

## Mixed Mode Worship...

### Introduction:

This document is designed to help you think through mixed mode worship. It includes:

- Central Resources
- A Theological Framework
- A 'How to' section
- A Communication Section
- A checklist for you/your PCC to consider - it can also be turned into a questionnaire for your congregation

As we, slowly and carefully begin opening our church buildings again it is good to consider how that worship is changed and challenged by the fact that it may now happen both online and in our buildings. For many of us this will be more complex and demanding than the initial phases of lockdown; especially for those who are responsible for multiple buildings. We urge you to walk before you can run, and to do what you safely can, not what you cannot. By 'safely' we mean of course physical safety with proper precautions being taken, but also and importantly 'safely' in terms of your wellbeing. This remains a demanding time, so please see what follows as permissive and not prescriptive. We offer it as a way of helping you navigate and carefully think through all that lies ahead. Needless to say the current guidance is currently being updated so as ever please do check the Church of England website regularly for updates: [HERE](#)

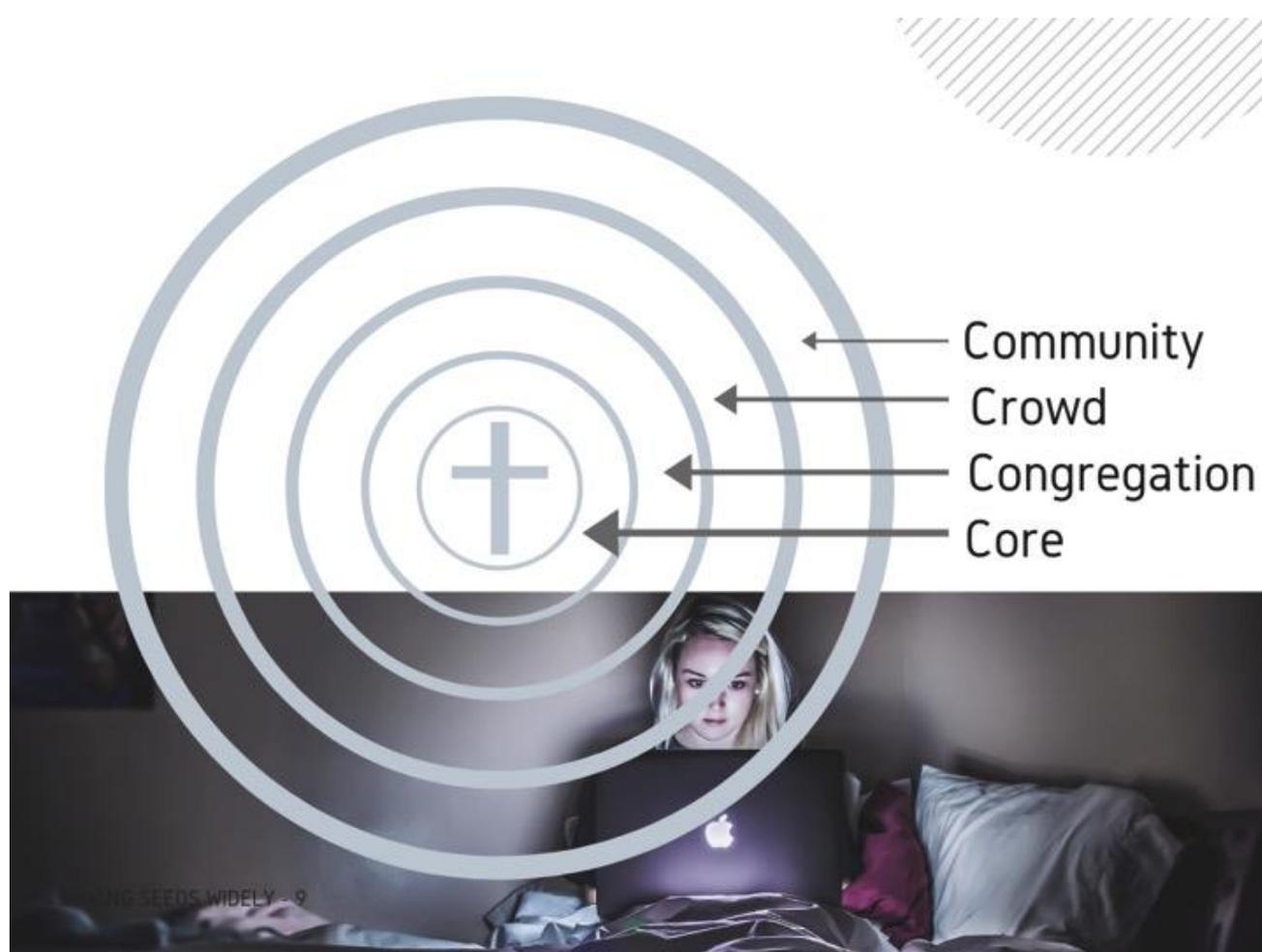
### Central Resources:

