

Sight Loss

Friendly Church:

**Virtual church**

**Top Tips**



from TORCH TRUST

# Introduction

Virtual church has become a normal occurrence since the Coronavirus. This document offers some helpful top tips in ensuring your virtual events are sight loss friendly.

## Things to Consider for Video

### Background

- Think about your visual background. If your background is busy, confused, or cluttered, it will take attention off what you are saying. Partially sighted viewers need good contrast between the action and the background. Ideally, your background should be plain (not busy or bookshelves); a fairly even background will be most accessible.

### Lighting

- Is your face lit well? If you have the light behind you, so that your face is in silhouette or shadow, you won't be seen clearly. Ideally have a light placed to highlight your face.

## Video Conferencing

- If using a platform such as Zoom ensure everyone has their correct name displayed so that anyone using a screen reader can identify who is present. The Host can change the name of a participant if they are displaying a device name or a phone number. It may also be helpful to verbally say who is present if it's not a huge meeting.
- If you are going to be sharing words on a screen on Zoom send the content beforehand to anyone who has sight loss. A screen reader is not able to read a shared screen. If you are unable to send this before the meeting make sure the content is read aloud and made available afterwards. For helpful information about fonts, background and print sizes please see our document *Preparing Materials for People with Sight Loss*.
- As in any situation a person with sight loss might not recognise the voice of somebody speaking. Ask people to introduce themselves if they have a section in a virtual meeting so that everyone is aware of who is speaking.



## Think, Ask and Act

Some people with sight loss really struggle to use computers and might not be able to engage with your virtual worship. Make a point of phoning them so you can discuss a system that works for them. Here are some practical ideas that may be more accessible.

- Record your weekly service onto a CD or memory stick. Zoom has a built in 'record' facility to help with this. Simple memory stick players can be purchased from RNIB.
- If you stream or broadcast your service onto YouTube send the direct link to people as it can be difficult to find on YouTube.
- If you are using Zoom, make use of the dial-in service and give people the phone number with meeting ID and Passcode. You may need to talk them through the process to begin with.
- Point people to alternative services like the BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship or the Church of England Daily Hope phone line, which offers music, prayers, and reflections, as well as full worship services.