

First United Methodist Turns to JVC for Alternative Worship Formats

January 2021

The Customer:

O'Fallon First United Methodist Church in Illinois



With the use of a GY-HC500 CONNECTED CAM™ camera located in the upper sound booth at the rear of the church, O'Fallon First United Methodist Church is able to stream live services to its congregation

The Challenge:

With social distancing guidelines impacting the way in which churches operate, O'Fallon First United Methodist Church was looking for alternative ways to reach its congregation. The house of worship ultimately landed on the decision to offer both pre-recorded and live streamed services to its parishioners.

The Solution:

Chosen by the church's Director of Technology Tyrone Castle, a GY-HC500 CONNECTED CAM™ Camera was used initially to pre-record Sunday services and later for live streaming. Though the camera was first implemented during the pandemic, Castle's search began before that time. "I was looking for something that would not only be viable for a long time, but also had a really good set of specs. The GY-HC500 had the built-in streaming function, as well as SD and SSD recording capabilities."

Castle chose to set up the streaming camera in the church sound booth, located above and behind the pews. The church connected its soundboard directly to the camera, which is positioned in the sound booth, ensuring it would capture the full scope of the service by panning across the stage or zooming in on any person. When first beginning to live stream services, Castle exclusively utilized the camera's CONNECTED CAM feature. As his workflow evolved, he opted to use the camera's SDI-out to connect directly to the computer in order to display song lyrics on the live stream, with the built-in CONNECTED CAM direct streaming capability as a backup. "In the event that something goes wrong with our computer, I can just hit one button and switch to the camera's streaming function, so there's no loss of feed."

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The Results:

Initially, the church solely pre-recorded separate segments of the services and edited them together into one complete Sunday worship. "This allowed us to practice social distancing better than if we had everyone on stage." After a while, the church progressed to offering drive-in and streamed worship, and eventually to full live streaming with limited in-person services.

While doing remote shoots at the height of lockdown, Castle took note of some other key features of the camera. "It works really well in terms of how it picks up light," he explains. "Some cameras don't do well in bright sunlight because you have to adjust the white balance quite a bit. With the JVC, I don't have any of that, which I love. The zoom features are another thing I really like about that camera. Even from the long distance between the booth and the stage, I can get a tight shot on the pastor and then pan out to cover the entire stage if we need to. On the functionality, I also love how easy it is to set up and go through the features because it allows me to preset the camera and get all of my settings correct. The GY-HC500 is not overly sensitive like other cameras, it has a very steady zoom in and out and the controls are very fluid. Additionally, I have a pair of headphones plugged into it, and the team really likes that they can hear exactly what's being captured as it's happening. We also noticed that the battery life is very good."