



CHURCHES TOGETHER

in St Albans

Churches Going Online

Sadly, we have had to cancel public meetings whilst the covid-19 virus is a threat. Some churches may be well equipped with this with sophisticated installed video streaming systems but many are not. This brief paper is how to get the best results cost effectively for both services and meetings.

Status

This is a work in progress and will be updated. Not every option here has been tested and testing continues. If you would like to help with testing, then contact us on our [Contact Us](#) page. The latest version will be available from the CTSA online page at ctstalbans.org/online. This version Going Online v2 was last updated on 10/04/2020 11:08

Very Brief Summary

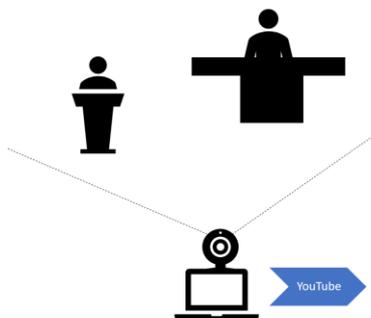
It is quick, cheap and surprisingly easy to live stream church services, even with multiple cameras, on YouTube. Zoom is great for online discussions but Jitsi may be better for prayer meetings. Care must be taken over security and privacy.

How to live stream

Simplest Approach

Live streaming your church service is free and not that hard to do. You need a mobile, tablet or laptop, either WiFi or good mobile data and a YouTube account. Below are links with instructions. Remember to have any mobile in landscape (sideways) orientation when recording.

If it's just the minister, the simplest thing might be to use a laptop with a webcam positioned to take in everything: say both the altar and the lectern. The laptop will be facing the minister. The minister can then start streaming just before the service starts. This does not require anyone other than the minister to enter the church.



YouTube: [create a channel](#) if you don't already have one. Livestream instructions are at

YouTube: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360028478292-Streaming-a-Meeting-or-Webinar-on-YouTube-Live>

Livestream choices

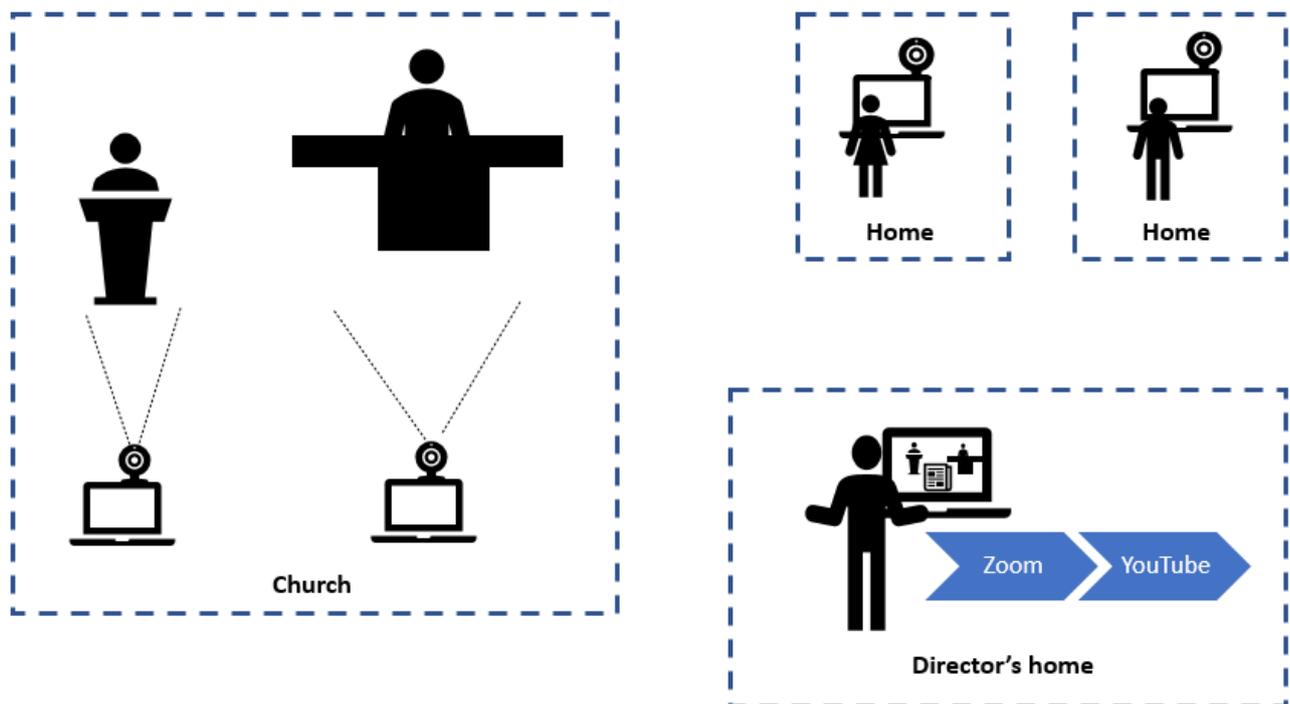
There are various options for livestreaming. Some services provide their own servers.

