

## THE CHURCH AND COPYRIGHT LAWS/LICENSING

The pandemic has caused many churches to join the digital world by either live-streaming or posting pre-recorded services. This is great outreach, but it requires churches to comply with copyright laws for print and video. When a service happens only within the church walls, the copyright issue is basically a non-event, although if you print or project texts that are not in the public domain, you are liable for financial penalties under copyright infringement, even though you are not likely to be caught.

Using material that is under copyright in print or broadcast without permission or a reprint license is, quite simply, stealing from those who created the material. The process of copyright permission is new to many, so here is some information that will hopefully be helpful. *This applies to hymns and ALL anthems, solo music, and praise band material. You also may NOT share a YouTube video without permission unless you have a paid subscription to that channel.*

This also applies to any artwork you use in worship. There are some free sites such as the Vanderbilt site in Wikimedia Commons. If you search in Google Images, take care to see what images are copyrighted—they are marked.

1. Copyright permission **MUST** be obtained for any service that is posted online—whether on YouTube, Facebook, church website, etc. This includes both print and broadcast permission if a bulletin is also posted with hymn texts listed.
2. Anything in the public domain is safe to use and if you are only using public domain hymns, there is no problem.
3. In any hymnal, the copyright information is listed under the hymn at the bottom of the page. (this is true for the 1990 *The Presbyterian Hymnal* and for 2013's *Glory to God*.) In *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, there is nothing listed if the material is public domain, but in *Glory to God*, the source of the text and tune are both listed, so you must look for the © designation by these names. With many hymns, the music is not under copyright, but the text is new, so you must look at both. Also, there may be two different copyrights—one for the music and a different one for the text. In *Glory to God*, there is a complete copyright list in the back of the book, (p. 933) and this can serve as a quick reference. If the hymn number is NOT listed, everything is public domain.
4. There are two main music licensing companies and they both work in the same way. A yearly fee is paid for print only, podcast/livestream only, or both. There is a price break for purchasing both together and there is a sliding scale depending on average worship attendance. (This means average in-person attendance and not how many people are watching/listening on-line.)
5. Here is the information on the two companies and some general guidelines for each one:

**One License** <https://www.onelicense.net> This company covers most of the “mainstream” publishers and much of the material in *Glory to God*. Member publishers include Iona, Hope Publishing, Augsburg, GIA, and many others.

**CCLI** (Christian Copyright Licensing International) <https://us.ccli.com/> This company tends to cover the more contemporary, “praise band” oriented material, although there are some hymns in *Glory to God* that come under this license. CCLI has some other features available, for an increased fee, including *SongSelect* which allows you to print out songs in different formats, which is helpful if you want to sing a song in four-part harmony.

With either company, you have an account number, and you report your usage online—with One License, you report by the date used, while CCLI simply takes the information whenever you report it.

Whenever you use something that is licensed in worship, a notice **MUST** accompany the material. One License has a specific wording and CCLI does not indicate a preference. It is usually easier to include this wording in every bulletin and on every video post because then there is no worry about whether it is needed every week. It can also be a scroll at the end of the service video or on a fixed slide at the end. The online reporting is still done by individual title though.

**St. James Press** <http://www.sjmp.com/> This is a publishing house and there is a membership available for only \$139 for the year. You have full access to all their PDFs and can make as many copies as needed **LEGALLY** for your choir to sing from. (Basically, pays for itself after 2-3 anthems.) Most of their pieces also have a downloadable mp3 that during these times they are allowing churches to use in their online services if they have a membership and list their requested line at the end of the service.

6. Reprint licenses are site-specific, meaning that they must be used only at the physical location of the church that owns the license—they cannot be shared by multiple churches.

7. Copyright can be also obtained from individuals if necessary. Many creators want to control access, so they determine fees generally based on the number of usages, etc. These people generally have a website, or something similar which can be used to make contact.