

Christian Church in the Southwest Remote Worship Recommendations

March 2020

With recent concerns about Corona Virus and general concerns about how to help people connect with us in worship when they can't be physically present in our sanctuaries, the CCSW staff has prepared this compilation of advice. First, this is not an endorsement of live-streaming or remote worship generally. That's a conversation worth having but on another day. Second, we're not claiming to be experts here. We just want to share what we've gleaned from others and our own trial and error. Third, while we mention several commercial products, WE ARE NOT MAKING ANY OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENTS.

Terminology

Live-streaming—broadcasting your live worship service through the internet. Generally, live streaming doesn't provide much interactive quality.

Teleconference—teleconference or video conference is an internet video call where participants can see one another and hear one another.

Platform—Platform refers to the vendor you use to either live-stream or teleconference.

Don't Be Afraid to Talk About Money

Contributing financially is the most common way for people to participate in the work God is doing through a congregation. For many members, making their offering is an essential act of worship—it is one of the ways they light their own candle of grace. Ensuring that people have a way to contribute financially when they worship remotely is worship leadership. We'd strongly encourage you to look at ways for people to give online or some other electronic means. While CCSW makes no endorsements in this matter, we have heard good things about [Givelify](#). We cannot use it for donations to the region because it doesn't work with the accounting system used by Treasury Services. However, it works well for several congregations.

How do they know?

Whatever pathway you choose, you need to make people aware of how you are offering them opportunities to worship. Navigating a conference call, social media, or feed source is not intuitive to anyone. It's learned for everyone. And the members who most need to worship remotely often need the greatest assistance in accessing this. We encourage you to take the time to talk with people.

Our (CCSW's) #1 Recommendation

Our #1 recommendation would be to offer an entirely different worship and fellowship experience for your distance people. Use a teleconference platform like Zoom, Google Hangouts, or Free ConferenceCall.com. Have the worship leader lead from a web-cam without trying to simultaneously lead a live worship experience. Teleconference can give people a chance to communicate with one another, share joys, concerns, and experiences. Here are some things we've learned through experimentation.

1. Be aware of latency. If you say something expecting a response, you have to give people time to respond.
2. Congregational singing and Unison prayers do not sync in a teleconference. Have one person unmuted lead the unison prayer or song and let everyone follow-along with their microphones muted.
3. With Zoom (our preferred teleconference platform) you can “Share” and use PowerPoint to show the words of prayers, scripture readings, etc. Also with “Share” you have the option to “Share Computer Sound” which will allow the music you might be playing on the computer to be heard by everyone in the call. So, you can offer meditative music while offering times of silence.
4. Leader-Response Prayer and Responsive Readings work best if the unmuted worship leader reads the “One” part. And only one unmuted respondent leads the response—the “Many” part. Everyone speaking into their microphone simultaneously creates noise.
5. Here is a [Zoom Worship Experience/Experiment Video](#)

Call To Worship	
One:	In different spaces, we worship the same God.
Many:	Let us worship the Lord together.
One:	Scattered by circumstances beyond our control, we are drawn together by our common faith.
Many:	Let us worship the Lord together.
One:	Pushed apart by the realities of life, we are one body by God’s Spirit.
Many:	Let us worship the Lord together.



Here’s a link to a document we produced a while back about [using Teleconference in Church meetings.](#)

#2 Recommendation

Whatever you do, have an informal practice session. None of this stuff is intuitive.

Live-Streaming: Capturing the Live Worship

From a Friend:

My biggest piece of advice is to just start doing it. There are a thousand not to - mostly around complicated feelings and insecurities of the preacher, and not having great AV equipment. We don’t have great AV equipment, but we do the best we can, and folks who watch at home when they’re sick or out of town are glad for the ability to connect! Just tear off the band-aid and start!

If you choose to live-stream, you have several concerns to work through. First, is how you're going to capture the video-audio within your space. The easiest thing to do is to use a cell phone or iPad and go directly from it to Facebook live. Here are some additional thoughts.

