



**Mayor's Center for Faith  
and Community Partnerships**

## Leading Services, Sermons, or Religious Lectures Online

### Introduction

Public health officials have advised that one of the best ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 and lessen the burden on our healthcare systems is to practice social distancing. We have created this toolkit to help clergy in NYC convene their congregations online.

This toolkit lists the various products (free and paid) available so your congregants can stay connected to you and donate.

This guide is organized into these sections:

1. Broadcast Your Service
2. Holding Meetings and Group Discussions
3. Receive Online Donations
4. Disclaimer

### Basic Requirements

To use video services, you will need:

- a desktop computer or laptop with a web camera – with an internet connection, or
- a smartphone or mobile device, like an iOS (iPhone, iPad) or Android device – with a camera and an internet connection

Your congregants will need a desktop, laptop computer, or mobile device that can use the service you select. Both the computer and smartphone must be running on up-to-date operating systems and have up-to-date browsers – when you try to use the services below, the services will alert you if you do not have the minimum requirements. For more information on what you need to use to streaming services, please search for the name of the online service you will use and “minimum requirements.”

If you are not connected to broadband or Wi-Fi, normal data charges will apply to your mobile plan. Streaming/Video conferencing is data-heavy, so please be mindful of your data plan and your congregants’ plans.

## Broadcast your Service

### **YouTube Live**

YouTube Live is a popular service to broadcast live events. Before using YouTube Live, you will need a YouTube account. Sign up for one at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (if you already have a Google account, you already have one!). Note: when you use “YouTube Live” for the first time, you will receive instructions from YouTube to verify your account, and you will need to wait 24 hours for YouTube to verify your identity.

### **How to Broadcast**

1. For streaming with a webcam, see this guide:  
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9228389>
2. For streaming from a *mobile device*, see this guide (Note, you must already have 1,000 subscribers to stream over a mobile device):  
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9228390>
3. For information on how to share your stream with congregants, see this guide:  
[https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2524542?hl=en&ref\\_topic=9257984](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2524542?hl=en&ref_topic=9257984)

### **How Congregants Can Access the Broadcast**

1. Before the service, congregants should subscribe to your channel. Please see this guide on how congregants can find your channel:  
[https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2524542?hl=en&ref\\_topic=9257984](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2524542?hl=en&ref_topic=9257984)
2. When you are broadcasting, congregants will go to your YouTube channel and click on the stream – this will enable them to see your stream.

### **Receive Donations**

1. To receive donations during your YouTube Live broadcast, your organizations must be a registered 501 (c) 3 and be customer of “Google for Nonprofits.” Learn more about how to set up donations through YouTube Giving here:  
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6319255?hl=en> (Please note, this process may take weeks or months)

### **Post Pre-Recorded Lectures**

1. If you do not plan to broadcast live, you can upload pre-recorded lecture or sermons to your YouTube Channel. Go here to learn how:  
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/57407?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>

### **Facebook Live**

You can also broadcast services to your Facebook News Feed using “Facebook Live.” First, log into your personal Facebook account on either your desktop or mobile device. To obtain a Facebook account, go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) or download and log into the “Facebook” app on to your iOS (iPhone or iPad) or Android device. Second, encourage your congregants to be your Facebook friend.

### **How to Broadcast Instantly**

1. Log into Facebook on your mobile device or desktop/laptop.
2. On Desktop – click on your name at the top of the screen to open your user profile. Above the “What’s on your mind?” prompt, click on “Live Video.”
3. On Mobile – Under the “What’s on your mind?” prompt, click “Live.”
4. Give Facebook access to your camera and microphone when prompted.
5. Choose your privacy and posting settings by clicking “To:” You can chose to post to “Friends,” for your Facebook friends, or “Public,” which means any Facebook user.
6. Write a compelling description.
7. Click “Start Live Video” on the bottom of your camera screen.
8. At this point you will be live. From this screen, you can also send invitations to Facebook Friends.
9. Invite friends to join. Or, be sure you have shared the URL of your newsfeed in advance, so public members can view your feed.

Also see Facebook’s “Live Broadcast” guidance here:

[https://www.facebook.com/help/1738143323068602/?helpref=hc\\_fnav](https://www.facebook.com/help/1738143323068602/?helpref=hc_fnav)

### **How to Schedule a Broadcast**

1. Open the Facebook website on your desktop/laptop.
2. Above the “What’s on your mind?” prompt, click on “Live Video.”
3. On the top left, click on “Schedule a Live Video” and enter the time of your scheduled live broadcast, a description, and an optional title.
1. Click the blue-button “Schedule Live Video” and now other Facebook users can see your announcement for the upcoming Facebook Live broadcast. They can then like, share, and get reminders on your broadcast.
2. A few minutes before your broadcast is scheduled to air, follow the instructions of “How to Broadcast Instantly” above.