The Church of England has produced a suite of resources called 'Opening the Doors' which you can find: [HERE](#) It includes: Posters and invitations, digital and hard copy, that churches can use to invite the parish to worship, liturgical resources, provided by the Liturgical Commission, as well as some others produced by Fresh Expressions practitioners. In due course, resources, and guidance to help churches prepare for Advent and Christmas.

We are called to share the Good News of Jesus afresh to each generation. The message and hope of the good news does not change, but the medium - how we present that message, is what is changing and has changed. The intention of our worship (online and gathered in buildings) is to offer quality and profound, public worship that encourages our existing congregation, and ourselves, to grow spiritually through Word and Sacrament, but also to reach out and welcome in the searcher, newcomer, and returner: perhaps to gathered worship, or, as the statistics suggest more likely, to online worship (see here for the research behind this claim: <https://bit.ly/2TkaJrD>)

## **A theological framework: Ministering to the crowd, community, congregation and core**

The following model may help us think through the complexities of a mixed mode approach to worship and how each platform and method meets different needs. It is also worth noting that all worship is 'public' worship and we have a commission to be as inclusive as possible.



Thinking of our communities as concentric circles with levels of faith and commitment increasing nearer the center is a model that has been used by many to plan and shape ministry.

It is a pattern that can be overlaid on to how Jesus did ministry. It is also a pattern that will help us consider what platforms and what style of worship we offer now and as we continue to move towards the end of lockdown. You may want to think and pray this through with your ministry team or PCC or equivalent.

| Jesus' Example   | Church Equivalent  |
|--|--|
| <b>Community</b>   |  |
| <p><i>'...Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom...'</i><br/>Matt. 9.35</p> <p>Jesus was determined to visit all the towns and villages of Galilee: this was his calling and he was intentional about it. In this way, everyone in those places saw and heard of Jesus.</p>  | <p>Churches can be intentional about offering the good news as widely as they are able. This can include sharing on social media, good notice boards, banners, and anything 'public facing'.</p> <p>Even short views on social media are valuable to show that the church is vibrant, and 'doing something', but this widespread sharing of the good news is not the only ministry even if it is valuable ministry</p>   |
| <b>Crowds</b>  |  |
| <p><i>'...[Jesus] saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them...'</i><br/>Matt. 14.14</p> <p>From the communities where Jesus shared the good news crowds would gather. These were people who wanted to hear more, or who had needs that they hoped Jesus might be able to meet. They were not necessarily followers of Jesus. On occasions, if they didn't find what they wanted, they would leave Jesus.</p> | <p>Churches can minister to crowds too. These are not those who scroll past, but who want to know a little more and have, in particular, found it less demanding to come 'online' than to come to physical buildings and services.</p> <p>Again, engagement with crowds is often through Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram. In these places there are some who will hear 30 seconds or more of our posts. In this way we share in the ministry of Jesus and call out to the crowds and proclaim the love of God. This is a valuable ministry, but it is not the only ministry.</p>   |
| <b>Congregation</b>  |  |
| <p><i>'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today...'</i><br/>Luke 19.5</p> <p>It appears as if Jesus was always seeking to identify those in the crowds who might be 'seekers', those who wanted to go a bit deeper. Jesus made the time to share with these in a more in-depth way, often around food.</p>  | <p>From the crowds who see us online, we can seek to connect with those who want to go a bit deeper. This might be those who use the comments on Facebook or YouTube. During the service we can invite people to be in touch with us to find out more. From here it is a good idea to have a contact list of people. Connect with them socially and then help them to grow. Zoom is a great online resource to do social events. Recent examples included: quiz nights, G &amp; T with the Vicar, coffee mornings. There are also offline ways to connect with folks: helping the vulnerable with good neighbour schemes, foodbanks, debt counselling etc.</p> |

