



Live Streaming



Equipment for Live Streaming

You don't need lots of expensive equipment to start live-streaming. A simple setup is often all that's required.

Getting Started

SMARTPHONE OR TABLET

Most modern devices have cameras that are more than capable of streaming services and events. An iPhone, Samsung Galaxy, Google Pixel or similar device is usually sufficient.

TRIPOD OR STABLE STAND

Helps keep the camera steady and provides a better viewing experience.

GOOD SOUND

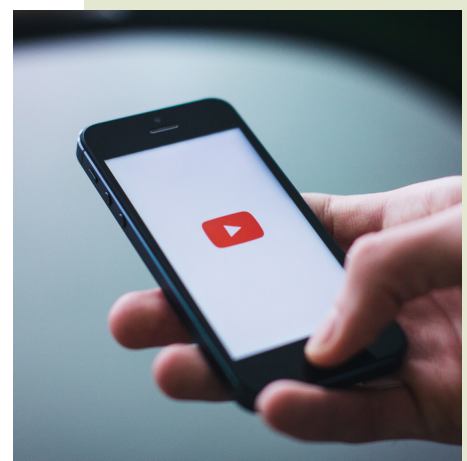
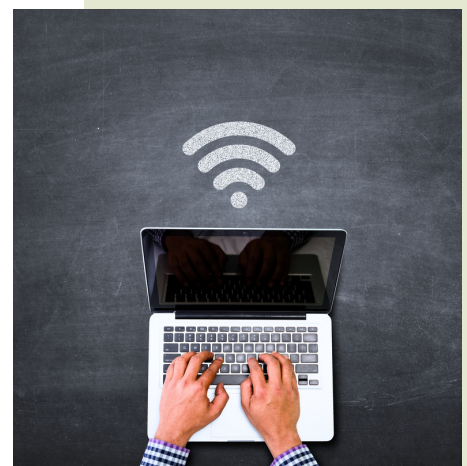
Clear audio is often more important than video quality. You may be able to use your church's existing sound system, or add a simple clip-on (lapel) microphone.

RELIABLE INTERNET CONNECTION

A stable Wi-Fi connection will help ensure your stream runs smoothly. If your church does not have Wi-Fi, a smartphone's mobile data connection may be enough.

FREE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT

Platforms such as Facebook Live and YouTube allow churches to broadcast services at no cost.



Taking Things Further

As your confidence grows, you may wish to enhance your live-streams with additional equipment.

Cameras

Dedicated cameras can provide improved picture quality and greater flexibility.

DSLR and mirrorless cameras offer excellent image quality and are popular for churches wishing to upgrade from a smartphone.

PTZ (Pan-Tilt-Zoom) cameras can be mounted discreetly on a balcony, wall or pillar and operated remotely. They allow you to zoom in on the altar, lectern or pulpit without moving the camera.

Multi-camera setups can provide different views of the service and create a more engaging experience for online viewers.

Microphones

Clear audio is one of the most important parts of a successful live stream.

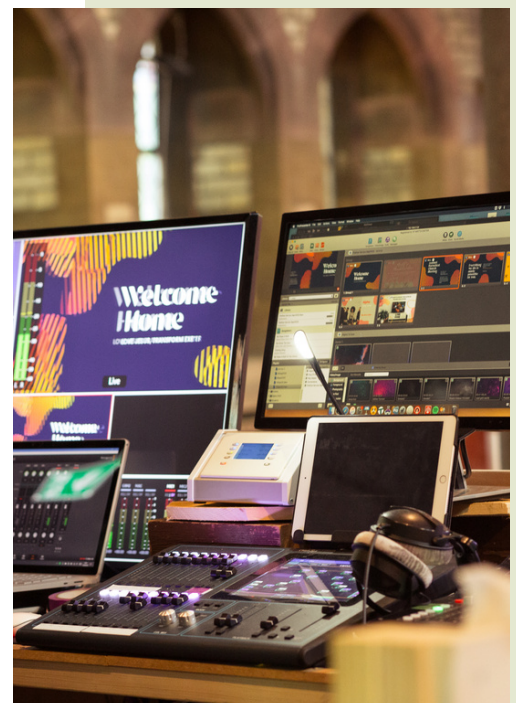
Wireless clip-on microphones are ideal for vicars and speakers. They provide clear sound while allowing freedom of movement. Popular options include:

- RØDE Wireless GO II
- DJI Mic 2

Shotgun microphones are another simple option. These can be mounted on a camera or tripod and pointed towards the front of the church to capture speech clearly without needing individual microphones.

Connecting to Your Sound System

Many churches are able to connect their live-stream directly to the existing audio system. This often provides the best sound quality for online viewers, particularly during readings, sermons and musical performances.



Streaming Software

If you would like to add hymn lyrics, service information, multiple camera angles or pre-recorded videos, streaming software can help. Popular beginner-friendly options include:

OBS Studio

Free and highly flexible. It allows you to create different viewing layouts and switch between cameras.

Streamlabs Desktop

Free and easy to use, with a more visual interface and ready-made templates.

Building a Team

As your live-streaming develops, it can be helpful to recruit a small team of volunteers to:

Operate camera

Respond to technical issues during broadcast

Monitor sound quality

Manage slides and service information

Remember, additional equipment can improve the viewing experience, but it is not essential. Start with what you have and build gradually as your needs develop.

CAMERA POSITIONING TIPS

A few simple adjustments can make a significant difference to the quality of your live stream.

Avoid the centre aisle

People walking past can block the view and cables may become a trip hazard.

Position Cameras Slightly Higher

Balconies, pillars or wall-mounted positions can provide a clearer view of the altar and congregation.

Keep cables secure

Use gaffer tape or cable covers to prevent trips and falls

Think about what the camera can see

Avoid!

Lighting Tips

Church buildings can present unique lighting challenges, particularly older buildings with stained-glass windows and limited artificial lighting.

Light the speaker from the front where possible

A well-lit face is easier to see on camera

Avoid strong backlighting

Bright windows behind the speaker can make them appear dark on screen

Test your setup beforehand

Lighting conditions can vary throughout the day

Check image quality in poor weather

A cloudy afternoon may produce very different results from a sunny morning

Privacy & Permissions

When live-streaming a service, it is important to respect people's privacy and comply with UK data protection requirements. [Click here](#) for advice from the Diocese of Exeter's Safeguarding Team.

Create a Camera-Free Area

Consider setting aside a designated seating area for anyone who does not wish to appear on camera.

- Clearly identify the area
- Ensure it remains outside the camera's field of view
- Consider this carefully for vulnerable individuals and visitors

Display Clear Signage

Inform people that filming or live-streaming is taking place. Signs should:

- Be displayed at church entrances
- Be visible inside the building
- Explain where camera-free seating is available
- You may also wish to include a reminder in the service sheets, newsletter and notices

Obtain Appropriate Consent

- People with prominent roles in the service should understand that they are being broadcast
- Particular care should be taken when children and young people may appear on camera
- Obtain appropriate parental or guardian consent where necessary
- If consent has not been obtained, consider positioning camera so children are not visible
- Always follow your church's safeguarding policies and diocesan guidance

Music Copyright and Licensing

Before live-streaming services that include hymns or recorded music, check that you have the appropriate licences in place.

- A licence may be required to stream copyrighted music online.
- Common options include a CCLI Streaming Licence and other relevant music licences.
- Without the correct permissions, social media platforms may mute parts of your stream or remove recordings.

Top Tip

Don't wait until everything is perfect before you start. A simple, reliable live stream with clear sound and a welcoming atmosphere will usually serve your congregation far better than a complex setup that feels difficult to manage.

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