-black>

Additional Equipment

- SD Card (\$20): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07H9J1YXN>
- Tripod (\$180): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0772WLSHZ>
- Wireless Microphone System (\$199): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07QGGBNMN>
- Lavalier Microphone (\$62): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00EO4A7L0>
- Light Kit (\$160): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B06XW3B81V>

Advanced – Studio Quality Camera

If you're considering an advanced studio set up, do realize that the technology is a bit more complex and there are more ways your recording could go wrong. You'll get very professional results, but this is probably not the place to start when you're creating video content for the first time.

- Sony Camera (\$2,300): https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1186034-REG/sony_ilce7sm2_b_alpha_a7sii_mirrorless_digital.html/DFF/d10-v21-t1-x674436/SID/EZ

- Camera Lens (\$2,200): https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1392921-REG/sony_24_70mm_f_2_8_gm_lens.html/DFF/d10-v21-t1-x880369/SID/EZ
- SD Card (\$37): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07H9DVLBB>
- Light Kit (\$480): https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1337224-REG/dracast_drsp_lk_3x500_b_s_silver_series_led500_bi_color.html
- Portable Recorder (\$330): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00DFU9BRK>
- Shure BLX14 Lavalier Microphone (\$249): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B016APL728/>

Conclusion

Public event cancellations and closures will impact churches, but they don't have to derail your connection with your attendees. With a few precautionary steps to prepare for all possibilities you can be confident in your continued ability to communicate quickly and professionally.