YouTube has some key advantages:

- It is widely known and the place most people would go to look for your church
- It can be watched on most TVs. TVs are much better than laptops and tablets for families to gather round
- It is free.

Multiple Cameras and Locations

To have a livestream where you can choose who people can see from sources chosen by a director who can be at a remote location.



All that needs to happen in church is for a laptop or two, or even phones or tablets to join a Zoom meeting hosted by the director. The meeting can also be joined by other participants, such as readers and intercessors. The director uses Zoom's spotlight feature to choose which camera is streamed to YouTube at any given point. The director can also choose to input from their computer such things as power point slides. Chat can be used to co-ordinate remote participants. Note that only the minister need enter the church. Remote participants need not be readers if readings have to come from within the main church. Remote participants could be:

- Giving notices
- Giving input from separate children's liturgies
- Reading intercessions
- Giving input into a participatory homily or sermon
- Simply getting together with the minister after the service.

Different traditions have different guidelines for what is and is not allowed. Most traditions would allow input from another building as when children bring in contributions from their own liturgies. Many traditions allow input from another source in such extreme circumstances as these but vary as to exactly what is allowed. If no input from

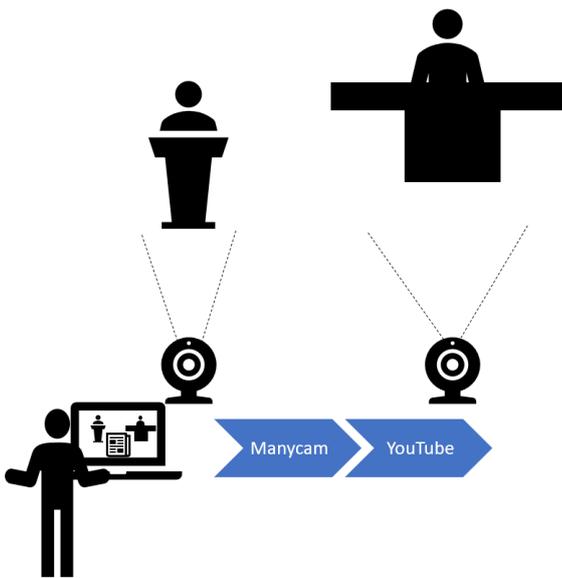
outside the church is allowed then this setup can still be used for single or multiple cameras in the one church building.

Remember that if you are live streaming then you must take care with respect to child protection, security and privacy (see below).

Livestreaming from Zoom to YouTube instructions are at: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360028478292-Streaming-a-Meeting-or-Webinar-on-YouTube-Live>. Live streaming requires a Pro, Business, Education or Enterprise account. It takes 24 hours to activate a YouTube account for live streaming.

Manycam

Manycam is software which allows one person to switch between cameras, including mobile phone cameras and add captions and other effects. This is interesting software and can be combined with Zoom or streamed straight to YouTube.



However, it requires a director to be on hand. It can be used in combination with Zoom, but in tests this proved to be a bit tricky.

Live Meetings

There are a number of technologies that allow you to have effective and fun meetings. Given that face to face meetings, though preferable are not an option at this time, now is a good time to get going with online meetings. Skype, Google Hangouts and Zoom all provide free meetings.

Most people have found that [Zoom](#) is better than Skype or Google Hangouts. It allows much better quality and control over large meetings. It is limited to 100 participants and 40 mins in the free package, otherwise one person needs to have a £11.99 package meetings up to 24 hours.

Prayer Meetings

Though Zoom is great for normal meetings it has a major failing for prayer meetings and choir practices. Zoom selects the sound from a single source: whoever is speaking loudest. For a discussion this is great, but not if participants are all singing or praying together. On these occasions participants need to hear all other voices mixed together. One option is Jitsi.

