



EVERYTHING YOUR CHURCH
NEEDS TO **GO LIVE!**

CHURCH LIVE STREAMING

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

CHURCHSTREAMING 

A MINISTRYBRANDS COMPANY

LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming allows your church community to stay engaged from anywhere at any time. But, because every church is different, there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

While each church needs to decide which option is best for them, their decision will come down to these factors:

1. **Objective:** What are you trying to do? Yes, you want to stream, but do you want to stream live? Stream record? Do you want to stream just the message, the entire service, sermon slides, music? Knowing what you want is key to creating your live streaming plan.
2. **Cost:** Knowing your objective will help you budget for the costs. Streaming can be a relatively inexpensive part of your ministry or you could spend thousands of dollars. The investment you make can be in hardware such as cameras, microphones, and computers or software that helps with live streaming and video editing.
3. **Time & Resources:** When do you need your live stream up and running? Do you need it this weekend, or do you have some time to figure things out? Additionally, do you have a staff, or a pool of volunteers, who can help operate equipment every weekend?

Regardless of where your church falls when considering these factors, it's best to think of live streaming as a process. Or, if you prefer, there's the old adage that

“you’ve got to learn to crawl before you walk.”

Below is a brief summary of the live streaming process.

- **Start simple:** There is no perfect way to start live streaming. Your initial goal needs to be establishing an online presence. If you have limited resources and need to start streaming ASAP, you have options. The simplest is filming on a mobile device and streaming to a social media platform like Facebook Live or YouTube Live. While this solution is cost-effective and has a small learning curve, it does at times limit the quality and dependability of your stream. It also limits your reach.

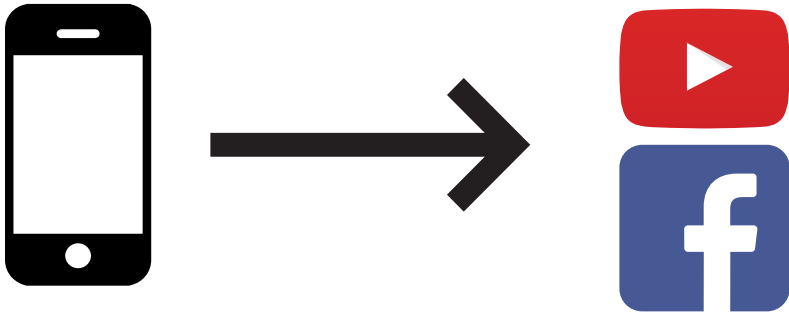
- **Expand & stabilize:** After you've established a quick presence, it's time to improve the live streaming experience for your congregation by using a reliable, secure platform. Where do you want them to watch—your website, social channels, a church app, or all of the above? Do you want to show announcements or sermon notes slides during your service? How are your video and sound quality, and how good do you want them to be? Answering these questions will take you down a road of investing in streaming services with Sunday support, new video-related software and hardware, and possibly a team of dedicated volunteers.
- **Create community:** Ultimately, a live stream is not meant to be a passive experience where people just watch. It is a time of worship for everyone and needs to be an extension of your church. It should include a strong sense of community, purpose, and connection. In the same way that you would plan a service in your sanctuary, you should also plan your live stream. A great live stream will incorporate worship, teaching, giving, kids ministry, prayer, and so much more. There is no perfect live stream, but with a little creativity and planning, there is so much that you can do!

START SIMPLE

CHURCHSTREAMING The logo for ChurchStreaming.TV, featuring the word "CHURCHSTREAMING" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, followed by ".TV" inside a white circle.

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START SIMPLE



If you needed to start streaming yesterday and have little to no equipment, what do you do? In this section, we'll cover the minimum requirements to start live streaming. This approach will require you to have a church Facebook page or Youtube account, a smart device (phone/tablet), and a device tripod.

- **Facebook Live:** Facebook Live allows anyone from anywhere to stream live content from a mobile device or computer. [Go here for step-by-step instructions on how to use Facebook Live.](#)
- **YouTube Live:** YouTube Live will allow you to stream directly to your YouTube channel. However to use a mobile device you must have at least 1,000 subscribers. To help, [the Church Communications Facebook group](#) has started a thread to mutually subscribe to one another's channels. Here is a [helpful resource on YouTube live streaming.](#)

- **Tripod Mounts:** We strongly suggest a tripod if you are going to live stream. No volunteer has a strong enough arm to hold a phone steady for your entire service. The tripod will ensure that your video is steady and consistent. Additionally, they are relatively inexpensive for smart devices. If you don't have a tripod you can explore [smartphone tripods here](#) and [tablet tripods here.](#)
- **Additional Gear:** You can improve the quality of your live stream by adding external microphones ([Best options for Android](#) & [best options for IOS](#)), lighting, and additional cameras. We'll cover these items in the following sections.

