

Back in church but still online

How to Guide 1: Promoting Online Services

St Albans Parish Communications and Online Worship Group

Online Worship

During the lockdown our Church communities have discovered new ways of worshipping God, listening to his word and praying together online. A number of churches have discovered that more people have been accessing their online services than were coming in person when our buildings were open. According to anecdotal evidence by CPAS, online congregations are 53% bigger. Much of the growth has come from younger adults.

For some people with health concerns it may take some time before they feel confident to return to worshipping in our buildings. It's important that we continue to offer and promote online services so that nobody is left behind.

Passive Promotion:

The single most important way to promote your online services is to link them to your profile in the Church of England's "A Church Near you" website. Tag you church with 'Live Stream'seach.

Embed the service on the homepage of your website so that it's easy to find.

Promote you online services in community magazines etc.

Active Promotion:

If you don't have an email list of members of your congregation, create one and send the recipients a link in advance. You make a user-friendly link to your service by shortening a long gobbledygook URL into a short one by using a free service called TinyURL.com.

Share a link to the service on social media at least 48 hours ahead and again on the day.

Whatever platform your service is streamed on, promote your service on other platforms.

Ask church members to share a link to the service on their social feeds on such platforms such as Facebook or Instagram.

Encourage members of your congregation to invite friends they meet walking the dog or speak to on the phone to your online service. It is much, much easier to invite someone to an online service than asking them to walk into a church service on Sunday morning.

You can advertise your service to Facebook users living near your church at minimal cost using a feature called "Boosted Posts". The ads are created from posts on your Facebook Page. Boosting a post may help you get more people to react, share and comment on it. You may also reach new people who have never seen your online service. For advice on advertising on Facebook contact Rachel Wakefield on rachwakefield@outlook.com.

CofE Instructions on how to share a link to services on A Church Near You:

Youtube going live on youtube

Share the video link:

Go to the **camera upload** icon in the upper right-hand corner

Click **Go Live**

At the top, select **Manage**

Click on ... beside your scheduled live video

Click **Share**

Using the share link, embed the video on your website or A Church Near You profile.

To embed your YouTube video on A Church Near You:

Create a page on your church's A Church Near You profile. Give it a helpful title, such as: *Watch a live service*

Describe the video in the **Page content** section. Perhaps include liturgy so they can join in with the service

In the box titled **Video** paste the share link to your Live video

Add the tag **LiveStream** to your service or event so that visitors to A Church Near You can find churches that are showing Live video
When you are live your community will be able to watch it on this page.

Facebook

Link to your Facebook page from A Church Near You

As an A Church Near You editor, click on the + by events and services to create an event

Add the **time and date** of your live video

Add a description inviting people to visit your Facebook page to watch the video by clicking the button which says **More about this event**

In the **web link** box add the URL for your Facebook page

Add the tag 'LiveStream' to your event

Click **save**.