'Worship in Lockdown' Survey, April 2020
Initial Findings and Analysis

1. Introduction

This paper is a summary of the initial findings from a survey which conducted in the Diocese of Exeter five weeks after churches were closed for public worship and four weeks after they were also closed for private prayer. An invitation to respond to the survey was sent to Beneficed Readers and Clergy, with a wider group invited to contribute via links on the diocesan Facebook page. 194 of the 199 responses were from the e-mail invitation. This level of response is very encouraging and respondents have given serious thought to their answers, making the dataset a rich source of information about what is currently happening and how licensed leaders are anticipating the future.

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26th April 2020

2. Quantitative Data

This table shows how people are reporting what they have been doing over the past month. The definitions of each of the different types of service are listed in Appendix A at the end of this document.

	SUNDAY SERVICE	WEEKDAY SERVCIE	SMALL GROUPS	COFFEE MORNING	MAUNDY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	EASTER SUNDAY	TOTAL UNIQUE RESPONDENTS
Pre-Recorded Service	87	41	7	4	40	64	75	112
Promoting Diocesan Services	85	28	3	2	59	67	85	106
Promoting National CofE Services	80	27	1	0	43	57	72	95
Live-Streamed Service	58	36	10	9	26	34	52	72
Simultaneous Service	46	26	5	1	22	30	39	61
Interactive Service	43	24	20	14	26	25	35	65
Live Service by 'phone	32	11	2	3	13	16	23	42
Text chat alongside one of the above	24	7	11	2	4	7	18	33
Video Meeting	16	13	88	45	12	6	14	107
Virtual Service[1]	5	3	1	1	3	3	5	7

Figure 1: Types of service running in lockdown

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[1] Looking at the text responses, I don't think that people who selected this option are doing what was described in the survey: "A service which takes place inside an online virtual world such as Second Life or Roblox."

In addition to the activities listed above, Mission Communities have been using Blogs, E-mail reflections, thoughts and reflections on Facebook, physical banners, links to worship songs on YouTube, various services and activities for families and also promoting live and recorded services from other churches in their local area.

The comments which respondents have given accompanying this data put flesh on these bones and describe the different ways Mission Communities are making use of the different platforms. This will be explored in detail in Section 5 below.

3. Initial Observations

Some very positive overall themes emerged from the survey. Given the number of responses and the spread of Mission Communities behind them by them, it is reasonable to conclude that this gives a representative picture of the response across the diocese, rather than just highlighting those who had 'something to report' and so filled in the survey.

A. AN AGILE RESPONSE

The speed at which churches have moved to offering worship, discipleship and pastoral care while maintaining physical distance is nothing short of remarkable. The data in the table above is after only one month of lockdown, and many of these have been offering some version of their current pattern since the first and second week of the restrictions. Complexity theory offers the maxim that 'change happens on the edge of chaos' and as we have moved from a long period of stability to the current situations, rapid change has not only been possible by necessary for survival. As we move back out of 'chaos' and into 'stability' the most creative long-term change will happen on the border between those two states. We can't leave it too long to embed changes, but there needs to be a path back to stability before people are able to buy-in to a longer term vision.

B. CHURCHES ARE USING MULTIPLE CHANNELS TO CONNECT

Most churches in the survey are doing more than one new thing. This may be because that haven't yet decided which is the most appropriate for their context, but their own assessment is that they are using different ways of connecting with different types of people and that different platforms achieve different outcomes. This grid in Section 5 below might be a useful template developing a spectrum of recommended platforms which the diocese can support though training, expertise and bulk-purchasing.

C. A DIGITAL DIVIDE

We know that many of our church members do not have reliable access to video streaming, email or other internet resources. This can be seen on rural/urban lines (broadband speed) and also on age lines (but not totally – one respondent reported that, "Our oldest Zoom worshiper is 100"). Churches have been good at meeting the needs of those who are not online, but we should not assume that once public worship is restored, these people will be 'non-digital physical' attenders as many will need to continue to self-isolate.

D. A VARIETY OF STYLES

Contrary to what we might expect, it isn't just contemporary services that are being delivered via modern technology. All our physical formats need adapting to a non-physical delivery and this is

something we can help leaders with through training, modelling and the development of liturgical forms that are written for these media.