Important: While this is the easiest way to start live streaming, we don't recommend it as a long-term solution. By partnering with ChurchStreaming.tv you can own/archive your content, display it ad-free, and send it to multiple channels at once including Facebook, Youtube, your church website, church mobile app and more.

EXPAND & STABILIZE

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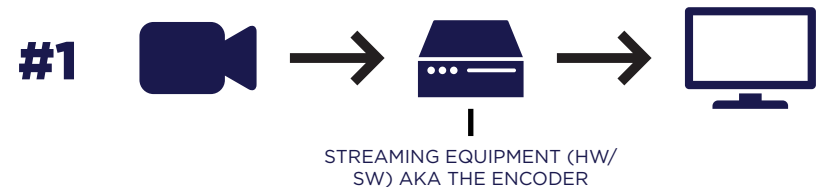
After you've established an online presence, the next step is expanding the quality of your live stream and making sure that you have long-term stability for your viewers.

This step requires a blend of hardware, software, and a church streaming provider. Below we'll provide a few basic outlines of what this can look like and then take some time digging into each element.

- **ChurchStreaming.tv:** An easy-to-use streaming service that allows churches to stream content to multiple channels without ads, archive video content, and have quick access to weekend support if needed. [Sign up for a 90-day free trial.](#) A streaming expert will guide you through getting started.
- **Camera:** The first, and most important, piece of equipment that you'll purchase will be your video camera. Your choice will determine the quality of the video that you'll be live streaming. Moreover, your camera selection should be based on the environment that you'll be using it most. For example if you have a large room with artificial light, you don't want a camera that has great quality but is designed for well-lit situations. Below are recommendations for all levels of experience:

UNDERSTANDING THE ENCODER

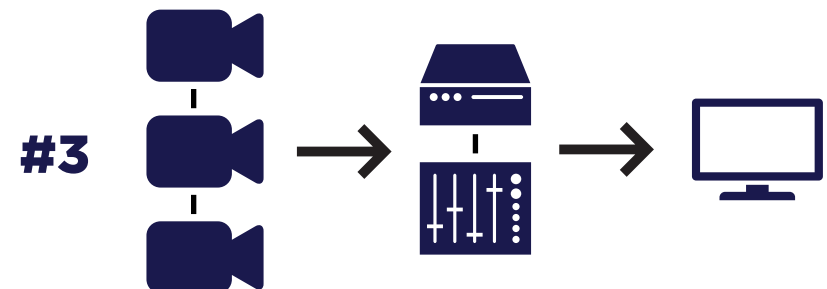
THE CAMERA IS CONNECTED TO THE STREAMING EQUIPMENT (ENCODER)



THE CAMERA HAS A BUILT IN ENCODER AND IS CONNECTED DIRECTLY TO THE PLATFORM



CAMERAS ARE CONNECTED TO A CENTRAL SWITCHING/PROCESSING UNIT WHICH IS THEN CONNECTED TO AN ENCODER OR DIRECTLY FROM THE SWITCHER TO THE PLATFORM IF THE SWITCHER HAS A BUILT-IN ENCODER



- Novice: The **[Sony HDR-CX455](#)** is a low-budget, yet very powerful camera. Perfect for beginners and reasonably priced at \$400, this is your ideal starter camera.
- Intermediate: The **[Canon Vixia HF G21](#)** provides a sharp HD video with many of the features of higher-end cameras at a great price of \$800.
- Expert: If you're looking for an advanced camera the **[Canon XA25](#)** is ideal. Priced at \$2,500, the quality of this camera gives your videos a more cinematic feel while its versatility makes it great for producing stunning videos for your entire ministry.
- **Tripod:** A tripod is a three-legged device that is designed to securely and steadily hold your camera. The best tripod should be sturdy, long-lasting, and reliable. This article walks you through the **[top 10 tripods you should consider](#)**.
- **Encoder:** Video encoding is the process of converting digital video from one format to another. All of the videos we watch on computers, tablets, and mobile phones have gone through an encoding process. Often the goal of live streaming is to encode video so that it is compatible with a variety of common formats.
- **Software encoders:** Software like **[Wirecast Studio](#)** or **[OBS](#)** run on a computer connected to your video source. While this option requires a computer with good processing capability and a video card, it gives you high production value features that include text over video, scene transitions, and graphic overlays.
- **Hardware encoders:** This electronic device connects your video source to the internet. This is an ideal option for those whose priority is plug-and-play ease of use. However, hardware encoders can only stream raw videos and lack the versatility of their software counterpart.
- **In-Camera:** The simplest way to encode your video is to buy a camera with a built-in encoder. This allows you to share video from your camera directly to ChurchStreaming.tv. The downside of this option is that these cameras are relatively expensive
 - We typically do not recommend built-in encoders because they are small with limited processing ability. Additionally, they require you to stream over wifi which greatly increases your risk of stream instability.

