



Leading your Church
into Growth

Connecting the older generation

One distinction that is to be found in our church communities at this unusual time of the coronavirus is the divide between those who are used to technology and those who are not.

We all know that it is important for us to do all we can for those who don't have access to online services. This could be:

- pointing them toward the Sunday service on Radio 4 etc.
- posting a copy of the service you are using through their door
- helping them to phone in to Zoom services from a normal phone
- sharing with them the Church of England 'Daily Hope Phone Line'.
The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

As well as all this, it might be possible, depending on some circumstances, to help people get connected digitally. This has a practical problem in terms of social distancing that needs to take place, but if you make the time then even keeping two meters apart it may be possible to set someone up on a Tablet that will allow them to become digitally connected.

The first step in this would be if they had WiFi at home. If they don't use a computer or tablet, why would they have WiFi? They probably won't: but a neighbour might. A lot of elderly people know their neighbours who may be willing to let them use their broadband – they will only be streaming

services on a Sunday morning, and then sending emails and messages: they want be watching hours of Netflix!

If it is possible that a neighbour would be willing to give access to WiFi, then a tablet can be bought very inexpensively nowadays (recognising that you get what you pay for). A seven-inch Amazon Fire Tablet is £50. This tablet has enough spec for Zoom, Facebook and Youtube...even if at that price there is not much storage for much else.

Here are some more detailed steps:

1. Help them choose their device – they key factor is money. Tablets can be as much as £600, they can be as little as £49. Probably the most well known brand if money is no object is an Apple iPad. The best budget tablets are generally Amazon Fire tablets. Like iPads, these vary in price depending on how much memory they have and if they are the latest model with the most up to date technology.
2. Create them an email address and set up emails to come through on the mail app of their device. This point, and following may take some patience if social distancing in in force. you will likely be on their front path, 2 metres away, and talking them through the process. However it could be worth it if they can connect to church, friends, and family.
3. Set up the YouTube app on their device and subscribe them to your church channel and possibly the CofE one too and show them how to open the app, go to subscriptions and see latest films.
4. Set up the Zoom app on their device, if you can add any of your regular church meetings to their device so they can go in the app, see what is happening that day and then join.
5. Maybe set Facebook app to your church page so they can see what is on there.

6. On their internet browser set up a sensible home page for whenever they open it and maybe add BBC news etc... to their favourites.
7. Then, drag all the other apps that are auto installed on their device into a folder and then call it "Ignore" or whatever and if you can put that on a second homescreen and off their main one. That helps keep the main home screen as clear as possible.
8. Make sure they know where the volume controls are on their device!
9. Remind them to keep it charged and how to turn it on and off if needed. It's easiest if they keep it charged and so it 'sleeps' but never fully goes off.
10. Write down their email address, passwords etc... and make sure you keep a copy too!!

Other Things You Can Do:

1. You can set up cloud sharing that all can access allowing you to put newsletters, videos, etc., in there and then teach them all how to access that. You can use Dropbox or Google drive as well as iCloud and others.
2. Create them a contacts folder with other people from church in it and teach them how they can Facetime/Google Meet one another. Being able to see one another can make such a difference. You can also then help them use Houseparty or WhatsApp to be in conversations with one or two others.