

## Licensing and online broadcasting – Protect Your Church!

From Heather E. Kimmel, Esq.  
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Friends,

I hope you are well in these strange times. I am copying the Conference Ministers and Conference Attorneys on this email.

I have recently received questions about livestreaming worship services and copyright. Please know that on our Coronavirus Resources page, <https://www.ucc.org/coronavirus>, there is a document that was shared with Conferences and other partners last week that addresses some of these issues, [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E\\_RKfy\\_VOzelb5jbXV7UW5ytimil-Md-W0H8UaRlaM/edit?ts=5e66621c](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E_RKfy_VOzelb5jbXV7UW5ytimil-Md-W0H8UaRlaM/edit?ts=5e66621c).

Churches need licenses to livestream music that is under copyright. These licenses need to be specific to broadcasting/livestreaming. A normal reprint or performance license will not suffice. Blanket licenses can be obtained for this purpose from several companies, including CCLI and CCS. The church will still need to check to see if they song they are performing is included in the catalog covered by the license, and most pre-recorded background tracks are not covered.

Churches also need licenses to display copyrighted lyrics. This is a different license than a broadcast/streaming license. OneLicense is one company that provides these kinds of licenses. Your churches may know of others.

Some of these license companies are offering free licenses to churches right now.

We have had recent requests to give a license to all churches to stream the New Century hymnal, and the fact is, we cannot do that because many of those hymns are under copyright and the Pilgrim Press had to seek a license itself to include them in the hymnal. The blanket licenses likely include many of the hymns in the hymnal. The document I linked to above includes some suggestions about material that is in the public domain.

Another question I have received is what do churches do if Facebook or YouTube cuts off their livestream during services? Facebook and YouTube are acting pursuant to their own policies and may not be aware that the church has a license for the particular song. The church would need to pursue resolution of that issue with Facebook and/or YouTube individually.

These are challenging times for our churches as they learn to do worship differently. Let me know if you have questions.

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