



THE
*Digital
Community*
CHURCH GUIDE

2022

 Altar

Altar Live's Digital Community Christmas Guide

The Holidays are here, and that means one thing: it's time to gift your community with new ways of engaging and connecting together! Whether it be Christmas parties in your small groups, Advent storytime and hot chocolate for the kids, or a classic Christmas Eve service, Altar Live is the perfect place for your community to stay engaged, connected, and share the holiday cheer.

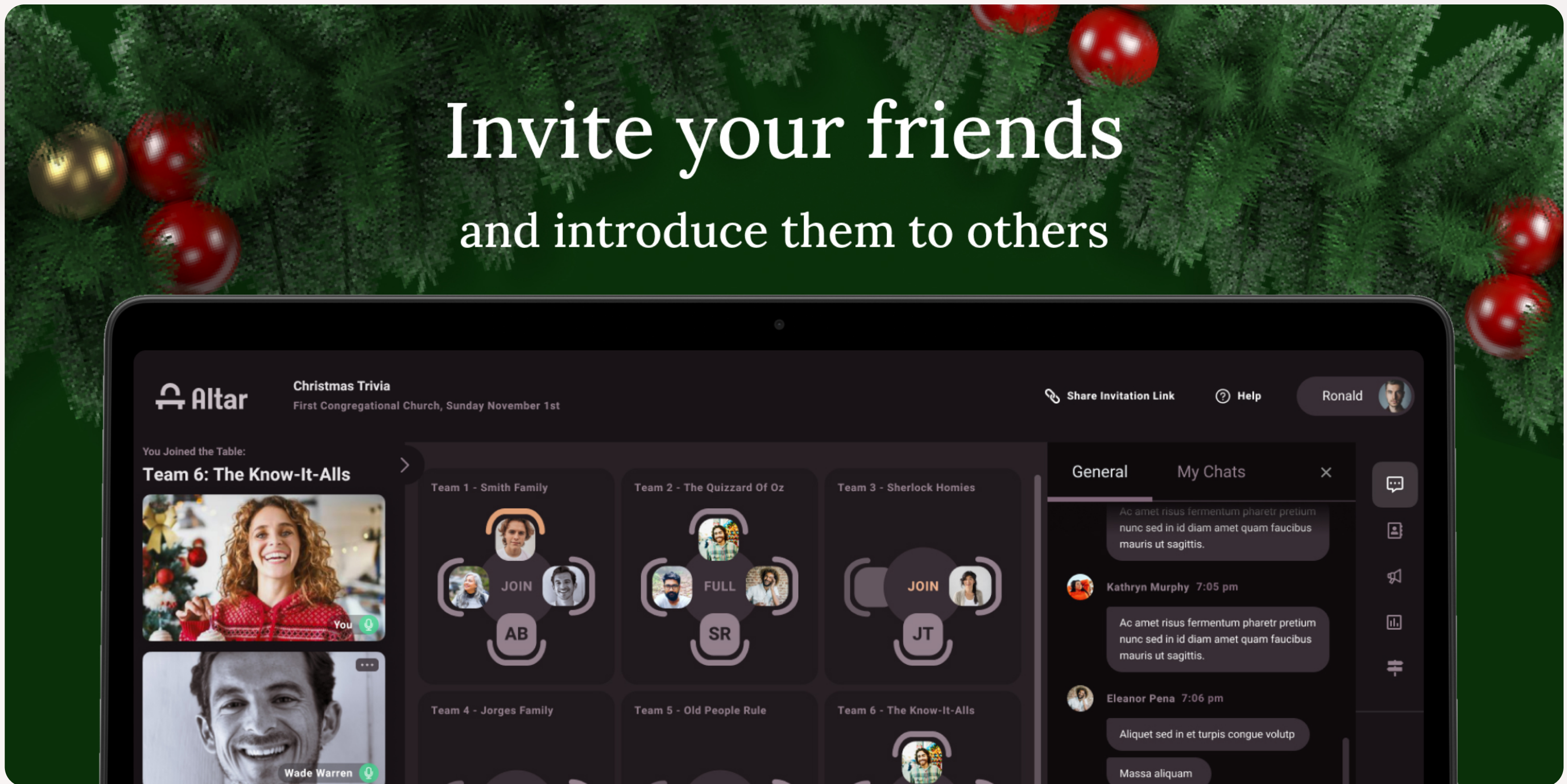
What You'll Find in This Guide...

