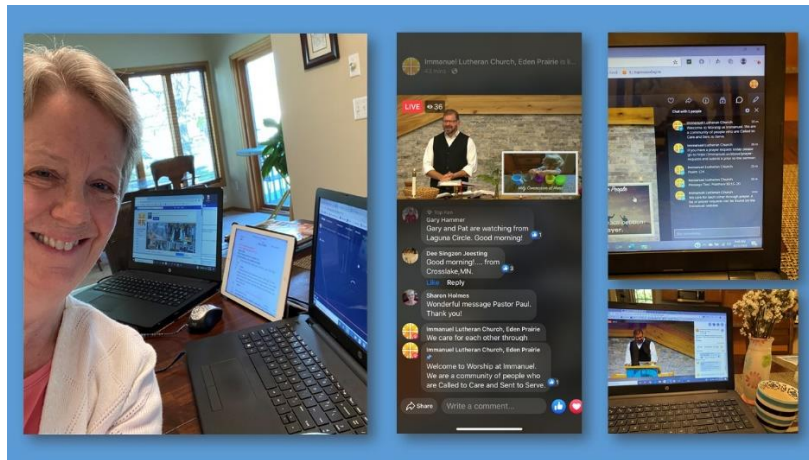


FaithBIT



Active Online Worship

By Kim Rathjen

Sunday mornings have been quite different for most of us for the past six months, and probably will be for some time into the future. The ritual of gathering for worship in our sanctuary and the fellowship before and after are an integral part of who we are as a community of faith.

Since March I have been attending worship in front of a screen (as have many of you!). We are fortunate that as a congregation we have the technology, staff and volunteers who make online worship possible and I am grateful for that! But I do miss interacting with others on Sunday mornings.

Worship has always been an active practice of faith for me. That has become more difficult while worshipping alone and it is easy to become passive in our worship practice. As we gather (some in person and many online) for worship this fall around the theme ReNew, I am hopeful that we can re-engage with God and each other through our worship. I have some suggestions for actively worshipping from home:

- **Commit to the full 45 minutes that worship lasts.** We notice in our analytics that a lot of people are not viewing the entire worship service and that they arrive late and leave partway through. We would rarely come and go like this during worship in the sanctuary. God covets this time with you as a worshipper.
- **Comment during worship.** Live worship services on Sundays are available both on [Livestream](#) and on [Facebook](#). Both platforms allow for people to communicate with each other from a distance. If you see Immanuel commenting on something that is me! I host the communications on both platforms during worship from my dining room. Talk to me and to each other!
 - On [Livestream](#) you click on the speech bubble icon to open the comments. You can type your comments in just like texting or Facebook commenting.
 - On [Facebook](#) you can comment at any time.
 - Many people stream worship to a large screen so that it feels a bit more like worship and so that multiple family members can participate at the same time. Commenting or replying is not as easy when streaming. However, you can open the worship service on another device like a phone or laptop so that you can participate in worship through commenting. We are giving you permission to have your phone out during worship while we are separated!
 - Reacting with a "Yes!" or an "Amen" during the sermon would give our Pastors some positive encouragement as they adjust to preaching to a more sparsely populated sanctuary.

- **Sing!** I will be the first to admit that when we started this in March I said I would not be singing along during worship. But you know what? I need to sing! Singing the words of the liturgy or the hymns/songs is an active part of worship – and though I thought I wouldn't, I do sing and I look forward to it.
- **Participate in Communion.** This is God's gift for you! Have a plan for wine/juice and bread in advance. Perhaps there is a special supply of items that you use only on Sunday mornings. Things set apart are Holy – Communion can still be a holy practice even while in your home.

I'd love to hear from you if you have ideas about how to make the online worship experience more active and interactive. Join me in worship on Sundays as we always have – and let me know you are there! More importantly, let God know you are there by being an active worship participant from wherever you are.

