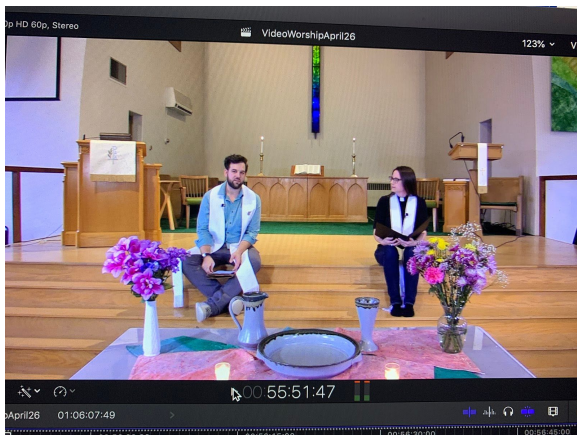
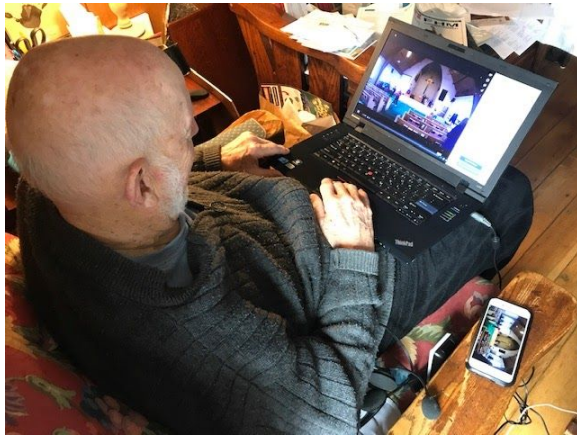


BETTER ONLINE WORSHIP

Rev. Zac Morton



**LET'S GET THE MOST OUT OF WHAT WE
HAVE TO WORK WITH.**

PRACTICAL TIPS

Let's consider some practical ideas and questions that will help inform decisions we're going to make about how/when/why we are creating. Some things to definitely do and some things to definitely avoid.

NUTS & BOLTS

What equipment do you need? What skills are needed to make it a reality? How can I get the most bang for my buck? How do I use the equipment well? What all the 'behind the scenes' work?

THE REWARDS

Let's think about what we can accomplish through the use of creating online worship experiences. What new possibilities do we have? How can we become a better church while creating online worship? How can we actually grow our churches with online worship?

WHAT THIS IS NOT

We're not talking about theology, the merits of virtual communion, or anything highly contextual. This is simply for you to learn from some of the things we have done right and wrong creating online worship.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Why are you thinking about improving your online worship options?

Is this going to be a temporary or long-term part of the church?

Who is your primary target audience? (This is real important) Your members? New people? Your community?

What resources do you have? NOT JUST MONEY! What people do you have, what skills do they bring, what are they able and willing to learn?

What kind of worship experience do you want to offer, and how accessible do you want it to be?

Launching straight into this without thinking about some of these questions is going to make it more difficult for you - you won't have a clear goal or clear set of criteria to consider when making each decision. When you don't have a clear goal in mind, people can tell.

Your online worship experience DOES NOT NEED TO BE PERFECT. It needs to be genuine, and get the basics right - we'll cover those basics in a bit.

Your online worship DOES NOT NEED TO LOOK LIKE A BIG BUDGET CHURCH PRODUCTION. Big budget church productions look like big budget church productions because they have big budgets and teams of paid staff who handle everything. Manage your expectations.

Some fundamental questions:

What length are you going for?

Will music be part of it?

Where do you want to record? Only in the church? Or would you like to have the capability to record from other locations?

What level of congregational involvement are you going for? How much would you like to engage them?

FOUR BASICS

VIDEO

Yep, this is the most obvious one, but there are some details. There is no way around it - the quality of the camera determines the quality of the video you'll be able to shoot. Modern smartphones have pretty good cameras, but they have their limitations.