The holidays can be a busy (and sometimes overwhelming!) time for churches and faith communities. Altar Live hopes to come alongside you during this season to bring stress-free digital tools and resources to make the holidays the wonderful and joy-filled time they're intended to be. In this guide we'll give you:

- **Questions to Ask as You Prepare for the Holidays**
- **Christmas Event Ideas That Are:**
 - For Advent Season + Worship Services
 - Flexible for Big Events or Small Groups
 - For the Whole Family
- **Ways to Increase Engagement in Your Events**



Invite your friends
and introduce them to others



Questions to Ask as You Prepare for the Holidays...

Whether you're a small group leader, kid's ministry director, or in charge of coordinating the next holiday event at your church, it's helpful to take a moment to gauge where you are and what you might need to consider as you work to bring together your community this holiday season. Here are a few questions you may want to ask as you begin to plan:

- What are unique ways we can increase participation and reach new people?
- Who is in my community currently, and how can I foster deeper connection and engagement with them?
- How far in advance will I need to start planning and preparing my events? How much time will I need?
- What digital tools and resources will I need in order to make sure everything is running smoothly? What do I need to do to prepare and equip those helping out with the event?
- What kind of communication will need to go out leading up to the event? Internally? To the wider community?
- Will there need to be limits to the digital event registration? What will the format be? In a meeting, in the auditorium, at tables?

Just because your family members or friends can't be in person, doesn't mean you can't experience a worship service or Christmas play together - in real time! Altar Live offers a way for grandparents, aunts and uncles, and friends to sit together and see and hear each other over video conference while watching their cousins perform a play or hear their daughter sing in the choir. It might even be an opportunity to invite someone to your church for the first time!

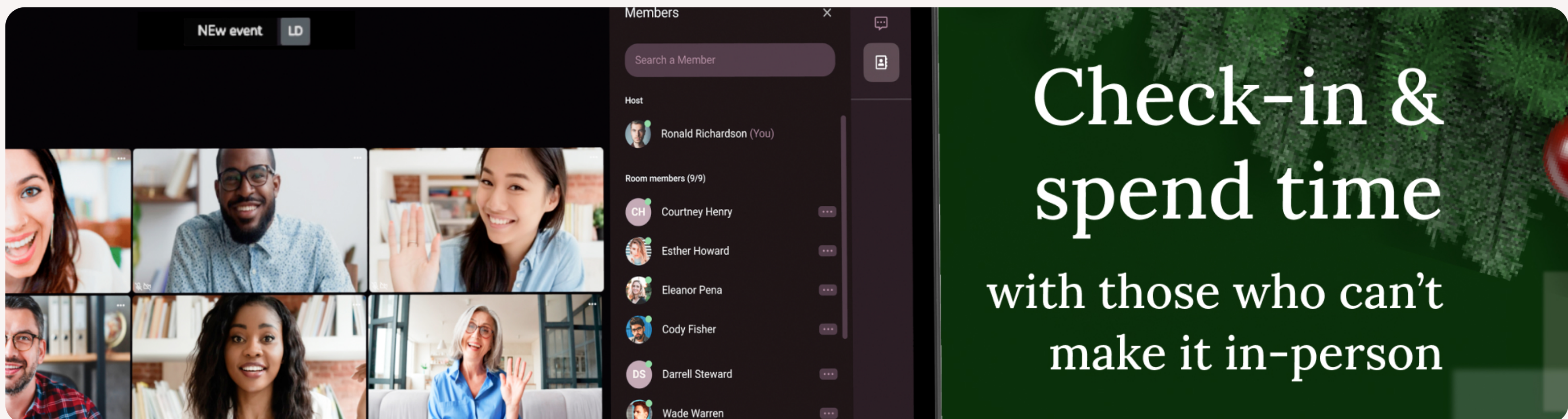
Christmas Event Ideas

1. Ideas for Advent Season Events + Worship Services

List of Online Event Ideas for Advent Season

There is an endless number of possibilities when it comes to the kinds of events you could host on Altar Live. We won't be able to cover them all in detail here, but we made a list of some of our favorites to get your creativity going:

- Christmas Movie Night with Discussion Afterwards
- Christmas Party for Staff and Members
- Four Sundays of Advent Evening Service
- Hot Chocolate Children's Story Time
- Christmas Breakfast
- Christmas Pageant
- Christmas Eve Service
- Christmas Wrapping Party
- Christmas Craft Day for Ornaments or Christmas Cards
- Operation Christmas Child Box Assembling Event



Advent Prayer and Contemplation

Advent is a time of waiting and contemplation. In this season, invite your community to meet at Tables regularly for time of reflection, prayer, and encouragement.

Advent Devotionals and Discussion

Reading an advent devotional as a community can help prompt your community to prepare their hearts as they reflect on the holiday season. After the reading of the devotional, meet at Tables, Rows or Rooms to discuss and pray together.

