

# Copyright and the Local Church

Copyright - the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute the matter and form of something (as a literary, musical, or artistic work). (Miriam Webster)

The morally sound approach is to never use any media (audio, video, or image) created by others without obtaining their permission, in writing. In practice this makes the legal use of mainstream music and movies very difficult and sometimes expensive to obtain.

Although some may suggest Fair Use as a means of avoiding Copyright entanglements, it is not a surefire way to comply with the Copyright laws, as it is rarely applicable to the church, and never for performance. Furthermore, as God's representatives on Earth we need to seek to be "above reproach" (1 Tim 3:1-2) and not attempt to skirt the laws of our country.

Thankfully for many types of media there are simpler alternatives for churches that desire to comply with Copyright laws and avoid potential moral and legal pitfalls:

- Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. (CCLI) is one organization that offers several blanket licenses that cover various aspects of using media in your ministry. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)
- Christian Copyright Solutions (CCS) is another organization that offers a wider set of music licensing from ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. [www.copyrightsolver.com](http://www.copyrightsolver.com)
- Christian Video Licensing, Inc. (CVLI) is a sibling organization of CCLI and offers licensing to use videos in your ministry. [www.cvli.com](http://www.cvli.com)

## Music (Performance in the Church)

CCLI offers song lyric licenses for about 200,000 religious songs for non-profits.

Does Allow	Does Not Allow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reproduction of lyrics in a bulletin or on a screen</li> <li>• Creation of songbooks</li> <li>• Recording of original musical performances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copying of musical arrangements (sheet music)</li> <li>• Streaming of lyrics or musical performances</li> </ul>

CCS offers a license called PERFORMmusic which covers over 16 million songs. It covers both religious and secular songs from most of the biggest names in music.

Does Allow	Does Not Allow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of secular music during worship services</li> <li>• Playing of copyrighted pre-recorded music in and out of services, including free concerts, picnics, outdoor events, pre- &amp; post- service, and may more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streaming of performance</li> <li>• Streaming of pre-recorded music</li> </ul>



## **Music (Distributing over the Internet)**

The CCLI Church Streaming & Podcast License will allow your church to stream and make podcasts available for the music performed during your worship services.

Does Allow	Does Not Allow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streaming and podcasting of live musical performances of songs that are covered under the CCLI license. (Roughly 200,000 religious songs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streaming or Podcasting of songs not covered under the CCLI license (this includes background tracks).</li> <li>Charging for the access to live streams or podcasts.</li> </ul>

Point of clarification: “Streaming” covers video that is initialized by the user and watched on the Internet. “Podcasting” is a downloadable resource that can be copied onto computers and other mobile devices.

CSS offers another license called WORSHIPcast that offers some of the same services as the CCLI Church Streaming & Podcast License, but with some important differences.

Does Allow	Does Not Allow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streaming (Live and On-Demand) of musical performances of songs that are covered under the PERFORMmusic license. (over 16 million songs from every genre)</li> <li>Streaming of worship, concerts, and studio recordings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Podcasting of songs</li> <li>Streaming of pre-recorded songs (includes background tracks).</li> <li>Making music available for download</li> </ul>

Point of Clarification: “Live-Streaming” covers showing the service live. “On-Demand Streaming” covers having the service archived and available for Internet playback but not for download.

## **Video (Presentation in the Church)**

CVLI, through agreements with many major movie studios and producers offers a blanket license for a large number of movies. It is identical in all but name to the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation Umbrella License. [www.mplc.org](http://www.mplc.org)

Does Allow	Does Not Allow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showing movie clips and whole movies in worship, teaching sessions, youth groups, Sunday schools, and church movie nights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streaming copyrighted movies or clips of movies</li> <li>Showing YouTube or TV shows/clips</li> <li>Charging admission to church movie nights</li> <li>Publicizing or advertising a movie by name</li> </ul>

