Christmas Eve Livestream Countdown

A small church can go from never having streamed to a live Christmas Eve service in four weeks, using phones and tablets it already owns. One volunteer can run it, with a second person watching the chat.

Work through one block a week and tick each box as you go. Christmas Eve 2026 falls on Thursday, December 24, so the dates below count back from there.

A free guide from Workflow Vantage.

4 weeks out (week of November 23): decide and gather

This week costs nothing. You are choosing people and collecting what the church already has.

- [ ] Pick one person to own the stream and one helper to watch the chat
- [ ] Decide where people will watch: Facebook, YouTube, or both
- [ ] Collect your devices: one iPad or iPhone to run the stream, plus one or two phones as extra cameras
- [ ] Find a tripod or mount for each device (a steady stack of books works for a test)
- [ ] Gather a charger and a long enough cable for every device
- [ ] Choose your streaming app, but wait to start the free trial (see 2 weeks out)

3 weeks out (week of November 30): sound, light and internet

These three things decide whether people at home can actually follow the service. Fix them before you touch any app.

- [ ] Run a speed test on the church Wi-Fi from the spot where the stream device will sit. You want 5 to 10 Mbps of upload speed
- [ ] If the Wi-Fi is weak, move closer to the router, switch to the 5GHz network, or line up a phone hotspot as backup
- [ ] Plan your audio: feed the sound from your soundboard into the main device instead of relying on the phone's microphone
- [ ] Check the lighting with the room set the way it will be on the night. Candlelight services are dark, so make sure faces at the front are lit

- [ ] Confirm all music will be performed live. Pre-recorded tracks can trip the copyright filters on Facebook and YouTube and get a stream blocked
- [ ] Ask whoever handles your church's music licensing whether it covers streaming the songs you plan to sing
- [ ] Start announcing the date, time and where to watch: from the front, in the bulletin, by email and on Facebook

2 weeks out (week of December 7): set up the app and run a first test

Start your streaming app's free trial this week, not earlier. A 14-day trial started on December 11 covers your practice runs and runs through Christmas Eve. Started sooner, it runs out before the service, so budget for one paid month if you want more practice time.

- [ ] Start the free trial and install the app on the main device
- [ ] Connect your extra phones as cameras: one wide shot of the room, one close-up of the speaker
- [ ] Link your Facebook and YouTube accounts
- [ ] Build your on-screen graphics: church name, service title, song lyrics and scripture
- [ ] Set up online giving (PayPal, Givelify or Tithe.ly) and make a giving link or QR code to show on screen
- [ ] Run a 10-minute private or unlisted test stream
- [ ] Watch the test back on a phone with headphones and write down what looked or sounded wrong

1 week out (week of December 14): dress rehearsal

Run the whole thing once with the real musicians, microphones and lighting. Problems you find this week are easy to fix. Problems you find on Christmas Eve are not.

- [ ] Stream the full rehearsal privately, start to finish
- [ ] Practice switching cameras and write a simple shot plan: wide shot for singing, close-up for the message
- [ ] Play the recording back and check the sound: speaking is clear, loud songs do not distort
- [ ] Give the chat host a welcome message and the giving link, ready to paste

- [ ] Schedule the stream on Facebook or YouTube so there is a real link, then share that link everywhere
- [ ] Agree a backup plan: if the internet drops, keep recording and post the video afterwards

Christmas Eve: the run sheet

Print this page and tape it next to the stream device.

When	What to do
90 minutes before	Plug in every device. Turn on Do Not Disturb on all of them
60 minutes before	Set the cameras, check the framing, check the sound from the soundboard
30 minutes before	Run a two-minute private test and watch it on another phone
15 minutes before	Go live with a welcome graphic so early viewers know they are in the right place
During the service	Welcome the people watching at home from the front. Chat host greets viewers and posts the giving link
Right after	Thank the online viewers, end the stream, and confirm the recording saved

The week after

- [ ] Leave the replay up for people who missed it
- [ ] Pull two or three short clips from the service and share them through the week
- [ ] Write down three things to fix before the next stream, while you still remember them

What you can skip buying this year

None of this gear is needed for a first Christmas Eve stream. Price ranges are from Switcher Studio's equipment guide, October 2026.

You can skip	Typical cost	Use instead
Dedicated camera	$400 to $2,000+	The phones you already own
Hardware switcher and encoder	$800 to $1,500	A streaming app on an iPad or iPhone
New audio mixer	$200 to $900+	Your existing soundboard, or one good microphone
Lighting kit	About $270 for one ring light	The lights already in the room, tested ahead of time

The app we point small churches to

Switcher Studio turns iPhones, iPads and Android phones into a multi-camera setup, with up to nine cameras, on-screen lyrics and giving links, and streaming to Facebook and YouTube. It has a 14-day free trial, and the Studio plan was $65 a month at the time of writing.

Start the Switcher Studio free trial

Disclosure: Workflow Vantage is a Switcher Studio affiliate and may earn a commission if you subscribe through this link, at no extra cost to you.