

Using technology to connect the congregation in the coronavirus pandemic

You just announced to the congregation that due to the pandemic situation and guidance from the local government, your church will not be having regular Sunday in-person services. You pointed them to the Online Streaming website for the service broadcast. Now what!?

As churches respond to pandemic outbreaks and mandatory in-person closures, there is a need to understand the various options that are available to engage with the staff, ministries and congregation remotely. While there are many options that are available for churches, sometimes the options can look overwhelming. In addition, a number of the staff, ministries and groups may already be using various methods to communicate. What do you do as a church?

This guide is a quick one that has been put together for churches to understand the various options and pick what suits their church environment. In general, there are 6 categories of tools and options available to churches. There are link to the tools below so that you can easily review them and see if they fit your needs.

Resource sharing & meaningful remote group conversations	Email, Attachments & File Sharing	Slack, Microsoft Teams, Google Suite	Hub365, Facebook Groups
	Phone Calls, FaceTime & Text Messages	Group Me, WhatsApp, Zoom Conference Calls	Church Online, Facebook Pages, Website, Email
Immediate announcements & one-way broadcasts			
	One-on-one communication	Staff, ministry leaders & volunteers	Congregation & ministry groups

As with any task, the best tool depends on the job to be done. So, let's walk through the categories and tools and look at the pros/cons for each of them.

One-on-one Communication

This is an easy category to describe as it really focuses on simple one-on-one communication tools that most of us are familiar with. Phone calls and text messages and [Zoom](#) calls are best for communication or conversations that have a need for an immediate response.

If the need is to have secure conversations and the ability to discuss and share resources, e-mail, [Google drive](#) and [Apple iCloud](#) could be good options for the one-on-one communication category.

Staff and Ministry Leaders

This is an interesting category as the need here is to communicate to a group of people; a staff team, ministry leaders or volunteers. There are a number of tools that can help with broadcasting messages and most teams already use a combination of these tools. While texting is a common way, [WhatsApp \(a product from Facebook\)](#) and [GroupMe](#) work well for these immediate and sometimes disjointed conversations.

If the need is to have discussions and share resources within multiple groups, [Microsoft Teams](#), [Slack](#) and [Google Docs](#) will work well. Documents can be shared easily and groups can be created as well and administered at an enterprise level.

Congregation and Ministry Groups

This is an emerging category especially in light of churches needing to engage with communications in environments where people are not present in a face to face environment. Since the congregation is being engaged, the tools have to be 'insanely simple' and easy to use.

On the immediate broadcasting need, the best tools may your church E-mail (if you have an e-mail list) and Facebook (if you have already built up a following).

If the need is to create multiple groups and have thoughtful discussions and share resources across groups, Facebook and [hub365](#) can meet that need. Facebook can work if data privacy or algorithm changes are not an issue and if the congregants are comfortable with being in Facebook for their ministries. If your church already has a vibrant Facebook Groups presence, start communicating regularly on it. Facebook is easy to use and administer for a single group.

[Hub365](#) is insanely simple to use and will be a better option if Data Privacy is important. It is also the better choice if there is a need to create many ministry groups and share resources within and across those groups, in a trusted setting. Hub365 also links with Zoom and Calendly to provide ways for congregation members to seek assistance and receive it remotely. In addition, [Hub365](#) allows the church to brand it to the church and make it a seamless experience across the other church web sites and CRM so that it feels seamless to the congregants across your online and campus experiences.

Engaging Your Congregation Remotely - An Action Plan

At a time when there is general economic uncertainty and a pandemic uncertainty, people need community more than ever. Uncertain times in the past have led people in droves to churches as they need hope that only the gospel can provide. At a time when people need support the most, there may be regulatory or health and human services that do not allow your church congregants to do what they are normally used to doing. If you do not have an action plan for engaging with your congregation remotely, [Start Here](#).