

‘Live Streaming’ and online publication of worship and other events

Introduction

This guidance note covers digital and online audio-visual publications by congregations relating to worship services (including live streaming, pre-recorded film and pre-recorded audio) and the photography and filming of church events, including education and outreach events. It has been issued following consultation with the Safeguarding Service and CARTA (the Committee on Church Art and Architecture).

A case study from Dalziel St. Andrew’s Parish Church, Motherwell is appended. It has some very useful information on the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of live streaming.

Live streaming and pre-recorded film

Church of Scotland congregations are increasingly using ‘live streaming’ via the internet to broadcast worship services. This is an excellent way to reach out to those who are unable to be present physically and also allows individuals to ‘attend’ the service as it happens. This form of communication is not new; the General Assembly is streamed live each year.

Alternatively, congregations may prefer to upload a film of a pre-recorded service to the internet to allow access to the service at a time convenient to the viewing individual.

Either way, there are important considerations to bear in mind both before and during the broadcast if your congregation is keen to proceed in this way.

Considering the implications fully

It is recommended that, in advance of any broadcast, the matter is considered fully by all relevant committees:

- The Kirk Session, as the responsible authority for matters spiritual.
- The Kirk Session or Congregational Board, if applicable, should be considering the financial aspects of the proposals.
- The Safeguarding Panel should also be involved given the potential child protection or adult protection implications (covered further below under ‘Possible Issues’).

Sourcing the equipment

Many congregations will already have suitable equipment that is currently being used to project images onto a screen in church during a service. A computer/internet connection could then be linked to the camera and used to record/transmit the service. However, if the technology is being acquired for the first time it is important that it is fit for purpose. CARTA can provide independent advice on AV installations (including equipment for live streaming) if you provide them with details of what you are trying to achieve. Visiting congregations

that are already live streaming can assist greatly in determining what exactly you want to do and how you might do it.

Also, bear in mind the importance of obtaining several price quotations, if possible, in order to fulfil your duties as charity trustees (see the Law Department's guidance notes on charity trusteeship and anti-bribery, available on the "Law Circulars" section of the website).

Frequency of transmission

Consideration should be given to the number and frequency of services to be streamed. This will impact on the information to be communicated to the congregation (see below 'Informing the Congregation'), as the congregation must be fully informed before any live streaming or filming takes place. You will also need to consider how long the service is to be made available online. If services are to be available indefinitely, you should ensure that the congregation is aware of this.

Informing the congregation

By streaming images online you are transferring to third parties sensitive or special category personal data (i.e. the images) of the people who are attending church and caught on camera.

Information should therefore be available to the congregation in advance of the proposed filming, for example, the dates, times and locations of filming. This will enable those attending to opt out if they wish and for consent forms to be completed by the parents/guardians/carers of the children, adults at risk and others attending the service who will be included in the footage.

If it has been decided that the filming/streaming is to happen e.g. once a month, those who do not wish to be/should not be filmed could decide not to attend that week or go to a different service or congregation.

Whilst it would be best practice to obtain specific written consent of those who will be in view of the cameras, this may be impossible to achieve in practical terms, particularly if filming/streaming is to occur each week. It is suggested that you follow the recommendations below to ensure that those attending are fully informed:-

- A note should be included in the service intimation sheet informing the congregation that the cameras are in place and why they are there. The note should specifically describe the area/pews that will be in view of the camera. If all worship services are to be streamed, this should be a standing item on the intimation sheet.
- At the start of each service that is being filmed/streamed the Minister should not only welcome the congregation present in the building but also those tuned

in/watching later online. This will further serve to inform and highlight that the cameras are there and transmitting images.

- Visible notices should be placed on the way into the church and in the areas the camera lens will focus, confirming the locations that will be within reach of the camera lens. This will allow those who do not wish to be 'caught' on camera to select their seats appropriately.
- Unless prior consent has been obtained, the camera must avoid children/adults at risk and therefore be angled away should there be any involvement of children/adults at risk during the service. See further at 'possible issues'.
- If the designated area also happens to be the only area that you have designated a wheelchair area, consider creating more spaces to provide a variety of places for wheelchair users to sit. It is vital that some are created within areas not picked up by cameras. You should contact the General Trustees to discuss how permission can be obtained for shortening, alteration or removal of pews to accommodate this.

