
6 Church Live Stream Improvements That Make a Big Difference

I said that I would never buy an air fryer.

I didn't need more kitchen gadgets, and I especially didn't need a large one taking up counter space. But the COVID-19 season changed that.

Similarly, even the churches that weren't interested in introducing an online service option found themselves doing just that during COVID-19.

What seemed to be a frivolous investment before turned out to be a welcomed tool that makes better ministry possible right now (and in my air fryer case, better fries).

But after months and months of live streaming, pastors started reporting a drop in online service attendance around June 2020. At the time, only [42% of practicing Christians](#) reported that they had listened to or watched a sermon online during a four-week period.

So, while online services continue to be the norm for many churches, people are less engaged. It's time to revisit (or create) your church live stream strategy.

When we think about improving the live stream, our minds often go to spending thousands of dollars to upgrade the equipment.

But it's not about the gear. It's about engagement. Especially now.

As [Carey Nieuwhof](#) put it, “Just because the novelty of online church is wearing off for people doesn't mean there isn't great long-term potential for online church in a world in which everyone you want to reach is online.”

There are steps you can take to rebuild live stream engagement for your church. These small changes can make a big difference.

#1 – Add a host

If your live stream goes right into music at the beginning of service and switches straight from music to sermon, consider adding a host.

This person can add a personal element, helping to pull online attendees in and make them feel welcome. Not only can they serve as the friendly face that begins and ends the service, but they can provide context as the live stream transitions from one part of the service to another.

#2 – Leverage countdown slides

The countdown slides that help everyone know how soon service is going to start can also do so much more.

Use those countdown slides to encourage connection:

- Follow us on social media!
- Have a question about how to get connected? Email _____.
- Send us your prayer request
- Join a virtual small group today—just follow this link!

[Together Church](#), where Church Fuel ministry coach Dr. Robbie Foreman is Senior Pastor, is a great example. They use their countdown slides to

encourage people to submit a prayer request, tell them how to find the church on social media, and show instructions for giving online.



#3 – Create an engagement team

If your church has full-time staff, they most likely have their plates full with just making sure that Sunday service happens.

But volunteers can easily step in to help with the engagement piece of online service.

When I was on staff at a church, I had my hands full with typical communications tasks. I recruited a team of volunteers to post Instagram stories live on Sundays, reply to social media comments, and cover events.

An engagement team can improve your church's live stream by being available to chat, pray, and answer questions. Their active presence in the chat section of the live stream can make it feel more lively and interactive for guests.

If you're a Church Fuel member, check the Resource Library for our Online Service Moderator Guidelines. This resource outlines what engagement team members/online service moderators should do, best practices for engaging, and example comments and questions to spark interaction.

#4 – Facilitate conversations

If you ask most people who are burnt out on live streams and Zoom calls what they miss the most, their answer will probably be “other people.”

We took our times of hanging out in the church lobby to chat after service for granted.

But until those times return for your church, help people connect online. For example, Cornerstone Church in Atlanta, GA sets up a Zoom call every Sunday for church members who want to see familiar faces while they watch the service online. People can log in to the Zoom call a few minutes before service and stay on after to interact.

Providing spaces for “virtual lobby talk” can make people more excited about having church online. They can watch the live stream and connect with the people they miss.

“The Apostle Paul used the technology of his day (letter writing) to connect people with God and to grow the church,” said [Dave Adamson](#). “We’re called to do the same thing—use the technology of our day to help grow the church and connect people with God.”

#5 – Say “hello” to the online audience

When the live stream process becomes routine, it can start to become mundane. It’s easy to eventually forget that those are people and not just viewer numbers behind the screen.

Let people know that you remember them. Tell people you're happy to "see" them on the live stream. Share personal news and stories.

This is the same principle that says people are more likely to stick around at a church if they get involved—making friends, volunteering, joining a small group, etc. If people feel seen and known on a live stream, they're more inclined to log on.

Thank Sharon for sharing the live stream with her grandma in Indiana. Congratulate Jack and Jill on their recent engagement. Ask everyone to wish Bill a happy birthday. Don't let your live stream continue to be "business as usual" Sunday after Sunday—bring people in.

#6 – Ask for feedback

If the live stream attendance is dropping and those who do watch aren't engaging or sharing it with friends and family, the reasons might be deeper than screen fatigue.

The best way to know what could improve the live stream experience for your people is to ask them. Better yet, ask an outsider who isn't a part of your church (or even a non-believer) to evaluate your live stream and give their honest feedback. They can point out shortcomings that might be turning people off and highlight issues that aren't easily seen from the inside.

Church Fuel members, you'll find an Online Service Evaluation Form in the Resource Library to help with this.

The live stream may be new territory for a lot of churches because of COVID-19, but it's an excellent tool to help even more people connect with the church.

As [Kenny Jahng](#), a church communications expert who helps organizations create content that drives engagement explained in our [Rebound course](#): "You

now have an audience that's captivated, curious, and conversive, and those are the three magic ingredients."

Make a few small changes to improve the live stream experience and they will add up to build a stronger, more engaged online audience for your church.

Take the Next Step

Looking for ways to reach more people in your community and invite them to church? In *The Senior Pastor's Guide to Reaching More People*, you'll find practical and actionable tools that you can use to reach more people inside and outside of your church.