

Thank you to everyone who was able to host an online service (many of you for the first time)! This “pro tips” list was created to assist everyone in becoming more proficient each time our churches have services online. If you have a tip you’d like to add, please e-mail Canon Nicole Krug (nicole@azdiocese.org) and she’ll update the list!

Pro Tips for Online Services

- Send step-by-step directions to all parishioners about how to connect (especially if you’re using Zoom or another program that requires a call in number). These should also be sent – even by mailing a hard copy – to those parishioners who don’t subscribe to your e-newsletter.
- Make sure the link to access the online services are available to everyone (posted on the website, social media, etc.) and not just through your e-newsletter.
- Clean the camera lens (especially if you’re using the camera on a smartphone), so the video isn’t fuzzy.
- Consider the background lighting. If there are clear or stained glass windows behind the altar, turn on all the lights in the sanctuary and try to shoot from the side (instead of in the center) or record the service earlier, so that the people on the altar don’t become silhouettes.
- Put the camera close to altar, not in the back of sanctuary. The focus is on those conducting the service, not the empty space.
- Connect the audio for the video feed to the church sound system, if possible.
- If you’re not using post production graphics to name the people on the altar, have the Rector/Vicar introduce everyone before you begin. This is especially important if you don’t have an online bulletin that shows who the people are. Video has a large reach, and there is a good possibility that people from outside the church are watching. They will want to know who they’re watching. It could result in them attending a service when we’re able to meet in-person again!
- People know the sanctuary is empty right now. Recite the readings and preach to the camera; that’s where your audience is.
- If you’re using Facebook or YouTube Live and someone is not able to monitor the comments in real time, go back and interact with comments once the live video ends. You should acknowledge those who attend your service, the same as you would greet them at the back door of the sanctuary at the end of service.
- If you’re using Zoom, record and post the link for viewing the video after the event.
- If you’re using FB YouTube Live, choose to “save” the video when the livestream is over, so it can be viewed by those who missed the service.
- If you have online bulletins available, let viewers know where to find them (e.g., link to them in the comments before the live video).
- Call or send a hard copy letter to older parishioners who don’t have internet access letting them know about in-person services being cancelled. You can send them a copy of the bulletin and text of the sermon each week. They need to be able stay engaged because they are particularly at risk for isolation.
- Update your marque sign to indicate services have moved online for now. It’s an easy way to advertise to invite new people join you. Checking out a church online is a lot less scary than having to come in!