

MARCH 2020

Tips for Staying in Touch ... and Safe

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ;

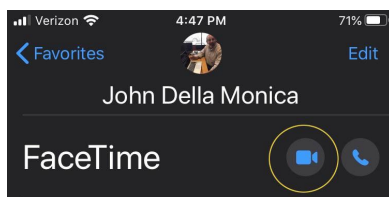
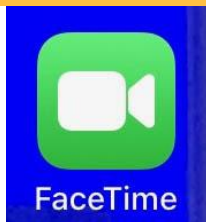
Like you, I am bombarded with a non-stop flow of bad news about the Coronavirus, from school closures to the isolation that is facing many of our seniors. This is a time when our resolve and compassion will be tested, but I believe our faith in Christ will lead us through these difficult times.

There are also ways we can safely stay in touch with members of our Church via smart phones, online services and social media. In this issue, we list a variety of resources that you can use to hold meetings, stay in touch with individual parishioners, and even provide remote tech support for those who (like myself) might have difficulty working the various pieces of technology that are available.

As always, thank you for participating in our ministry with your support!

John Della Monica
President, OCCIF

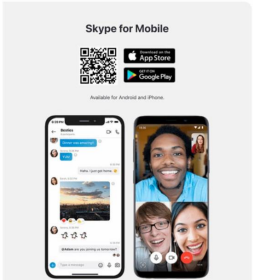
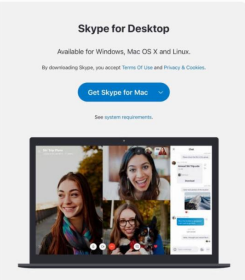
Stay Face to Face Using Phone Video Conferencing



Most smart phones offer some kind of video conferencing capabilities. On iPhones, you can use the Apple program **FaceTime** to contact your parishioner if they have an iPhone.

Simply click on the FaceTime app or the phone number of the parishioner, and then click on the FaceTime app.

With Android phones (from Samsung and others) it's a bit trickier, but still doable. There are a variety of apps on the Google Play Store. However the easiest solution – especially if you don't know what kind of smart phone your parishioner has – is



Skype works on Mac's, Windows, IOS, and Android devices pretty easily to use and install as either a desktop application or an app on your phone or tablet. Skype is a great way to have a meeting between different devices and up to three people.

Online Church Council Meetings

If your entire church council needs to have a meeting, you can use [Zoom](#) to create a meeting with many participants with very little setup required. We've used this technology at OCCIF recently, and it works very well.

If you can keep your meetings short (less than 40 minutes) and you have less than 100 members, Zoom offers a free version of their service. For meetings longer than 40 minutes, you'll need to upgrade to the next level of service.

The screenshot shows the Zoom pricing page with the following details:

Basic	Pro
Personal Meeting	Great for Small Teams
Free	\$14.99 /mo/host
Sign up, It's Free	Buy Now
Host up to 100 participants	All Basic features +
Unlimited 1 to 1 meetings	Includes 100 participants
40 mins limit on group meetings	Need more participants?
Unlimited number of meetings	Meeting duration limit is 24 hrs
Online support	User management
+ Video Conferencing Features	Admin feature controls
+ Web Conferencing Features	Reporting
+ Group Collaboration Features	Custom Personal Meeting ID
+ Security	Assign scheduler
	1GB of MP4 or M4A cloud recording

Here's a great video from the [Church Media Guys](#) on how to get started with Zoom...



Online Services with Facebook Live!

Another way to reach out to those that are shut in is to start using online services to stream your service online to those who can't make it into church. OCCIF board member **Father Martin Watt** is doing this with his own parish in Ames, Iowa, and will be streaming his services on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/HolyTransfigurationOrthodoxChurch>. He will be doing vespers at 6:30 on Saturday and Third and Six Hour followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:40.

A key factor to remember in all streaming services: it's better to have great audio than it is to have a great image.

People can get past a so so video image (after all, how else could YouTube have succeeded at this point??), but poor audio will ruin the experience for your viewers. You can avoid poor audio by using a good mic on the podium (or a lavalier mic on the priest), process that audio as needed in a mixer, and then running that audio into the computer that is handling the audio for the live streaming.

Here's a good video on how to get better audio for Facebook Live streaming:



Mac to Mac made easy!

This is a useful trick for those people that need to do tech support for people that have Mac computers. Using the iMessage app on all Macintosh computers, you can not only share your screen, but also have a parishioner share their screen – and have you control their mouse to do hands on tech support.

Why would this be important? Not all of your parishioners are tech savvy, so using this tool would help them join a Zoom or Skype meeting, setup up online accounts, and so on.

Here's a great video showing how to make this work:



Remote Food Delivery

Finally, keep in mind that your church can work with food delivery services to get meals to the senior members of your church that can't make it out for food supplies. There are a variety of services out there, including

GrubHub (<https://www.grubhub.com/>)
DoorDash (<https://www.doordash.com/>)
Postmates (<https://postmates.com/>)

Not all of these services are available in all locations, but you can check to see if they have some of these services available in your town.

Not only can this be a lifeline to our seniors that can't go out for food supplies, but also it has the added benefit of helping our local restaurants that are facing a severe economic hardship with the closure of in-house dining.

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OCCIF supports the growth of all jurisdictions of the Orthodox Church through capital improvement financing to parishes, missions, and monastic communities in the United States. At OCCIF, we bring together decades of professional expertise in the areas of real estate, financing, banking and construction related services to provide the best counsel and oversight for all loan applications.



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OCCIF offers several programs for institutions and individuals with investments that provide a rate of return while providing critical funds for church growth.

[Contact OCCIF for more information](#)

P.S. Please share this newsletter with your Parish email list!

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