

# Webcasting and On-Demand Video and Audio Policy

This policy of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., governs webcasting and on-demand video and audio posting of any services or educational seminars on congregational websites.

1. **Live webcasting.** Local, live webcasting for Sabbath services is provided for the edification of and service to the local congregation. Live webcasts should be available only to members or regular attendees, and only by password-protected access that is granted by the local pastor or his designee.
2. **Public webcasting.** Congregations are not permitted to webcast live to the **general public** without prior written permission from the president or his designee.
3. **Notice requirement for webcasting of images and likenesses.** If webcasting, the following sign must be posted with prominent lettering at all entrances to the church meeting hall and in announcement bulletins. (For ease of reproduction, this sign is included at the end of this document.)

## PLEASE READ BEFORE ENTERING:

This church is webcasting (including audio and video) the service today. If you enter, it is possible that you or your minor child(ren) will appear on the live webcast, and anyone connecting to our webcast may be able to view you or hear your voice on the Internet transmission. By entering, you agree to hold harmless the \_\_\_\_\_ congregation and the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., if your or your minor child(ren)'s image, voice or likeness appear in the congregation webcast or other Church media.

4. **Special music.** Special music can be webcast only if (a) it is a public domain work or (b) we have a verified license that includes webcasting rights for the work.
5. **Announcements.** Do not make prayer request announcements that include a person's specific name, medical information or any personally identifiable information (PII) during a webcast. If a specific prayer request announcement is necessary for the webcast, obtain prior written consent using the form below if the announcement contains information covered in any of the following bullet points. An exception exists: Prayer request announcements sent by email directly to the pastor do not require the written consent form.
  - A parent or guardian must give written consent for any announcement that includes personal information or information about the well-being of a minor child.
  - For announcements involving personal or medical information (which includes most prayer requests), written consent must be given by the person mentioned before webcasting.
  - For medical or prayer request announcements regarding a COGWA employee, the employee must give written consent due to privacy requirements.
  - When in doubt regarding whether an announcement is medical in nature, err on the side of caution and consider the announcement medical and do not webcast without signed consent.

6. **Commentary during announcements or sermons.** Anyone speaking on a webcast should be especially careful about making political statements. Under federal law, certain statements made publicly can jeopardize the tax-exempt status afforded to nonprofit and religious corporations.<sup>1</sup>
7. **Commentary subject to charges of slander.** All speakers need to be aware that making careless controversial statements, even if factual, can subject the Church to a slander suit. Such statements should especially be avoided during a webcast. For example, statements or editorial comments about what another church is doing, why they are doing it, evaluations of their ethics or actions, etc., can easily put the speaker and Church at risk. Anyone can record a webcast. Due to this potential, speakers should exercise wisdom, discretion and care on this issue.
8. **Live versus delayed webcasts.** Unless special approval has been granted, any on-demand video or audio material cannot be posted on websites accessible to the general public until it has been reviewed by the local review team and approved by the pastor. Live webcasting or on-demand video and audio available exclusively to members of the local congregation and not to the general public is permitted without this review.
9. **Review teams.** The pastor of each congregation must establish a local review team consisting of at least three congregational leaders plus the pastor. For national office websites, a similar type of review team must be established.

Before any webcast messages can be posted as on-demand video and audio files, the review team must review and evaluate content for doctrinal accuracy and integrity, matters of sensitivity to anyone, invasion of privacy, defamatory or libelous statements and the misuse of copyrighted material. The team, or any member of the team, should alert the pastor if there are any concerns raised about the message. The pastor will make the final decision as to whether or not to post the material. In the case of a national office, the review team will make its recommendation to the designated person responsible for making the final decision.

If the on-demand video and audio in question can be edited to satisfactorily correct the problem, the file may be published once edited. However, if the overall content makes it too difficult to suitably edit, then the file may not be posted at all. If the entire review team recommends against posting, but the pastor approves it, the matter should be brought to Ministerial Services for review and resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see this *New York Times* article:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/03/nyregion/03irs.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&ref=nyregion](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/03/nyregion/03irs.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&ref=nyregion)

## Consent Form

Please use the following form when gaining consent from individuals for information or images to be webcast.

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### **COGWA Webcasting Prayer Request Release**

**(Note: This form is required for ANY medical or prayer request announcement, written or verbal, about a COGWA employee (whether or not the announcement is webcasted), and for ALL medical or prayer request announcements that are webcast, whether or not the person is employed by COGWA.)**

Upon my/our signature(s) below, I/we hereby give consent and permission for disclosure to third parties by Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. ("Church") of any medical or health information that I or my duly appointed representative provide for disclosure. This consent will allow and authorize the Church to announce and disclose the provided medical or health information in the form of prayer requests or other announcements. I am requesting that the Church use its resources to make and publish these prayer requests or announcements. This consent is granted for printing, emailing webcasting, and/or verbally announcing such prayer requests or announcements. I understand that any prayer requests or announcements issued on my behalf will include the medical or health information that I provide to the Church for this purpose. This permission is granted to the Church or anyone authorized by the Church, and this permission is granted in perpetuity.

#### **Signatures:**

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Parent/guardian signatures, if applicable:**

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

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