

1 **NIC Bishop’s Advisory on Holy Communion**

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7 Since the “shelter-in-place” orders began, the question of Holy Communion has been
8 earnestly asked by the congregations we serve. How and when will we have Holy Communion?
9 The question is never “if we will have ...” but “when we will have...”. The people of God called
10 United Methodist in Northern Illinois seek and desire this known and regular means of grace in
11 their lives. Its sudden withdrawal because of the need to shelter-in-place in order to decrease
12 the spread of COVID-19 was unseen. However, matters of this nature have not gone unnoticed
13 or unconsidered. The present situation calls for an urgent response and one which is
14 thoughtful. Our pastors, congregations and congregants need and desire guidance on this
15 matter sooner than later.

16

17 **Section 1: Disciplinary, General Conference, and Judicial Council Concerns**

18 The initial conversation among the advisory team began with this question: Who has
19 authority to “authorize” the celebration of “online Holy Communion”? Is authorization needed?
20 Is there any already existing guidance from the General Conference?

21 Paragraph 16 of the *Book of Discipline 2016* reads in part:

1 ¶16, Article IV – *The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all*
2 *matters distinctly connectional, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as*
3 *follows:*

4
5 6. *To provide and revise the hymnal and ritual of the Church and to regulate all matters*
6 *relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and*
7 *second Restrictive Rules. (¶16.6, Discipline 2016)*
8

9 The authority to regulate worship, including form and mode which would include
10 “online Holy Communion,” are expressly retained by the General Conference. The conversation
11 then asked: Did the General Conference make provision for episcopal leadership to step in
12 during a time of crisis to oversee some type special arrangement? A study of the *Book of*
13 *Discipline 2016* indicates no such authority has been passed to our United Methodist bishops.

14 If grounds for “episcopal authorization for online Holy Communion” could be made,
15 they would need to fall under the provisions of ¶¶ 414, 415, and 416. Establishing grounds
16 under those particular paragraphs of the *Book of Discipline 2016* could be made under the
17 provision for episcopal supervision of the clergy in an episcopal area. However, this is a weak
18 argument.

19 Because the General Conference has retained the privilege “... to regulate all matters
20 relating to the form and mode of worship ...”, how has the General Conference regulated, or
21 what system has been put in place to regulate, worship? With regards to the administration of
22 the Sacraments, the General Conference has authorized elders for the due administration of
23 the Sacraments. “Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care
24 and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in
25 mission and ministry as pastor, superintendents, and bishops” (¶ 340.1, *Discipline 2016*). The
26 local pastor, either elder or licensed local pastor, is granted this privilege and responsibility. The

1 local pastor must be particularly mindful of the guidance and direction given by the General
2 Conference which accompanies this privilege and responsibility granted to them.

3 Judicial Council Decision 1032 holds that the General Conference has vested the local
4 pastor-in-charge with the responsibility to discern if an individual is or is not ready to make the
5 appropriate vows of professing membership. The General Conference has granted and vested
6 sacramental authority to and with the Order of Elders and Licensed Local Pastors. If we follow
7 the same logic as in Judicial Council Decision 1032: it is the local pastor-in-charge who, guided
8 by the General Conference through the *Book of Discipline*, *The United Methodist Hymnal*, and
9 *The United Methodist Book of Worship* in particular among other documents and agencies, who
10 determines the circumstances under which the Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated.
11 This is the manner in which the General Conference has “authorized and regulated” the
12 sacrament of Holy Communion: Members of the Order of Elder along with the Licensed Local
13 Pastors are authorized to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion under the directions of
14 the *Discipline*, *Book of Worship*, and the denominationally authorized hymnal as the primary
15 source for guidance and regulation. Episcopal supervision would rightly be the appropriate
16 place for matters related to the proper use or misuse of the sacramental authority or ignoring
17 regulation(s) established by the General Conference. These are the established patterns in
18 which the General Conference has “authorized and regulated” worship.

19 As to the notion of “online Holy Communion,” *This Holy Mystery*, on page 22, says the
20 following:

21 *The Communion elements are consecrated and consumed in the context of the*
22 *gathered congregation. The Table may be extended, in a timely manner, to*
23 *include those unable to attend because of age, illness, or similar conditions.*

1 *Laypeople may distribute the consecrated elements in the congregation and*
2 *extend them to members who are unavoidably absent (BOD; ¶¶ 331.1.b and*
3 *1115.9). An elder or deacon should offer appropriate training, preparation, and*
4 *supervision for this important task (¶ 331.1.b).*

5 The General Conference has clearly understood Holy Communion to be an event celebrated in
6 person as a gathered community. *This Holy Mystery* does not expressly say, “online Holy
7 Communion shall not be celebrated.” However, throughout *This Holy Mystery* the General
8 Conference is clear that the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be
9 celebrated among a physically gathered community. Provision has been suggested for
10 extending the Table. Could “online Holy Communion” be an extension of the Table?