E.   A NEW SET OF OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

With the closure of churches, Mission Communities have ventured into a new mission field and found that its inhabitants are surprisingly receptive. Many people reported that their online services were reaching a larger number of people then attended their usual services and that they were gaining regular viewers from across the world. 42 people said that there services were reaching over 100 people per week, with many times that number coming back to view material after it had been broadcast. (It will take some time for people to fully interpret the analytics provided by the software to see exactly how many of these are regular visitors and how much of the services they watch). It is also heartening to hear that people who have been excluded from worship are now able to join in, prompting some to question why it has taken so long for the church to respond to this need. Online ministry, however, also comes with a new set of barriers. Visitors need to find the right links and, in some cases, be given passwords to join in. Just as some are unable to attend physical church because of physical factors, many are unable to access online church due to a lack of equipment, training or connectivity.

F.   DELAYS IN LITURGICAL RESPONSES AND SINGING

A common problem across all platforms is the time delay between users who are physical distant from each other. This has led some Mission Communities to stop trying to sing together and others to muting participants during worship.

4.   **Theological Reflection on Praxis.**

As part of the survey, respondents were asked: "Have you been able to reflect theologically on how you are currently being church and conducting your ministry? What are your conclusions?" The full set of responses to this question have been collated into the document *Open-Source Theology in the Diocese of Exeter: Theological Reflections on being Church during the COVID-19 Restrictions.* This has been circulated in the hope that our corporate reflection and ongoing conversation will help us to understand our current situation, to see how God is at work in the current crisis and to build a theological foundation for our future mission. The following themes emerged from the responses to this question:

A.   CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

The largest theme emerging from the response was that the church is the people not the building, and that being unable to meet physically in church has meant that homes are now a place of worship and mission. Presence is more than just physical, and removing the barriers of time and space is allow people to see church and join in where they could not before.

B.   LOSS AND LONGING FOR PHYSICAL MEETING

Despite the positivity of the above, there is still a deep sense of loss and longing to meet physically again. This is compounded by the expectation that many of our congregations will still be unable to attend, even when public worship is once again permitted. Some respondents expressed this using the biblical metaphors of exile and wilderness.

C. THE EUCHARIST

The centrality of Holy Communion in Anglican worship makes the questions around Eucharistic practice particularly pressing. As above, some experience this as a deep loss, while others expressed this in terms of fasting from the Eucharist and priests standing in solidarity with their congregations by not receiving communion. Many struggle with the performative aspect of a Eucharist as part of a broadcast or live-streamed service, while others find technology brings us closer together than is possible in a church service.

D. GOD IS STILL WITH US AND STILL AT WORK

Respondents were keen to acknowledge that God is not limited by the current crisis, indeed He may be more present and more at work in ways which we had not previously seen.

E. SERVING WITH JOY

For some, the practical needs which have arisen as a result of physical distancing and self-isolation have provided an opportunity to express Christ's love in new ways in the community, or to play a key role in partnerships alleviating some of the problems of isolation.

F. WITHDRAWAL AND WASTED OPPORTUNITY

The complete closure of churches, is seen by some as a withdrawal from our role as the national church providing spiritual resources though our physical presence in every community. These responses also explore the public perception of the church and question whether the reputational damage of closing churches will be a significant barrier to trust in the future.

G. VOCATION

The sudden change in circumstances has caused some people to look at their own calling and the vocation of others in a new light. New opportunities have arisen as old ways of doing things have closed down and this is a cause of reflection and anticipation as well as grief.

H. TIME (OR LACK OF IT) FOR REFLECTION AND ADAPTATION

This process of reflection is ongoing but, as with any sustained reflection on our praxis, needs dedicated time, prayer and conversation. Some respondents have found time for this in self-isolation, others are even busier now than before the lockdown.

5. What are we doing and what have we learnt?

As noted above, many churches are using a combination of different non-physical communication methods to reach a wide range of people. The following grid arranges the most common tools and approaches on two axes, 'bandwidth' and 'interaction'. It is important to note that this matrix is not intended to make a judgement about the value of different types of communication, each will be better suited to use in certain contexts and are most effective when used in combination with each other.

