
Moving Church Online – A Resource

Ongoing social gathering restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic very quickly impacted the ability of churches to hold services in person. While the BC government has ordered that no gatherings larger than 50 people are allowed, they have strongly requested that there not be ANY gatherings of people who do not live in the same household. This includes teams gathering at local churches to produce live streams or to create videos to compile and present later. Your district leadership team is strongly advising the you DO NOT gather in your sanctuaries, even in small groups, to produce these videos. This honours the strong request from Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer.

No matter the particulars of our provincial regulations, our CPD team firmly believe that churches should be modeling appropriate public health behaviour right now. If our churches take these restrictions seriously and demonstrate to others why they are important, then they are offering a public service to their communities. Again, this implies that you do not go to your church and live stream or produce videos from the church building during this time.

The situation keeps changing and we must quickly adapt and change our methods this new normal. We want to encourage you to be innovative and creative as you answer the questions of how to offer your congregation opportunity to engage with worship expressions and pastoral teaching, and when presenting opportunities for your church community to connect in this new reality. There has been a large amount of information released to help churches navigate a move to online services and we are hearing many stories of innovation and creativity.

The following resource articulates how to offer worship services **created entirely at home** and streamed smoothly on Sunday mornings (or your usual worship time) to keep your congregation in the habit of regular worship until they are able to meet again.

Please feel free to contact Dwayne Toews at the District Office at 604-372-1922 or dwaynet@pacificdistrict.ca if there is any assistance that he can be for you as you navigate these products and/or solutions. He would be happy to try and walk you through things or connect you to someone who can.

Worship from Home options

Worship services from various homes can be either live streamed to social media platforms or pre-recorded and premiered “live” to social media platforms.

Live streaming can involve one person on Zoom, Facebook, or a similar platform connecting with the worship leaders who offer spoken word, music, or other worship elements from their smartphones or devices in their homes. The platform host chooses who is on the live stream at what time (a song leader transitions to a service host, transitions to a lead pastor, etc.).

Pre-recording involves each participant in the worship service recording their content at home and sending the video file to someone who edits the various files together into one big movie file (this person will need some basic video editing skills). The person compiling uses YouTube and Facebook’s (or a similar platform) features to have a pre-recorded video file be released at a specific time, with “live” features built in.

Please be sure to purchase a streaming license from [CCLI](#) and properly display all copyright information when streaming or sharing pre-recorded worship.

Live Streaming Options

Live Stream Worship Directly to Facebook Live

For some churches, a very simple solution is required. One can simply place their smartphone in front of them, start Facebook Live, and present their service. A few weeks ago, I watched a CPD service where the pastor did this very thing. He started the live feed, led the singing, and preached the sermon to the smartphone. It was simple, authentic, and very effective. Absolutely nothing beyond the phone and good Wi-Fi was required.

Live Stream Worship Over Zoom to Facebook Live

It is surprisingly easy to have all the worship leaders do their parts from their own homes due to videoconferencing software like Zoom, which allows multiple people to video chat but only be “on screen” one at a time.

Zoom to Facebook Live

An option for Zoom PRO users, this is a great option to stream from home. They can use the “Spotlight Participant” feature to show different participants at different times of the service: the service host, the worship leader, the preacher, the worship leader again, etc.

People may appreciate the live quality and will likely forgive any live errors, just as they would on a typical Sunday. After testing out the setup and making sure the feeds are working, it can easily reach the people through Facebook Live.

For some communities, live Zoom worship may be the best option because it is technically easy to do, even if the quality is variable, with the benefit that getting to see familiar people lead in familiar ways is a comfort in times of change and upheaval. I hope churches choose this setup rather than no worship at all, but there is a better way.

Pre-Recorded Options

Pre-recorded Worship Premiered “Live!”

Another option is to have the worship elements pre-recorded in participant’s homes and then compiled together into a single video file (or a series of video files) that is released “live.”

Each week, the various participants will record their content then send the file(s) to the person to compile. The earlier this person has the files, the better.

Finally, sometime that week, the person compiling the video files takes all the submitted files, mixes the audio, and puts them together into one video file (or a series of files on a playlist) ready to upload or stream.

Streaming Pre-recorded Content “Live” on YouTube and Facebook

In speaking with many pastors, they indicated that they really wanted to do “live” services so that people are interacting on social media during the service and they feel connected to each other. It turns out that both major streaming services allow you to use pre-recorded content and “premiere” it at a specific time. That allows you to give the “live” feel but have everything done early and can be fully present on Sunday.

This website describes Facebook's Premiere and Watch Party process and features:

- [Facebook streaming: LIVE, Premiere, Watch Party. What's the difference?](#)

YouTube has a similar process:

- [How to "premiere" a new video on YouTube](#)

Supplies & Setups

Below is a list of supplies and setup you need whether you are a preacher, service host, music leader, or the person doing the compiling.

Pastors and other participants in the service (sermons, prayers, scripture readings, announcements) will need:

- Smartphones or good digital video cameras (DSLR preferably) to capture video.
- Headphones with microphones, or microphones that connect to a smartphone. If possible, try not to use the built-in microphones on the devices as the background noise can be disruptive. Many headphones (wired and wireless) have built in microphones which may be sufficient.
- A place with a window behind the camera for best natural lighting.
- Content to read or recite.

Church musicians offering instrumental or vocal leadership will need:

- Equipment to record or live stream the sound. This could be as simple as a smartphone or DSLR camera to more complex options utilizing audio/video editing software. One such recording option could be www.reaper.fm.
- If you are wanting to effectively capture instruments and vocals into computer software, you will require a midi interface. Here are some options that work well:
 - Focusrite SCARLETT-2I2-3RD-GEN 2x2 USB 2.0 Audio Interface
 - Behringer UMC202HD U-Phoria USB Audio Interface
 - Focusrite Scarlett 18i8 (2nd Gen) USB Audio Interface with Pro Tools
 - Behringer UMC404HD U-Phoria USB Audio/MIDI Interface
- Cloud storage or smartphone to send the files to the person compiling the video.

Video editor putting it all together will need:

- If live streaming: a Zoom Pro or higher account that is controlling the live stream feed.
- If pre-recording: a movie editing program (iOS and Mac devices have iMovie for free) to splice together the film clips. A free desktop application that works well is called DaVinci Resolve. You can source this at www.blackmagicdesign.com/ca/products/davinciresolve/. A great, inexpensive app for iPad is LumaFusion.
- A free audio editing program that can edit and equalize the audio. Again, www.reaper.fm would also be a good solution but there are many others such as Logic Pro X.
- Church account access on YouTube and Facebook.

Additional Resources

- [Church Online Platform](#) – free online platform for churches from Life.Church
- [Facebook Live for Churches \(from the C&MA\)](#)
- [How to Capture Sunday Services Online](#)
- [Online Church is Different](#) – blog from Daren Wride, CPD Transitional Pastor
- [ProPresenter free trial](#)
- [Vidflex Faith Offer](#) – 3 months of free video hosting/streaming services that integrate with online giving