Setting/locating the cameras

When placing the cameras it is important that consideration is given to the location of the equipment together with the reach of the camera lens.

The camera should be placed to be as unobtrusive as possible to the attending congregation. Unless the written consent of every member of the attending congregation has been obtained, or it is done in such a way that no individual is recognisable, the camera should not 'pan' over the whole or part of the attending congregation. Instead, it should be placed to take in only a set area covering the pulpit and any other clearly signposted areas.

Filming/live streaming should avoid personal, close-up images of children who are best shot in wide angle and in groups (but only if prior written consent of parents/guardians has been obtained). If it is not possible to obtain such prior written consent, the camera must avoid children/adults at risk and therefore be angled away should there be any involvement of children/adults at risk during the service

Consider also the Health and Safety aspects of installing the equipment. Camera wires should be appropriately secured to prevent them becoming a trip hazard and electrical equipment should be PAT tested frequently.

Consideration should also be given to the visual impact the equipment will have on the sanctuary. For example, if a camera is to be fixed to a grey stone pillar, consider purchasing a camera unit that has a grey finish on the casing. Where possible, attach cameras in positions and heights that do not fall within the sightlines of congregation members looking at the front of the church. Where equipment cannot be installed discreetly and if budget

allows, purchase smaller equipment that will minimise the visual impact and draw less attention. In all of this the right balance of budget, technical specifications and aesthetics will need to be considered.

Consider how wiring and cabling can be as invisible as possible. Can thin cable be placed within joints between bricks and grouted over? Is wireless an option? Can cables be made the same colour as the pillar, wooden panels or paintwork?

Copyright

Strictly speaking, permission will be required when copyright works are included in any recording/transmission. Whilst in most cases it is unlikely that a copyright holder would raise any objection to recording worship services, since people will more than likely be singing from books which have been purchased (and for which copyright is not a consideration since the price includes a copyright fee) or from copies made with permission, a Christian Copyright Licence should be in place to allow video recording of events.

Christian Copyright Licensing International was established in 1991 and provides licenses giving copyright clearance for a large number of publishers of hymns and worship songs. If you are looking to reproduce copyright material fairly frequently (e.g. if you are recording services on a weekly basis) it would certainly save time, if not money, to take out an annual Christian Copyright Licence. The Licence applies to all publishers on their list. It is, therefore, advisable to check the material you are reproducing before investing in a Licence. The CCLI has a website which gives further information, including a list of copyright holders. Please see www.ccli.co.uk for further information.

Note, however, that where the author of the words and the composer have been deceased for over 70 years and that information is in the public domain, there are no copyright implications. This would, for example, cover all the traditional psalms.

Finally, note that your organist should confirm that he/she is happy to waive any performing rights, and consider the position regarding any rights to an additional fee which may be contained in their contract of employment.

Photography/video

Good practice must be adhered to when photographing or videoing during church activities. Photography and video includes that recorded on mobile phones and devices.

By publically displaying images (e.g. notice board, local press or online) you are transferring sensitive or special category personal data (i.e. the images) of people caught on camera to third parties.

Information should therefore be available about proposed photographs or filming in advance; for example, the dates, times and locations that will be included. This will enable those attending to opt out if they wish and for consent forms to be completed by the parents/guardians/carers of the children, adults at risk and others to be included.

Neither names nor any personal information should be displayed alongside any photographs.

Mobile phones can be used to take photographs and videos which can be immediately uploaded onto the web or social networking sites without permission. Therefore, group leaders should discourage the use of mobile phones during church activities. Group leaders must also not post photographs or videos taken while carrying their professional role on their personal social media site etc.

Congregations may find it helpful to refer to the Safeguarding Service pages on the Church of Scotland website which include links to organisations providing guidance on safe use of mobile phones and the internet. The Safeguarding Service has also produced social media guidelines which can be found in Safeguarding Handbook 4.

During large events, provided that appropriate consent has been put in place in advance, arrangements can be made by the host to provide video or photographic stills of the participants in action. This would allow a performance to go ahead with limited interruption, and allow a child who is not to be photographed to take part.