Another important question is to think about how wide a shot you want - is everything going to be close, or do you want to have the options to zoom out and capture the whole front of your sanctuary?

The last big thing for Video is lighting. Even if you have good natural light in your sanctuary, you have no control over its intensity and direction. When you're trying to upgrade your video game, you'll want to have more options. More on this later...

AUDIO

This is often the most challenging piece of the puzzle. Are you going to stick with ambient sound? Do you want to use a sound system to connect to your camera? Without good, quality audio, you cannot create good, quality worship content.

NETWORK

No matter what strategy you choose (Livestream, pre-recorded, combination, ZOOM/video conference) - you need a reliable internet with a decent connection speed.

DISTRIBUTION

This one is often overlooked, but it is critical - especially when considering your audience. How are you going to get this content out to the world? What platforms will you use, how will you use them? How will you evaluate how well you are engaging your audience?

THE FIRST PRACTICAL QUESTION:

WHAT FORM OF CONTENT AM I GOING TO CREATE?

Let's review three basic options, and consider Pros and Cons:

LIVE

Doing a live service is probably the easiest option of them all. Facebook Live is just a really great platform. Livestream (A Vimeo streaming service) is a fantastic upgrade and is very popular for many good reasons. YouTube Live is another option, but keep in mind you have little control over advertisements that show up during future playback..

PROS: It feels familiar. You're physically showing up on Sunday.
It enables real-time, visual interaction with the congregation.
It's the easiest to pull off, and most of the preparation efforts are familiar.
It can be captured for later playback.
It is pretty cost-effective for quality upgrades.

CONS: You get one shot at it. If it goes haywire, it goes haywire in real time :)
You're at the mercy of your internet/network connection.
You have to have everyone there at one time, it limits involvement of others.
It's difficult to upgrade audio quality with this method without expensive equipment.
Your creativity is limited. You've gotta have a few shots and stick with them.

PRE-RECORDED

Pre-Recorded services are probably the most intimidating option - and if you have something big in mind, then for good reason. But you can also keep it pretty simple, and it doesn't have to be all that complicated. Although this is the most intimidating option, it also has the most to offer.

PROS: You can create it on your own schedule. You don't have to do it all at once.
You can include more people - they can shoot video on their smartphones and send them to you to include in the main video.

You can get much more creative. You can shoot anywhere. When you get good at editing you can do all sorts of effects and enhancements to your videos.

It's easy to distribute. All you need is a link to share.

People are most familiar with this platform. Just use a video player on any major platform.

It's easiest to access for those who are not so familiar with technology.

- CONS: It takes more equipment - cameras, video subscriptions, audio equipment.
It takes more effort, especially at first - shooting video is only ONE PART. Editing and distributing are just as labor-intensive.
You need a dedicated computer to store, edit and create your video. It takes a lot of storage.
Converting files and uploading media to internet platforms takes a long time. You have to work ahead. Do not choose this option if you procrastinate.

ZOOM/VIDEO CONFERENCE

Once you get into the swing of using ZOOM for worship, it can become easy. There is some learning on the front end, though - and you'll need to experiment a little bit. People are becoming rapidly familiar with this platform, which makes it become more appealing over time.

PROS: The level of interaction in real time is the greatest. You can see all the faces of everyone participating in the worship service, and they can participate.

It's probably the best platform for celebrating virtual communion.

Everyone is present together, so it has the most intimate feel.

It's cheap.

CONS: You get one shot at it. If it goes haywire, it goes haywire in real time :)

You can record, but the experience of those later is not near as effective as live participation.

Your visual creativity is most limited - small video screen shot, platform limitations, etc.

It can be challenging if you and your folks don't have good connections. It can be a frustrating user experience.

The quality is limited by the capabilities of the platform.