11 In Judicial Council Decision 1109, the Judicial Council nullified and voided an
12 amendment to our *Book of Discipline 2004* published in the *Book of Discipline 2008*. While two
13 of the justices dissented, citing the lack of a fuller record from the annual conference secretary
14 as the reason for their dissent (Gray & Capon), they did not argue with the findings or
15 conclusions of the decision as we might have expected, rather the dissent is over the question
16 of jurisdiction and analysis. The digest of JCD 1109 is:

17 *Paragraph 1117.9, as amended by the 2008 General Conference, creates a doctrine of*
18 *the “reserved sacrament” for The United Methodist Church. Paragraph 1117.9, as*
19 *amended by the 2008 General Conference, contravenes Restrictive Rule I. It thereby has*
20 *the effect of altering Part II, Section 3, Article XVIII of the Discipline without legislative*
21 *authority to do so. Hence, ¶ 1117.9, as amended by the 2008 General Conference, is null*
22 *and void. To achieve such a change of doctrine will require a two-thirds majority vote by*
23 *the General Conference and three-fourths of the aggregate votes of the annual*
24 *conferences.*

25
26 The matter is of such importance the Judicial Council made this statement as part of the
27 analysis and rationale of their decision:

1 *[The Judicial Council of JCD 358] clearly determined which matters can be modified by*
2 *legislative action and which matters may need to follow the process for adopting*
3 *constitutional amendments. Are the “Articles of Religion” a part of the Constitution? In*
4 *Decision 358 the Judicial Council clearly said they are not. Yet they are, according to the*
5 *Council, “basic documents in the life and structure of our Church.” For that reason, they*
6 *“are given even greater protection than the Constitution itself.” Indeed, the Council*
7 *added, “Change in them is made more difficult.” In short, any change in “established*
8 *standards of doctrine” must be made in the manner that would be used to amend the*
9 *Constitution, except for an even larger super-majority in the aggregate vote of annual*
10 *conferences—three-fourths, rather than two-thirds.*
11

12 Clearly, the Judicial Council sees the matter of our sacramental practice and theology as of even
13 greater concern than our constitution. Changing our practices (i.e.: form and mode) related to
14 our theology of sacraments is of such importance as to require a majority of votes greater than
15 is required for changing our constitution on doctrinal matters. The ratification of a hymnal,
16 book of worship, or other liturgical text requires a simple majority vote of the General
17 Conference. The General Conference has retained the privilege of establishing the “form and
18 mode.” Hymnals, ritual, and other like documents are the method in which the General
19 Conference establishes our “form and mode” for worship. We are in “uncharted waters” as a
20 new virtual experience of Christian faith rapidly emerges. The General Conference did not,
21 could not, foresee such a time as this, however it has decided to respond to such matters slowly
22 and carefully. Each local pastor must proceed at his or her discretion on this matter but within
23 the boundaries established by our General Conference.

24 Further, some practices which may be considered to help mitigate the passing of
25 infections, like COVID-19, are expressly prohibited. *This Holy Mystery* on page 23 states:

26 *Both “self-service” Communion, where people help themselves, and “drop-in”*
27 *Communion, where the elements are available over a period of time, are contrary to the*
28 *communal nature of the sacrament, which is the celebration of the gathered community*
29 *of faith.*

1 The General Conference has been clear, although not explicit, that online celebrations of Holy
2 Communion violate part of our deepest understanding of the meaning, intent, and purpose of
3 the sacrament: to build and build-up the community of faith.

4 ***N.B.: In Extremis***

5 Some have argued that we are in an extreme circumstance which requires extreme
6 response. Many have pointed to the extraordinary manner in which Thomas Coke was set aside
7 as a “superintendent” of the people called Methodist. However, the *in extremis* argument is
8 misguided. The Latin “*extremus*” is rightly translated “outermost.” It is describing the ultimate
9 limit of something. Generally speaking, this is used to indicate that someone or something is “at
10 the point of death.” The present circumstances do not qualify as being at the “outermost” limit
11 or “at the point of death.” We are in an extraordinary situation without question, but we are
12 not to the point of *in extremis* as it is most accurately understood.

13

14 **Section 2: Matters Going Forward**

15 **Hygiene**

16 As the “shelter-in-place” order is lifted, we will be challenged returning to normal
17 practices. The Center for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health continue
18 to give guidance and direction about matters of hygiene: masks, gloves, eye protect, etc. We in
19 the church must take those same matters seriously especially when we are working with a
20 product (i.e.: bread and juice) for human consumption. It is not unreasonable to expect the

1 same level of hygiene applied to the practical matter of the sacrament, namely its' preparation,
2 service, and disposition, as we find in commercial food service establishments. We will have to
3 think about hygiene in a new way as it relates to the sacrament.¹

4 We may need to teach some older ritual practices such as the use of a lavabo and ewer
5 for handwashing along with new practices such as using hand sanitizer. Other Christian
6 traditions may have things to teach us as well. Part of the black church experience is being
7 served communion from trays by stewards wearing gloves. The stewards hand the small glass
8 to the communicant rather than each individual take their own glass themselves. The same
9 practice applies with the bread as well no matter if prepared beforehand or torn from a
10 common loaf: the steward wears white gloves and hands the bread to the communicant.
11 Pastors and congregations will need guidance and direction related to hygiene and Holy
12 Communion. The practice of intinction from the common cup would be ill-advised unless some
13 type of alcohol (i.e.: wine) is used. The General Conference has expressly forbidden the use of
14 wine.

