

Video and Audio options for services, sermons and homilies

Living streaming

This is an option for churches so that their people can watch an act of worship from their own church in their own homes on a digital device. There are a number of considerations that need to be borne in mind when considering this.

Advice about the best method can be found on C of E web site -

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/beginners-guide-going-live-your-service-or>

If you are planning to live streaming your service or event, **A Church Near You** can enable people to access it online.

Over the coming weeks, they will be promoting all live streamed events and services, so please do ensure you have added to A Church Near You all the live streamed events you are planning.

They have added the 'Live Stream' tag, which you can add to your relevant services and events, making it easier for the service to be found.

You can also add the link to the Live Stream.

When adding or editing an event:

- In the description of the service, give instructions on exactly how people can watch the live stream. Will this be via your Facebook page or YouTube channel?
- In the Tags section, add 'Live stream' by clicking 'Change Tags' and ticking the 'Live Stream' box in the list. This will be the first option to appear.

In the 'Optional details' box add the link to the live stream in the URL box. (The two most common platforms used are YouTube and Facebook.) The Live Stream provider will give instructions on how to generate the link.

We also recommend that you add a page about Live Streaming that explains how it works and how to access it, making it as accessible as possible for worshipers. If you're using YouTube to stream, you can add the URL link to your scheduled live video so that people can watch directly through ACNY.

Here are some thoughts about the technical and licencing issues.

Technical Capabilities

Technology can do a lot these days relatively simply but mixing, recording and streaming live content still requires a certain level of skill and equipment to make it happen successfully.

Some churches will already have an 'all singing and dancing' streaming system set up, along with paid production staff to operate this. However, if you are not in such a fortunate position, there are a few hurdles you need to consider how you will get over.

1. However good the music is on a Sunday, playing for a recording is a completely different kettle of fish than playing at the front of church. Most churches won't have musicians who are of a recording level. Perhaps this sounds harsh, but it is one thing leading a congregation on a Sunday, and another thing to translate this to a recording. You may say that this doesn't matter, but if the music quality is so ropey that it distracts rather than encourages, is it worthwhile?
2. The same is even more true for church sound engineers. Even if your sound team operates perfectly each week, do you have a sound engineer that knows how to create a good mix for a broadcast? This is an especially important question to ask if you are live streaming rather than recording for on demand as, depending on your set up, you are likely to be asking them to create a mix for the live room *and* for the recording at the same time. This is a very difficult task indeed.
3. Once you've considered whether or not you have the right expertise, you need to also consider whether or not you have the right equipment to achieve what will be most helpful for your congregation.
How will you *capture* the audio and video?
How will you *sync* the audio and video?
How will you go about *encoding* this data for your live stream?
How will you *host* the live stream on your website? Or will you use a third-party website e.g. YouTube or Facebook live?
These are questions you should know the answers to before you get started.

Copyright Issues

If you manage to come up with a solution to address the technical issues, then there is still a matter of copyright to consider to ensure that everything you are doing is legal and beyond reproach.

Generally speaking there are three things to consider how you will obtain permission for when it comes to music under copyright: the audio, the synchronisation rights, and the rights to display song words.

1. Audio

- A. Your current CCLI licenses will not cover any songs under copyright on your live stream or on demand recording. This means that if you are including copyrighted music in your recorded service, you will need to gain additional licences.
<https://uk.ccli.com/ccli-news/recording-streaming-and-podcasting-your-services/>
- B. CCLI will direct you to PRS for Music. You will need to contact PRS for Music yourself so that they can assess your situation and make the correct recommendations. (020 3741 3888 or applications@prsformusic.com)
- C. PRS for Music are likely to suggest you need a Limited Online Music License (LOML) if you are streaming directly to your own website.
- D. However, an LOML doesn't cover streaming to a third-party website (such as Facebook Live or YouTube) and so if you plan to host your live stream in this way, you would need to contact the third party directly to check their terms and conditions.
<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-music-online/limited-online-music-licence>
- E. As an alternative to obtaining an LOML or if you are hosting on a third-party platform, some churches have had success in contacting the publisher of each song used directly to obtain the relevant permissions.