It's not very good for music. (Corporate singing does not work because of different connection speeds. Solo performances are your only real option, and audio quality is not great)

I'm not going to talk much more about ZOOM worship in this document, because I'm not re-inventing the wheel. Bruce Reyes Chow is amazingly awesome at coaching you through ZOOM worship. He is the best at it I've seen. The level of connection and realtime interaction you get with ZOOM is not replicable through the other options. If that interaction is your highest priority, then go with ZOOM!

Here is a link to a bulk of Bruce's tutorials on using ZOOM worship. It's everything you would ever want to know on the topic:

BRUCE REYES CHOW'S LAND OF ZOOM WORSHIP AWESOMENESS:

<https://reyes-chow.com/zoom-worship-laboratory/>

TIP:

You can upgrade your ZOOM audio quality with a podcast microphone! There are lots of options.

Also, look at some basic tutorials for ZOOM videos. Like this one here -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19ltEhTO9iELsRwJXf2ruznKUA8JUxMhy/view?fbclid=IwAR2UQimf9-ZZou6hgr5a4TLkKYgftAOKJYbW3rMZL6esoYKn8kjpelVzSN4>

Take some time to get your video angle and lighting in good shape! It makes a big difference. There are pretty cheap desktop selfie lights you can get to up your lighting game.

TWO CENTS:

Choose one of these mediums and GO WITH IT. STICK WITH IT! Don't try to switch back and forth. Each medium has its own set of skills that you need to learn to do them well.

You will be learning. Don't judge the effectiveness of your efforts based on the first three tries. Reserve judgement and give yourself some grace to learn and develop.

LIVE: VIDEO

CAMERA:

Smartphone - A new smartphone is pretty good for up-close shots. Once you get more than about 20 feet away, they're not as great. But they can still produce quality live video. Here are a few upgrades for live-streaming with a smartphone:

Tripods:

- A small flexible tripod, like a Gorillapod can be great for setting up up close shots
https://www.amazon.com/GorillaPod-Premium-Flexible-Pro-Grade-Charcoal/dp/B074WG1ZTJ/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=flexible+tripod&qid=1588310487&sr=8-5
- A larger tripod or monopod is also great if you want to be able to pan back and forth.
https://www.amazon.com/Victiv-Aluminum-inches-Monopod-Smartphone/dp/B083O41HQ1/ref=sr_1_77?dchild=1&keywords=smartphone+tripod+quality&qid=1588310739&sr=8-77&swrs=AF5B754DFF2FAA8BDA238ACC35626D8C

UPGRADE:

We use a Mevo camera system, and it's really a great tool for livestreaming. There are lots of options out there for livestreaming cameras, so do your research, but the Mevo stands out because of how easy it is to use. You'll need four things to get going on a Mevo, and you can do it for about \$700.

- Mevo Camera
https://www.amazon.com/Mevo-Start-C%C3%A1mara-eventos-vivo/dp/B075P5QHHL/ref=sr_1_3?crd=213KXH3KL2TYH&dchild=1&keywords=mevo+camera&qid=1588310918&sprefix=mevo+cam%2Caps%2C168&sr=8-3
- Battery Extender (highly recommend)
https://www.amazon.com/Mevo-Boost-Charging-camera-battery/dp/B01LWN4T3C/ref=sxsts_sxwds-bia-wc-p13n1_0?crd=213KXH3KL2TYH&cv_ct_cx=mevo+camera&dchild=1&keywords=mevo+camera&pd_rd_i=B01LWN4T3C&pd_rd_r=3e49ecc1-3f2c-44a5-8dc8-d799ff358ba1&pd_rd_w=me3Bf&pd_rd_wg=20SRJ&pf_rd_p=d027eaac-7531-45fe-a61e-20ae30db06de&pf_rd_r=QFR9SF5JK4DZNVJMGAH0&psc=1&qid=1588310918&sprefix=mevo+cam%2Caps%2C168&sr=1-1-70f7c15d-07d8-466a-b325-4be35d7258cc
- Tripod (any tripod would work, get a mid range one - you don't need the expensive ones, and the cheap ones usually suck a lot.
https://www.amazon.com/PHOPIK-Lightweight-Aluminum-Photography-Professional/dp/B07X2PGLLO/ref=sr_1_53_sspa?crd=HSXESAPBD1F6&dchild=1&keywords=mevo+camera+tripod&qid=1588310970&sprefix=mevo+camera+%2Caps%2C172&sr=8-53-spons&swrs=81684B24E3600954F520D3F757868A19&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcjnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEzM1oyUUZZWVVMzEzJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNTY

[2MTA4MTYzTTYzODM1V1oxOSZlbnNyeXB0ZWRBZEIkPUEwNDk4NjU2TzYzQVYVWjQ3N0IKJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYnRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MTA4MTYzTTYzODM1V1oxOSZlbnNyeXB0ZWRBZEIkPUEwNDk4NjU2TzYzQVYVWjQ3N0IKJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYnRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==)

- Smartphone or Tablet - Mevo works on a Mevo app - and this is what makes it stand out. You can connect the mevo to your phone, and to your WiFi network. The app is so easy to use. One person can control the view of the camera, and zoom in and zoom out without ever touching the camera. We have a dedicated iPad mini with the app on it that we use to control the Mevo's livestream picture. You can stream directly from the app to your preferred livestream platform (including Facebook Live)

LIGHTING - I'm gonna cover this at the end, since it's pretty standard for both methods

TWO CENTS -

Sometimes the Mevo gets a little finicky with connecting to your device. Get it set up at least 10 minutes prior to your event. It's not perfect, but it has not let us down yet. You can also pre-record on an SD card if you want the video to upload on a computer later.



LIVE: AUDIO

IT'S A CHALLENGE

You're using an ambient mic most of the time with live video - it's not as easy to patch into a sound system, but it is possible. Your smartphone has a decent audio mic - it's a phone - so if you are close, it will work well for you.

The Mevo again has a pretty decent built in ambient mic - it works best the closer you are to whomever is speaking. It loses significant audio quality the farther away you get (of course).

If you want to patch into a sound system with a Mevo, you do it through whatever device you are using your Mevo app on. Lightning or headphone jack? You will likely need an adapter and long cable to do that, FYI.

TIP:

Be careful cranking up your sanctuary sound system too much, thinking it will solve low audio issues. It will create more, because the sound is coming from different speakers in different places, so you get echo and tinny audio. If nobody else is there, the best strategy is to bring the camera close and project your voice. Same with music - just bring the camera as close as you need (but not too close, especially to a piano or organ - you will top out your audio and it will sound scratchy on your livestream video).

LIVE: NETWORK

Obviously this is tremendously important if you are going to livestream. From a smartphone or cell-data network connected iPad, you can stream over you network - just be aware it takes a lot of data - so don't do this if you do not have unlimited data!!!!!! And those networks aren't reliable all the time.

If you're using your local WiFi - keep in mind that there are a number of variabilities than can determine your effectiveness and quality (these go for ZOOM, too):

- Your internet speed. What is your plan? What is your UPLOAD speed? Not download... You will want AT LEAST 5 Mbps UPLOAD speed to rely on it. If you have the lowest plan, you likely won't have that. If you want your video quality to be good, you need good internet upload speed.
- Your network equipment can also hold you up! A bad router or modem can slow you down. Consider upgrading this equipment.
- LOCATION MATTERS! Your WiFi signal will be different strengths depending on where you shoot from. Get a signal amplifier to relay the signal to where you need it most.
- TEST IT!!! Make sure you test everything the day before. Livestream something for at least half as long as you plan to shoot for, and make sure everything works, especially your connection speed.