15 **Infection Mitigation**

16 The governor may change the shelter-in-place order so that large gatherings may begin
17 again sometime later this summer. Our impulse will be to celebrate Holy Communion
18 immediately or soon thereafter. Celebrating the sacrament should be approached with great
19 caution. Unless a pastor and congregation have a clear plan for sharing the consecrated
20 elements which ensures proper hygiene and safety for all participating, a pastor and

¹The "Ecumenical Protocols for In Person Worship" can be found at this link:
<https://sites.google.com/view/worshipsafely?fbclid=IwAR1jHRO96UtXpnJ23cFRbws6JopOAhVYiSuimbaJ4D6P0No0mTj0aywEnKc>

1 congregation should refrain from the celebration until such a plan is in place. The plan should
2 give careful consideration to the following:

- 3 • Plans should recognize and implement appropriate and proper food handling
4 and food safety measures at all times with the elements of the sacrament.
- 5 • Preparation of the Elements: All those preparing the elements for Holy
6 Communion should be wearing proper protective items – a mask and gloves, at
7 minimum. There should be appropriate facilities for hand washing. The prepared
8 elements should be immediately covered once prepared and stored in a
9 refrigerator or placed directly on the Table for the celebration.
- 10 • Handling of the Elements: Should manual acts (i.e.: elevating the cup or the
11 bread at the appropriate moments, fraction/breaking, etc.) be eliminated during
12 the celebration?
- 13 • How will those who serve communion ensure their hands are properly clean
14 before serving? Will gloves be used during the handling of elements for clergy
15 and lay servers alike? If not, will those elements handled without gloves be
16 served?
- 17 • How will any unused portion be disposed of? Do the pastor and congregation
18 know proper methods for the disposition of the elements after the celebration
19 of Holy Communion?
- 20 • If a congregation has the practice of taking the consecrated elements
21 immediately from the Table to those unable to attend, will the practice
22 continue? If it will, how will proper hygiene be ensured?

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It may be necessary for the elders to travel from house to house in order to celebrate Holy Communion in groups of 10 or less. This practice poses infection mitigation problems, too. The pastor, in visiting from house to house, may inadvertently become the one who carries an infection from family to family, home to home. If such a plan is implemented by clergy, they should give careful attention to infection mitigation on their part.

Further & Theological Questions

Questions about the validity of online community must be asked and answered for a fuller understanding of the sacraments in a virtual reality. Matters related to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism are of concern as well. We have noted the bishops throughout the Connection have declined “virtual” ordination. At the core of this conversation is the fact that Christian faith by its’ very nature is incarnational. Christian faith is to be embodied; it is physical. Can a virtual reality provide that same sense of community and connection without the physicality of connection? The situation begs us to re-examine our ecclesiology: What does it mean to be church in a virtual world? Can the church authentically exist in a virtual space? If so, how does the community make disciples of people in that context? Some of the present practices we have heard of such as “drive-by Holy Communion” and “online Holy Communion” further a consumer culture making the Sacrament of Holy Communion an “on demand” service rather than a community experience and community celebration. Does the Church want to embrace a “consumer service” model?

1 **In the Meantime**

2 The General Board of Discipleship has advised using the other means of grace among them the
3 Love Feast. This is an opportune time to teach the other means of grace: bible study, prayer,
4 public and private devotion, fasting, tithing, works of justice, and works of piety along with the
5 already lively conversation about worship both private and public. However, it is teaching which
6 is most needed on this particular topic. We are comforted, and rightly so, by the Sacrament of
7 Holy Communion. It is a known means of grace. However, it is not the only means of grace.

8 Our ecumenical relationships are another important consideration. The ELCA has
9 forbidden the celebration of online Holy Communion. Will our celebrating online Holy
10 Communion jeopardize our relationship with the ELCA, the Episcopal Church, and others? There
11 is an on-going ecumenical conversation (listed in the Ministry Resources section) for developing
12 and implementing a coordinated, ecumenical response to the varying phases of “reopening.”
13 Following the guidance of the Illinois Department of Public Health and governor’s office will be
14 particularly important as large gatherings are phased back in. Local pastors should be
15 encouraged to engage with ecumenical colleagues to develop a community or neighborhood
16 coordinated strategy and plan, where practical, in partnership with local ecumenical colleagues
17 and congregations.

18 Celebrating the Love Feast must be advised only with caution. It, too, celebrates
19 community and building community. Part of the Love Feast is a time of confession and pardon.
20 Can we fully experience the Love Feast in a virtual setting when signs and actions of confession
21 and pardon are not physically experienced? The General Board of Discipleship believes it is a
22 better option at this time than online Holy Communion. Caution should be advised in using this

1 service. Teaching and instruction of our congregations on all of the means of grace and linking
2 those with our daily lives is urgently needed.

3 **Final Considerations**

4 As we continue to live into this new reality, we all recognize that it will not be possible
5 to return to “business as usual.” There are significant questions to be answered.

- 6 • How can we work collaboratively with each other and our ecumenical partners?
 - 7 • How can this be a time to strengthen the Connection?
 - 8 • How can our congregations be in cooperative ministry together?
 - 9 • Is a virtual presence enough of a presence for true engagement? Will “engagement” or
10 “being present” take on a new meaning and understanding in the wake of this time
11 period? If so, what?
 - 12 • What does it mean to “be present” in a virtual reality? How does a virtual reality shift
13 our understanding and experience of church?
 - 14 • What does it mean to gather as a community? Will virtual gatherings carry the same
15 weight and gravity as our physical gatherings?
 - 16 • What is really happening in all the different “Zoom worship” services? Is it worship or
17 something different? How so?
 - 18 • How will we overcome the class and economic forces which separate people?
- 19 Technology is wonderful if it can be afforded (and it works as expected). In 1938 a
20 bishop consecrated Holy Communion using the radio. There were economic distinctions
21 which separated people in 1938; not everyone could afford a radio. The same is true in

1 2020: All people cannot afford the technology necessary to participate via a virtual
2 presence.

