

It's Saturday night, March 21, and my son and I have spent pretty much all day creating an iMovie Sunday morning worship service for my two congregations. Now we can't figure out how to upload it from Aidan's school-issued computer onto YouTube. This is the first time I've had to do this all online. I call Allysen, a teacher in the school district and a member of one of my churches. She suggests I try putting it on a flash drive.

It's 11:55 p.m. My son's computer is set to turn off at midnight and won't open up again until 6 a.m. I frantically run downstairs and search for a flash drive in an attempt to transfer the iMovie of the worship service from his computer to mine. My kitchen drawers are a mess. I can't find a flash drive. I can never find anything when I need it in my disaster of a house.

On Facebook Messenger Allysen says, "Just sleep for now and do it in the morning. Your churchgoers should be a forgiving lot even if it isn't ready right at 8:30 a.m."

I can't go to sleep. In a world where nothing is going right, where everything has changed, where this is the first opportunity to prove that I can adapt and lead and be of help to the congregations I love as we navigate these uncharted waters, I need this to happen.

I realize my iPhone has iMovie on it. It's 12:10 a.m. when I open a new "project" and begin to import all the pieces I originally worked with on Aidan's computer. The video clips of Mom and Jill singing the hymns; the video of Allysen reading scripture (the video that had taken hours to download via Google drive); the short little clip of the Smorstad family sharing the peace, sweet twin boys—age 9 months—giggling and drooling. God, I miss them all.

Aidan had told me it would be too difficult to add the words of the hymns to the screen, but I do it. At 1 a.m. I figure out how to add photos of the hymns as cutaways to the movie. I discover this by mistake. I'm pressing buttons without knowing what I'm doing. I swear it feels like the Spirit has given me the button I need. I forget to give thanks. I'm too busy making a movie that is somehow also a worship service for two congregations that can no longer meet in person.

Seminary has not prepared me for this.

I have a YouTube channel only because I had used it to share videos of my sister's senior trombone recital years before. I had never made an iMovie. Now I've made one between the hours of midnight and 3 a.m.

It's done and I'm proud of it. I've gone from waking up at 7 a.m. on Friday morning with the idea of including multiple parishioners in the making of the movie—to being ready to upload it to YouTube at 3 a.m. on Sunday morning. In the future, I'll allow more time. But it won't make it any easier. For each piece that becomes routine and knowable, another piece becomes a challenge. How to convert files that aren't allowed by iMovie? Google it. Pay \$6 for an app that will do the conversion. Problem solved. How to create hymn files when your mom refuses to keep singing for these worship services? Sister to the rescue. She discovers openhymnal.org. I play the midi file of the hymn through old, donated speakers attached to my work computer, place my iPhone at the perfect distance from the speakers (too close and it's fuzzy; too far away and it's too soft—this I learned through much trial and error), hit the voice memo record button on my phone and try my best to have some sort of decent breath support as I sing the public domain hymns that I can include without worrying about copyright infringement.

It would help if I could breathe. It would help if I could sleep. It would help if I wasn't trying to do this, basically, all alone. It would help if I could turn over the movie production to some high school student who loves such things and who could do it all easily and maybe even enjoy it. But now I feel like it's my job.

I think I should be spending more time calling my people, but I can't seem to manage much calling. Each conversation leaves me absolutely spent. I sob after each goodbye. I miss these people. I don't want to make phone calls or iMovies. I want to give hugs. I want to talk face to face, leaning in to listen well, holding hands as we pray for hope and healing.

The night before Easter I can't sleep. Awake at 2 a.m., I watch the worship service created by my good friend, a volunteer music director in a neighboring town. The service is beautiful. I love my friend. And I miss her.

At 3 a.m. I watch another worship service created by another dear friend, a pastor in my corner of Iowa, skipping ahead to get to her sermon. I've already read it, as she asked me two days before for input, but now I get to hear it. Receive it. It's beautiful. Needed.

At 4 a.m. I click on YouTube news and lay in bed listening to death counts. It's Easter morning.

At 5 a.m. I get out of bed and go to church. I'm supposed to join an invitation-only zoom gathering by 5:40 a.m. My computer is sluggish and won't load the meeting. I hate technology. I hate being so damn dependent on it.

Christ can rise from the dead but can't make this computer do what it's supposed to do.

I finally use my iPhone to connect to the meeting. It's a gathering of women from around the world, an informal worship service of sorts that grew out of a single Tweet. "How to faithfully celebrate Easter this year: Only women on the Zoom call. Call is scheduled before dawn. We speak only of impossible things that would topple the empire."

It turns out to be the most meaningful Easter worship service I've ever experienced. As each woman is called by name—just as Jesus called Mary Magdalene by name in the garden outside the empty tomb—we give our testimony. We talk about where we've seen the Lord. I think I'm going to say something about the church in which I grew up. How they used the Bible to tell me women couldn't pastor—I couldn't preach—but God said *yes!*

But instead, a song I've written comes to mind. And my testimony is this: I know that death is real but it will never be the end. I know the song goes on and dancing feet are powerful.

I worship later with my family, watching myself lead worship on the television screen in our living room. I smile at my on-screen self. I can't help it. I want to dance.