

Dear Friends,

So, how many of us were in church last Sunday? The answer could be 0 as services of worship have been suspended in church buildings. Or it could be 815. That's the number of times the service we broadcast has been viewed on YouTube. Before I get too excited, the real number would need to take account of both the fact that you only need to watch 30 seconds for it to count as a view, and that some people joined for a while, but gave up because of failings with the technology. So, not really as many as 815. On the other hand, in many houses there were more people than one watching the screen. Perhaps we could put it this way, 137 households gathered for the live stream of our act of worship.

More important than the numbers is that people found it helpful. For some it was a place of connection making them feel a little less lonely. For others a place to share worship with those they wanted to be with but couldn't on Mothering Sunday. It was a link with people from different churches in our circuit and beyond.

We were led really well by Martin and Naomi. Martin manages our circuit website. You could describe him as the producer of the broadcast. It was his technological skills that made it possible. Naomi was supposed to be on holiday. It was meant to be her Sunday off. But she and her husband Luke decided that they needed to stay as this crisis began to take hold; Luke to find safe places for London's rough sleepers and Naomi to be with the Methodist people she serves. When the opportunity of streaming a live service was suggested Naomi enthusiastically embraced the challenge, although she had never done anything like it before. After the service, my daughter Kathryn said that she looked as though she'd done it a million times before. One of our members said that the service was better than the one on the radio. That's not surprising. They only had the Archbishop of Canterbury, we had Naomi.

I do not however thank Naomi for saying that in future weeks the services would be more interesting and more interactive. As long as I stay well and can handle the technology, it's my turn this week. If I can get the camera to point roughly in my direction and the microphone to pick up my voice, I'll see that as enough and just go for it.

Even if it's less professional, it will be what it needs to be, a place where we can be together and do what we are created to do, which is to worship God.

Here's the link to the circuit website where you can find access to the feed and find links to the two hymns on YouTube. It's probably helpful to open the tabs with the songs before the service and have them paused and ready to go. You may also like to have with you the worship sheet, which was sent out on Wednesday, which includes some of our prayers.

<https://www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/invitation-to-worship-from-home.html>

God bless you,

Tony