An open “photo shoot” can be held at the end of a performance (sensitively distracting any children not to be photographed) to allow families to take their own private shots.

Responsibility for storage and destruction of photographic material should be lie with the Kirk Session.

The Law Department has produced a style contract for filming in churches to cover the situation where external film companies wish to use church premises for a production. This is available on the “Law Circulars” section of the website.

Possible issues that apply to all situations

The main safeguarding considerations centre around protecting the identity of children or adults at risk. This is where the deliberate or inadvertent disclosure of information by verbal or written means, or via photographs or live images, may put a person at risk of harm. Such circumstances, identified below, are rare but do happen. The risk can be reduced in the planning of live events and by ensuring that appropriate formal consents are in place.

In general, “adults at risk” means people who may be unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests; are at risk of harm; and because they are

affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable than adults who are not so affected.

CHILD OR ADULT PROTECTION

A child, adult at risk, or a survivor of domestic abuse may need to be protected from another person and information about their wellbeing, location and who they are living with may be highly sensitive. Children may be present who are subject to legal child protection measures and who are potentially fleeing violence or are being 'searched for' by others. Similar considerations may apply to children who are adopted or placed with families by local authority social work services; and to people and their children affected by domestic abuse who have separated from abusive partners.

ACTION: Get the formal consent of all children's parents/carers/guardians prior to broadcasting. If an adult at risk is not able to consent speak with the people who provide care or support for them. For all other adults, let all members of the congregation know in advance when and where live streaming will occur so that they can opt in or out; or sit in an area not covered by the broadcast.

CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER ATTENDING WORSHIP

This may put the offender at risk of harm if recognised. Sex offenders worshipping within congregations are supported with Covenants of Responsibilities administered through the Safeguarding Panel.

ACTION: Let the Safeguarding Panel know about proposed live streaming.



Dalziel St. Andrew's Parish Church, Motherwell

"The Kirk at The Cross"

*BELIEVING in Christ – BELONGING to Christ – BECOMING like
Christ*

In Motherwell: Dalziel St. Andrew's Parish Church we have been live-streaming our worship services since the summer of 2012. In addition to this each week we record our services and upload them to our You Tube Channel. Over the past six years, we would estimate that we have now had a total of almost 100,000 views on this channel, and have connected with people from more than 100 distinct nations around the world (links below). It is fair to say that the interest generated in what we produce has gone way beyond our initial expectations, and been such a blessing to so many folk in a range of different circumstances. For example, a number of young families, who have come into membership with us in recent years, tell us that they have often already viewed what we do via the Internet even before they walk through the doors of our sanctuary to worship with us in person.

We have also been pleased to facilitate a live link during worship with family members in places such as Australia and Canada thus enabling those living at a distance to share in worship at events such as baptisms and funeral services.

We will always be indebted to Neil MacLennan from Sanctus Media, based within Bo'ness: St. Andrew's Parish Church, who gave us invaluable advice on set-up, and has continued to be wonderfully supportive throughout. It would be useful for other congregations, who are considering live streaming, to be in touch with Neil. At the same time, we would be more than happy for you to contact us, to come and see what we do (details below), and to chat with us in person. Neil also assisted us as we sought a good A.V. supplier when he acted in an advisory capacity as three competing firms were invited for interview. It must be stressed how important it is to secure a reliable system which will be maintained and, as required, expanded with the passage of time.

Of great importance is the preparatory phase when the A.V. system is being considered. We secured benefit from visiting other churches which utilize A.V. and drew on their experiences as we developed the design options for ours. Our system uses 13 screens which suits the configuration and size of our sanctuary. We believe the live streaming allows us to display the interior to good advantage.

For what it may be worth to others, here are a few of the things we have learned along the way, in no particular order of importance.

Rather obvious, but crucial nonetheless, a reliable broadband connection is essential within the areas where streaming will be take place. We have had to review this, as our service needs have developed. It is important, however, to note that people viewing remotely may not enjoy a particularly fast broadband connection and thus to be careful not just to broadcast your stream at the highest rate you can.

