

Inviting Response to a non-interactive Online Church Service

Here are four kinds of e-mail for which you can ask. Other modes of response are possible too:

- A. People asking for a “give-away” you are offering: something you can e-mail them. It could be simply the PDF of a “What about.” All the “What abouts” are in public domain, and collected at <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/barryunchangingtruth.pdf>. Print one off, scan it, and you will have it ready to send as a give-away.
- B. People asking questions which you will answer on video after an upcoming church service
- C. People “voting” for one of two questions that you suggest. You will answer the “winning” question the next week. These questions could be – but need not be – about church services, paraments, the church year, etc.
- D. Perhaps people giving their “multiple choice” response to a lighter question that you pose.

NOTE: By asking for responses, you will be moving toward building an electronic “guest book” of sorts. Of course, if it is to do good, you have to *use* it. A list of e-mail addresses by itself helps nothing.

FORMAT OF A CHURCH SERVICE PACKAGED, FOR EXAMPLE, ON YOU TUBE:

- I. Announcer (or pastor) speaks on video prior to start of church service
VIDEO COULD SHOW THE CHURCH, OR MAYBE STAINED-GLASS WINDOW FOR MOST OF THIS.
Good day, and welcome to this service from St. John-by-the-Gas-Pump Lutheran Church in Anywhere, Illinois for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost. We’re glad you are with us, and we invite your questions and concerns. We would be delighted to send you a short article about Baptism. Send an e-mail request to feedback@stjohnpump.org. Also, Pastor John Bugenhagen will be answering questions before the end of this video. If you would like to ask a question for him to answer in the future, again our e-mail address is feedback@stjohnpump.org. We will repeat this address later on. Right now, let’s join today’s service. IF POSSIBLE, PUT THE E-MAIL ADDRESS ON SCREEN WHILE IT IS SPOKEN.
- II. Before sermon hymn
INSTEAD OF THE PASTOR INTERRUPTING THE CONTINUITY OF A LIVE SERVICE, IT WOULD BE GOOD IF, BEFORE THE SERVICE IS POSTED ONLINE, THE ANNOUNCER COULD INSERT THIS:
In a few moments, Pastor Bugenhagen will present today’s sermon, “What Jesus Thinks of Little Faith,” based on the Gospel lesson from the end of Matthew 14. And keep watching this video after the service concludes, as Pastor Bugenhagen answers questions that have come in via e-mail to feedback@stjohnpump.org. He will also have a couple of questions for you to choose from. You can hear the answer to the winning question next week.
- III. During Prayer of the Church
Include a petition for those watching online, perhaps also for those who submit questions.
- IV. Pastor speaks immediately after the Benediction or final hymn
THIS IS THE LONGEST TIME DEVOTED TO PROMOTING RESPONSES, RIGHT AFTER SERVICE.
 - Perhaps before the live congregation – or if not, then added in for the video – the pastor reads one or two e-mailed questions and answers them briefly (in about 2 minutes each). If you are just starting to answer questions, compose a few to “prime the pump.”
 - After the pastor finishes with the viewer-originated question(s), he answers an “audience demand” question. E.g.: *Last week, viewers of our online service sent an e-mail to feedback@stjohnpump.org and asked me to answer this question: Why, in church services at St.*

John-by-the-Gas-Pump Lutheran Church, does the pastor sometimes face the congregation while at other times he faces the altar? The answer is: [GIVE BRIEF ANSWER]

- *Now, here are two questions I would be happy to answer next week. Send a message to feedback@stjohnpump.org and tell us which you think I should take up. The questions are:*
 - *1. Why does the pastor wear a white robe during church services? OR*
 - *2. What does it mean when we say this is the service for the “Tenth Sunday after Pentecost”?* REPEAT THE QUESTIONS AND THEIR NUMBERS

*I will answer the question that YOU want. E-mail us at feedback@stjohnpump.org
YOU CAN “RE-CYCLE” THE “LOSING” QUESTIONS AT LATER DATES.*

- *Don’t forget that we would love to send you a little piece on Baptism. You can request it at the same e-mail address, feedback@stjohnpump.org*
- *Finally, and just for a little fun, in what city do you think I went to college?*
PUT THESE ON SCREEN AS THEY ARE SPOKEN:
 - *A. Ann Arbor, Michigan*
 - *B. Austin, Texas*
 - *C. River Forest, Illinois or*
 - *D. Seward, Nebraska*

Send your guess by e-mail to feedback@stjohnpump.org. I will tell you the answer next week. Until then, the Lord be with you!

A FEW MAY NOT WANT TO TRY THIS LAST KIND OF QUESTION, ALTHOUGH SOMETHING OFFBEAT LIKE THIS MIGHT PROMPT RESPONSES FROM PEOPLE WHO WOULD NOT E-MAIL YOU OTHERWISE. YOU CAN ALTERNATE: RAISE A QUESTION ONE WEEK, ANSWER IT THE NEXT, RAISE ANOTHER QUESTION THE FOLLOWING WEEK, AND SO ON. THE WEEK YOU GIVE AN ANSWER, PROMISE THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER QUESTION NEXT WEEK.

- V. Announcer or pastor concludes the video
VIDEO SHOWS THE CHURCH, OR A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW, ETC. HOPEFULLY, THERE WILL BE MUSIC BACKGROUND UNDER THE ANNOUNCER AS HE SPEAKS. IF THERE IS, START IT BEFORE THE PASTOR FINISHES SPEAKING ABOVE.
Thank you for joining us via video for today’s service. St. John-by-the-Gas-Pump Lutheran Church is located at [NOT ONLY GIVE STREET ADDRESS BUT ALSO MENTION ANY HELPFUL LANDMARKS]. After [the video of] next week’s service, Pastor Bugenhagen will again answer questions that you e-mail to feedback@stjohnpump.org. And for a copy of a short article on Baptism, be sure to send your request to feedback@stjohnpump.org
LET THE E-MAIL ADDRESS BE THE LAST WORDS PEOPLE HEAR, PREFERABLY ACCOMPANIED BY HAVING THE ADDRESS ON SCREEN AT THE SAME TIME. IF YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IS LONG AND COMPLICATED, GET A NEW, SIMPLER ONE THAT YOU CAN DEDICATE TO THIS PURPOSE.

OTHER IDEAS:

- a) Set up a Zoom call on Monday or Tuesday evening to discuss the week’s sermon. Announce in your church service video that if people e-mail you, you will reply with an invitation to the Zoom call.
- b) Explore the prospect for people to respond to you not only via e-mail but also with a text message. Direct these messages to a special number, not the church phone or anyone’s personal number. They can be forwarded from there to the device you choose.
- c) You might offer to send out a future text message announcing when your next online church service is posted. This outgoing text message can include your e-mail address.