



# Best Practices for COVID-19 (Print/Phone)



In the current pandemic, going back to basic tenets of communication are best practices for any local church no matter the level of technology capabilities. During this time of cancelled in-person worship, if your church needs other options to streaming a worship service or recording a sermon, below are some ideas that include print resources and telephone possibilities.

## Print Communication Options

- **Church Directory**

- If your church has a directory, pick out members to send a card to each week to let them know you are thinking of them, praying for them, and miss seeing them on a weekly basis.

Find creative ways to keep the church in community together even though physically apart. One way is to keep up the newsletter. If your newsletter is currently only monthly, consider how to make it weekly for more connection opportunities for your congregation.

- **Newsletter**

- Have updates about how church families are keeping up with their faith under the stay-at-home order or share fun activities they are doing
- Share ways that the church can be praying for members
- Share a devotional that parishioners can join in each day
- Share a prayer/Scripture verse that becomes your church's guide during the pandemic
- Get creative and have a different member of the congregation each week be responsible for a different portion of the newsletter (share responsibilities if checking in on members/gathering content)
- Have small group or Sunday school leaders share questions each week for members to discuss and ponder from recent or upcoming studies
- Use content from the conference office:
  - share upcoming readings from the Bishop's Bible Challenge: <https://vaumc.org/2020BibleChallenge> and have the congregation read together
  - share recent conference news stories: <https://vaumc.org/ConferenceNews>

## Phone Communication Options

Options through the telephone can also be ideal for keeping your church connected. These can be used for checking on members, conducting church business or keeping fellowship groups such as small groups connected.

- **Church Directory Calling**

- If your church has a pictorial directory, find your picture then start by calling with the person pictured underneath you.
- If your directory only lists phone numbers, call the people starting below your number once a week.

- **Phone Tree**
  - Have a contact person who is in charge of all communications of the tree.
  - Make sure the message is direct and simple.
  - If individuals do not answer, report back to the coordinator so a follow-up phone call can be made.
  - Template can be found here: <http://templatelab.com/phone-tree/>
- **Group Phone Call**
  - Individuals can lead a devotion or conduct church business over the phone.
  - Try to keep communications as concise as possible.
  - Come with a plan so people are not trying to talk over each other. Have one person direct conversations and keep on task throughout the phone call
  - Resources for a conference call:
    - <https://www.freeconferencecall.com>
      - Free to use but suggests a donation for use.
      - Has the capability to record sessions for later listening.
      - You are able to decide which call setting is best for you
        - Lecture, Q&A or mute all
    - <https://www.call-em-all.com>
      - \$7.50 a month
      - Allows you to send text messages and voice calls.
      - Has the capability to pre-record messages to be sent out to individuals.
    - <https://freeconferenceusa.com>
- **Best Practices for Conference Calls**
  - Be in a quiet place free from background noise.
  - Make sure your phone signal is strong so dropped calls are minimized.
  - Have a plan going into the call:
    - Write down what you want to say.
    - Create an agenda for your call.
    - Say the most important information first.
  - Give a start and end time for the meeting.
  - Be yourself
  - As conference calls and ZOOM meetings are more prevalent during stay-at-home orders and social distancing, be sure to have down time and space these meetings out so you do not burn out.