

# COVID-19 Response: Taking Your Church Online

**T**his week, Governor Wolf extended the stay-at-home order for counties all across the state as Pennsylvania tried to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

To help your church “move online” during the coronavirus crisis, check out the following resources:

## 1) Streaming Services Online

Pastors who livestream their services are sharing their sermons and sometimes worship time through a live video feed.

Equipment needed:

- Camera (an iPhone can do the trick)
- Microphone (usually included in camera, but another may be preferable)
- Internet access.

[\*Click here for a helpful resource on simple ways to improve your online videos.\*](#)

### Online Resources for Broadcasting Video

[The Church Online Platform](#) provides a free online streaming platform for churches to broadcast their sermons. It also has a number of other useful tools to help you interact with your church online.

Facebook Live is accessible to people who don't have a Facebook account, but it can be somewhat complicated to access for those folks. [Here is a helpful how-to guide for live-streaming on Facebook.](#)

Churches will have to create their own YouTube channel before they are able to live-stream their services. ([Here are Google's instructions for creating a YouTube channel](#)). Here is a helpful [how-to guide for live-streaming on YouTube.](#)

## KEY POINTS

The list below provides recommendations and resources to help your church address four key areas:

1. Streaming Sunday Services Online
2. Accepting Tithes and Offerings Online
3. Hosting Online Small Groups/Bible Studies
4. Using Digital Kids' Ministry Resources

#### Other Resources:

- Zoom - Free if the gathering has 100 or fewer people and only if it lasts 40 minutes or less.
- [Vimeo](#) - Costs \$75/month for a premium account, and through their service “Livestream”, you can share your video simultaneously to their church’s website and Facebook Live. It’s a little more technical, but can provide more outlets for people to access your sermon.
- Switchboard.Live – Costs start at \$35/month. Another online service to broadcast your sermon on multiple channels.

*NOTE: Live-streaming, as opposed to sharing a recorded sermon after the fact, does run the risk of internet connectivity or other technological issues. If those issues arise, your congregants could miss what’s happening. If churches do pursue live-streaming, they might also want to record the sermon (on a second device) to distribute later as needed.*

#### Tips on Livestreaming your Sermon:

- [How to Livestream Your Church Service: A Practical Guide](#)
- [5 Tips for Church Online](#)

*NOTE: When sharing video recordings online, be aware that sharing copyrighted material (such as worship songs) could violate the law.*

## 2) Accepting Tithe and Offerings Online

There are many third-party online giving platform - keep in mind that these sites will take a small portion of each gift as a processing fee (usually between 1% - 3%). Many also allow users to tithe through smartphone apps and even text message.

Here are a few platforms churches might consider using:

1. [GivingFire](#)
2. [Subsplash](#)
3. [Pushpay](#)
4. [tithe.ly](#)

People can also give directly through their bank accounts through these services, which has a lower transaction fee. Or they can speak with their bank to have the bank issue a one time or recurring donation to your church, that typically does not take any fee.

## 3) Hosting Online Small Groups/Bible Studies

A “Stay At Home” order doesn’t need to keep you from your church family! Many Ohio churches are utilizing services like those we mentioned above under livestreaming to also meet in smaller groups to read the Word, share prayer requests, and just “be together.”

Think of it as a small group conference meeting.

[Zoom](#) and [Google Hangouts](#) are free, easy and especially popular ways to do this.

#### 4) Using Digital Kid's Ministry Resources

It can be overwhelming to imagine how to do kids' church at home. But online options for children's ministry abound.

Check out [this really helpful post from Ministry-to-Children](#) about ways to design your at-home kids' ministry.

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- [Worship House Kids](#) - includes songs, games, and full curriculum
- [The Bible App for Kids](#) - a smartphone app that includes interactive videos and Bible illustrations (kids are prompted to touch the screen and "play along" during the stories)
- [Saddleback Church](#) in California puts its Kids' Videos on Youtube for free!
- [Skit Guys](#) - these are funny and informative skits that can illustrate or youth ministry
- [Minno Kids](#) - includes lots of full episodes of Christian TV shows for kids (think Veggie Tales, Owlegories, etc.)  
be used for sermon
- [Children's Ministry Deals](#) - a one-stop shop for dozens of kids' ministry curriculum

Aside from kids' content, there are lots of general resources for churches looking for kids' ministry ideas and support, including:

1. [LifeWay Kids Ministry 101](#)
2. [kidology.org](#)

*This document is designed to help churches navigate the Coronavirus crisis. While not comprehensive, the purpose is to give churches free or low-cost recommendations to stay connected. Thank you to all the churches and leaders who contributed to this guide, especially Jared Williamson at Grove City Nazarene, Chris Quinn at Princeton Pike Church of God, Jack McClintock at Grace and Peace Productions, Joel Murray at Living Word Church, and Adam Kennedy at Good News Church.*

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