Table 2: Matrix of non-physical communication

Bandwidth Low >> High				
	Video	Pre-recorded video services, sermons and teaching. Vlog.	Live Streaming Service.	Zoom Service/Groups. Live Streaming Service with chat.
	Audio	Podcast. Pre-recorded Audio of Service. WhatsApp/Voxer	Telephone Service (muted).	Telephone Service (unmuted). Phone Call.
	Text	E-mail. WhatsApp. Social Media. Blogs.	Twitter. Social Media Threads.	Social Media Conversations. Text Messages. WhatsApp.
	Print	Liturgies/Orders of Service. Newsletters.	N/A	N/A
Bandwidth can refer to technical ability to access resources, as well as the means of delivery.		*Published*	*Live*	*Interactive*
		Level of Interaction Low >> High *The greater the level of interaction, the fewer people can be meaningfully involved. For those who are, however, the connection is stronger and more immediate.*		

The analysis below is not a complete guide to choosing and using these platforms, it highlights some of the main issues and tips raised by survey respondents.

A. BROADCASTING PRE-RECORDED VIDEO

87 Respondents reported using pre-recorded video material for Sunday Services, with a total of 112 respondents using it for some aspect of their mission and ministry. The most common platforms for posting video were YouTube and Facebook, with some Mission Communities hosting video directly on their own websites.

The advantages of using pre-recorded video is the quality which can be achieved and the ease with which the video can be accessed by both regular members and visitors. Nothing is required of the viewers of a recorded broadcast and the service leader will not know who is watching. This makes it simple for visitors to drop-in to church and join is as much or as little as they are comfortable. This lack of participation is also the downside of this approach, as members do not interact with each

other or the service leader and it is easy to fast-forward through the service or stop watching altogether. If subtitles are not used then planning responsive liturgy or singing requires orders of service to be distributed by e-mail, online or as a printed copy, preferably in advance.

Good quality video can be recorded using equipment which many people have access to (such as mobile phones and DSLR Cameras) although people reported upgrading their microphones to improve the sound quality, especially when filming outdoors. The main advantage of pre-recorded material is that it is easier to include a number of different short videos so that different voices are included and music can also be used. Those without editing equipment have either become adept at recording 'in one take' or interspersing short recorded segments with song videos on YouTube in a playlist on YouTube or distributed via e-mail or a website. Again, video can be edited using readily available hardware and software (iMovie on the Mac or Windows Movie Maker). With practice, video can be recorded at home to a very high standard and there are numerous YouTube tutorials which can help you to think about how to set up and light a scene so that it looks professional with limited investment. Also, look out for the diocesan training described in section 6 below to help improve what you do and understand the legal aspects of using other people's content (especially songs). In most cases it will be necessary for you to purchase an additional license to record and broadcast any type of contemporary worship music and YouTube and Facebook both have automated systems for finding and removing copyrighted content.

One feature that a number of Mission Communities use is YouTube's Premiere function. This allows a video that has been uploaded in advance to be watched from a set time. This 'simulated live' broadcast can be watched simultaneously by the whole Mission Community at the time of the normal service and then remains on the site for others to catch up with later. YouTube's Premiere function also allows live chat alongside the video (see paragraph F below).

As with many of the other platforms listed here, broadcasting pre-recorded video is limited by broadband speeds, especially in more rural areas. Some people reported taking over seven hours to upload a service to YouTube, although downloads should not be a problem from platforms such as YouTube. Care also needs to be taken to curate the archive of services which are left online. It would be neater for your website or YouTube channel to carry just your most recent services and some special services, festivals or musical items, rather a complete back catalogue of all your services

B. LIVE STREAMING VIDEO

58 people reported that they live-streamed Sunday Services, with a total of 72 using it across the range of what they offered. Facebook, YouTube, Periscope, Twitch and Instagram (and others) allow live streaming directly from their phone app, which make setting up your broadcast very simple – Just secure your phone, make sure the sound is good enough and 'go live'. For a more professional production, there are a number of platforms (both on your computer and though your internet browser) which allow you to mix live and recorded elements, add titles and overlays and bring Zoom, Skype and FaceTime callers into your feed. These then send the stream out though YouTube, Facebook Live, etc. On most platforms the live service then remains as a video which people can download and watch later.