3 • Will there be legal issues in the civil courts if the actions of a pastor or congregation
4 endanger an individual or a group of people’s health because of an inadvertent passing
5 of a pathogen?

6 • How will other ritual actions, like the “passing of the peace,” occur? Are there other
7 ways to express the same ritual action than has been our present custom?

8 • How will we conduct baptisms? They require in person gatherings, the use of water, and
9 a particular formulation of words. The General Conference banned the practice of
10 “private baptism.” Do we need to also rethink our Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

11 • Will the Church consult medical and epidemiological experts to help develop guidance
12 for all these matters?

13 Our time of “sheltering-in-place” has revealed much both in the church and culturally. This
14 advisory team’s function was to address matters related to Holy Communion. Further questions
15 are outside the question we were to answer but need to be answered as we live into a new
16 reality as Church. We must never lose sight of a simple but core truth of our faith. As it says on
17 the wall of the Methodist chapel in Epworth, England: *Best of all, God is with us.* Thanks be to
18 God.

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Resources Concerning Online Communion

Foundational UMC Resources:

Book of Discipline (2016), esp. ¶¶331.1.b, 340.1, 1115.9:

<https://www.ctcumc.org/files/fileshare/2016-book-of-discipline.pdf>

This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion (General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, 2004):

http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/what-we-believe/documents/communion-holy-mystery-united-methodist-understanding.pdf

Additional UMC Resources:

“What is the United Methodist view of online Communion?” (<http://ee.umc.org/what-we-believe/what-is-the-united-methodist-view-of-online-communion>)

An excellent place to start, this page contains links to many UMC articles on the topic of online Communion including the papers from the “Task Force on Online Communion” that convened in January 2015 . You will also find links to other resources for teaching about Holy Communion such as the PDF of “The Holy Mystery” (http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/what-we-believe/documents/communion-holy-mystery-united-methodist-understanding.pdf).

Burton-Edwards, Taylor and Steven J. Sandage. “Neuro-Physical and Psycho-Social Implications for Online-mediated Sacramental Practice,”

<http://umcmedia.org/umcorg/2013/communion/neurophysical-psychosocial-implications-burton-edwards-sandage.pdf>

Drawing upon a wide range of scientific studies up to 2007, this article argues that while virtual interactions may stimulate “intentions to participate” only physical interactions qualify as preferred “actual participation.”

Carter, Ken. “Online Communion in the United Methodist Church: A Pastoral and Missional Reflection,” (November 13, 2014):

<https://www.flumc.org/blogdetail/653552>

Chair of the Task Force on Online Communion (2015), Bishop Carter offers an overview of the challenges and possibilities for offering online Communion.

Neal, Gregory S. “Online Holy Communion: Reflections on the Internet and the Means of Grace,” (2006): <http://umcmedia.org/umcorg/2013/communion/holy-communion-over-internet-reflections-experiment-neal.pdf>

In this paper from 2006, as well as in his more recent “Holy Communion Over the Internet” (<http://umcmedia.org/umcorg/2013/communion/holy-communion-over-internet-reflections-experiment-neal.pdf>), the Rev. Dr. Neal Gregory

1 *acknowledges the limitations of online Communion while exploring the*
2 *theological and ecclesiological implications of limiting this sacrament to in-*
3 *person gatherings.*

5 **Ecumenical Resources**

6 *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry.* Faith and Order Papers. Vol. 111 (Geneva, Switzerland:
7 World Council of Churches, 1982):
8 [https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text)
9 [order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text)
10 [and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text)

11 *Episcopal Church*

12 Gatta, Julia. "Communion with Christ and One Another in a Time of Pandemic," *The*
13 *Living Church: Serving the One Body of Christ* (April 9, 2020):
14 [https://livingchurch.org/2020/04/09/catholic-voices-julia-gatta-on-communion-](https://livingchurch.org/2020/04/09/catholic-voices-julia-gatta-on-communion-with-christ-and-one-another-in-a-time-of-pandemic/)
15 [with-christ-and-one-another-in-a-time-of-pandemic/](https://livingchurch.org/2020/04/09/catholic-voices-julia-gatta-on-communion-with-christ-and-one-another-in-a-time-of-pandemic/)

16 *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)*

17 "The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament,"
18 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress
19 Press, 1997):
20 [https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/The_Use_Of_The](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/The_Use_Of_The_Means_Of_Grace.pdf)
21 [Means_Of_Grace.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/The_Use_Of_The_Means_Of_Grace.pdf)

22 "Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns: COVID-19/Coronavirus," Evangelical
23 Lutheran Church in America (March 20, 2020):
24 [https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Worship_in_Times](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Worship_in_Times_of_Public_Health_Concerns.pdf?_ga=2.19511544.1735373660.1585323257-2025289056.1557504087)
25 [of_Public_Health_Concerns.pdf?_ga=2.19511544.1735373660.1585323257-](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Worship_in_Times_of_Public_Health_Concerns.pdf?_ga=2.19511544.1735373660.1585323257-2025289056.1557504087)
26 [2025289056.1557504087](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Worship_in_Times_of_Public_Health_Concerns.pdf?_ga=2.19511544.1735373660.1585323257-2025289056.1557504087)