UPGRADE:

Livestream has a great product to create your own dependable wifi network, that can hook up to other cameras - it's called Broadcaster Pro (this one is on our wishlist). It's not cheap, but if you want to NOT have to worry about the reliability of your internet connection, this is a great piece of equipment you need. It also encodes your videos live, which is a very valuable thing to have:

<https://livestream.com/broadcaster>

*Keep in mind, this particular broadcaster works best with a Livestream Account (more on this following...)

LIVE: DISTRIBUTION

Facebook Live is obviously a very popular option. It's easy to use and its cheap. But it does have its limitations - many people don't have facebook, and you need to make sure your setting are on PUBLIC in order for them to see it, and they'll rely on you to send them a link, and then Facebook will try to get them to create an account.

The best paid option is Livestream or Vimeo Pro - both are \$900/yr. We use Vimeo Pro because we pre-record AND livestream - but just for livestreaming, nothing beats a Livestream account. Yes, it's pricey, but if you're committing to it, it is well worth the investment. There will be no ads, you can choose thumbnails, you get all sorts of neat live streaming tools. It's well worth it.

It's really easy to just use your vimeo link to distribute the video - we make it available 5 ways every week:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Website
- Text
- E-Mail

TIP:

Don't underestimate YouTube. There are just so many users, you're bound to get some exposure. But YouTube has ads that you basically have little control over, so that's a consideration. You don't want an ad popping up 15 minutes into someone watching the video of your livestream the next day...But for live, it can work - and if you can live with the ads, the price is right!

PRE-RECORDED: VIDEO

CAMERA:

Smartphone - Again, new smartphones are a great tool, especially for close-up shots. They're best used as a secondary option for filming pre-recorded videos. I like to use it for another angle, or to get a shot I want to be close-up, or a shot while I'm moving around.

DSLR/4K Camera:

You can get some pretty decent video camera options for a decent price - between \$400-\$800. The upgrade really does enhance your video quality in a way nothing else can. Keep in mind, you'll want to get a decent sized SD card or two to make sure you have plenty of memory for your videos!

PLEASE KEEP AUDIO IN MIND! Cheaper cameras do not have the same audio input options that professional cameras have (like XLR and USB) - so if you want to improve your audio, make sure your video camera has the inputs you want to be able to improve your audio game!!!

UPGRADE:

We have been recording sermons for a few years, and shoot from far away, so we already had a nice camera. We have a Canon XA11 and LOVE IT.

- Canon XA11
https://www.amazon.com/Compact-Camcorder-2218C002-Battery-Charger/dp/B07G4K4KC8/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=canon+xa11&qid=1588314669&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFpNEkzOEtCT01ETkImZW5jcnlwdGVkSWO9OTAxMTlwMDU5MUtWMEZNUeIyT1EmZW5jcnlwdGVkQWRJZD1BMDgwMDI2MTdVOUVORklKS1cxUCZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU=
- Tripod (GET A NICER TRIPOD! We made this mistake. It makes a lot of difference.) We went with this, and are really happy with how smoothly we are able to pan and move shots with it:
https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1034327-REG/magnus_vt_350_video_tripod_with_2_way.html

TWO CENTS -

Consider this - your image quality impacts the level of intimacy your viewers can experience. The more they are able to see the details of your facial expressions when you preach, the more effectively you can convey the message you want when you preach. Whenever I preach, I make sure the shot is close, the camera is level with my face, and the lighting is bright so that people can see my facial expressions and eye contact with the camera.

LIGHTING: We'll cover it in the next section, since it applies to both mediums.

PRE-RECORDED: AUDIO

IT'S NOT AS MUCH OF A CHALLENGE

You have many more options to get good audio with a pre-recorded service. It is also easier to cut out ambient noise - which was a big deal for us. Seriously, an ambulance or police car with sirens on goes by every Sunday morning because we are on a main road...

We actually use two strategies for sounds:

1 - ambient mic - we use this for music performances and hymns. We upgraded to a Rode mic that mounts on top of the camera. There are some cheaper options, but again, the quality matters with equipment like this.