1. Synchronisation Rights

- A. Strictly speaking, the LOML licence is an 'audio only' licence and doesn't cover synchronisation rights (i.e. streaming visuals alongside audio).
- B. To stream any images alongside audio brings in the Synchronisation right. Rights holders and publishers have the right to decide what images are shown whilst their music is played or performed. This most obviously applies in advertising, television and film.
- C. Rights holders and publishers have chosen to retain their Synchronisation rights and so none of the major licensing organisations can provide a blanket licence to cover either individuals or organisations for online synchronisation of audio and video.
- D. Some ambiguity then comes into play. For low-level, non-commercial use, it is believed that some publishers are not concerned enough to require synchronisation permissions to be sought, probably due to it not being cost effective. Further, there may be some question about whether a Synchronisation right applies at all in the case of a live audio stream. Seemingly some publishers say 'yes' and others 'no'. The difficulty for those wishing to live-stream their Sunday morning services is knowing which publishers and rights holders will require permission and which others might waive the requirement.

2. The Rights to Display Song words / Lyrics

- A. Displaying lyrics on your stream or video recording for people to follow at home is not covered by your CCLI licence. You will need to obtain additional permissions from publishers in order to do this.

- B. The simplest solution to this may be to avoid putting song words on your stream altogether. You could always inform people of the songs beforehand so that they can get hold of the words themselves if they wish to sing along at home.

Suggestions / solutions

- One solution that addresses a lot of the issues we have discussed is to not stream /record music at all. Rather than including songs in the stream, why not put together a playlist of songs that you would have chosen for your gathering and share this with your congregation? This can then be accessed legally through a platform like Spotify, YouTube or Apple Music. Your service can still include prayers, bible readings, notices and of course, the sermon.
- If you want to include music, but are struggling with copyright issues, you could choose to use only songs that are in the public domain (i.e. songs written more than 70 years ago).
- If you are going to include music and have got around the copyright issues, I would suggest simplifying the musical arrangements, at least by using a smaller band, and choose to use the most skilled musicians you have available. Remember that you need to specifically seek permission of each musician playing before they are recorded for a live stream or on demand recording – you may wish to get this in writing.
- It is harder and more pressurised to do a live stream rather than pre-recording something to release on a Sunday. Therefore, if your church gathering is cancelled, why not consider recording something in advance? This would give you the flexibility to get the set up just right for the recording without having to consider a live mix for a congregation in the room.
- If you are sticking with live streaming a service, the simplest solution (technically speaking) is to film directly using a smart phone. The audio is likely to sound less clear and could end up as a bit of a cacophony with a full band, but if it's a simple music setup, this could lead to reasonable results that could serve your church. This won't lead to a high-quality stream like we see from large churches in the US but could be useful in the short term. This website has some useful practical tips to help with this option.
<https://www.alexrobinsonds.com/livestream>

If you have the technical capabilities within your team, a way of doing this that would give significantly better results would be to create a completely separate mix for broadcast.

Finally, if this all feels too much for you to tackle, or you know you won't be able to get something up and running quickly, live streaming your own service is not the only way to

serve your church family. There are many other resources out there that you can utilise to support your church family in the meantime.

- Pool resources with other churches in your network – are there churches with more expertise in this area that you can partner with to serve your congregations together?
- Find something that is already established online that you can point your church congregation to that will serve them whilst you can't meet together in person.

So, 'can't we just stick the service online?' Well yes, once you've considered how you will do it practically and legally. But there is a world of fantastic resources already out there so if they would serve your church congregation better than a live stream that you would struggle to pull together, then don't sweat it.

Audio transmission

Recording your services

Audio recording a church meeting, including weddings, carol services or big celebrations, is a great way of capturing a meeting for those not able to attend, or for archive. However, a number of permissions are required before you make an audio recording of a worship service, wedding or funeral.

Your church will hopefully hold a Church Copyright Licence (CCL), usually obtained for the projection or printing out of hymns and worship song words. However, in the UK the CCL also includes a Mechanical-Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) right which permits churches to record live music during their services.

Contributors

It's always good practice to ask all the musicians, singers, readers, speakers etc. for their consent before recording their 'performance', especially if you intend to make copies for sale or free distribution.

Podcasting

The word podcast typically describes a serialized or edited recording made available to download and is protected in the same way as any other copyrighted work made available on the internet. Recording sermons and making them available for download would be regarded as a podcast.

A podcast which includes no third-party copyright material would not require a licence. You do still need to ask permission from all contributors before you record, broadcast or distribute their performance. See for details on how to <https://blogging.com/podcasting/>

MP3

These can be recorded via a smart phone and uploaded to a computer then uploaded to your own church website or facebook page (see <https://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Upload-MP3-to-Facebook/>)

Thanks to modern technology, there are many ways we can encourage one another without meeting together (physically or virtually), and so whatever it is that will serve your church family.

This has been put together using a range of sources including Matt Denis' blog