Tips for using Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/blog/tips-for-using-live>

### **How Congregants Can Access the Broadcast**

1. Be sure that your congregants are your Facebook friends.
2. They must log in to Facebook before you begin broadcasting.
3. When you begin broadcasting, they will receive a pop-up message asking if they would like to join your broadcast. They must click on this message.

### **Receive Donations**

1. Find out how your registered 501 (c)3 can receive donations during your broadcast here: <https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/blog/fundraising-with-facebook-live> (Please note, this process may take weeks or months)

### **Instagram Live**

Instagram is also a popular service to broadcast content. You must download the “Instagram” app onto your mobile device, create an account, and log in. Learn how to broadcast using Instagram here:

<https://help.instagram.com/292478487812558> .

### **Zoom**

Zoom is a video conferencing and webinar platform. It allows all the participants on the conference to see one another. It is free with a personal account for up to 100 participants, with a 40 minute limit per meeting. Sign up for a Zoom account by visiting [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) and see more information on plans here: <https://zoom.us/pricing>

### **How to Setup a Video Conference**

1. Once you have signed up, visit the Zoom Support Center at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us> This website includes free 1-minute videos that include step-by-step instructions for setting up your first conference.
2. Zoom will require you to download and install software the first time you start a video conference. Try to do this well in advance of your first meeting.
3. At the appointed time of your conference, log into Zoom and join the meeting.
4. Once your conference has started, click “Manage participants” and select the “Mute All” button to mute your participants to ensure background noise does not overwhelm a service.

### **How Congregants Can Join**

1. When you create a meeting, Zoom will provide you with a link to your meeting, which you will share with your congregants.
2. Congregants will use that link to enter the meeting. They will be prompted to download and install the appropriate Zoom software (either on their computer or on their smartphone).
3. Then they will be in the conference.

## Holding Meetings and Group Discussions

There are many tools you can use for phone and videoconferencing (Webex, Zoom, MS Teams, etc.). Below are a few tools to have small meetings with congregation leaders. They are designed for group discussions and may not be conducive to a religious service as they require more set up and technical ability.

### FreeConferenceCall.com

This service allows for free conference telephone calls with up to 1,000 participants. It is not a video conferencing service. If your congregants do not have access to computers or the internet, this can be another way to broadcast your service – over the phone.

#### **How to Setup the Call**

1. Go to [freeconferencecall.com](http://freeconferencecall.com) and sign up for a free account with your email address and a new password.
2. You will receive a conference call phone number and an access code. (You do not need the host code)

When you want to hold a phone meeting you and your participants to dial into your conference call phone number, then when prompted, dial the access code. This service can be used anytime, 24/7.

#### **How Congregants Can Access the Call**

1. Participants must dial the conference call phone number, and when they are prompted, dial the access code.
2. It is recommended that folks who are not talking should mute their phones. If using a mobile phone, participants can mute their phone by pushing the word mute or the icon near it.

### Google Hangouts

This service will let the participants see you, and you see the participants. They will be able to join by video conference at their computers. To use this service, all congregants must have or sign up for free Google accounts. There are two levels of service: Free and Paid (G Suite).

If you do not have a Google account, sign up for one by going to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and clicking on “Sign In” in the top right hand corner.

**Free:** For video conferencing up to 10 people:

#### **How to Schedule a Video Conference?**

1. On your computer in your web browser, go to [www.calendar.google.com](http://www.calendar.google.com) and log in.
2. In the calendar, double-click on a date and time you would like to virtually meet.
3. Fill out the information in the form that pops up, and in the “Add Conferencing” dropdown, select “Hangouts”

4. In the column called “Guest,” type in the google email address of each congregant who should receive an invitation. Then click “Save.”
5. Google will send an invitation with a link to each user by email.
6. On the date/time of the appointment:
  - a. You will go to [www.calendar.google.com](http://www.calendar.google.com) and single-click on the virtual session you created. Click on “Join Hangout”
  - b. Your congregants will click on the “Join video call” link in their Google email invitations. Note: On a computer, “camera” and “microphone access” must be enabled. Congregants can also log in using their mobile devices; they must install and log into the Google “Hangouts” app.

Best practice: As there is usually a lot of background noise, ask all congregants to “mute” their sound by clicking on the Icon that looks like a crossed-out microphone.

