

Low-Tech and No-Tech Methods for Ministry During the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

Ideas gathered from staff members, pastoral leaders, and churches in the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences of the UCC.

HEALTH NOTE: Some of these ideas include mailing, picking up, or dropping off material. PLEASE be sure that any paper, objects, supplies, etc. that are being mailed, picked up, or dropped off are done so in a sanitary way (washing hands properly before packaging, wearing gloves, wiping down with disinfecting wipes, etc.) and that the receiving person also knows to clean/wipe objects down before use and wash their hands carefully after use. Any ideas that involve sharing a space are to be done so in the open air or from inside cars while observing social distancing.

If you have more ideas to share, email Aidan Spencer at aidan@ucctcm.org.

Birthday Parades:

Gather up all of your instruments and noise makers and form parade—get in your vehicles and roll the windows down!—to celebrate birthdays happening in your neighborhood!

Bulletins:

Create a PDF of the bulletin and mail, drop off, or email to folks who want to use it to follow along with the online service.

Calling Partners/Phone Tree:

Create “Calling Partners” by assigning people to check in with each other every day or two. You could provide them with questions to ask each other.

Children’s Lesson Material:

Drive by or delivery service for children’s lesson material.

Coloring Pages:

Free coloring pages for all ages are available through Illustrated Ministry or find or make coloring pages of your own. You could your Youth to draw pictures that would be scanned and sent to other congregants to color.

Daily Posts:

Post daily devotionals, inspirational thoughts, songs, etc. on Facebook or through email.

Distance Book Club:

Start a book club and discuss the book over the phone, by letter, or Zoom.

Donations for Help in the Community:

If you have extra funds, randomly select names of congregants and give them the funds to do an act of discipleship or charitable action of the person's choice and conscience. St. Paul UCC in Denver, IA has done this and found that very creative and compassionate kindnesses had occurred, though they do not require a report back to the congregation. They used loose change offerings to fund this, but the funds could come from any number of places. You can also set up a "Love Fund" where the pastor receives referrals from congregants for folks in need and directs the funds as needed.

Errand Service:

Provide an errand service for folks who are more vulnerable and/or have less assistance.

Finger Labyrinth:

Create and drop off a finger labyrinth with instructions on how to use it. Create an activity for all ages by just sending the instructions and potentially materials.

Lawn/Porch Concert:

Give a short concert or host sing-along on the lawn or porch of neighbors, particularly those who are very isolated. This could be done over the phone too. Keep the members of the performance to those in your household/ quarantined space and be sure to maintain social distancing.

Letters and Drawings:

Mail or drop off letters, drawings, and artwork to each other.

Make DVDs or CDs:

Burn DVDs or CDs of your live/recorded services for folks who do not have internet.

Online Resources:

Anyone in any church can get a free, All-Access subscription to over 28 6-8 part series in the www.darkwoodbrew.org library. For some more online resources, visit ucctcm.org/health.

Prayer Journals:

Create a daily prayer journal and drop off copies or email to folks who can print at home. To make an activity, send instructions/suggested techniques so people can make their own.

Printable Worship:

Create a printable liturgy, or “Worship Script” (liturgy, sermon, song lyrics). Print and mail/drop off to those without internet. For those who do, post it online and/or send through email and include links to music on YouTube.

Scripture Study:

Start a weekly mail or email study on scriptures. Have people ask questions, make suggestions, and offer stories in their responses.

Text Joys and Concerns:

Text joys and concerns to pastors individually or in a group chat. Do it throughout the week or as part of a live-streamed service.

Join Up with a Church Nearby:

Not offering online worship, but near a church that is? Text joys and concerns to the pastor is hosting so that prayers can be shared between congregations. If not everyone can participate because of limited technology, have someone who can watch it online write down prayers and distribute after the service.