| <b>Core</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>'After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.'</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Luke 10.1</i></p> <p>Jesus had a variety of 'cores', from the 72 he send out on mission, to the core of the disciples: Peter, James and John, to those who were very close to him such as Mary of Bethany who anointed his feet, or the 'beloved disciple'.</p> | <p>We have a core within our church (who as well as us ministering to, will help us with the ministry of the church). We can support them one-to-one with Zoom, phone calls, Zoom Bible studies, prayer meetings, etc.</p> |

### **How will we do a 'mixed-mode' approach to worship?**

There are lots of variables that will influence how different churches will be able to do a mixed-mode approach to worship services; many of these will be based on the thinking you did looking at the above model. Other factors may include:

- What sort of worship are you going to prioritise? Online or gathered in a building? It may be worth canvassing the opinions of your congregation before assuming the answer to this. Much will depend on the vulnerability and age of your people and the facilities of your buildings. E.g. many vulnerable people cannot return before August. Many young families need toilet facilities for young children etc. There's a questionnaire at the end of this document that may be helpful.
- What are your resources: technical, people, money, Wifi? You will need an upload speed of about 10Mbps, which may not even be possible in some rural locations.
- How many church buildings are there in the benefice? Will you stream from one, some or all of them? How will this be negotiated or shared? Have you other ministers or worship leaders than can share this?
- How can you use resources already available to manage your workload? Bishop's staff are sharing sermons for the summer which you can use online or show on a screen in the building. Who can you share this ministry with? What is sustainable as we expect this phased return to last for many months?

If you livestream your worship here are some questions to think about:

- Service sheets for those at home with the hymn/song words
- Length of time - do you need to cut hymn verses? Speed up 'links' e.g. make people move during the music to the lectern for the readings or prayers? Share the peace (not touching) during music? If celebrating Holy Communion, will you turn the camera to a flower arrangement or candle whilst people receive? So those at home can pray and focus in the quiet and communicants can do so privately?
- Fellowship - will you still have Zoom coffee? How will you encourage those at home to feel part of the worship in the building - and vice versa?

Communications and technical advice is [HERE](#)

If possible, experiment and trial before committing to an expensive solution.

### **Communication:**

Please communicate your intentions widely so people know how to access the worship that is appropriate and safe for them. It is also good to prepare people for how gathered church will be so they are not taken aback if they come to the building - this is also a good idea for any new people who have joined online in recent times.

It is good for people (and you) to know:

- What will happen when you reach capacity in your building? Will there be additional services, or will people be turned away? How will this be managed?
- Will a mid-week service help relieve pressure on Sundays if your building is small or congregation large?
- What the worship will 'feel' like e.g. Communion in one kind. Social distancing. Hand sanitiser. Tape restricting access to pews. No communal singing. No physically sharing the peace. No coffee. No hymn books/service books. How will people be prepared?

### Toolkit:

We offer this as a possible questionnaire for your congregation or as an exercise for your PCC. It is hoped that as you prayerfully and thoughtfully consider the following questions you would recognize that there are many 'good' things you could do, but it may help you discern the right thing. The green boxes are our comments on the questions - you can edit them out if using this as a wider questionnaire.