Poll Palooza

Send out a poll and create Tables named after the answers. Once people vote, have them move to the Table and watch the discussion unfold!

Candlelit Service

The candlelit service doesn't just have to occur in person. For this event, ask each Row to turn their cameras on and lights off and have a candle burning during the service.

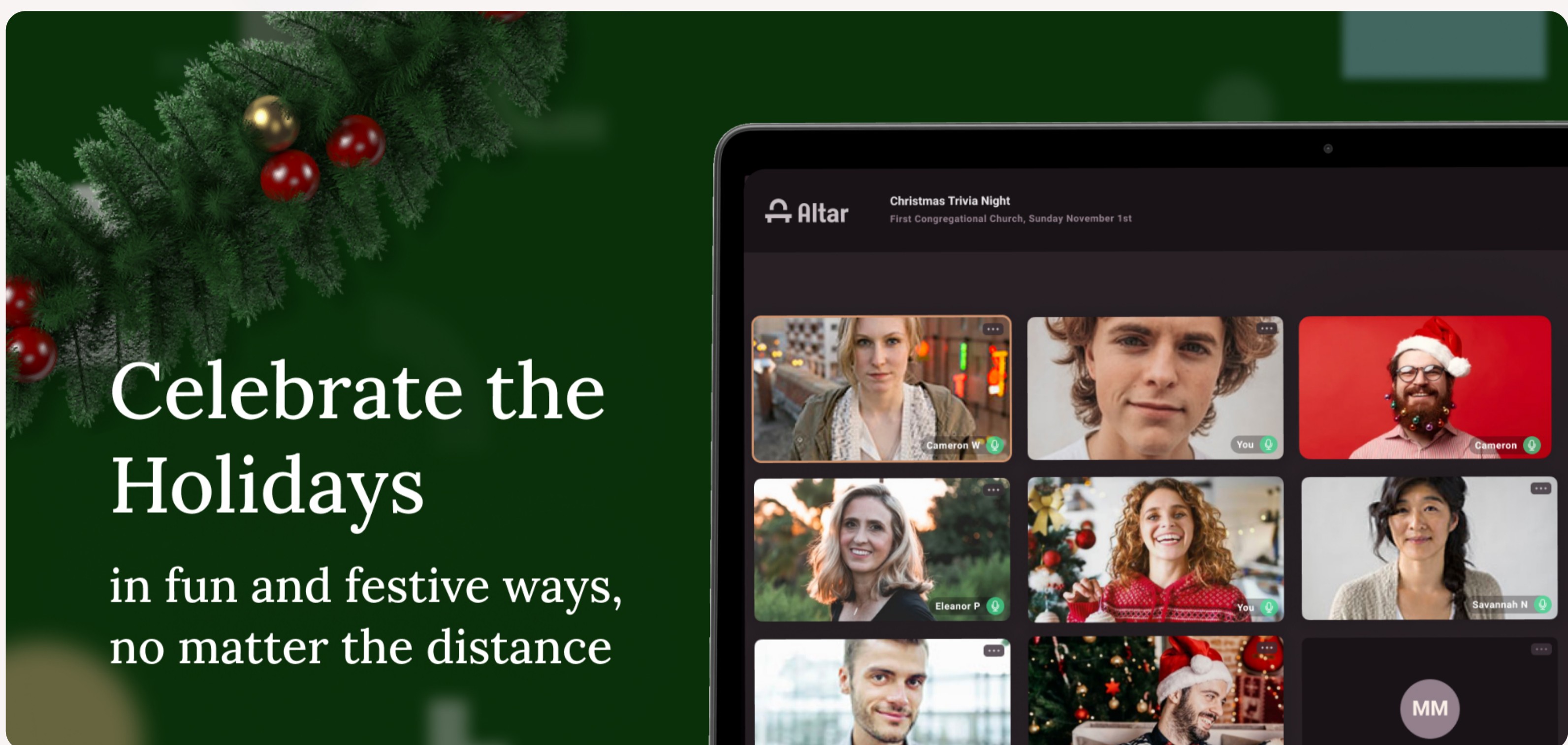
2. Flexible Ideas for Big Events or Small Groups

Secret Santa

Secret Santa doesn't always have to be about finding the perfect material gift! Have your community bless each other by building one another up with encouragement. Within each Row assign each person to someone to pray for or send a note of encouragement.

Christmas Party

Gather with your team, friends, and family in Rooms and celebrate the season. Rooms fit up to 500 people and have video and audio share for party music, videos, slideshows and more!



