



Community of Christ

Online "Reunion" Experience Menu of Ideas

Welcome to Reunion 2020!

We are moving on an arc from the 2019 World Conference to the 2022 World Conference. This year we're exploring the guiding question before the church, "Are we moving toward Jesus, the peaceful One?" The resources for 2020 reunions center around *A Way of Life*—starting with the foundation of Christ, the peaceful One. Next year's conversations, 2021 reunion resources, coalesce around non-violence, and Jesus, the peaceful One. All of these experiences moving us on the journey to the 2022 World Conference.

We don't want to lose sight of the themes and content created because there is intent in our journey.

As you are planning, think of things that are particularly meaningful for a reunion "experience" and incorporate these online.

Below are best practices, thoughts regarding registration, copyright & permissions, structure and organization, ideas and resources. If you have an idea to include, [submit your idea here](#).

May all seekers and friends be blessed as they journey together in these reunion experiences.

Susan Naylor, resource project manager
2020 Reunion Resources

Best Practices/Something to Think About

- Protecting our children is not an optional code of conduct. It is an opportunity to live out our Christian stewardship in a practical way—by protecting those most vulnerable in our society.

- Activities or lessons for children and youth online need to be in shorter time blocks than if we were meeting in person. If creating something, be mindful of what resources families will have readily available to them.
- How can we use the online time for interaction and community building, and then how do we invite interaction away from the screen?
- An often-heard reflection is, "There is brand loyalty to 'that' week. Going online removes this restriction. Be aware of other timelines. There may be schools that go back into session in June or the first of July; some may have a staggered session with families split between attendance in the morning and afternoon. Be sensitive to what is happening within your community.
- How do we strike up those "unexpected" connections or relationships that just happen as we are walking the grounds, choosing who to sit by at a meal or during worship, or at the canteen? Could you take a walk with a friend? It could be spontaneous or sign-up to do it.
- People choose to participate in a reunion experience. There is an aspect of committing their time and investing to be together. A suggestion might be to set participation expectations. These don't have to be hard and fast "rules," but there is a higher chance of success when participants are not surprised or know what to expect.
- Keep the time on screen engaging with one another; how do we invite people into experiences away from the screens and then use screen time to interact. Perhaps you can invite people into a spiritual practice outside and then come back together to share.
- Online doesn't restrict you to a particular timeframe. Maybe the experience is stretched over a more extended period.
- These kinds of online gatherings provide an excellent opportunity to invite – morning meditation, tai chi, campfire, and more.
- After conducting a survey across the mission center about what matters most about the reunion experience, responses included: the need to be careful in our worship and classes focusing intergenerationally, to be inclusive and enticing.
- Be mindful of one computer households – may need to adjust schedule so all age groups can participate – stagger class times.
- Even if you are saavy with zoom, the experiences are always better if someone is managing the tech and others are managing the content. This is a good idea to engage others. Could also have "greeters."
- Pay attention to various personality/spiritual types – it's also okay to turn off the camera for some activities or spiritual practices.
- What about inviting several individuals to record a short testimony or statement about what is meaningful to them about the reunion experience? Or what they hope to

receive or give in this new experience? Link these to your mission center social media or webpage.

- Helpful ideas for online engagement:
 - It's okay to turn off the camera
 - Be sure someone else has a backup copy of (or access to) your PowerPoint slides or tech materials before you start, and an idea of how you set them up. The backup person can take over and share the presentation should there be internet and technical difficulties.
 - Greeters – welcoming people into the space through the chat feature or verbal conversation.
 - Be creative and courageous.
 - Teachers / presenters could upload recorded elements to YouTube that could be watched at another time (similar to a flipped classroom experience).

Structure

- Sierra Pacific MC – current plans are to keep it simple. We are planning on a three-day event - one hour in the morning for the adult class, and 2 hours in the evening for intergenerational time and campfire.
- What would it look like if it were on a journey over a period of time? Maybe weeks? We could come back and reconnect with one another, forming an identity around some things.
- Lamoni Heartland MC – current plans include: a mix from the traditional schedule, and then at home activities to do. We plan on creating a schedule that provides for the Zoom links for each time together, so it's easy to connect.
- Mid-Atlantic and Eastern Great Lakes MCs are going to team up with a menu of items throughout July. Even though they are combining, there will be some jurisdictional activities to honor different "communities."
- Eastern Great Lakes MC is planning "31 days, 31 ways to connect in July." One activity a day in July. Sundays will be the reunion themed worships; opportunities for various age levels – different times of day – will have an outline and adjusting as needed; opening doors for opportunities; not necessarily trying to find people to fit, but asking people what they'd like to share – inviting people that might not necessarily feel they have something to share a typical reunion experience – maybe share about a trip, discussion about history, what are they interested in and want to share?
- Think about your timeframe. For some it's important to keep the traditional week on the calendar. Others are not feeling as restricted – there is a lot of flexibility.