It is also important to respect the privacy of individuals. From the start, we made it clear that there are certain areas in our sanctuary, where people would be out of view from our cameras. Through mounting large signs at front and rear entry to our church buildings, we indicated that all worship services would be filmed and uploaded to the Internet, and spelled out where the "non visible" areas are in our sanctuary. On the subject of cameras; buy the best you can afford at the time. We did. But, we have recently upgraded these to HD quality, and the difference is remarkable. Remember that tech is constantly changing, and there is a necessity, once you start down this road, to keep on improving, which comes at a price. Also, more than one camera is useful (we now have four - with one dedicated for use by BSL interpreter), as it gives a varied range of shots, and makes the final product far more interesting to watch than just a single view. In addition, we have found that a close shot of the preacher's head and shoulders, rather than at a distance, is helpful to viewers. This is especially true for those who may be lip-reading. But, it is also something that others tell us they find makes the whole experience more personal and involved.

We provide a CHAT box, just to the side of our live stream. This means that those who are watching LIVE can interact with our tech team. We enjoy the functionality to show the camera shots through the screens within our sanctuary. We use this feature during infant baptisms as it allows the whole congregation, regardless of where they are seated, to share in the sacrament more closely. On the first occasion this was shown one member (aged 95) commented that her failing eyesight meant this was the first occasion in many years she had been able to fully appreciate the baptismal ceremony.

Overall, we have a team of 16 folk who are trained in the use of sound desk, cameras, streaming and visuals, with three or four on duty each Sunday at the tech desk to make it all happen. It has been interesting to see how a number of folk have shown an interest in this area of service. Whilst a range of ages are involved, it is especially pleasing to see some of the young folk from our church family getting on board. Coupled with live streaming, we find that promotion through social media (link below) such as Facebook and Twitter, helps to build a wider "audience."

So, who watches our services, either LIVE or on catch-up at YouTube? A number of people who are no longer able to attend worship including those who are ill, either long- or short-term, from our own congregation and from a wider denominational context, who find it helpful to worship alongside a real community of faith. Sometimes, we have found that the folk are confined to their own home, and on other occasions, we have had messages from people in Hospital, both near and far. There is also a community of around 30 residents in a local Nursing Home, who worship with us via the Internet every week. One of our members is employed as their activities coordinator, and she arranges for everything to be set up in the lounge of the Nursing Home, where the old folk can sing along with the hymns and listen to the prayers, Bible reading and sermon.

Furthermore, a small village church in rural Perthshire, where they find it difficult to get a regular preacher, contacted us. With our permission, they use our filmed sermons during their services of worship each Sunday. Last year, a teenager in Pakistan got in touch. He had been converted to Christianity, but could not easily access Christian worship and teaching at a local level. Via email, we have tried to support him through his growth in faith. Many of our own members keep in touch with us, even when they are on holiday, ensuring they have continuity through the teaching series' that we follow. As we regard those who join us online as part of our congregation, we hope soon to appoint an Elder, whose responsibility it would be to keep in touch regularly with many who have

contacted us.

Since the start of May 2016, we have been offering two separate live streams, one of which is focused on serving the community of deaf and hearing impaired people. This shows an interpreter for British Sign Language (BSL), along with subtitles, which come from an Electronic Notetaker, who produces a near-verbatim commentary on everything said and done during our worship every Sunday. Initial feedback we have received indicates how much this particular service is appreciated. At present, we have funding to run the pilot project for twelve months, but we are already trying to put in place a team of local folk, who may be able to carry it forward following that initial period.

The capacity to view recordings of the worship service has also assisted in the training and formation of those training for the ministry. It provides a facility whereby a student or supervisor can watch the service again, potentially picking up on things missed during the live event. It also helps in honing presentation skills. The service leader can watch the recording of their “performance” and consider how they might improve or do things differently the next time he or she has the opportunity to lead worship.

May I reiterate what a privilege it is to be involved in this ministry via digital technology, and say that we would welcome any approaches from those looking for advice and help to set up their own system of live streaming.

Links, which may be useful:

<http://www.dalzielstandrews.org.uk/watch-live/>

<https://www.youtube.com/dalzielstandrews>

<https://www.facebook.com/dalzielstandrews>

<https://twitter.com/DLStAndrews>

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