27 *Presbyterian Church (USA)*

28 "Advisory Opinion: Communion in an Emergency/Pandemic," (March 24, 2020):
29 [http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory_opinion_com](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory_opinion_communion_in_an_emergency_or_pandemic.pdf)
30 [munion_in_an_emergency_or_pandemic.pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory_opinion_communion_in_an_emergency_or_pandemic.pdf)

36 **Church Resources for Online Worship and Fellowship**

37 **NIC Churches Offering Online Worship Services**

38 <https://www.umcnic.org/congregational-life/worship-services-online>

39 **Denominational Resources**

40 NIC Online Learning (<https://www.umcnic.org/online-learning>)

1 “Liturgical Practices of Virtual People,” David Aslesen and Christine Hides
2 “Ways to Worship Online,” Urban Village Church
3 “Online Worship Content,” Dawn Chesser and Taylor Burton-Edwards
4 “Virtual Gathering Training,” Rich Havard
5

6 UMC Discipleship Ministries (<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/>)
7 “Online Worship and Music Resources for Livestreaming,” Diana Sanchez-
8 Bushong (March 16, 2020): [https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/online-
9 worship-music-resources-for-livestreaming](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/online-worship-music-resources-for-livestreaming)
10

11 UM News (<https://www.umnews.org>)
12 “Churches have much to consider before reopening,” Joey Butler (May 11, 2020):
13 [https://www.umnews.org/en/news/churches-have-much-to-consider-before-
14 reopening?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTVRkaU1EYzVNRE14WWpRMylsInQiOiJTVHJzMIzTeEhsWm5ZeW5IMUpOa3hQM1wvY2dUdytSeXNnaGJxNFZ1dGVNSm9zUk9QTyt1ODUyUWdcL242UDVYeVhVb2ZzMjd2ZlI1Q0I3djl6NUJFMZCMHR0N3RWcDFoZEISjZ2MDNhcmdBbk92RkVkb2NFOERqeUJ0bEI4R1JlIn0%3D](https://www.umnews.org/en/news/churches-have-much-to-consider-before-reopening?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTVRkaU1EYzVNRE14WWpRMylsInQiOiJTVHJzMIzTeEhsWm5ZeW5IMUpOa3hQM1wvY2dUdytSeXNnaGJxNFZ1dGVNSm9zUk9QTyt1ODUyUWdcL242UDVYeVhVb2ZzMjd2ZlI1Q0I3djl6NUJFMZCMHR0N3RWcDFoZEISjZ2MDNhcmdBbk92RkVkb2NFOERqeUJ0bEI4R1JlIn0%3D)
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19 The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection (<https://cor.org/>)
20 *Offers many resources for churches and pastors. See especially their digital*
21 *options under “Connect.” Also, their affiliated site “Share Church” is a great*
22 *venue for sharing ideas and practical tools for ministry*
23 *(<https://www.sharechurch.com/>). See especially their resource “Coronavirus*
24 *Conversations.”*
25

26 **Ecumenical Resources:**

27 “Ecumenical Protocols for in Person Worship: An Ecumenical and Interdisciplinary
28 Consultation,” Bishop Larry Goodpaster, et. al.:
29 [https://sites.google.com/view/worshipsafely?fbclid=IwAR2shl7SgIJtetFLSXR89eX
30 INWUt1-HauJLdZjWvBJKfM_iFIV9yU6tedK8](https://sites.google.com/view/worshipsafely?fbclid=IwAR2shl7SgIJtetFLSXR89eXINWUt1-HauJLdZjWvBJKfM_iFIV9yU6tedK8)
31 *As noted on the home page, the purpose of this group is “to conduct a*
32 *consultation of public health experts, pastors, theologians, liturgical scholars, and*
33 *ecclesial leaders to develop medically sound and theologically informed*
34 *recommendations for in person worship, sacramental practice, and fellowship in*
35 *the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.”*
36

37 **Government and Secular Resources:**

38 Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Guidance on Cleaning”:
39 [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-
40 guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM26911CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM26911CDC)
41

42 CDC, “Guidance on Funerals”: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-
43 coping/funeral-guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/funeral-guidance.html)
44

1 Illinois.gov (<https://www2.illinois.gov/>)

2
3 The National Association of Teachers of Singing (OfficialNATS), “A Conversation: What
4 Do Science and Data Say About the Near Term Future of Singing”:
5 <https://youtu.be/DFI3GsVzj6Q>

6
7 “The Risks – Know Them – Avoid Them,” by Erin Bromage (May 6, 2020):
8 [https://erinbromage.wixsite.com/covid19/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-](https://erinbromage.wixsite.com/covid19/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them)
9 [them](https://erinbromage.wixsite.com/covid19/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them)