- British Isles Mission Center completed an online retreat that was a big success. There was no registration fee, but following the offering opportunity at the final worship, the offerings exceeded expectations.
- Check out Park of the Pines Book Club idea:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/138877752848247/>
- Combine your reunion with another mission center. Combine guest ministry.

Registration

- How do we extend the invitation broadly, but also know who plans to participate?
- Review Child Protection Policies and follow for any updates regarding Online Ministries.
<https://www.cofchrist.org/child-protection>
- Is it essential, or how do we get a list of participants? Creating a registration link might be helpful to know ahead of time how many to expect.
- Registration could include a donation. Campgrounds still have expenses; there may be expenses if you are providing materials for individuals and families.
- Keeping track of registrations helps to know who is participating and to ensure as best as possible to be inclusive, providing materials and supplies for participation.

Copyright and Permissions:

- Check your copyright licenses (CCLI, CVLI, OL) – during this time some are offering streaming without additional expense.
- Anything that is not Community of Christ, or you didn't personally create, you need permission to use as well as project and stream in a closed group.
- Permission to use is not permission to stream. Make sure your permissions are complete.
- One License <https://news.onelicense.net/2020/04/13/looking-ahead-licensing-options-for-gratis-accounts-after-april-15/>
- CCLI - <https://us.ccli.com/streaming/>
- CVLI - <https://us.cvli.com/>
 - CCLI Search: <https://songselect.ccli.com/>
 - CVLI Search: <https://www.screenvue.com/>
 - One License Search: <https://onelicense.net/>
- *Community of Christ Sings* Applicable Copyright Licenses - <https://www.cofchrist.org/hymnal>

- Resources for royalty-free images, videos, music:
 - Using Google Search:
 - Enter your keyword(s)
 - Click on “Images.”
 - There is an option on the top right corner that says “Tools” – click that.
 - From the drop-down list, select “Label for Reuse.”

Or go to Advanced Settings and set associated settings.

- Bing Search also works and has tools to filter results.
- “Creative Commons” license/“Public Domain” means it’s free to use however we’d like.

Sometimes “Creative Commons” licenses require attribution (you have to display who created the content). Please validate that before using.

- <https://pixabay.com/>
- <https://unsplash.com/>
- <https://www.pexels.com/>
- <https://www.bensound.com>
- Use your own photos and creations

Ideas/Resources

- Awareness of what supplies are needed for crafts – consider putting together supply packs, drop off at homes, or mailing.
- Flipped classroom model – Watch a recorded lesson message/lecture individually, and then time together is the interaction; perhaps delivery of content is with a recording of some kind; could be housed on the Community of Christ website or done in an individual context. Video recording of messages is a continuing conversation.
- Adult study time – would it be of value to do a webinar-style.
- Cinema Divina – "Moses had a tablet. David had music. Paul had letters. We have movies! Cinema Divina is a spiritual practice inviting participants (of all ages) to notice how we connect to God through movies. Participants watch a movie, either individually or as a group, and then proceed to discuss plot themes reflecting life circumstances, Enduring Principles, or ethical considerations. This practice merges modern cinema with theological thought and personal reflection, and, more importantly, it emphasizes God's presence can be discovered anywhere, even the movies." Ryan Pitt, Mid-Atlantic MCP can share more support with this idea.

