

Live Streaming Experience from David Magnet, Pastor of Fairfax Circle Church

We've switched all of our small groups (6 groups) to Zoom and are planning to add a couple new ones for folks who were not in a group this semester. We've also switched to doing online services (sermon only) when we had not previously done any streaming or video. In the past we've only uploaded an audio of the sermon to our website and app.

Here are some things we're discovering about Zoom for groups and meetings that might be helpful:

1. An issue we've had is, even though the church has a paid subscription to Zoom, they still limit us to only one meeting at a time. Since we have 3 groups that meet during the same time on Fridays we've had to find workarounds. Fortunately two of the groups had access to other Zoom accounts.
2. The free Zoom account will work for some but keep in mind it limits meetings to 40 minutes.
3. The host for a meeting is the person signed in under the paid account. To get around giving out our church's username/password and to keep a staff member from having to be on for every Zoom meeting, we make sure the "allow joining before host arrives" feature. This essentially allows anyone with a link to the meeting to join the meeting even if the host (the person who created the meeting) is not online.
4. We've created a separate meeting for each small group and set them up as reoccurring. This allows the small group members to use the same link every week to get into their Zoom meeting.

Here are some things we've learned on the fly about video streaming.

1. Let the Youth Pastor or someone in their 20's figure it out. Ours has done great and understands the technology and how things should look really well.
2. You really can get by with an iPhone and Facebook. We've gotten pretty good quality video and audio with a newer iPhone. We've also seen a few of our folks connect to our Facebook page who had not before. Also, our church's FB page is public so even non-FB users can access it and view the video.
3. At this time we are still doing a true FB Live event at 10am on Sundays. We may switch to pre-recording it and then uploading it on FB and YouTube as a live event on Sunday but we are not there yet.
4. We use a TV on a stand, placed just behind me, in camera shot, to project our PowerPoint. It works really well. We have someone who runs the PPT remotely.

5. For a better shot, have the camera/phone slightly higher than the person. A shot with the camera looking up is generally not flattering.

6. We have tightened up the camera shot. The phone is literally about 5 feet away from me. It seems very close when I'm preaching but the shot looks good. Having it that close achieves two things. 1) It keeps us from using the zoom so it's a better quality and 2) it puts the mic closer to the speaker which gives better audio.

7. The camera really does add 20 pounds or that's just wishful thinking on my part and I've actually gained it.

Here's a link to our Facebook page where you can see the difference in the last two Sunday's videos as we've tried to improve it. <https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcirclechurch/>

We've just purchased a Mevo camera and will be figuring it out this week and maybe using it this Sunday or the next.