### **Mobile**

1. Open the “Google Calendar” App. It is a free download.
2. Click on the plus sign in the bottom corner and create an “Event.”
3. Follow steps 3 to 6 from above.

**Paid:** This service is called “G Suite.” It offers video conferencing for up to 250 participants with 1,000 viewers until July 1 2020.

- For more information on how to start a 14 day G Suite free trial: [https://support.google.com/a/answer/6388094?hl=en&ref\\_topic=29190](https://support.google.com/a/answer/6388094?hl=en&ref_topic=29190)
- For more information on pricing: <https://gsuite.google.com/pricing.html>
- Once you have an account, the above instructions are applicable to set up a conference.

## Receive Online Donations

In addition to the donation services connected to Facebook Live and YouTube Live, many online services allow congregants to donate funds to you or your religious organization. A few of these services include: Venmo ([www.venmo.com](http://www.venmo.com) and as a mobile app), Paypal ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com) and as a mobile app), Cashapp ([www.cash.app](http://www.cash.app) and as a mobile app), Zelle (only and as a mobile app), Tithe.ly (<https://get.tithe.ly/>), Planning Center (<https://www.planningcenter.com/giving>), Faithlife Giving (<https://giving.faithlife.com/>), GiveInJoy (<http://www.injoystewardshipsolutions.com/giveinjoy>), etc.

Before you start, for most services you need a U.S. bank account and a smartphone that can send and receive text messages. Your congregants must also sign up for the same service as you to donate.

Below, as an example, we list instructions for one service. To learn how to use the other services, please visit their websites.

### Venmo

#### How to Sign up for Venmo

1. Download the Venmo app using your computer, laptop or smartphone or go to [Venmo.com](http://Venmo.com).
2. Create an account using Facebook or your email, then verify your account with your cell phone.
3. Once verified, Venmo will prompt you to add a photo. Adding a picture helps others recognize you when they receive money or a charge request. Venmo will assign you a username.
4. Click "*Done*" in the right-hand corner.
5. Venmo will allow you to sync your Facebook account so you can see which of your contacts and friends use Venmo. If you choose to do this, click *Allow* when prompted.
6. Once logged in, link your Venmo account to a funding source, like a U.S. checking or savings account. You can also use a credit card, but know that you will be charged a 3% fee for each transaction. Do this by clicking on the icon in the top left corner of the app (three stacked lines), and clicking "Settings." Click on "Payment Methods" and click "Add bank or card..."

#### How to Send or Receive Money with Venmo

1. To send or request money, tap the "Pay/Request" icon in the top-right corner of the Venmo Home screen.
2. Type in your recipient's Venmo username, email, or phone number.
3. Type in an amount. You should see a corresponding dollar amount appear as you type. Optionally, you can add a note to the transaction by tapping "What's it for?" field below the payment area.
4. Tap "Pay" if you would like to send money to the recipient or tap "Request" if you would like to receive money from the recipient.

Please note that receiving mobile payments is free. Sending money is also free if you're using your Venmo balance, a linked bank account, or a debit card from one of about 30 major banks. Otherwise, there's a 3% fee if you use a credit card or other debit card.

## Disclaimer

A legal disclaimer about the content in this guide.

All information contained in this guide is provided for general informational purposes only and reflects publicly available information collected by the City of New York as a public service. The claims, functions, features, availability, and security of any products, services, or platforms referenced herein have not been independently verified by the City of New York.

Neither the City of New York, nor any of its employees, makes any representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to this website or the information, services, or related graphics contained on this website for any purpose, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the inaccuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information conveyed in this website. The City of New York expressly disclaims all legal liability based on any information contained on this website.

The City of New York is not responsible for the contents of any off-site pages, services, or platforms referenced herein or for references to any specific commercial product, process or service by trade name, trademarks, service mark, manufacturer otherwise contained herein. These references or links are provided as an information service only and the inclusion of any off-site links or references does not constitute or imply a recommendation, endorsement or favoring by the City of New York of the views expressed within them.

The accuracy of the information contained herein is limited as of the date of publication and by the methodology (if containing data) and accuracy of the original sources. The City of New York shall not be liable for any costs related to, or in reliance of, this information or any associated data.

## Copyright

© City of New York. 2020 All Rights Reserved. NYC is a trademark and service mark of the City of New York. The materials on this guide are subject to copyright and therefore copying, reproducing, or distributing any part of this guide is prohibited without the prior written consent of the City of New York, except for press releases that can be reproduced with proper credit to the City of New York. Downloading and printing of this guide materials is allowed for the personal use of visitors.