

Nicholle Hansen
ASU Religious Studies Student
10-7-2020

My life has changed significantly since the Covid-19 pandemic. I currently work at a church leading the children and youth programming while I return to school to follow my call to be an ordained pastor. My most memorable moment from the Covid-19 pandemic was the day I had to throw all my plans and expectations for Easter worship out the window. My coworkers and I had to record all four worship services for Holy Week in one day before the governor enforced a shelter in place order. That day, I experienced the events of Holy Week in a completely new way than ever before. I have always had a full week to reflect on the final week of Christ's life in the midst of other day to day events that were taking place. As we worshiped I found myself filled with the holy spirit and I was overwhelmed with so many thoughts and emotions to process through. That experience was challenging at the time, but gave me a new understanding and appreciation for those sacred rituals. After a full 12-hour day of recording we were all exhausted and emotional as we said good bye to one another not knowing when we would gather together again.

Our staff hasn't been together in person since the end of March. Through many hours of zoom meetings, we learned new technology and shifted from leading worship and teaching classes in person to online from home. We were all so worried that something as personal as worship couldn't be meaningful in an online format. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that it wasn't about the place we were gathered it was about the relationships and connections we had with our church family. This change provided new ways to reach out to our community, and we are attracting new people. We had to take a risk and go outside of our comfort zone, beyond the church walls to meet people where they were.

In January I registered as an ASU student after a thirteen-year break in my education. I planned the perfect time to return to school in the fall of 2020 when both my children would be away at school during the day. Well those well thought out plans didn't exactly work out the way I envisioned them. I'm now balancing working from home, being a college student and providing support for my elementary aged children who have been participating in remote learning from home. My house has transformed from the place we return to after a long day to rest, to a busy hub that is now my office, university, elementary school, church and at home restaurant. This time of change and uncertainty has given me the opportunity to reevaluate my priorities, take a fresh look at the world around me and has helped me to slow down and enjoy making memories at home with my family.