Live streaming has the advantage of being responsive, although there needs to be a mechanism for the congregation to communicate with the service leader for this to be meaningful (see F below). There is also a sense that people are participating in an event that is taking place at that moment

rather than something that has already happened. The drawbacks with live-streaming are generally seen when things go wrong. Lack of bandwidth to upload a service means everyone loses the feed, other technical problems are amplified during a live broadcast and the internet is now swamped with videos of church minsters encountering unexpected delivery drivers, curious pets, noisy relatives, Snapchat filters and naked flames. As with a recorded service, livestreaming is easy to access by those who don't usually come to church (see paragraph 3.E above).

Many respondents are simply using the 'go live' function in their app of choice on their mobile phone to record and broadcast a live-stream as this is a simple way to share straightforward services such as Morning Prayer which only rely on the voices in the room. While picture quality on mobile phone cameras is now very good (many basic models can shoot in the same high resolution as expensive video cameras) the sound does not tend to be as clear, especially when filming outdoors or when the camera is far away from the subject. A simple way to get around this is to buy a clip-on microphone (starts around £10 for a basic model) which connects to the phone via a long wire, or a directional microphone (£20 - £50 for a basic model, more for a more solid solution, professional microphones can require a mortgage). At the top end of the range are radio microphones. One pack plugs into your phone/camera and a body pack is worn by the speaker and connected to a clip-on microphone. Cheap radio microphones can be bought new for under £200, with prices stretching up to £500.

One other mantra to remember for streaming from your mobile phone is 'landscape not portrait'. Turn your phone on its side as a wide image will look more natural and is the format which streaming services, TVs and computer monitors are designed for. A simple tripod will hold your phone securely for a stable and deliberate image.

If you want a live stream which includes inputs from different cameras, includes screen sharing and titles and can mix recorded segments into the live feed, you will generally have to use a piece of software to prepare the stream. OBS (Open Broadcaster Software) and StreamYard were both mentioned in the survey responses. OBS is totally free (but takes a bit of work to understand and customise) and runs on Mac and PC. StreamYard has a basic free service and runs in an internet browser.

C. SIMULTANEOUS SERVICES

A lower tech option was favoured by 46 people who recognised the digital divide in their context. They reported sending out printed (or email) orders of service for people to use in their own homes. This option was also used by many people who sent out similar publications as an accompaniment or alternative to their online services.

The biggest advantage of this approach is that it has a very low bar to access, as no equipment or technical knowledge is required. The material is also familiar to participants, can be used at any time and can be supplemented by services on TV or radio, suggested songs from YouTube (for those who have access) or on CD or DVD, or though the Church of England's national 'Daily Hope' phone-in with pre-recorded hymns, prayers, reflections and advice about COVID-19. The drawbacks are that this approach can be a lonely experience, especially for those who live alone, and several respondents mentioned high printing and postage costs. From the survey it was clear that those who were offering only printed materials we also striving to connect with all their members by phone on a weekly basis which, in many cases, was felt to be a more effective means of connection than

broadcasting worship services. Because they rely on a contact address or e-mail, Orders or service are generally only sent to members of the congregation, which limits their missional potential.

People who are producing printed orders of service have used Common Worship Moring and Evening Prayer and Night Prayer (some distributed the CofE service booklets before churches were closed), supplemented with seasonal material, reflections, prayer pointers and lectionary readings. Some include creative physical prayer activities which can be done with items parishioners would have at home such as a candle.

In many cases, updated booklets, newsletters and other materials have been sent out during the lockdown, although Mission Communities need to be very alert to the risks of spreading infection via printed materials, especially those which are hand-delivered.

D. INTERACTIVE SERVICES AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

The biggest discovery of the lockdown seems to have been Zoom, a simple, free video conferencing platform which allows up to 100 people in a meeting and has built-in telephone access. According to the survey, 59 of the 200 million daily calls on the platform are interactive Sunday services and online 'coffee' after services in the Diocese of Exeter. 107 respondents reported using Zoom for some aspect of their Mission and Ministry. Zoom has a free package which allows meetings to last up to 40 minutes, and a number of people have upgraded to the Pro Package, which costs £14 per month and removes the time limit on meetings.