10 11 **Online Worship Resources**

12 *Grace Incarnate Ministries*, Gregory Neal: <https://www.revneal.org/>

13
14 “Nuts and Bolts of Online Worship,” Clif Guy and Dan Leafblad, *Share Church: Church of*
15 *the Resurrection* (May 14, 2020): [https://www.sharechurch.com/Resource-](https://www.sharechurch.com/Resource-Library/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)/Corona-Care-Conversations.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1bciv8NztLF1RFfyBeR_qoqgSW4X7hC4dxT2k-fGX7zO_kaFS3RvYogt8)
16 [Library/Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\)/Corona-Care-](https://www.sharechurch.com/Resource-Library/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)/Corona-Care-Conversations.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1bciv8NztLF1RFfyBeR_qoqgSW4X7hC4dxT2k-fGX7zO_kaFS3RvYogt8)
17 [Conversations.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1bciv8NztLF1RFfyBeR_qoqgSW4X7hC4dxT2k-](https://www.sharechurch.com/Resource-Library/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)/Corona-Care-Conversations.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1bciv8NztLF1RFfyBeR_qoqgSW4X7hC4dxT2k-fGX7zO_kaFS3RvYogt8)
18 [fGX7zO_kaFS3RvYogt8](https://www.sharechurch.com/Resource-Library/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)/Corona-Care-Conversations.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1bciv8NztLF1RFfyBeR_qoqgSW4X7hC4dxT2k-fGX7zO_kaFS3RvYogt8)

19
20 “Taking Worship Online: Beginners and Everyone Else,” by Jeremy Steele, *Resource*
21 *UMC*: [https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/taking-your-worship-online-a-](https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/taking-your-worship-online-a-guide-for-beginners-and-everyone-else)
22 [guide-for-beginners-and-everyone-else](https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/taking-your-worship-online-a-guide-for-beginners-and-everyone-else)

23
24 “Principles for Online Ritual Design,” *Sacred Design Lab*:
25 [https://mcusercontent.com/9ab8e3135a56f9b5acb9c04dd/files/9c877c32-33c2-](https://mcusercontent.com/9ab8e3135a56f9b5acb9c04dd/files/9c877c32-33c2-45a5-9b32-c21bcbe14aac/Principles_for_Online_Ritual_Design.01.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2-43p45OM4dzKU-whYidw7uNmVWrGonnjw3o2ae45LWA-xJkkNT1Fv-Hk)
26 [45a5-9b32-](https://mcusercontent.com/9ab8e3135a56f9b5acb9c04dd/files/9c877c32-33c2-45a5-9b32-c21bcbe14aac/Principles_for_Online_Ritual_Design.01.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2-43p45OM4dzKU-whYidw7uNmVWrGonnjw3o2ae45LWA-xJkkNT1Fv-Hk)
27 [c21bcbe14aac/Principles for Online Ritual Design.01.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2-](https://mcusercontent.com/9ab8e3135a56f9b5acb9c04dd/files/9c877c32-33c2-45a5-9b32-c21bcbe14aac/Principles_for_Online_Ritual_Design.01.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2-43p45OM4dzKU-whYidw7uNmVWrGonnjw3o2ae45LWA-xJkkNT1Fv-Hk)
28 [43p45OM4dzKU-whYidw7uNmVWrGonnjw3o2ae45LWA-xJkkNT1Fv-Hk](https://mcusercontent.com/9ab8e3135a56f9b5acb9c04dd/files/9c877c32-33c2-45a5-9b32-c21bcbe14aac/Principles_for_Online_Ritual_Design.01.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2-43p45OM4dzKU-whYidw7uNmVWrGonnjw3o2ae45LWA-xJkkNT1Fv-Hk)

29 30 31 **Live Stream Licensing**

32 “How can we livestream worship legally?” Ask The UMC:
33 [https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-how-can-we-livestream-](https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-how-can-we-livestream-worship-legally?fbclid=IwAR2OzWkmFEJY0oKcVDZ2eM2PKyOLkwUXJKQqZOKPPcQvtVfq4M2iG1fRfMU)
34 [worship-](https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-how-can-we-livestream-worship-legally?fbclid=IwAR2OzWkmFEJY0oKcVDZ2eM2PKyOLkwUXJKQqZOKPPcQvtVfq4M2iG1fRfMU)
35 [legally?fbclid=IwAR2OzWkmFEJY0oKcVDZ2eM2PKyOLkwUXJKQqZOKPPcQvtVfq4](https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-how-can-we-livestream-worship-legally?fbclid=IwAR2OzWkmFEJY0oKcVDZ2eM2PKyOLkwUXJKQqZOKPPcQvtVfq4M2iG1fRfMU)
36 [M2iG1fRfMU](https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-how-can-we-livestream-worship-legally?fbclid=IwAR2OzWkmFEJY0oKcVDZ2eM2PKyOLkwUXJKQqZOKPPcQvtVfq4M2iG1fRfMU)

37
38 “Local Church Learning Session: Copyrights and Licenses,” United Methodist Videos,
39 (March 28, 2020): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN77ycvJk0Y&t=971s>

40
41 “Streaming License Terms of Agreement,” Christian Copyright Licensing International
42 (CCLI): <https://us.ccli.com/streaming-license-terms-of-agreement/>

43 44 **Technical Resources**

1 Church Online Platform: <https://churconlineplatform.com/>

2 *Free to use, "the Church Online Platform is more than a video player. It puts tools*
3 *in your hands to engage with attenders in all the ways that make church church."*

4
5 Google Meet Tutorials: <https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/9282720?hl=en>