Jitsi

Jitsi is open source software and works differently from most video conferencing offerings. Jitsi has a lot of things going for it:

- Free – with no cap on meetings. Go to meet.jit.si
- Mixes voices together so more suitable for prayer meetings
- Can work for 2 musicians getting together, both playing at once
- Very easy to use.

However it is not quite as polished as Zoom and has some deficiencies:

- Sometimes it can be buggy e.g. with cameras ceasing to work and needing to be de-selected and then selected to get them back working.
- It is not as polished as Zoom
- Lagging is significant when there are more than two participants, so it's not really effective for a choir practice with more than two. Hymns or prayers can be said and sung but hymns need to be slow moving.

Meeting Tips

Tips

- It is best to use a laptop or a desktop as a larger screen will help you to see more people.
- If you are using a mobile, have it in portrait orientation
- Do not have the camera too close to your face, it is better to see you in your surroundings.
- Try to have a meeting off the hour and half hour as there can be high traffic at these times. Go for times like 6:50 or 8:10
- If you've not used Zoom before, have a test meeting with someone first. Not absolutely essential: Zoom set up is straight forward. Use our [Contact Us](#) page to set up a meeting with me if you like.

Security and Privacy

There is a balance between accessibility and security. 'Bombing' of meetings is where strangers interfere with meetings and has been known to happen. The same can happen in physical church meetings but

- a) Virtual meetings could potentially be interfered with by anyone from around the world;
- b) It's easier to evict someone from a virtual meeting.

If a meeting is being live streamed then you must have very high trust of participants. Remember that an online meeting might feel private but could be very public.

Some security steps include

- Always use a randomly generated meeting ID rather than a personal ID
- Always use a password

- Don't post a meeting URL containing the meeting ID and the password
- If necessary, send the meeting ID and password by separate means
- Make sure attendees join via a waiting room. This way you can vet attendees before they join
- Initially mute audio and disable video for attendees
- Ensure that people in the meeting know if it is being live streamed and are aware of how public the meeting is.
- As host, monitor carefully, using the following mechanisms
 - Mute attendees
 - Put attendees on hold – this temporarily removes them from the meeting
 - Kick attendees out of the meeting – they will not then be able to rejoin
- Turn off screen sharing for all but the host
- Use a very limited number of Zoom participants with high security and live stream so others can see but not participate
- Live stream to a private stream

Not all these measures may be necessary for all meetings, but they should be considered.

Security is complicated. Being overzealous makes it hard for people to participate. Being too lax could be dangerous and/or illegal. Being too timid hides your light under a bushel.

Zoom security has improved with the latest version.

Child Protection

Any possibility of a child being seen online requires child protection policies to be observed. Consult your child protection officer. Consider the security steps above carefully.

Licensing

If copyright material is to be used you probably require a license if it is to go online. This may be in addition to licenses such as CCLI. Just because you are licensed to project or make orders of service does not mean you are necessarily licensed to broadcast videos.

"The CCLI Church Copyright Licence is a prerequisite for the Streaming Licence. You may also require a Limited Online Music Licence (LOML) from PRS for Music if you are hosting the stream on your church website. We refer you to www.prsformusic.com"

<https://uk.ccli.com/streaming/>

Practice

Many churches are doing live meetings and streaming. These include

- Prayer meetings
- Planning meetings
- Children's activities
- Interactive church services

Some traditions even allow remote consecration, though most do not.

Where services are live streamed it is a bit odd with only the minister normally visible, and no ability to receive sacraments. However, a live connection with a church that you know can be a real benefit, and reduces isolation.

Some look around for the best service they can find. Some look for a church with which they have a connection. There is still something special about worshipping live, with your and your church, knowing that the events are happening at the instant, even if at a distance.

Many churches in St Albans are doing online services. Here are a few

- [St Albans Abbey](#)
- [St Peters](#)
- [St Saviours](#)
- [Vinyard](#)
- [Forest Church](#)

More links

- [Celebrate](#) have a good page on online resources
- [Spring Harvest](#) this year is online and free and hopes to include some interaction.
- [HTB](#)
- [Hillsong](#)
- [Catholic Services](#) for Catholic Services at many churches.

Finally

This document is a work in progress and the views expressed are only opinions. It may all seem daunting, but in these times of isolation it seems to me that we need to make the extra effort. Please give feedback on the [Contact Us](#) page.

Peter Berners-Lee

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