EVERYBODY WELCOME ONLINE

UPDATE MAY 2020

GEORGE FISHER

INTRODUCTION

In response to Everybody Welcome Online we have had a multitude of messages with grateful thanks.

Here is just one typical example of many:

'Your booklet was so helpful in evaluating what we've already done and opening up ideas and conversations with my team on what we could be doing and getting us started on praying and planning for the future.'

Church online is a rapidly growing and changing area and it is heartening to hear of how the churches are responding to the challenge of being online. We have also received queries, advice and offers to help with the surveys.

Bob Jackson, my co-author, is looking at what the future holds for church online and I, George Fisher, am here summarising the updates to our original document, some of which are also on the web page and Facebook page. I have listed below a sample of some great stories of what churches are doing, additional information on Safeguarding, greater acknowledgment of the online church which was thriving before Lockdown, and good practice which we have been sent in the last few weeks.
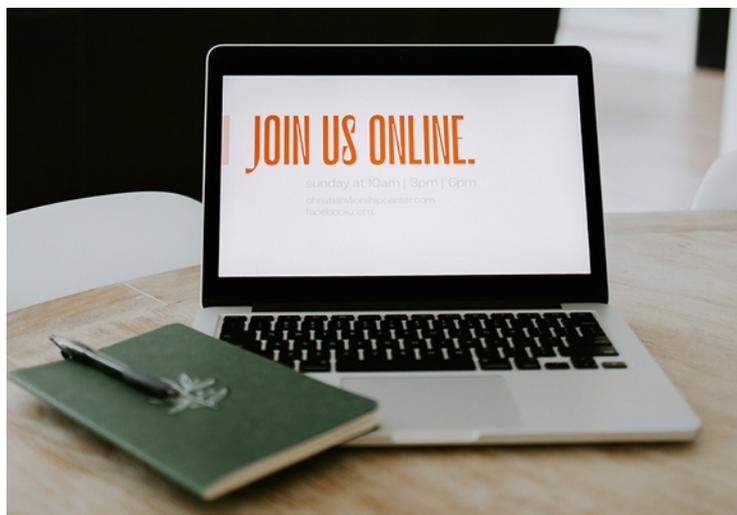
Our hope and prayer is that this, along with Bob's futuristic look, will continue to equip the churches to fulfil all we are called to do in feeding the flock, serving our communities, and reaching out with the good news of Jesus.

The Rev George Fisher

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Safeguarding

This is a key area of concern for online church and we do not claim to be experts on this. In addition to any ongoing advice from your own denomination we refer you to two bodies which have been recommended to us for their ongoing advice:

ThirtyOne:Eight (formerly CCPAS)

www.thirtyoneeight.org/news-and-events/blogs/2020/coronavirus/
Seven top coronavirus safeguarding tips for churches.

Safer Activities for Everyone CIC (SAFECIC)

www.safecic.co.uk/
With concerns rising about the welfare of vulnerable children, young people and adults at risk during the lockdown, more and more organisations are switching their normal face to face services to online activities including social media and video meetings.

Safeguarding remains a top priority when creating and developing such ways of working and SAFE has developed free access, clear and simple guidance to help keep everyone safe:

- Professionals
  www.safecic.co.uk/professionals-and-organisations

- At risk groups
  www.safecic.co.uk/at-risk-groups

- Parents and carers
  www.safecic.co.uk/parents-and-carers

The guidance is also available online as a word or pdf document so organisations can easily circulate the information to their personnel and those they work with as appropriate.

To further help in these challenging times SAFE is also offering:

- **'Buy one, get one free'** discounts for online training.
  www.safecic.co.uk/buy-one-get-one-free
  Courses credits do not expire so this is a good time to top up training accounts to ensure all personnel remain up to date with their safeguarding certificates, ready for when regular services can resume.

- **Free safeguarding consultations** with one of our in-house experts, by phone or ClickMeeting, available for any safeguarding leads or managers to discuss their safeguarding arrangements, policies and safer working practices. To book your appointment email consultation@safecic.co.uk with your contact details and availability during office hours.

Church Stories

Many will have seen the innovative 'The UK Blessing':
www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U

Here are samples of the exciting and innovative things local churches are doing across our country which can be found at:
www.dur.ac.uk/digitaltheology/ewo/churchstories/

- St Mark, Pennington, which Rev Rachel Noel, describes as a smallish normal (sort of) church. Read about the amazing and innovative things they have been doing in Lockdown.

- St Edmund, Yeading, where Fr. Peter McKenzie outlines what he has done, and hopes to do.

- St Nicholas, Taplow, with their Virtual Hallelujah Chorus from the Messiah.