People commented that they were surprised how intimate it was to be church on Zoom and this this meant it was important to be able to control who was on the call. Zoom is the closest online experience we have to walking into a new church, so the high level of interaction also makes it less suitable for larger numbers and more anonymous visitors. People are now using Zoom for services, social gatherings, small groups, prayer meetings, PCCs and youth events and report a high degree of engagement and enthusiasm for the way these work. Some places have used Zoom for licensing services and there is a suggestion that it could be used to admit Church Wardens in the absence of an Archdeacon's Visitation.

As it has exploded from a niche business product to a must-have global utility (Zooming is now a verb that has nothing to do with speed) Zoom's security has come under increased scrutiny. The latest versions of the software set meetings with a waiting room as default (requiring the host to admit them) and require a password. Some featured have also been withdrawn from the app to simplify its operation and improve security. Once such feature is the ability to use live-streaming software as an input to a Zoom call. Zoom does still give the ability to share your screen (useful for liturgy and song words), has a text chat function alongside the pictures and gives the host of the meeting a good deal of control over the meeting, including the ability to mute participants.

One important security tip is never to publish the link to your Zoom meeting online as this makes it vulnerable to being 'zoom-bombed' with offensive material. This has happened to at least one Zoom meeting in the diocese in the past month. As discussed above, this make it harder for visitors to join in and may mean that it is necessary to regard Zoom meetings as being for church members, rather than something more missional. More tips gleaned from the last few weeks using of Zoom can be found on my blog at http://marlow.me.uk/recurringthemes/discoveries-in-zoom.

E. TELEPHONE SERVICES

32 People said that they were using telephone conferencing to stream the audio of a service. Some are getting over 50 people dialling in on a Sunday. There are a number of platforms available, each with slightly different pricing structures. Most users have opted for a platform which offers free calls to those who call in, or a geographical local rate number to keep the costs as low as possible (and free for those with inclusive minutes). Survey respondents seemed to be using FreeConference or free.conference.com although most services are permutations of that name.

The advantage of telephone conferencing is that nearly everyone has the necessary equipment in their home and knows how to use it. It also does not require an internet connection for listeners and gives a live, interactive and familiar service lead by their local ministry team. The drawbacks are that people cannot see each other and this makes meaningful interaction (especially in a large group) difficulty. Some Mission Communities who started using telephone conferences are switching to Zoom (with the phone-in option) because too many of the members wanted to join by computer than the telephone platform allowed.

One of the outcomes of telephone services is that some people who had not been to church for a long time due to illness and infirmity are now able to be included. All those using the telephone had distributed orders of service ahead of time by post or e-mail and many had indicated that they will continue to offer a weekly service in this way once the lockdown is over. One person commented that "Old fashioned phones are better than modern ones; landline is better than mobile; two phones in the same room make life difficult; the time lag makes congregational participation difficult, especially singing; even when speaking loudly, clearly and slowly some voices are simply easier to hear than others; people love hearing the voices of their friends."

F. USING TEXT CHAT ALONGSIDE VIDEO

24 people said that they used some form of text chat alongside a live or pre-recorded video service. This is automatically provided in both Facebook Live and YouTube Premiere, with Facebook Live allowing viewers to see comments appear in real-time when they watch the recorded service later. Some Mission Communities are using the Church Online Platform, which is a free service which embeds your video in a webpage where live chat can be moderated by a team of local hosts, who are also able to have private chats for prayer.

The advantage of using chat is that it can create a sense of interaction and engagement around a pre-recorded video. When accompanying a live stream, the presenters can also respond to the chat, giving an even higher level of interaction. This combination of video and text allows the 'best of both worlds' for members and visitors. The service is easy to drop-in to or watch in your own time, but members can build community through the comments and even see service leaders respond to their questions and comments.

The Church Online Platform gives your church a static, memorable web address for your online service (stthingy.online.church). To use the site for live-streaming, however, might require subscription to a paid streaming service as YouTube live-streams are not recommended by the platform.

