

## Now What?

Reflecting on our stay-at-home/shelter-in-place experiences to help us move forward  
(for every age or all ages)

With many states “opening up,” churches may soon be offered the ability to resume in-person worship services. As you discern with your congregation when it is time to meet together in person, please follow your local state and county guidelines, putting into place every proscribed precaution. You may also want to frame the questions of “when” and “how” theologically, thinking together about what it means to protect and care for the most vulnerable among us. This resource was not designed to help discern when/how to return to your church building, but rather, to help leaders and congregants reflect on their experiences once the decision to return has been made.

### **Purpose:**

This tool was created with the intention of helping congregations reflect on and think theologically about the experiences that we have had with stay-at-home/shelter-in-place and virtual church. This tool is designed

- 1) to encourage individual congregants to explore their own experiences,
- 2) to share with others so that together we can understand more deeply the breadth of experiences during this time, and
- 3) to help congregations discern what to carry forward/leave behind and what the “new normal” might look like, moving forward.

### **Ideas for Use:**

Feel free to use this resource in whatever way it seems most helpful to you. Resources are provided for a one-time reflection, and for a multi-step process. Some ideas for use might be:

- \*Provide to small groups/children’s and adults Sunday school classes/etc. for reflection and sharing.
- \*Invite the congregation to fill out and share (if sharing church-wide, you may want to “plant” congregants of various ages and situations who have agreed beforehand to share).
- \*Have the congregation fill out worksheets and turn in, then compile the results and talk about them together.
- \*Use in pastoral care settings to help individuals/families discern how they are and what comes next.
- \*Create a retreat or mini-retreat around these questions. Include times of worship, reflection and sharing.

### **A few cautions:**

- \*This resource is designed as a starting point, not as an ending.
- \*Don’t use this resource “too soon” (as you have determined). It is often not helpful to be asked to find the “silver lining” of things in the middle of a rough or stressful situation.
- \*Don’t forget about the children! Children need opportunities to reflect, and may also help the congregation to see some of the “good” to come from this situation.