Good Practice

We have continued to receive advice and ideas about what works and what doesn't as well as various queries we have sought to respond to. Here are a few of the things we have heard about:

- John Truscott's 'speaking to camera' tips. As we encourage more people to be involved and provide clips for online church we need to ensure that what we are doing is good quality:
www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Training-Notes-index/Speaking-to-camera-tips

- Lexi, who is five years old, gives her top tips for creating 'self-tapes'. A different angle from John Truscott but the same message:
https://youtu.be/om2a2jgjtIM

- Community in a Crisis (CIAS) has been set up in response to COVID19. It is run by a group of friends that love the local church and is endorsed by International Fellowship of Evangelical Students Europe. They are passionate about relational sustainable church online during COVID19. You produce practical training videos and you can find their Facebook page at:
www.facebook.com/communityinacrisis/

Many churches are realising the need to update and upgrade their web pages in response to all that is happening and prepare for the future. Here are a couple of good examples of where this has been done really well:

- www.allsaintswick.org.uk/DispersedChurch

- https://kerith.church/

How to Conduct Great Online PCC Meetings

With lockdown in some form looking like it may continue for a while, many of us are turning to online PCC meetings and discovering they are somewhat different to normal ones. These two free guides from CPAS build on their popular resource 'PCC Tonight', offering practical ideas on how to set up and run great online PCC meetings:
https://www.cpas.org.uk/church-resources/resource-for-pccs/

- **How to Lead a Zoom PCC Meeting**
https://www.cpas.org.uk/download/3609/how-to-lead-a-zoom-pcc-meeting
This guide is for incumbents and PCC chairs and covers everything from how to use various tools within Zoom to the nuances of needing both a firmer hand and a more relaxed style.

- **Getting Ready for a Zoom PCC Meeting**
https://www.cpas.org.uk/download/3610/getting-ready-for-a-zoom-pcc-meetingg.uk/
This is for PCC members to help them both prepare well for the meeting, and also to engage well during the meeting.

Churches are considering what to do when Lockdown is over and looking at live-streaming services. Bob's look at the future considers issues surrounding live-streaming. There are numerous articles and videos online to guide you in this and here are a few to consider:

- https://restream.io/blog/how-to-begin-streaming-live-church-services/

- https://youtu.be/29-gslw_NHc

- www.boxcast.com/blog/the-best-live-video-streaming-equipment-for-your-ministry

- www.switcherstudio.com/blog/how-to-livestream-your-church-service-for-free

The following items of good practice can be found on our web page at:
www.dur.ac.uk/digitaltheology/ewo/goodpractice/

- Kerith Community Church, Bracknell, are brimming with ideas and it is worth a look at their web site as well as reading what they have been doing.

- How to handle YouTube's 'Made for Kids' designation. Some churches have been confused by this and here is an explanation of how to deal with it.

- What about those who are not online? Telephone options and a novel idea.

In addition to this, 'Sanctuary First' in Scotland has been operating as an online church for several years and you can see what they do at: www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/home

Zoom

Many churches are using Zoom for their online services very effectively as we reported on page 15 of the first edition of Everybody Welcome Online. Innumerable churches are also using it for after church 'coffee and chat' using the Zoom facility for creating break-out rooms. On Sunday 17th May, the reason for the Zoom app crashing, according to The Independent, is due to too many people using the app to hold Sunday church services online! Churches are also using Zoom for midweek activities and meetings.

However, there have been instances of unwanted Zoom gate crashers. Whilst wanting our services to be open to everyone it is not good practice to advertise the Zoom code on the website. Churches are advised to send out the invitation and code to regulars who should then be asked to pass this on to family, friends and neighbours.

One church has sent the code round on a 'keeping the local community in touch' email list. Similarly, for after-church coffee and chat, the safest way to do this is to send the Zoom code to members and then at the end of the service, when giving the invitation to coffee and chat to everyone, give out an email address which other people can contact to access the code. Let's stay open and friendly, but let's keep safe.

Accessibility and Online Church

In our haste to send information out to the churches in edition one of Everybody Welcome Online, we failed to take fully into account the existing online church. For years people with disabilities have struggled with access to our churches and the internet has been a wonderful opportunity for them to be church. They are somewhat bemused that churches are now going online and think that what they are doing is brand new when disability groups have been doing it for years. We can all learn from their experience and embrace the pre-existing online church both now and when Lockdown is over.

Capt. Tim Rourke, a Disabled Church Army Pioneer Minister in Chesterfield has put a blog on his 'Holding Space' website with his views on 'Disability, Covid-19 and the Church' at:
https://holding-space.org/2020/05/05/my-view-on-disability-covid-19-and-the-church/

It is a brilliant and heartfelt plea for inclusion and adds some very useful resources and links at the end.

There are also other helpful items on the Holding Space website, including 'Mission in a time of chaos' at:
https://holding-space.org/2020/04/23/mission-in-a-time-of-chaos/

Alice Kemp, the Disability Advisor for the Diocese of Bristol, has drawn up some helpful advice on accessibility in consultation with her diocesan disability advisory group. This can be found at:
https://cofebristol.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/How_to_make_your_church_accessible_during_the_Pandemic.pdf

Spiritual and Theological Reflections

You will find a number of these on our web page at:
www.dur.ac.uk/digitaltheology/ewo/reflection/

Please continue to send in your stories, ideas and suggestions for good practice and reflections, which we will endeavour to put on the website and Facebook.

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