6. Training and Communication

Requests for training broadly fell into the following categories:

A. Immediate Technical and Liturgical Training to help lead appropriate worship services while public worship is not permitted in church buildings (and into the future).
B. Training and guidance on Copyright, Data Protection and Privacy issues arising from online ministry.
C. Reaching across the digital divide. How to continue to meet the needs of those who will not or cannot get online, including service leaders, staff and officers.
D. Digital Mission and Discipleship. What does this look like now?
E. A forum for pooling expertise and experience. (This might just require flagging up the existing Facebook groups).

The Mission and Ministry Department and the Communication and Engagement Team are currently developing specific training around the above areas and also moving as much of the CMD programme online as possible so that learning and reflection can continue to take place while travel restrictions are still in place.

Using the grid in section 5 as a tool for choosing an approach, the technical and liturgical training could follow a modular approach as listed below.

- Core Module: Listening to your context - choosing the right approaches to include everyone. Delivered online though short video introductions to different approaches, a Q&A and Panel Discussion and coaching to help participants apply the right approach for their context.
- Follow-on Modules: All of the modules below could be delivered via short videos (specifically recorded or links from YouTube), followed by a Zoom discussion about local use and some Q&A.
  o Filming Worship for Live Streaming and Broadcast.
  o Adding live chat to a broadcast using Church Online Platform or Facebook.
  o Basics of Live Streaming.
  o Using Zoom for Services (and small groups and meetings).
  o Telephone Services.
- One-to-one support on any of the above (for those who have already seen the videos or participated in the training).
- Advanced Modules in any of the above – largely signposting YouTube Tutorials.

Part of the diocesan response to the requests for help will be to discern what resources are best produced centrally. This could include printed materials, pre-recorded services led by senior staff, online discussion forums and support around running meetings in the medium term.

7. Finance

A number of responses mentioned financial support for Mission Communities. These generally fell into two distinct categories:
   A. Help with common fund through re-assessment, payment 'holidays' and clear communication around what would be expected from Mission Communities who were not able to pay due to the crisis. Also, clarity around how Statistics for Mission would work in a digital environment.
   B. Grants for buying equipment and licenses to allow ongoing online ministry to take place. Possible solutions to this could be to reassign money from the Mission and Growth fund to digital mission projects (including staff, training and equipment) and also setting up a diocesan system for bulk-buying equipment at a discount, simplifying the DAC process for installing Wi-Fi and streaming equipment in churches, and lobbying organisations like CCLI to recognise where Mission Communities could share a single licences instead of taking out a costly licence for each building.

8. Conclusion

This document contains a fairly hasty initial analysis of the responses to the survey about Worship in Lockdown. The data from the survey will continue to be explored and the questions which were not included in this analysis will be included in that.

Please do continue to send comments, updates, questions and other feedback to the Communications and Engagement Team via Chloe.Axford@exeter.anglican.org.

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Appendix A
Definitions

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Live-streamed service

A service from your home, which is filmed and broadcast as you do it using a website such as Facebook Live. This may or may not include live chat (see below) alongside the stream.

Live service by phone

A service which you lead (and others might contribute to) which people can listen to over the phone using a system like FreeConferenceCall.

Pre-recorded service

A service which is filmed in advance and made available via YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook Live or a similar video sharing site.

Interactive service

A service which you lead and broadcast live and people can participate in using a system link Zoom, Skype or Google Hangouts.

Simultaneous service at home

A service where you distribute orders of service for the congregation to use in their own home at an agreed time (or in their own time). This also includes the use of resources such as the Church of England's Daily Prayer App.

Video meeting

A group meeting (other than a service) where everyone can contribute on Zoom, Skype or Google Hangouts.

Virtual service

A service which takes place inside an online virtual world such as Second Life or Roblox.

Text chat alongside one of the above

A forum where people can share typed messages, prayer requests, etc, with each other or the whole group alongside a broadcast or live-stream. This is possible in platforms like Zoom, Facebook Live and Church Online.

Promote national or diocesan services

Sending links to services broadcast by the Church of England nationally or by the diocese of Exeter. This could include suggesting that you all watch the service simultaneously or discuss the service afterwards.