6
7 "The Home Studio Gear Guide: Here's All the Equipment You Need Even On A Tiny
8 Budget," Carey Nieuwhof: [https://careynieuwhof.com/the-home-studio-gear-](https://careynieuwhof.com/the-home-studio-gear-guide-heres-all-the-equipment-you-need-on-a-tiny-budget/)
9 [guide-heres-all-the-equipment-you-need-on-a-tiny-budget/](https://careynieuwhof.com/the-home-studio-gear-guide-heres-all-the-equipment-you-need-on-a-tiny-budget/)

10
11 Open Broadcaster Software (OBS): <https://obsproject.com/>

12 *OBS is free and open source software for video recording and live streaming to*
13 *YouTube and other platforms*

14
15 Pro Church Tools: <https://prochurchtools.com/>

16 *Tools that are free and for purchase to assist with a wide array of ministry needs*
17 *related to digital media.*

18
19 Pro Church Tools, Church Video Series:

20 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b9sRWCozM&list=PLJflgShWpbGwTDIO-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b9sRWCozM&list=PLJflgShWpbGwTDIO-7MAI71rYiXg5Ldm&index=1)
21 [7MAI71rYiXg5Ldm&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b9sRWCozM&list=PLJflgShWpbGwTDIO-7MAI71rYiXg5Ldm&index=1)

22
23 Sermon.net: <https://sermon.net/>

24 *A service for all-in-one digital ministries including live streaming to Facebook and*
25 *YouTube, recording and providing on-demand sermons, and other audio-visual*
26 *needs.*

27
28 Zoom Tutorials: [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials)
29 [Tutorials](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials)

30 31 **Online Giving Resources**

32 "5 of the Best Church Online Giving Platforms," *Outreach: Share God's Love:*

33 <http://www.outreach.com/blog/best-church-online-giving-platforms/>

34 35 **Creative Visual Resources**

36 Canva.com

37 Churchart.com

38 Creationswap.com

39 Sharefaith.com

40 41 **Online Fellowship Resources**

42 *The Collective Psychology Project, "This Too Shall Pass," by Alex Evans, Casper ter Kuile,*

43 *and Ivor Williams: [44 \[content/uploads/2020/04/This-Too-Shall-\]\(https://collectivepsychology.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/This-Too-Shall-\)](https://collectivepsychology.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/This-Too-Shall-</i></p></div><div data-bbox=)*

1 [Pass.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3HHh5AEqE5uAnrcZYhg6xuponbVxNPLUbAstqBrGtD-](#)
2 [se0sl6JBd9mjYg](#)

3
4 “Five Cups of Coffee: Conversations Around Discipleship and Call,” contact the Rev.
5 Anna Voinovich of First UMC in Downers Grove, IL (anna@dgfumc.org).

6
7 “Leading Groups Online,” by Jeanne Rewa and Daniel Hunter (2020):
8 <http://www.leadinggroupsonline.org/ebooks/Leading%20Groups%20Online.pdf>

9
10 *The People’s Supper*, “The People’s Supper Guidebooks”:
11 <https://thepeoplesupper.org/resources>

12
13 “Virtual Coffee Hours: ‘A Vital Ministry for This Moment,’” by Neva Rae Fox, *The Living*
14 *Church* (May 7, 2020): [https://livingchurch.org/2020/05/07/virtual-coffee-hours-](https://livingchurch.org/2020/05/07/virtual-coffee-hours-a-vital-ministry-for-this-moment/)
15 [a-vital-ministry-for-this-moment/](https://livingchurch.org/2020/05/07/virtual-coffee-hours-a-vital-ministry-for-this-moment/)

16 17 **Worship and Formation Content Resources**

18 Amplify Media (<https://amplifymedia.com/>)

19 *An extension of the UMC Publishing House, Amplify Media is a “multimedia*
20 *platform that delivers high quality, searchable content with an emphasis on*
21 *Wesleyan perspectives for church-wide, group, or individual use on any device at*
22 *any time.”*

23
24 Cokesbury (<https://www.cokesbury.com/>)

25 *Online and in-stock orders are shipping free during the pandemic.*

26
27 Christianbook (<https://www.christianbook.com/>)

28 *Up and running, and shipping, during the pandemic*

29
30 Group (<https://www.group.com/>)

31 *Ministry resources for everyone from children to adults (some free, most for*
32 *purchase).*

33
34 Illustrated Ministry (<https://www.illustratedministry.com/>)

35 *An inclusive ministry that uses the visual arts to explore faith and fellowship. Free*
36 *sample material is available and excellent resources for printing and completing*
37 *at home are available for purchase.*

38
39 Kahoot! (<https://kahoot.com>)

40 *A fun “quiz” “trivia” website. You can use games that are already set up or can*
41 *create your own. It’s a great interactive tool.*

42
43 Ministry to Youth (<https://ministrytoyouth.com/>)

44 *Games and recorded messages for leaders to either use or build upon*

1
2 Stuck at Home Bible Camp

3 (https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=stuckathomebiblecamp)

4 *Children’s lessons offered by pastors and teachers on YouTube*

5
6 The Work of the People (<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/>)

7 *Offers thousands of quality films and mini-series for adult formation, liturgical*
8 *prayers, poems, and visual imagery, and guided learning paths for group*
9 *formation (subscription required)*

10
11 Youth Specialties (<https://youthspecialties.com/>)

12 *Great resources for Bible studies, some faith formation material, and great leader*
13 *resources for inspiration and affirmation.*

