

Summary of Webinar Chat

'HOW YOUR CHURCH CAN HELP DURING COVID 19' WEBINAR, HOSTED BY
DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA & WORLD RENEW

March 28, 2020 @ 2pm EDT

Below are excerpts from the Chat that took place during the online webinar (hosted by Zoom). It's our intention to share the ideas and resources that were shared by the leaders and participants!

STORIES SHARED

A neighbouring church had a community member whose house burnt down. They could still access local thrift stores in a private shopping session. They were able to acquire the essentials!

We are organizing a "CURB Your Enthusiasm PARTY" on our street for tomorrow. Everyone stay on your own curb and hangout for a bit. Lots of shouting will be done, but it should be fun!

Someone locally drew thank you notes with chalk on the front of the store thresholds thanking them for their service.

Grocery Shopping for neighbours and just leave them on the porch (they leave money on the porch).

Visiting people in a nursing home and singing to them via the nursing stations phone.

Visiting shut-ins by calling them from outside of their living room window and calling them on the phone.

Using Zoom or other internet platform to share a meal together or play games together – getting creative with how we connect.

Reached out to local foodbank and heard the increased requests for rental and utility payments so our diaconate was able to help in filling in the gap.

Matching modes of communication with prayer partners – setting the congregation up with prayer partners who want to use a particular method, phone, versus computer.

CONNECTING

We sent cards to our neighbours and I have had two neighbours for whom I am now shopping for.

One of our members is connected to an interfaith group and they developed a neighbour connection card that can be printed, filled out and put in neighbours mailboxes.

Look for those that are connected to your church through our programs, such as Gems Cadets, Friendship group (especially).

We also have people calling daily to just check in

- For those making phone calls I would suggest right away to set a time limit to the phone call. I think in a kind way you can explain the limited time for your phone call.

We have ready-made meals.

Asset based community development (ABCD): Mobilize the resources within your community!

Help people get engaged in 'useful' or purposeful activities.

Identify areas where we can 'step into the gap' as a church – is there a service missing, distribution method, communication, relationships/connectivity.

We have a care team who are not on church council who contact shut-ins. I don't know how busy they have been lately but they take a lot of the pastoral and social contact with the congregation

My husband is putting together a list/group of members who are 70 plus who would like to have a buddy. Buddies will connect with each other daily. They will find out/assess each other's needs and pass them on to those who can help. Also, people giving online can help and give information to those who are not online. And best of all...they can just chat with each other.

I also want to give a shout out to letter writers and the possibility of doing that too. It can be done with congregation members but also through prison ministry organizations to those who are already shut in, but even more so now with the virus. Many have gone into shutdown. We send printed copies of church newsletters out to those who have no internet.

On the members' page of our church website we have created a form that allows folks to communicate any needs they have as well as another form for anyone who wants to volunteer. Both come to me and I pass the information on. For those who are not online, we have encouraged them to call the church office or their elder/deacon/pastoral caregiver with needs or willingness to volunteer...it is beginning to work.

We use Zoom for our church services and you can phone in on those meetings.

- I believe when someone sets up the Zoom meeting, local phone numbers are offered, but not toll-free ones.

WoodyNook is using YouTube. There are some members, whether by choice or by not being technical, are not connected through social media. This way they can access daily

messages and the services when it is convenient for them. It sometimes takes a bit of time to get them connected but phone and email instructions work.

Grace CRC in Chatham, Ontario still has a phone in link to their worship services (519-436-0041). They also live-stream. This church is currently without a pastor, but local pastors are sharing the pulpit.

I think those of us who are still working full time, and especially the essential workers, need special care. We don't necessarily have the time to process all of this and it can be very stressful.

- For those working full-time it's even more important to mobilize as much of the church as possible. Especially those who have reductions in work

Seeing two needs that might be related: people needing food and restaurants needing to serve food or they will close. How might the church stand in this gap?

- Acton restaurants offering takeout only. Offer Gift cards to people?

OFFERINGS

On a more procedural note - how are your churches taking offerings?

- E-transfer works great
- Bethel Waterdown is adding each week's cause to our Tithely online giving platform.
- Mail in a cheque
- Our church is doing online donations on the church website
- We are using the [CRCNA] Bridge App for offering
- Our church uses church centre for collection
- We're encouraging: * The Bridge App* PAR* We're talking about an idea of "drive-through make up giving". Idea being two deacons station a drop off box in the church parking lot. 2 x 2hr slots on a Saturday kind of thing. Gather the counting committee safely a couple days later.
- We are encouraging people to use PAR or Canada Helps. Some people still want to write cheques so we have a drop off at church.
- We have 3 different drop off locations for checks and envelopes
- Another way of giving is PayPal Give. Make sure you register as a charity for paying less to use this service.
- We are also adjusting the offering schedule just a bit to meet more current needs...we are still giving to the Budget, diaconate/benevolence, Mustard Seed pandemic etc. (local charity). I guess you could call it prioritizing the timing of the offerings.

- Safe Counting Committee equals one person and a camera
- Diaconal Ministries Canada is working on a sheet right now that will be available on our website soon!

EVANGELISM/PRAYER

Prayer walking is always good - here is a link to a Prayer Walking guide:

https://diaconalministries.com/Prayer-Walking_A-Practical-Guide-for-COS_FINAL.pdf

We post an hour of prayer on Zoom on community Facebook pages

www.nationaldayofprayer.ca is hosting a day of prayer today till 8:30pm

There is also Alpha online, that is being implemented right now, for those who have deep spiritual questions