1. People will tolerate poor video quality longer than they will tolerate poor audio quality. Getting the sound feed from your soundboard into the live-streaming device, will greatly enhance the quality of your livestream and may be as simple as getting an adapter to go from the headphone out to the input on your phone. A few companies like Rode Microphones make boom mics that will attach to your tablet or cell phone that will also improve your audio quality.
2. Through a grant the region was able to purchase a Sling Studio. And while we don't want to be in the business of making product endorsements, we can say that this was a very wise investment. Sling Studio is easy to use. And it works well with YouTube Live and FaceBook Live. The studio itself costs around \$1000. It's not cheap. You'll also need an iPad to control it. The console only works on iPad (we think). We use iPhones as the input cameras. You can connect almost any iPhone to the sling studio and the newer Androids by downloading the Capture app. They are quicker, simpler, battery-life works better, the picture quality is better. We used old iPhones not serving as phones anymore: cracked screens, outdated. We had some stands, portable battery packs. These worked really well.
3. There's a good YouTube video describing how to use [Atem Mini](#)
4. Several people online spoke highly of using Mevo. See [mevo.com](#) Mevo can be purchased at Best Buy.
5. Several others use a simple web-cam or a more powerful camcorder or DSLR camera with HDMI-through capacity and pull it into their computer and then use OBS (a free downloadable software interface) to go from their computer to YouTube Live.

We put out a request on Facebook for Wisdom: Here's what one person wrote:

We have been livestreaming a service on Facebook for about 2.5 years. We use a medium price video camera and we don't use the built in mic. We pull the sound feed from the soundboard so we get a mix that is similar to the sound in the room. We do training for the volunteer camera people. We have more people who watch online than we do who show up in person.

Another FB Friend (and real life friend for that matter) wrote:

*Good question! Facebook Live is simpler to get up & running, and to do well, than YouTube. Mic *everything* and every voice for broadcast purposes. Something can sound fine in the room & be heard across congregation but not pick up on broadcast. Pay attention to camera angles. Turn on all the lights and test different camera placements before Sunday. Try *not* to use a phone, but a larger screen like an iPad, so you can see more detail of what you're broadcasting. Buying a stand for iPad is really helpful -- or at least rigging up a stable spot to place it, so no one is responsible for holding a device for an hour.*

Live-Streaming and Platform

There are a number of options you have to get your worship experience from your worship space out to the internet. In this regard, **CCSW Makes NO Endorsments of Products OR Companies.** We feel comfortable telling you what we've used and what others have

used. However, we have not thoroughly vetted the ethical practices of the companies and really do not want to be in a space of demonstrating favoritism.

What we've tried:

Facebook Live—You “go live” through Facebook in one of two Ways that we know of.

(1) You simply start a post and select “Go Live.”

(2) You set up a Facebook Live Event. The technical requirements of a Facebook Live event defeated us. You're probably smart enough to figure it out. However, our best advice is to tell people what page you're going to go live from and when and then just go from there.

YouTube Live—We use YouTube Live for our CCSW Learn Broadcasts. It requires some additional technical parts that we are not equipped to explain. SlingStudio does it somewhat automatically for us.

Church Online is a vendor that at least one of our congregation's is using. It is free and helpful and designed for this kind of work. <https://churconlineplatform.com/>

Can you use a Teleconference platform for Live-Streaming Purposes? Yes, you can if you want to.

Live-Streaming and Privacy and Copyright

1. You need to think about how prayer concerns are shared in worship. If people share intimate details about sickness, grief, hospitalizations, etc. You may not want that going out over a live-stream. Obviously, if you are connecting with your remote worshipers through a teleconference platform and you know everyone on the call, you don't have to worry about that.
2. Video images of children. Parents have every right to protect the images of their children and what happens to them—adults do to for that matter. Additionally, if you have children in worship who are in foster care, you **must** be very careful that their images are not shared on social media platforms.
3. You should consult legal advice about whether live-streaming a choir anthem or other copyrighted material is legal. Many churches who do some sort of live-streaming of their worship live stream only the sermon or other parts of the worship that are not touched by copyright.

A Facebook Friend Wrote:

Just be sure your licenses with OneLicense and/or CCLI cover streaming services. Not only is it bad form for churches to steal, but the musicians in your congregation will feel like you have their backs.