

Who would have thought that in a church so steeped in bluegrass-style gospel and traditional choir would have a large screen in the sanctuary and be listening and enjoying music of many genres?! I certainly didn't! Yet, here we are...

The pandemic brought this aging congregation to many changes that no one could have anticipated. The first Sunday that the session voted to be closed we had no plans. But that didn't stop us. Our pastor filmed a video from her laptop and posted it on our website. After that, she began learning more of Zoom, and we added a live component to our worship. We used talented musicians to pre-record music so that we could add familiar sounds to our worship, even as we gathered either by Zoom or by watching it on the web.

The Synod of the Trinity grant opportunity for technology gave us the push we needed. We built a plan for the equipment we would need, so that we would be able to worship without needing our pastor's personal equipment. With some memorial money as our share of the purchase, we were able to request the \$1,000 grant and purchase a camcorder, two pieces of equipment that allow our camcorder and sound system to speak to the computer we use, and the new large screen that occupies the whole choir loft area!

We have a few people who now run the Zoom from our balcony, with a refurbished computer, the camcorder and the attachments and cables. We use a borrowed laptop (the church's laptop actually quit on us before a service) to run our PowerPoint presentation with the words for the liturgy (no bulletins for now!), and we were fortunate to already have a projector in house. We also have a small FM transmitter to allow audio to leave our walls and bring others to join our service. Finally, we added a CD-duplicator so that the 10 or so audio CDs that are delivered each week could be run off more quickly, allowing less time to be spent waiting around for the CDs after the service.

We regularly have about 10 people join worship by Zoom, and another four or so by FM. We have been worshipping with about 30 in-house, wearing masks and physically distanced.

While we aren't where we were with worship numbers prior to the March shutdown, we are getting close, and we are doing a much better job taking care of those who are home-bound.

Because we now have a big screen and technology in the sanctuary, we are offering movies on the big screen once a month to bring some of our folks back to church, as well as to welcome our neighbors. We are also using the FM transmitter to do Christmas CAR-oling on Sunday afternoon – people will stay in their cars and we will play carols on the FM transmitter that they can sing along to with us. We are finding new ways to reach out!

We are grateful for the generosity of the Synod so that we could make our purchases go further and we could join the "digital" worship community! You can teach "old Presbyterians" new tricks!

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