

Dear Friends,

I preached yesterday to a bowl of satsumas and a bunch of bananas. It felt strangely familiar and I can't quite work out why. It was my baptism into live streaming. I am in my thirty fifth year as a Methodist Minister. Call me set in my ways but I had hoped that I could spend the years I have left deep within my comfort zone. Then came Coronavirus and the response of my enthusiastic colleague who immediately got to work on how to do a live broadcast service. Not wishing to get too left behind, I thought I'd also better give it a go. This was how I ended up on Sunday morning leading worship live in my kitchen. Note to self, maybe using just about the most echoey room in the house wasn't the best choice!

We are grateful to have found a way in which we can stay close in this time of isolation. We shared worship with those from our Methodist circuit and beyond. There were 85 households viewing from the start which peaked at 218. In the past we've struggled with circuit services. It's not easy to decide where people from Sheppey to Swanley will be prepared to get together. Maybe we've found an answer.

On a personal note, my family went to Church together for the first time in ... I don't know how long. Rachel was there in Manchester, Kathryn logged on and contributed the odd clump and creak to the sound design from her bedroom upstairs, and Christine was there. She was amongst the first with encouraging comments. If you didn't know already, Christine and I got divorced last year, so, I was touched that she still cared and wanted to give support. While these present restrictions continue some who are already in strained relationships are going to be struggling even more. Others who have lost touch may find a reason to make contact again and some may take the opportunity for a little bit of healing.

God bless you,

Tony