Christmas Trivia

Use Video & Audio share in Rooms to stump your attendees by playing Christmas music from your Spotify account or play short clips from classic Christmas movies for an awesome trivia night!

Christmas Decoration Contest

Within a meeting room, challenge each attendee to transform their space beforehand so when cameras are on, attendees are greeted with a winter wonderland, Santa's workshop, or a Christmas tree farm! Each attendee can take turns introducing and welcoming you into their special holiday space. (No virtual or store bought backgrounds allowed!)

Christmas Readers Theater

Pick a classic Christmas story and assign people sections to read or characters to play for an entertaining and interactive event. You can even adapt stories into a short script or write your own Christmas adventure!

Christmas Game Night

Whether it's 5 or 500 attendees, Christmas games never fail to bring on the holiday competition! Bring out the Christmas themed bingo or face off with other fun virtual party games!



3. Events for the Family

Hot Cocoa Social – For Kids & Adults!

Brew some cocoa, get in your favorite jammies and mingle from Table to Table for a time of cozy conversation. Prepare topics for each Table to get some lively conversation going! Close out the event with a devotional in the Event space or in a Room.

Christmas Card Making

Break out the scissors, glue, paper and glitter... it's time to get creative! Everyone appreciates receiving some holiday greetings, and there's no better time to share the joy of crafting than in community together. This fun activity is easy and accessible for anyone to do with whatever materials they may have at home!

Cookie Decorating

Gather with friends and family at Tables for a night of cookie-decorating fun! Send out recipes beforehand if needed but have everyone prepare their own cookies and frosting... share some holiday audio... and let the sweet fellowship time begin!

Christmas Story Hour

If you want a more interactive experience, try having a Christmas Story hour in Rooms! Perfect for families and the children-at-hearts. Pose discussion questions and save time for journaling and reflection.

Perfect Read Aloud Books:

- The Nativity Story- Luke 2:1-20
- A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
- The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry
- The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

Ways to Increase Engagement in Events: Tips for Hosts and Greeters

So, how can Hosts and Greeters maintain engagement, encourage participation, and get everyone into the Christmas spirit? Here is a helpful Host and Greeter guide for all your holiday festivities.

1. Make People Feel Welcome

In any service the welcome message is always a crucial part. It is the first thing people see when they log on to an Altar Live Event. The message is meant to make people feel comfortable, welcomed, and seen. As Hosts and Greeters, your goal is to make people feel like they are a part of the church community no matter where they are or how many times they have attended your church.

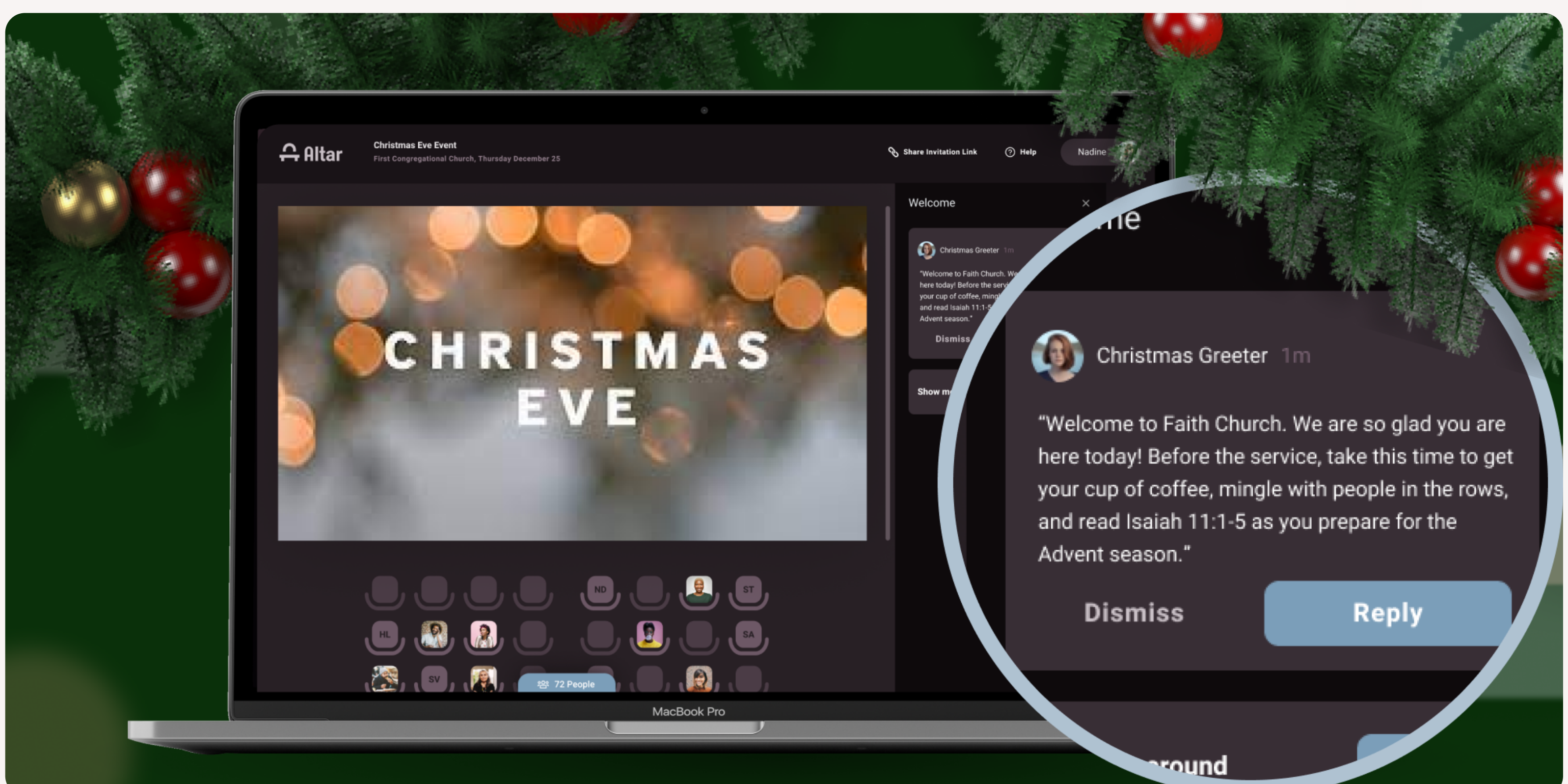
As the Christmas season approaches, this gives you an opportunity to welcome attendees with a message that will help them prepare their heart for the advent season or add a dash of holiday fun.

