

## **Music Performances and Copyright Issues**

With the current reliance on web-streaming for services, we are running into an issue that has been lurking in the background as the internet has become more ubiquitous with each year.

Here is a review of the issues.

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### **What can and can't be done in regard to performing music in services?**

1. Churches do not need a special license to perform **copyrighted** music **IN A WORSHIP SERVICE**.
    - a. Note the key words, "*in a worship service*".
    - b. This does not mean that congregations can indiscriminately **copy music**. Original copies must be purchased to be used by choirs or performers.
    - c. For reference purposes, click on [this link](#) for the specific location in the US copyright law that addresses this issue. (Just search for "religious" to find the references in the law)
    - d. According to the law, a recorded copy can be made and retained for archival purposes, but must be destroyed within a year
  2. Songs from **our hymnal** are permissible to perform through a separate agreement with their authors and owners.
  3. Songs that are **part of the public domain** do not need any special permission.
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### **What can and can't be done in regard to performing music and live-streaming it over the internet?**

The church holds a license to **live-stream or webcast** musical performances **of copyrighted music** from our church services or other church events. This license is held with CCS (Christian Copyright Solutions), and is called "Worshipcast License".

For the license to apply, the following conditions must be met...

1. The Church's license only covers performances that are livestreamed/webcasted through the **www.lcgwebcast.org** site. If you are streaming to your audience through any other system, then the Church's license will not cover your streaming of copyrighted music; for clarity, you may only livestream copyrighted music if you are streaming over **www.lcgwebcast.org**.
2. The song must be included in one of the following catalogs for our license to apply; [ASCAP](#), [BMI](#), or [SESAC](#). **Simply click on one of these links and search their index by title or author to confirm that the song is under their licensing arrangement.**
3. These webcasts **can be live or on-demand** – *so they can be recorded ahead of time.*

4. For as long as the Church holds this license, you can archive your performances for **future playback**.
  5. All license holders are required to report on a quarterly basis. This means that we have to log our performance of these copyrighted pieces in our congregations for our license to cover the performance. *This simply means that all Feast sites will need to submit to Church Administration a list of the pieces that were performed and live-streamed, including title and author.* Remember, these songs need to be looked up in the catalogs of ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC to ensure that our license covers their live-streaming. **Simply click on one of these links and search their index by title or author to confirm that the song is under their licensing arrangement.** The point is to ensure that the authors and arrangers of music receive compensation for their work.
  6. Webcasting is not limited to worship services and covers concerts, special events, and studio recordings of performers.
  7. The WORSHIPcast License does not cover downloading of music or any music posted to any third-party website. *In other words, we cannot post copies of our performance of copyrighted music on Youtube.*
  8. WORSHIPcast does not cover streaming rights for any pre-recorded music, including sound recordings, artist recordings, accompaniment tracks, multi-tracks, or stems. Additional rights must be secured from the sound recording copyright owner in order to legally stream. In other words, our license covers our members performing copyrighted music, NOT us playing other artists pre-recorded copyrighted music over a live stream or webcast.
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## **What can and can't be done in regard to performing copyrighted music OUTSIDE the CHURCH SERVICE?**

If congregations wish to perform music in any other venue outside the congregational worship service, then a new area of the law comes into play. This might include talent shows, fun shows, performances at nursing homes, etc. For these situations, our "[PERFORMmusic](#)" license covers us, as long as the songs are part of their combined catalogs, listed in of [ASCAP](#), [BMI](#), and [SESAC](#). **Simply click on one of these links and search their index by title or author to confirm that the song is under their licensing arrangement.** To learn more about this license, click on the link. The license we've purchased from HQ covers all of our US "satellite" congregations, as they are called in the license.

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\* These licenses are for the USA only

\*For more information, here is a basic explanation of the current situation with churches and copyrighted music...<https://christiancopyrightsolutions.com/blog/what-can-my-church-do-with-a-worshipcast-streaming-license/>