Good worship is much more than just a tick box exercise, but this may be a good way for you to map out the journey you will want to take the results in your arriving at worship that draws friends and strangers in to the presence of the Living God.

| For each of the following statements, mark how accurate you think they describe your recent online services. Online services have taken place over a variety of platforms and in a variety of styles. Each parish and/or benefice will have approached online worship in a different way and achieved different results according to the strengths or weaknesses of the different platforms. | Not true                 | true to a small extent   | largely true             | True                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| We had many new people at our online service who we don't know.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We had many new people at our online service, most of whom we know (e.g., friends and family of congregants, people from the community who have not been before)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The majority of our regular congregation have been able to attend online worship   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our online services have not been as well attended as services in our buildings before lockdown  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| A significant number of our regular congregation have not been able to attend online services due to not having the technology  |  |  |  |  |
| If you have had lots of new people, then it may be that you ought to make the needs of your online community at least equal to the congregation who will meet physically in your building - especially if you get the sense that those accessing online worship would not otherwise attend church.  |  |  |  |  |
| Our online worship allowed us to introduce new elements to our public worship (these might be children's work, new hymns, shorter services, different voices reading, etc.)   |  |  |  |  |
| Our online worship more or less mirrored the services that had taken place in our buildings.  |  |  |  |  |
| It may be that you need to consider how your online services will change the style of worship when you return to your buildings. Are there elements that <i>your congregation who will attend physical worship</i> will want to continue, are there some they will be glad will change (for example, they will almost certainly be glad to be able to receive Holy Communion, but they may also hope for shorter services to continue |  |  |  |  |
| We anticipate that most of our congregation will be want and be able to return to worship in our buildings.   |  |  |  |  |
| A lot of our congregation will be shielding and unable to return immediately to worship in the buildings.   |  |  |  |  |
| We anticipate that some of the new people who have joined us online will want to come to our physical worship in the building.  |  |  |  |  |
| We have no way of knowing how many of new or existing people will come to worship in our buildings once they are open.  |  |  |  |  |
| This group of questions will again go some way to helping you decide whether you make online worship, or worship in your buildings the priority. If you are not sure how many people will be coming, why not ask them? An online survey (e.g., <a href="http://www.surveymonkey.com">www.surveymonkey.com</a> ) will be a good way to reach out to new people who have joined you online.   |  |  |  |  |
| We have significant numbers of children and young people as part of our congregation  |  |  |  |  |
| The current government guidelines do not make it easy to have young children come and worship in your building. You may want to consider keeping worship for children and young people online, and  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| if this is the case, you may want all your worship to be online (perhaps with the exception of a simple midweek service) until you can all gather together again as one family.  |  |  |  |  |
| We have more than one church in our benefice   |  |  |  |  |
| We don't have Wi-Fi in our church buildings  |  |  |  |  |
| People enjoyed the closeness of our online worship - it was good to be 'close to the action'   |  |  |  |  |
| The Wi-Fi in our location is typically not that reliable (some rural locations will not have good bandwidth speeds even if you installed Wi-Fi)  |  |  |  |  |
| We don't have a reasonably up to date PA system in our buildings   |  |  |  |  |
| There are practical questions that will impinge on your response to mixed mode worship. It may be that it is practically impossible for you to live stream from church. If you have poor bandwidth, if you don't have a PA system that a camera can connect to, if a camera might end up being right at the back of a fairly dark building - these are all obstacles to overcome if you want to stream from the building. It may be that you decide to stream from somewhere where there is good Wi-Fi, or pre-record and schedule an upload (although this would be time consuming if you are doing worship in buildings too) |  |  |  |  |
| We have done other offerings online as well as worship   |  |  |  |  |
| If you have had lots of new people join you online, when you go back in the buildings it may be that instead of a service online you should have a go at an online Alpha or Start Course, or maybe an online evangelistic service.   |  |  |  |  |

And, finally, remember don't do too much.  
 Don't do what someone else is doing.  
 Just do what you can do and in all focus on Christ  
 the One whom we are serving and praising.