- **Switcher:** After a while, a single camera angle can become stale. A video switcher allows you to bring multiple cameras into your live stream. While a switcher makes your stream more interesting, it also adds a degree of difficulty. This article reviews the [7 best switchers](#) and provides an analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, and cost.
- **Video Editing Software:** In some situations you may want to pre-produce a video and then stream it live. This option allows you to have much more control of the finished video including scene transitions, slides, and the ability to edit out any unnecessary footage. [This informative article](#) provides a list of the best video editing software. They also rank the best free options!
- **Microphone:** While you can rely on the camera itself to capture your audio, you'll get the best results by capturing the speaker's voice on a separate microphone. You can use your church's existing microphone and soundboard equipment and run them through your encoder. If you're looking to upgrade feel free to explore the most commonly used [lavalier mics, wireless mics, and headset mics](#). Or, if you'll be live streaming in a smaller environment, you can choose from an [array of mics that are great for personal live streaming](#).
- **Lighting:** A great camera can't make up for poor lighting. For your live stream to look amazing your space needs to be well lit. Lighting is an investment that will take your video quality from good to great! As with most things on this list there are a wide-range of options when it comes to lighting. So [spend some time with this helpful guide](#).
- **Get Your Gear!** We've put together gear bundles that range from novice to expert. If you like to [start planning your purchases](#) swing on by!

CREATE COMMUNITY

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Live streaming is more than solving a technical problem. Ultimately is about creating an online community that is highly engaged and pursuing spiritual growth. Important! Prior to COVID-19, live streaming was an extension of your weekend service, however, for many churches, live streaming has now become their service. This transition will require changing how we approach teaching, building community, engaging the congregation, and more.

Personal over produced: The typical reminder when it comes to church is that it's about people, not a building. We can modify this for live streaming to say that church is about people, not a video. Your congregation wants to connect with your pastoral team. They want to hear your voice, heart, and passion. While it may feel awkward preaching or giving announcements into a camera, the most important thing you can do is to be yourself! If you tell jokes in service tell them on the live stream. If you get a little fiery when you preach in service do the same in your live stream. Be yourself. This, more than anything else, will help you connect with people watching from home.

Authentic over scripted: No amount of scripting can replace authenticity. We love our ministry leaders because they are real. We know from time to time they stumble over their words, come on the stage at the wrong time, or show the wrong slide during worship. That's okay! It reminds us that they're regular

people just like us. During your live stream, it's okay if someone walks in front of the camera or forgets to announce something. Just make a joke about it, have a laugh, and continue on. This will help to connect you more with your online audience than a perfectly polished video.

Discussion over lecture: Engagement is a huge part of a successful live stream. You want those viewing to be able to interact with your message, and you want to interact right back. So rather than just preaching a one hour sermon and calling it a day, pause and ask questions of your viewers. Encourage them to answer, or ask questions of their own in the comment section. Discuss ways to best answer questions in real time with your team. When your audience sees that they have a voice in the service, your engagement will skyrocket and your live stream will flourish.

Flexible over rigid: Live streaming will require you to re-think your weekend service. Your mission won't change, but your methods must. For example, during the offering time, it's impossible to pass baskets around, but how will you incorporate a time of giving into your service? The same re-thinking applies for communion, worship, kids ministry, and more. In the era of COVID-19 and social distancing, we must take a fresh look at how we do what we do. In a way, that's the silver-lining for churches: we have the opportunity to take a fresh look at church, get rid of the things that don't work, and create new rhythms and routines for our congregations.