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1422303-REG/rode_videomic_pro_shotgun_microphone.html

*I would get the windjammer if you want to shoot anything outside.

2 - A separate audio system with a mixer and XLR camera inputs.

We use a system of an audio mixer, three wireless mic units (that we already had - the same ones we used with our regular system each Sunday), and XLR inputs.

The mixer we use is simple and inexpensive:

https://www.amazon.com/Yamaha-Mixer-Bundle-Cables-Polishing/dp/B07BN4CNDW/ref=sr_1_3_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=yamaha%2Bmixer%2Baudio%2Bmixer&qid=1588315392&sr=8-3-spons&spLa=ZW5jcmlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEySFhHSFBTSFhNUkFRJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMTMzMjQyO1RGWjA3UFBLVWYwJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTA3MTk5NzUyTEE1WVU5V0s5M0tRjndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfbXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nO2xpY2s9dHJlZQ&th=1

We run XLR cable out of the mixer and directly into the camera - we also use a 3.5mm cable sometimes.

The separate audio system is what we use for speaking parts - sermons, prayers, etc. It eliminates ambient noise and gives us much more control over capturing good audio - and when we got to edit, we can enhance the audio much easier.

You can also plug a dynamic mic into your mixer if you want to capture music audio that way. Having a separate mixer gives you a lot of great options you would not otherwise have. You can also take this setup to other locations. We have used it at three different locations.

TIP:

ALWAYS TEST! Shoot a little, then play it back to make sure your audio was good. Play around with what location provides the best audio quality during music. Shoot a take, then go plug your SD card into your computer and give it a listen. Make sure you are getting the audio you need and make any adjustments you have to make!!!!

PRE-RECORDED: NETWORK

The biggest internet/network consideration here is upload speeds, again - but for a different reason. Once you create a video and put all that work in, you need to create a Master File and then upload the video to your platform (Vimeo, Youtube, etc.) The longer your video and the higher the quality, the longer it takes.

On average, our 50-60 minutes videos take 4-6 hours to upload and convert to Vimeo. So just be aware that it takes time! The first week I made the mistake of starting the upload too late. Now I make sure the video is uploaded by Saturday afternoon so it is ready to go and ready online for Sunday. Gotta work ahead!!!

Once your video is online, you just send a link or post a link wherever you want, to whomever you want. I suggest creating a dedicated page on your website for your Sunday Worship Videos. You can see ours here: <https://www.firstpresmorgantown.org/sunday-livestream>

BEHIND THE SCENES:

The Pre-Recording Option has one big hurdle: Video editing.

It takes a while, there's no way around it. It gets fun, but only after you learn the basics. Just know that the first few times you attempt it, it will take about 3x as long as you think it will. You'll get better as time goes.

There are a lot of options for video editing software, but we go with Final Cut Pro - which is an Apple product. I love using Apple products because it's very easy to share images and videos from my phones and laptop to the dedicated iMAC we use to edit videos. Final CUT Pro is a one-time \$300 license for the app.

There are other options, but this one is the best for the money. So if you're at all an Apple person, I would recommend going for this!

You may also want to create still visuals for your videos - for that, [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) is the best free tool out there. You can do a lot with it, and download quality is good enough to still look solid on a 1080p video. Just create a free account and learn!

UPGRADE:

GET A DEDICATED COMPUTER AND AN EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE!

Video takes up a lot of space over time. Get a computer that is just for this, and also get an external 2-5TB hard drive. We store all our videos, raw and produced - on the external hard drive to make sure there is plenty of memory space on our dedicated computer. Video editing takes a lot, and to keep it running smoothly with minimal frustration, this is a big help!

