WSN

Worldwide Streaming Network

How to Choose THE BEST Live Streaming Partner For Your Church

This year has created some definite challenges, hasn't it? Churches everywhere have been forced to get creative since "business as usual" simply hasn't been an option.

The live streaming of your services is one of the most effective ways to stay connected. Even if you have started meeting in person again, many of your members may still be hesitant to return. Guests are choosing to visit virtually, as well. Pastors who once had hundreds of people in pews on a typical Sunday have had thousands tune in from home!

During these times, the message that you can deliver to a watching world is more important than ever. That's why we want to help you reach your community with a quality live stream solution...a distraction-free experience they actually enjoy.

"We believe every church live stream can impact a person's life, both now and for eternity. And so they deserve to be done with excellence."

Can’t I just use Facebook and YouTube?

These are the two platforms most people think of when it comes to streaming. They’re free, they’re easy to use, and you can broadcast straight from your phone. Perfect solution, right?

Not exactly. Facebook and YouTube are convenient, but they’re not without some compromise

They offer no support.
If you encounter a problem 5 minutes before your service starts, you’re stuck.

They own your content.
If they decide to block it or take it down whatever reason, they can.

They’re often unreliable.
Your stream is one of the millions that they’re dealing with, and sometimes quality suffers.

They control the ads.
Your service could potentially appear next to advertising that you and your church might not want to support.

They can shut down your account.
YouTube and Facebook will shut down your account if they perceive any copyright violations (check with your worship leader) or any other violation of their terms of service. In that case, they lock you out entirely, and you have zero access to any of your content. We’ve seen this happen and it isn’t pretty.

Many churches using free services report that their members are often frustrated because “the signal kept locking up,” “it didn’t look very clear,” or “I had trouble connecting.” Members are often distracted from the message by the quality of the delivery.

Your live stream message could be what changes someone’s life today. Do you want to trust that to a free service that might not be reliable or align with your values?

So how do I pick the right streaming provider?

Ask around.

One of the best places to start is by talking to folks who are already doing it. Check with friends at churches who have been streaming their worship services for a while. Watch some of their archived services to get an idea of what they look like, then ask them about their experience.

A. **What company are they using? And for how long?**

B. **How is their tech support?**

C. **Do they experience a lot of downtime or connection issues?**

Research.

Go online and pick three streaming providers. Look at their websites to compare what they offer and get an idea of what you can expect.

A. **Be sure to read the fine print.**

B. **Take notes – you can use the comparison chart on page 7.**

C. **Look elsewhere online for reviews to see what people in the real world are saying about them.**

D. **See who they've done business with. Then contact those churches or companies to find out what their experience has been.**

A few more things to consider:

Don't fall for "bait and switch."

- Be cautious if you see ridiculously low price offers compared to the rest of the market. Quality doesn't have to break the bank, but "good" and "cheap" rarely go together.
- Watch out for limits on viewing hours. If you go over your allotted amount, they'll often bump you up to a higher-priced plan.
- The same is true for bandwidth. Exceed what they say you can have, and they'll raise your rates.

So how do I pick the right streaming provider?

Beware of high priced add-ons.

- These aren't usually mentioned on their sites' main pages, but you'll often find them when you dig deeper.
- **Over The Top:** This term describes any service that directly offers media content to end-users via the Internet. Roku & Amazon are the two biggest companies in this space. They offer free apps, but there's no way to make changes or add personalization...unless you're willing to pay more.
- **Multiple vs. Adaptive feeds:**
  - Adaptive – You stream one signal (usually 1080), and your service provider will "adapt" it to three streams (480, 720, 1080). The reasoning here is that different users may connect at different speeds. This sounds useful at first. However, you are more likely to experience delays, skipping/buffering images, and lower overall quality.
  - Multiple – All three quality options (480, 720, 1080) are pushed out to whatever service the end-user prefers, and they simply get the best signal/quality they can handle. That way, your content looks great no matter where they are or how they're tuning in.
  - Our competitors (especially the free services) usually only offer a single stream. (YouTube streams at 1080, but Facebook only streams at 720.) Everyone else charges more for adaptive, and they don't typically offer a multibit option. **That's where we choose to be different.** All of our media is automatically delivered in multiple streams, so you get the best results every time.
- S**torage Fees:** With most companies, you'll usually encounter limited space with your introductory data plan. As you exceed that storage in the future, you can expect higher costs—precisely what they're expecting. Our fees are based on attendance for each live stream event, so you never have to worry about hidden overage charges.
- Don't settle for sloppy service.
  - Are they available outside of regular business hours? (Since most church services happen on weekends.)
  - How responsive are they? (When you have an issue 15 minutes before your worship service begins, can you count on someone to take your call?)
  - Do they provide setup support and ongoing training? (Volunteers staff most church tech teams. You want a team of professionals who are willing to help them be confident with your live streaming setup.

What about equipment?

I know I can do it all from my phone, but it always looks like it is done with...well, a phone.

Everyone's needs are different. A lot of what equipment you choose will depend on the level of quality you want to achieve and the budget you have for it. However, you can usually get great results with just a few good pieces of gear and the right techniques.

If you have questions about equipment, give us a call. We'd love to help you figure out which options are the best fit for your situation. You could save a lot of money and headaches in the long run when you get help from those experienced in the field!

Another factor—COVID has disrupted supply chains, which means finding gear can be next to impossible if you don't have vendor relationships. And we have those relationships!

Compare Available Streaming Partners.

	Price	Services Offered	Pros	Cons
Option 1				
Option 2				
Option 3				
Option 4				

While this pandemic has upset many of our worship routines, it has created many great opportunities with incredible benefits:

- Church services that can easily be found online have the potential to reach more people than ever before.
- Archives can be made available to members who happen to miss a particular Sunday. (Pastor, imagine hearing "sorry I had to miss your message last week" and being able to say, "That's ok, here's a link to it!")
- New visitors are more likely to "drop-in" virtually to check out your church before they ever step onto your property. It's a low-risk introduction that increases their comfort level, making them more likely to visit you in person.

Whether or not you're able to connect and communicate clearly could make all the difference in someone's life. When you consider the possible impact your message can have, doesn't it just make sense to make the most of every moment and do it with excellence?

WSN began as a live streaming provider for high school sports, where quality and reliability are essential. (Just try explaining to coaches, raving fans, and the quarterback's mother why the big game had some glitches.) We understand what it means for you to be seen and heard without a lot of noise and distraction. That's why we've built our platform so that it simply works.

We also understand that many companies in this space are less than transparent about what they offer and what it could cost you. That's why we offer:

- Unlimited streaming
- Multi-device compatibility
- Automatic archiving
- Unbeatable on-demand support

And we do it at a price that's right for you.

Charlie Helms
WSN CEO & Founder

Schedule a Discovery Call

We'll answer your live streaming questions and help you determine the best next step for your church's live streaming needs.

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