

Paraphrasing from a webinar: Online is not the backdoor to worship anymore. It is the front door for many newcomers, and the side door for the faithful (those homebound, and those away from home). This pandemic forced us into online worship that many of us were not prepared for or enthusiastic about but, having made it over the initial hurdle we now find ourselves equipped with new tools for spreading the Word. Let's make the best use of these tools that we are able.

I have found some resources for instruction, for equipment, for software, for platforms. This is by no means a comprehensive list, and not meant to endorse any particular products or services. I am hoping to put together a webinar where we can discuss what we're doing, ask questions, and share information. Stay tuned for news of that in the next weeks. In the meanwhile...

A recent article in the Living Church about next steps to consider:

<https://livingchurch.org/covenant/2020/06/02/five-suggestions-for-reopening-your-church/> (Step 5 is the personal opinion of the author, your mileage may vary)

Suggestions for what equipment and software you might need for starting to film or livestream your services:

- <https://openblog.life.church/getting-started-with-church-online-equipment/> They helpfully break it down by budget; low, medium, high-end.
- This also has some really good guidance, and suggestions for equipment. <https://restream.io/blog/how-to-begin-streaming-live-church-services/>
- <https://www.Mevo.com> Mevo camera set-ups are designed for livestreaming and have received good reviews.
- If you are thinking about a multi camera set up and multiple audio sources, you will need software to manage all that. <https://www.switcherstudio.com/> is one option.

Still wondering about livestreaming?

- This is a basic guide to livestreaming to Facebook. Easy to understand, easy to get started, if you are still at the dipping-your-toe-in stage. <https://youtu.be/nhnR0hahkD0>
- A more comprehensive guide for streaming to Facebook. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/11MvzMHIRneZSRLblyIsS7pZvTisao8tTY1fab8fn1uM/edit>
- <http://hackingchristianity.net/2020/03/covid-19-lockdown-creating-live-streamed-worship-in-3-days.html> This is an interesting account of how one parish got themselves online.

What other tools can I use for videos or livestreams?

- We have been using [www.Vimeo.com](http://www.Vimeo.com) to host our videos and push them out to social media.
- <https://streamyard.com/> Is another platform for livestreaming and pushing to social media.

Additional considerations:

Copyright. Please be certain that you have the legal rights to broadcast/stream/use your materials. This includes music (yes, even music from the Hymnal), books, and Sunday School materials. Streaming rights are not necessarily included with reproduction rights, so do not assume that because you can print it in the bulletin, you can put it on YouTube.

Guidelines from Church Publishing are here <https://www.churchpublishing.org/contentassets/34d354ada2e7471facebbacbdba51603/covid-19-permission-guidelines.pdf>

A primer on copyright and fair use is here <https://fairuse.stanford.edu/overview/fair-use/>

When in doubt, leave it out.

Internet signal. Do you have the bandwidth or signal strength that you need, or will need? We've all been figuring out that what's worked fine in the office may be lousy in the chancel. Rambling buildings and stone walls are not helping the signal from your router.

Who is doing this? You should expand the number of people involved in your online ministry. Who can run the camera? Who can be the Zoom usher? Who is editing the recordings, who is producing the feeds?

Additional impact. Consider pinning a clip of the sermon to your website and/or Facebook page. On a Saturday, someone may not be up to watching an entire service, but they may want to check out the sermon to get a taste of what to expect from you. Make it easy for the curious.

Welcome. How do you reach out to your digital audience to include them into your community? Are you inviting them to leave comments in the chat? Are you letting them know about your Zoom coffee hour?