

Tyndale Thought for the Day

23rd March 2020



Leading a service in the empty (almost) Tyndale was a strange experience. I imagine watching it was a strange experience as well, especially the singing.

But it felt right to hold the service in the church. I've watched one or two alternatives on-line, from other churches. A talking head with the laptop camera too close, every pore cruelly exposed, doesn't to me, look like a very effective way of helping folk to worship, never mind what is said.

The difference, I think, comes down to whether the offering is an attempt at public worship or just an attempt to communicate with the church's own. Of course any church has to communicate with its own – to provide information, to inspire, pray, show care.

But public worship is something else. It is worship to God that anyone might join in with, be they part of a church, or not. Most churches routinely offer public worship – doors are open, a welcome is offered. But if the songs, prayers, words of greeting, sermon, all assume everyone is part of the church's own world, then none of what's offered will be "welcoming" at all.

The same thing applies – perhaps even more so – online. One aspect of the current crisis is the closing down of everything. Gradually the public domain fades away and the private, domain comes to the fore. Worship offered by churches online might be one of the few ways of opening up – not just to each other in the church, but to the wider world – it is God's world, after all; that He loves so much he has given his only Son.

Michael Docker