

Preparing for Online Liturgy

Getting Ready

Some things to organise the day before or the morning before so you're free to relax.

Check the time and details for the service

Make sure you leave yourself enough time to prepare and to get settled before it starts.

Make sure you have gathered the materials you need in time.

Print out a copy of the liturgy

You might like to put it in a binder or protective sheet so you can reuse it easily.

If you can't print it, organise a device to read it on, but try to turn off notifications or put it in airplane mode so you don't get distracted.

Organise a device to connect with

You can use a computer, tablet or phone as long as it has the right software to connect and you are comfortable with the screen.

It's best if you use headphones with a mic, this tends to reduce noise from outside.

Your device needs a way to be propped up and visible without you holding it.

Organise a space for participation

A quiet room, with some privacy, is fairly crucial. You don't need a lot of space, but you need to be able to focus and not to be distracted by other people or pets.

It should have a place to sit that's comfortable, but that lets you stay focused and alert. You should choose a seating place that is suitable for meditation.

Some services ask you to stand – you may wish to ensure you have space to stand and, possibly, to kneel.

Ensure the area you have chosen has a comfortable temperature and the right amount of light for you.

Gather materials to help create a sacred space

All this is optional. All you need to participate is the service sheet and a connection. Some people find these extras help to feel connected.

An unscented white candle – you can light this when the celebrant lights the last candle during the service, or you can light it before the service starts for yourself. Some people find that lighting candles or doing anything other than focusing on the service distracts them.

Prepare some incense (frankincense, myrrh or white sage as resin, herb, stick or cone).

A flower or flowers.

Some gentle music, perhaps chant or something you find appropriate, to listen to as you get ready.

You might sprinkle the room with blessed water or holy water.

Preparing to connect

Give yourself enough time to settle in and let your mind rest before the service is due to start. Aim for 10-15 minutes of stillness beforehand.

Turn off any distracting devices – phones, computer notifications, etc.

Remind any housemates or family members not to disturb you during this time and, if possible, close the door.

Light your incense (and your candle if you prefer)

Login to the video-conference or livestream 5-10 minutes before starting time. If possible, test your mic and headphones. Join in silently – keep your mic on mute.

If you're late

Take some time to establish your calm and join in on mute. Listen to work out where the service is up to and join in when you're comfortable.

During the service

Focus on the liturgy and ignore distractions.

Follow the instructions and participate (eg sit, stand, make the sign of the cross etc).

With your mind and heart, connect with the other participants in the liturgy.

If you have unexpected noise in the background, mute your microphone.

After the service

You may wish to extinguish your candle when the celebrant extinguishes theirs. You may leave yours lit until you are ready to leave your space.

Sometimes there is a discussion after the service, you can plan to stay around and join in.

You may prefer to disconnect and spent some minutes in silence or to meditate after the service, this is fine too.

Whichever you do, don't rush to your next activity. Leave yourself some time and space to proceed gently.

Considerations for a Eucharist service

Traditional sacramental theology does not foresee that bread and wine can be validly or effectively consecrated at a distance. Only bread and wine on the altar are a formal part of the Eucharist.

Some people prefer to set aside a small piece of plain bread and some red wine in a suitable cup in their space to consume along with a live-streamed communion service.

From a traditional perspective, this is not a valid communion, but it may help you feel more connected to the service.