- CVLI license – purchase, by invite and everyone can watch the movie together; <https://us.cvli.com/>
- How can we use the style with hymns being created by EuroPeople and Joey Williams? Could there be a hymn that goes with each of the day themes? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSuHisWfonQ>
- Laroni Heartland is planning to ask the campground managers to create a video there at the campground – may be a walk through a small trail, video of the dining hall, and places with memories. The idea is to connect those who are bonded to a campground. Fun activities they have talked about is a scavenger hunt and some "on-your-own activities" – maybe build your own Guthrie Grove and then show and tell one evening. Talent show could be pre-recorded; photo contest with categories and pictures to share.
- A great resource for having people record a short video is flipgrid.com. Our school did a virtual talent show using flipgrid. It is easy to access and easy to use.
- Our youth responded well to games such as Kahoot, Codenames, Skribble during our weekly hangouts. More screen time, but the youth really enjoy them :) We've also experimented with board games such as *Game of Things*, that can be managed easily by one person.
- Maybe we can help create these random encounters. What if there is a coffee hangout, provide a link for folks to gather. What about having lunch with someone (guest minister, Mission Center President) – here's where their "table" is going to be (provide a link).
- The idea of structured openness. How do we help people change their thought process and shift from going to a sacred ground, but rather people encountering sacred moments? Bring sacred ground to people – how we do worship, bless, share, **sacred moment opportunities** – spiritual practice of mindful walking.
- Table fellowship – late night activity pizza – send pizza to the home.
- List of creative online activities created by Joelle Wight. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M0kBFYs_ePE2sQ1dNJrW3wk-THm7JHhf/view?usp=sharing
- Pre-recorded location videos –video of dining hall and have a mindfulness meal with your family, or together in cluster groups with Zoom.
- Messy church, campfire, activities around the Enduring Principles, like the pre-recorded and live interaction model. Thinking about sending a package with materials need to support the reunion experience (maybe even ingredients for s' mores).
- How do we build spontaneity and impromptu sharing? Spontaneity is hard to replicate. The hardest might be opportunities for kids.
 - Table fellowship – everyone brings their lunch or dinner to the Zoom experience. Use breakout rooms and be surprised who's at your "table."

Morning coffee and simple conversation. Take a mindfulness walk – connect by phone and walk together

- Eastern Great Lakes and Mid-Atlantic Mission Centers have been holding virtual potlucks using small breakout rooms 5-6 people in a group works well.
- How many people would you put in an impromptu group – depends on the activity and expected outcome.
- Keep in mind how you're using your guest minister and opportunities to engage – online provides ways of movement between communities – being mindful of how you create community is really important.
- Different times of the day for different age groups; trying to get people excited for this new platform by sending a reunion fellowship box that includes reunion text, craft activities, snacks, smores, a schedule of what is scheduled on zoom and a list of activities to do as a family – take photos of their reunion experience and then create Mission Center album. We have heard from people who haven't attended reunion in years who are going to participate.
- Maybe one of the things is to choose individuals to be phone buddies during the "experience" – to check in, visit, and learn more from each other.
- Craft activity – don't assume that everyone has the supplies at their homes; maybe the "ask" is more broad, for example, "create something that reminds you of peace."
- Trivia Night, Kahoot app (you can also create your own categories, such as church history or Enduring Principles), Scattegories, BINGO, check online for pre-made ideas; Wheel of Fortune, using whiteboard on Zoom; a Baking competition; Paint Night; Nature challenges, and more.
- Traditional Talent Show...Online
- Pre-record a song, theme song, a little devotion introducing the day.
- How do we incorporate prayer time?
- People come to some reunions for the food. What about a Zoom "Cook Along" with your local wonderful chefs?
- Give an art prompt and all ages can create, provide a picture and develop an album for the "experience."
- Many congregations may have unused bulletin blanks due to COVID-19. In the spirit of Sacredness of Creation and Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, perhaps craft projects could be designed out of these bulletin covers.
- With Guest Ministry you may need to shift time frames; reach out and incorporate them into the online experience—worship message, chats, education (all ages)
- One mission center idea for camps is to have the Jr. Highs write letters to the Juniors as to their best memories of camps or what to expect in the future; Sr. Highs writing mentoring letters to Jr. Highs.

- Suggested Ideas for Youth: <https://youthgroup.downloadyouthministry.com/>
- A preschool group could gather with parents and families participating; time for the “littles” 😊
- Story time (or call it Book Club) is great for young children.

Ideas from Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation:

Greetings from your friends at the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation! We recognize the unique challenges and this significant time of change. We want to offer our support to reimagine summer reunions, youth camps, mission center retreats, and online worship. We are here to assist you as you move forward making history (through your actions and works of compassion) that will inspire future generations. Below are just a few of the resources that are available online through our website and social media.

