

Facebook connecting local communities at a time of social distancing

 By Nunu Ntshingila

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The world is coming to grips with the scale of the Covid-19 crisis and we are all embracing the need for an extended period of social distancing. People everywhere, including here in South Africa, are turning to technology and social media platforms to connect with family, friends and colleagues. Using digital platforms to host sermons, meetings, seminars and even live entertainment is becoming the new norm.



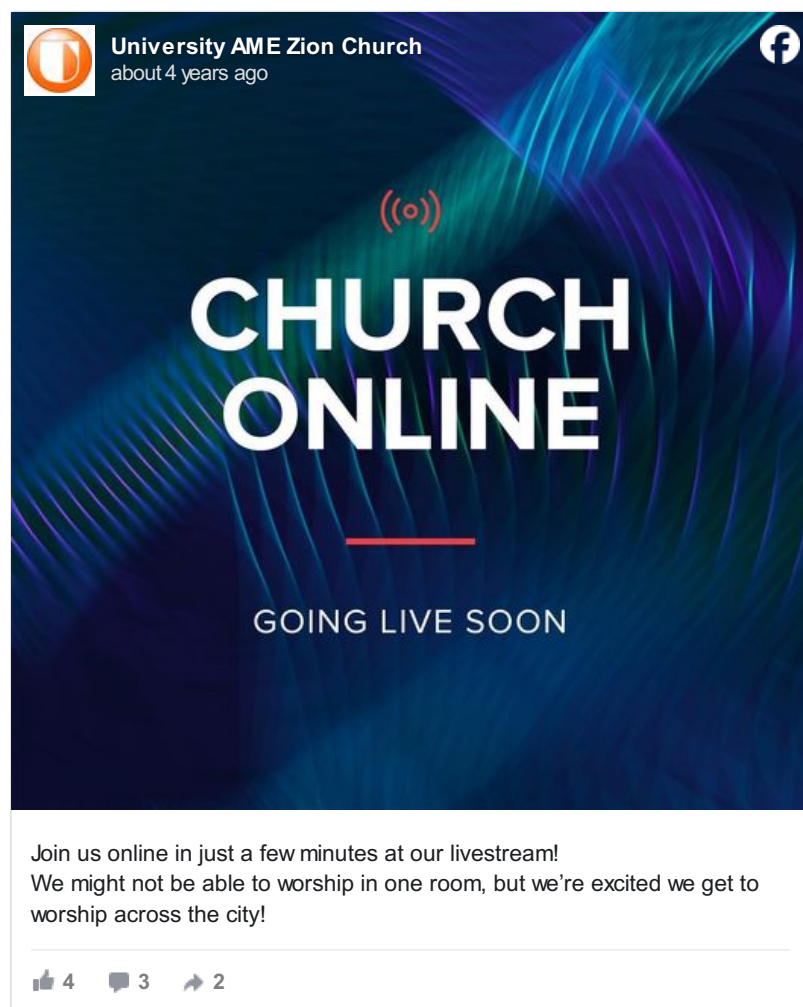
Credit: Austin Distel on [Unsplash.com](#)

In South Africa, the #ImStaying movement is using its [Facebook page](#), with a community of over 1.9 million, to raise funds for Mfuleni, a township of 400,000 people in Cape Town. It wants to raise R400,000 to help support members of a community living with low access to medicine and healthy food – many of them vulnerable to Covid-19 because they are old or immunocompromised.

It is also providing a place where people can seek emotional support during this difficult time - which is important as we

continue to see social gatherings of 100 or more banned across the country.

In the US, churches such as University AME Zion Church in California are closing doors in favour of live streaming services for congregants avoiding coronavirus. Leaders at [Fort Knox](#) conducted a Facebook Live town hall to inform the community about coronavirus, and Inmyung Girl's High in South Korea raised money for a Covid-19 relay donation campaign via an Instagram hashtag campaign.



Since the [World Health Organization](#) declared the coronavirus a public health emergency in January, people around the world have rallied together to stop the disease from spreading. Where face-to-face contact is no longer possible, digital platforms such as Facebook and our family of apps are giving people opportunities to foster community, offer encouragement, build bridges and drive change.

We hope that in line with our mission, our platform continues to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together.

ABOUT NUNU NTSHINGILA

Nunu Ntshingila is the regional director of Facebook Africa.

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