14 15 **Adaptive Leadership**

16 “Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup,” Andy Crouch
17 and Kurt Keilhacker, et. al., *The Praxis Journal* (March 20, 2020):

18 [https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-](https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff)
19 [organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff](https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff)

20
21 “Leading Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic,” Adam Hamilton, *Northern Illinois Conference*
22 *Online Learning* (May 7, 2020): <https://www.umcnic.org/online-learning>

23
24 “Strategies for Winter: Redemptive Leadership in Survival Times,” Dave Blanchard and
25 Andy Crouch, et. al., *The Praxis Journal* (April 23, 2020):

26 [https://journal.praxislabs.org/strategies-for-winter-redemptive-leadership-in-](https://journal.praxislabs.org/strategies-for-winter-redemptive-leadership-in-survival-times-f15a7791035a)
27 [survival-times-f15a7791035a](https://journal.praxislabs.org/strategies-for-winter-redemptive-leadership-in-survival-times-f15a7791035a)

28 29 **Mission and Outreach**

30 *Group Mission Trips* (<https://groupmissiontrips.com/>)

31 Provides ideas and resources for churches engaged with or seeking mission
32 outreach, even during the pandemic.

33 34 **Articles: Online Identity, Community, and Church**

35 Bailey, Sarah Pulliam. “Can online Communion be a substitute for the real thing?”

36 Religion News Service (October 10, 2013):

37 [https://religionnews.com/2013/10/10/can-online-communion-substitute-real-](https://religionnews.com/2013/10/10/can-online-communion-substitute-real-thing/)
38 [thing/](https://religionnews.com/2013/10/10/can-online-communion-substitute-real-thing/)

39
40 *The Christian Century*, published every 2 weeks and with additional content online,
41 offers many insight articles dealing with both the COVID-19 pandemic and the
42 future of online church. So far, see especially issues published on April 8, April
43 22, May 6, and May 20, 2020.

1 Dodgen-Magee, Doreen. "Why Video Chats Are Wearing Us Out," *Psychology Today*
2 (April 17, 2020):

3 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/deviced/202004/why-video-chats-are-wearing-us-out?fbclid=IwAR1JjM8y6Jv6qJq450NP8i8h7OELKjnO8v-Kc12NWxTaVUn698rJruiDNJE>

7 Hahn, Heather. "Should churches offer Holy Communion online?" *UM News* (September
8 27, 2013): <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/should-churches-offer-holy-communion-online>

11 Humphrey, Michael. "Is Online Community Real, 'Virtual' or Something Else?" *Forbes*
12 (April 6, 2015): <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhumphrey/2015/04/06/is-online-community-real-virtual-or-something-else/#8aceecf3c620>

13 *A series of articles on "how your life story emerges online," arguing against our*
14 *tendency to assume that the notion of community is something that we can*
15 *objectively define, something stable and agreed upon. Highlighting the variety of*
16 *physical communities and the inability of communities to agree upon a singular*
17 *model, Humphrey argues that "community" is fluid and capable of being*
18 *redefined through digital media.*

21 Ridgeway, Chris. "Online Communion Can Still Be Sacramental: The Bread and the Cup
22 Zoomed For You," *Christianity Today* (March 27, 2020):

23 <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/march-web-only/online-communion-can-still-be-sacramental.html>

25 *Asks the important question: what do we mean by "presence?" Ridgeway argues*
26 *with recent research in communication that "a daily digital culture has shaped*
27 *our interactions to the point that human presence is not synonymous to*
28 *physicality...being present doesn't require being in person."*

30 Skar, Julia. "'Zoom fatigue' is taxing the brain. Here's why that happens," *National*
31 *Geographic* (April 24, 2020):

32 <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/04/coronavirus-zoom-fatigue-is-taxing-the-brain-here-is-why-that-happens/#close>

34 *"Video calls seemed an elegant solution to remote work, but they wear on the*
35 *psyche in complicated ways."*

37 "A Welcome Surprise in the Coronavirus Age," *National Public Radio* (March 16, 2020):

38 <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/16/857338444/a-welcome-surprise-in-the-coronavirus-age>

41 **Books: Online Church, Fellowship, and Communication**

42 Anderson, Keith. *The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World*
43 (Morehouse Publishing, 2015).

1 Estes, Douglas. *SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World* (Zondervan, 2009).
2
3 Hutchings, Tim. *Creating Church Online: Ritual, Community and New Media* (Routledge,
4 2017).
5
6 Kim, Jay Y. *Analog Church: Why We Need Real People, Places, and Things in the Digital*
7 *Agee* (IVP, 2020)
8
9 ...with recent review by John Thomas, “Churches: Don’t Get Too Comfortable
10 Online,” in *Christianity Today* (April 20, 2020):
11 [https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/april-web-only/jay-kim-analog-](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/april-web-only/jay-kim-analog-church-online-digital-world.html)
12 [church-online-digital-world.html](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/april-web-only/jay-kim-analog-church-online-digital-world.html)
13
14 Shitama, Jack. *Anxious Church, Anxious People: How to Lead Change in an Age of Anxiety*
15 (Charis Works, Inc., 2018).
16
17 Wise, Justin. *The Social Church: A Theology of Digital Communication* (Moody
18 Publishers, 2014).
19

20 *Compiled by Daniel Cochran with and for the NIC Bishop’s Advisory Team
21
22