The Foundation's Website: www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org

The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation's website offers a variety of educational resources that help share church history in a congregational and mission center setting. The webpage includes resources for people of all ages such as heritage-themed worship services, hymn festivals, lesson plans, youth activity sheets, eBooklets, and more. One of my favorite resources include the short stories from church history that reflect the Mission Initiatives and Enduring Principles. These stories are great for both conversation and devotions. I encourage you to check out the resource page by following the link below:

<https://www.historicsitesfoundation.org/resources.html>

Summer Highlights in History

In addition to the resources available on our website, there will also be a number of educational events happening virtually throughout the summer.

Emma Smith Hymn Festival

Mark your calendars for an online Emma Smith Hymn Festival celebrating the life and story of Emma Hale Smith on her 216th birthday. This musical event will take place on Friday, July 10 at 8:00 PM (ET). We are partnering with Beyond the Walls to offer a wonderful event that shares Emma's story through the many hymns she selected from her church hymnals. It will be a fabulous night as we celebrate our "Elect Lady" through story and song. All are welcome.

Summer Lecture Series

We are fortunate to have a church history community that loves to share stories of the past that resonate for the church of today. This summer, we are tapping a number of those people to share their knowledge in an online weekly lecture series. Guest speakers include Lachlan Mackay, Seth Bryant, Andrew Bolton, Wendy Eaton, David Brock, David Howlett, and myself. The weekly lectures will begin in late June and run through the summer.

Please consider including these special events in your online reunion and mission center schedules.

"We Are All Storytellers" Video Project: Daily Stories from Community of Christ History

The "We Are All Storytellers" project began in the midst of isolation during the COVID-19 crisis. We recognize that during times of uncertainty and change, people long to hear stories where we see the goodness in humanity, people helping people, friends lifting up one another during times of despair, and folks sacrificing in the spirit of generosity and compassion. Fortunately, church history is filled with these stories! Over forty storytellers shared wonderful stories from Community of Christ's past for this project, some of whom may be from your mission center! You can view/hear these stories by going to our Facebook page. Please feel free to use these daily videos in your mission centers to aid in worship and discussion. We hope these stories serve as reminders of the powerful heritage we share in Community of Christ and the continuing call to love one another. I have attached a "31 Stories in 31 Days" schedule/list in the event you are interested in a daily church history story that helps illuminate the past and inspire the future. For a list of all the stories and storytellers, follow the link below to check out our Facebook page where you will see the daily video stories:

<https://www.facebook.com/Community-of-Christ-Historic-Sites-Foundation-194388303381/>

Our webpage for the "We Are All Storytellers" is a work in progress that should be completed by the end of the week. The webpage, in addition to our Facebook page, will feature all of the video stories listed in the attached document "31 Stories in 31 Days."

Campground/Reunion History

Our last resource for this summer is the one I am most excited about. It's an opportunity to gather as a mission center and celebrate the unique history behind your campgrounds. We invite you to take an engaging look at the history of our reunion traditions. This online gathering is intended to be a virtual celebration of our unique campgrounds. We are inviting mission centers to consider holding an online gathering that includes brief talks about the unique history behind the reunion tradition, the story behind your unique reunion/campground, and an open forum for people to share their own history and historic objects connected to their campground. It's an evening of tales among friends that focus on how these sacred sites have enriched individual lives and our faith community. The Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is happy to host this virtual gathering or I am happy to join you in your mission centers' online community to share the history behind the reunion tradition. The only thing needed is someone from your mission center to share the story behind your campgrounds and an engaging audience from the mission center willing to share stories from the past. In addition to sharing memories of the campground, the evening also has the potential to serve as an online fundraiser for the reunion grounds. I have attached a program outline that lays out the "evening of tales" for those who may be interested in this fun online gathering focused on our family camp tradition.

We Support You!

As an organization committed to Community of Christ heritage, we cannot help but look to the past for hope and reassurance. Throughout our history we have witnessed our faith community encounter challenging times before and has valiantly persevered through those difficult times. We also see that some of Community of Christ's greatest ministries and traditions have given birth during times of crisis. It is encouraging to see history repeat itself in today's church as we witness new forms of ministry take form in online communities and new relationships created as people discover unique ways to build community in an every changing world. We are grateful for those lessons from the church's past and we are especially thankful for your continuing leadership in today's Community of Christ.

Please feel free to reach out if you need additional details related to any of the programs described above and/or would like to discuss online guest ministry opportunities and unique ways to engage church history.

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