PRE-RECORDED: DISTRIBUTION

The best paid option is Vimeo Pro - we use it - it's \$900/yr. We use Vimeo Pro because we pre-record AND livestream. Yes, it's pricey, but if you're committing to it, it is well worth the investment. There will be no ads, you can choose thumbnails, you get all sorts of neat live streaming tools. It's well worth it.

It's really easy to just use your vimeo link to distribute the video - we make it available 5 ways every week:

Facebook
Instagram
Website
Text
E-Mail

It's really easy when you work ahead, because your video is up and ready to go prior to Sunday, and then you can just send the link wherever you want it to go.

We have found that our shut-ins really are enjoying the pre-recorded option. It's been relatively easy for them to access.

You may get some folks who have problems with the video - sometimes they just need to reload the page, sometimes their plug-ins and video players just need updated, or their home network is slow or unreliable. It's usually a problem on their end, especially with vimeo.

It also comes across really nice on a smartphone/mobile device or on a 60" home TV - especially when you have a nice camera. When you upload a pre-recorded video, you eliminate certain image quality variables, and if it comes through poorly, you know it is on their end, not yours.

TIP:

Get bold and make some targeted Facebook paid ads with your video - you might just get a little more expanded audience. You can get pretty specific with Facebook ad metrics and filters, so target a group and go for it.

PRO TIP:

DIRECT PEOPLE BACK TO YOUR WEBSITE AND/OR A CHURCH E-NEWS LETTER SUBSCRIPTION!!! This way you get some contact information for new online participants. They have a way to connect with you and you with them that is tangible. You can keep track and send them a personal invite when it's time to resume in-person worship.

REDESIGN your website! And redesign with the idea that this a place new people are coming who saw your video - make it easy for them to find what they would be looking for. Let your members navigate more. Put a button for e-mail subscriptions, your Livestream/Video page, and your donate button in an obvious place.

Here is an example of ours:

<https://www.firstpresmorgantown.org/>

LIGHTING!

Lighting is actually pretty important and easy to overlook, but it's a pretty simple piece once you learn some basics. The good news (dare I say Gospel) is that a lot of people are producing online content and livestreaming right now, so there are lots of good and relatively inexpensive options.

First - make sure the space where you are shooting is just as well lit as it can be. Know how the natural light hits in your space different times of the day, because artificial light can't overpower natural light. It'd be like Aziz Ansari up against The Rock in arm wrestling. The Rock is sunlight, in case that wasn't obvious...So be aware of what your natural light is doing and how that affects your shot and how well people can see your face and space.

A floor lamp is also a good thing to use sometimes. If you have a few of those available, keep them handy.

To get a half decent lighting setup, get three pairs of things:

Lights

Tripods

Extra Battery

We use these LED lights (make sure they come with a dampening panel)

https://www.amazon.com/Neewer-Dimmable-Cameras-Battery-Included/dp/B06XDFGDCX/ref=sr_1_42?crid=320097X9AWAM&dchild=1&keywords=led+light+for+video+recording&qid=1588317376&sprefix=LED+light+for+vide%2Caps%2C186&sr=8-42&swrs=AF5B754DFF2FAA8BDA238ACC35626D8C

Softbox lighting is also a good option - like this:

https://www.amazon.com/HPUSN-Professional-Photography-Continuous-Reflectors/dp/B07NBP6D98/ref=sr_1_3?crid=V4OZT3AB38SF&dchild=1&keywords=softbox+lighting+kit&qid=1588317428&sprefix=softbox+light%2Caps%2C161&sr=8-3

You can use CHEAP tripods for this!

Whatever LED lights you get - get some extra batteries - preferably the larger capacity ones. They have a tendency to drain quickly.

I like the LEDs because they are dimmable and adjustable for brightness. Softboxes are not as versatile.

When you set up with at least two lights, angle them on opposite side of you - this eliminates the shadows the bright lights cast. Play around with the positions of each light to get the best lighting. Honestly, the improvement of lighting makes a very noticeable difference in the quality of your video - whether you are doing a livestream or pre-recorded.