Welcome Message Example Text

“Welcome to Faith Church. We are so glad you are here today! Before the service, take this time to get your cup of coffee, mingle with people in the rows, and read Isaiah 11:1-5 as you prepare for the Advent season.”

“Hello Everyone! We are so thankful you have joined us today. While you’re waiting, take a seat, greet someone in your row, and send your Christmas movie recommendations in the chat! The service will begin soon.”

Happy Sunday, everyone! The countdown to Christmas has begun! Feel free to take a seat, grab your cup of coffee. If you are new or have any questions send us a question in the chat or ask our greeters.





2. Use Announcements

Using Announcement Templates (with Examples)

Have you set up your [Polls and Announcement Templates](#) yet?

Use announcements throughout the service to alert attendees of important messages.

Announcements can be more effective than the chat and there are few styles to choose from.

Announcements can be used to:

- Alert attendees about the service structure
- Ask for Christmas Donations
- Prepare them before [moving the whole Event to the Lobby](#)
- Remind people of upcoming events

Announcement Template Example Text

Text: *We will be raising money for St. Mary's Children's hospital this Christmas season. Please prayerfully consider giving to this cause. You can support financially here.*

Button: *Support St. Mary's This Christmas*

Link to: *Donation Page*

Title: *After Service Fellowship*

Text: *We will be moving to the tables in the virtual lobby after the sermon, so grab a cup of hot chocolate or coffee and hang around after the event has finished.*

Title: *Christmas Service Time*

Text: *Next week's online Christmas service will be combined and meet at 10:30 AM EST.*



3. Use Polls

Using Polls Templates (with Examples)

In the Event space, the use for Polls is endless. They are great for getting a consensus on certain decisions and a perfect way to get people to engage with each other. It may seem simple, but light, fun questions will encourage people to participate and connect with each other.

Polls can be used to:

- Engage the congregation in reflection on the Christmas message
- Create fun icebreakers to lift holiday spirits
- Prompt lighthearted conversation in Rows and Tables before and after the service

Poll Template Example Questions

- *What is your favorite Christmas Movie?*
- *What part of the Christmas story resonates with you the most? (Angels singing to the Shepherds, Mary treasuring everything in her heart, No room in at the Inn, etc.)*
- *Are you Team Animated or Jim Carrey Grinch?*
- *Favorite Christmas Song?*
- *Which do you prefer: Caroling or Ice Skating?*
- *Do you have the three wise men in your Nativity scene?*
- *Would you rather have: Christmas in Hawaii or Snowy Vermont?*

Feeling inspired?

We hope these ideas help more people see, know and feel the love of God through your church's unique and beautiful community—even when not in the building.

Get started today:

app.atlarlive.com

Merry Christmas!

The Altar Live Team