



How to use these resources

Virtual Worship Discussion & White Paper

Panel Discussion Video, White Paper, and Discussion Guides

Congregational leaders are encouraged to use the panel discussion video and/or white paper and corresponding discussion guides to assist them in determining the best plan for the future of virtual worship in their congregation. Options include:

- Sharing the paper with leaders, asking them to read it on their own, and using the discussion guide when you next gather to discuss.
- Sharing the video with leaders, asking them to watch it on their own, and using the discussion guide when you next gather to discuss.
- Watching the video together in its entirety and then discussing using the guide. (This will take some time as the video is approximately one hour in length and discussion will likely last at least as long.)
- Watching a different portion of the video at a series of meetings and discussing that portion.
- If appropriate to your setting, the video and discussion guide could be used at a congregation-wide gathering or series of gatherings such as a weekly Bible class.

Return-to-Worship Planning

“God’s People Gather” blessings videos

These are 60 to 90 second videos that can be shared with members in a variety of ways to encourage those who are virtually worshipping to return to in-person worship by reminding them of the blessings that are missed when one is not there to experience it.

Options include but are not limited to:

- Showing one per week after worship (especially leading up to a *God's People Gather* celebration Sunday).
- Sharing one per week via email (especially leading up to a *God's People Gather* celebration Sunday).
- Sharing via your congregation's social media.
- Encouraging members to share with fellow members who have not yet returned to in-person worship as well as unchurched acquaintances.
- In the long-term, these videos can be used by elders as they visit straying members to remind them of the blessings of being in worship.

"God's People Gather" Worship Celebration and Kick-off Event Materials

A celebration is certainly appropriate once all of God's people are able to gather once again to worship him. Congregations who choose to hold a special celebration Sunday will want to think carefully about the timing of such an event, taking local circumstances into account. Here are some suggestions for planning your celebration:

- Identify the day when a COVID vaccine is available for everyone in your community and schedule the celebration for eight weeks after that day. This assures that all members have access to vaccination and enough time for the vaccine to take effect.
- Consider a Sunday when your congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper was one of the greatest blessings our people missed when unable to worship in person.
- Peruse the Worship Celebration materials and decide what you will use. Begin organizing any special music/musicians you will be using that day.
- Promote the celebration in as many ways as possible. Social media, email, phone calls, announcements, texting, website, post cards, and word of mouth are some ways to build excitement about gathering as a family in God's house.
- Determine how you will make sure everyone is greeted in a way that reflects the significance of this special service. God willing you will see faces that you have not seen in a while. Prepare to welcome them home!
- Give your pastor time to focus on his sermon for the celebration. Pray for them and love them as messengers of the gospel.
- If you have guests, do your best to welcome them and gather some contact information from them. Hopefully, your church has a system in place for doing this post-covid. Do not forget to follow up with them and thank them for worshiping!
- Peruse the kick-off event ideas and determine which, if any, you will include in your celebration weekend.

Elder encouragement plans.

Many members will need personal encouragement to return to in-person worship. This resource helps a congregation's elders come up with a plan and timetable that is appropriate for its setting.