PRO TIP:

Make sure your lighting units are out of your video frame at all times, lol.

LET'S WRAP THIS UP

No matter which option you choose, you can upgrade your online worship game with whatever you have to work with. It feels weird, though, doesn't it? Preaching to a room that is mostly empty...

Here are a few thoughts from my experience doing all three of these things (Livestreaming, ZOOMing, and pre-recording worship)...

You can do each one well, but you have to work on the basics and keep at it - and also recognize that you need some resources - money and people - to make it happen.

No matter what you are working with and what you choose, use it to tell your story and use it to invite people to connect with your congregation's story. Get them interacting as much as you can.

We have encouraged people to share photos of them watching at home and what elements they choose to celebrate at-home communion.

On Palm Sunday we had people video themselves waving tree branches or handfuls of grass in their front yards yelling Hosanna, and we used them in the worship video.

We are currently partnering with another congregation - Avery UMC - to create combined video worship services for both of our congregations.

We have shot parts of the worship service at different churches, Coopers Rock State Forest, the shore of a lake, up in our Kitchen, out in a garden...You can help people see much more of what is going on in the life of the church and its people not just by talking, but with your visuals.

We've also included lots of people by having them record parts of the service on their phones at home, then send us the video of them reciting the Lord's Prayer or reading a poem on their porch - it adds some layers of intimacy when you can see people doing worship from their homes.

There are opportunities that doing worship this way gives us that we don't have when we gather in our buildings, so take advantage of this opportunity to get creative and try some things you wouldn't otherwise try. The more you can include ways for viewers to participate, the better.

Every few weeks we do a video challenge - the most recent of which was in celebration of the story of Samson - and folks sent in photos of their go-to or most outrageous quarantine haircuts. We included them all at the end of the worship video.

I ALMOST FORGOT! -

There is one more amazing category of equipment that can help you improve your video/visual quality by a lot - especially when shooting from a smartphone. The GIMBAL!!! You can get GIMBALS for any camera, but there are some very neat options for smartphones.

I LOVE the DJI Osmo 3 Mobile - It takes a little messing around with it, but its fantastic, especially if you're going to use that smartphone a lot. It stabilizes your video in magical ways, and has a little remote on the stock that control the pan of your phone. It connects to your phone via Bluetooth and you can totally control your phone without ever touching it. I used it to capture some video of our organist going to town on the Easter prelude and postlude, and folks got to see what they never get to see - how fast the organists hands and feet move!

Anyhow, here it is:

<https://www.amazon.com/DJI-Mobile-Smartphone-Gimbal-Combo/dp/B07X13Q6TK>

OUR SETUP

We've been setting this up over a couple years, and dedicated some money for it last year - it gives you an idea of a decent setup (we are honestly behind where many churches are, though - especially with livestreaming - FYI)

This is just to give you an idea of what all has gone into getting us where we have the capability, equipment wise, to give us the option to do all three.

Right now we are focused most on creating Pre-Recorded worship, and we use ZOOM and livestream for other parts of ministry.

Canon XA11 -	\$1400
SD Cards -	\$80
Rode Mic -	\$300
Camera Tripod -	\$100
Yamaha Mixer -	\$200
Cables -	\$60
LED Lights -	\$70
Batteries -	\$40
Tripods -	\$40
Mevo Camera -	\$600
Mevo Tripod -	\$75
iPad for Mevo -	\$250
Osmo Mobile Gimbal -	\$140

Gorillapod -	\$40
Vimeo Pro -	\$900
Zoom subscription -	\$140
Final Cut Pro -	\$300
iMAC for editing -	\$1200
Broadcaster Pro -	\$600
WiFi Relay -	\$120
Total Investment:	\$6,655

All the best to all of you doing your best right now! Hopefully this information will help make it a little easier for you and your congregation to up your online worship game in some big and little ways, from the practical side of things!

Peace,
Zac