



FREE GUIDE · DATA AND COMPLIANCE

Church Copyright and Licensing Quick Guide

A plain-English guide to UK church copyright licences including CCLI, PRS, CLA and CVLI with costs and scenarios.

We try hard to get everything here right, and every guide and template shows when it was last reviewed. But they are free, they are general and things change: the law, prices and the tools themselves. We cannot guarantee they are complete, current or right for your church, so check anything you rely on and take professional advice where a decision matters.

Church Copyright and Licensing Quick Guide

Who this is for: whoever looks after music, streaming or printed material at church, and the treasurer who wants to know which licences are needed and what they cost.

Copyright law can feel overwhelming, but the basics are straightforward. This guide will help you work out what you need, check you're covered and avoid the most common pitfalls.

The Licences UK Churches Typically Need

1. CCLI Church Copyright Licence (CCL)

What it covers:

- Reproducing song lyrics – in service sheets, on screens (projection), in songbooks
- Making copies of songs for musicians and worship leaders
- Recording your own performances of copyrighted songs (audio and video) for personal or church use

What it doesn't cover:

- Streaming or broadcasting services online (you need the Streaming Licence for that)
- Photocopying from published hymn books and sheet music. ⚠️ **This is the CCLI Music Reproduction Licence, not the CLA licence.** CCLI is explicit that the CLA Church Licence covers **non-music** publications; copying from songbooks and sheet music needs the Music Reproduction Licence, and copying from newspapers needs a licence from **NLA Media Access**. Buying CLA for hymn-book copying leaves you still infringing
- Performing or playing recorded music (that's PRS and PPL)
- Songs not in the CCLI catalogue (check SongSelect)

Typical cost (2025/26):

- Based on church size (average weekly attendance)
- From £71 a year for the smallest churches to £410 for 250–499; most fall between £103 and £295
- Larger churches (250+) pay more

Essential: Almost every church needs this licence.

2. CCLI Streaming Licence

What it covers:

- Livestreaming worship services that include copyrighted songs (lyrics and your own musical performances)
- Recording services and uploading them to **YouTube or Facebook**
- Podcasting services that include copyrighted music performed by your church

What it doesn't cover:

- The performing right in the music, which is PRS for Music's side. YouTube and Facebook hold their own PRS licences. For streaming from your own website, Zoom or Teams, ask PRS for Music (or CCLI, who act for them) whether a separate PRS licence is needed before you rely on the CCLI licence alone. A midweek prayer group on Zoom with a hymn in it is the case to ask about
- Streaming commercially recorded music – a worship album track played over your livestream, or band backing tracks. That needs the **CCLI Streaming Plus Licence**, which covers recordings from participating labels
- Songs from publishers outside the CCLI catalogue (see OneLicense below)
- Streaming or showing music videos

Typical cost:

- From £31 to £431 per year by church size; £75 for a church of 50–99
- Must be held alongside the Church Copyright Licence (not available separately)

Essential if you livestream, record or upload services.

3. PRS Digital Music Licence for Worship

What it covers:

- The music rights for streaming or recording worship on the platforms your CCLI Streaming Licence doesn't reach – your own church website, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Vimeo
- Live streams, on-demand recordings, weddings and funerals

What it doesn't cover:

- The recordings themselves as distinct from the songs – see the note on PPL below

Typical cost:

- Based on church size and usage
- PRS doesn't publish this one, so you'll need to ask them for a quote

Essential if: You stream on Zoom or Teams, or host video on your own website. Plenty of churches run midweek services this way and assume their CCLI licences carry across. They don't.

4. OneLicense

What it covers:

- Streaming and recording music from more than 300 publishers that CCLI doesn't cover – among them Taizé, the Iona Community, Oxford University Press, Stainer and Bell, Kevin Mayhew, GIA and Wild Goose

What it doesn't cover:

- Playing or streaming commercial recordings
- Bible readings: translations carry their own permissions (see below)

Typical cost:

- Priced by church size; the streaming licence runs at roughly 40 per cent of the annual reprint licence

Essential if: You stream services that include hymns from those publishers. CCLI's catalogue leans towards contemporary worship songs and a great deal of traditional and ecumenical hymnody sits outside it, so a **CCLI Streaming Licence on its own may not cover your service**. Take a few recent service sheets and check them against the OneLicense publisher list rather than assuming.

Bible translations are separate. Most modern translations (NIV, ESV, NRSV, NLT) let you quote or project a set number of verses without asking, as long as you print the translation's copyright line; beyond that you write to the publisher. Check the permissions page of the translation you use.

5. PRS for Music Church Licence

What it covers:

- Performing copyrighted music in your church – live or recorded
- Playing background music at church events
- Music at weddings, funerals and other services
- Playing music at coffee mornings, fetes and social events on church premises

What it doesn't cover:

- Reproducing lyrics (that's CCLI)
- More than six concerts or live performances a year outside worship (the licence includes up to six)
- Music played outside church premises

Typical cost:

- Based on a combination of factors including seating capacity
- Approximately £100–£300 per year for most churches

- Charitable rate applies to registered charities

Note on PPL: ⚠️ For churches these are two separate products, and assuming otherwise leaves you **unlicensed**. TheMusicLicence from PPL PRS Ltd is the general-business route; churches are licensed by CCLI on behalf of both bodies through a **PRS for Music Church Licence** and a separate **PPL Church Licence**. On its own the PRS licence covers live performance; playing commercial recordings – CDs, MP3s or a streaming service – needs the **PPL** licence as well. A church that buys only PRS and then plays a playlist at its coffee morning is not covered. ⚠️ **The PPL Church Licence covers in-person activity only and excludes all online use.** There is no straightforward PPL route for streaming: CCLI Streaming Plus covers recordings from participating labels, and beyond that you need the rights holder's permission directly.

⚠️ You may not need this at all – but read to the end

Churches aren't charged for music performed during in-person worship. This often gets called an exemption, which is misleading: it's a **voluntary waiver** by PRS and PPL, not something written into the legislation. It has held for years, but it's a commercial decision rather than a legal right. A church that only sings hymns and worship songs in services may owe PRS nothing.

What brings you into scope is music **outside** worship: background music at a coffee morning, a fete, an exercise class in the hall, a concert, a lettings arrangement, a film soundtrack in a youth session.

The waiver covers the room, not the stream. The moment you livestream a service or upload a recording, you're doing something different in law and the waiver doesn't reach it. That is what the CCLI Streaming Licence – and, on any platform other than YouTube and Facebook, the PRS Digital Music Licence – are for.

Work out which of those you actually do before you buy anything. Churches are routinely sold a licence they don't owe, and it is one of the easiest few hundred pounds a year for a small church to save. If you're unsure where your activity falls, ask PRS in writing and keep the answer.

Essential if you play or perform music outside acts of worship.

6. CLA Church Licence (Copyright Licensing Agency)

What it covers:

- Photocopying and scanning from published books, journals and magazines
- Copying short extracts for use in sermons, study groups and church publications
- Digital copying (scanning to email or screen) of extracts

What it doesn't cover:

- Copying entire books or substantial portions
- Copying music (that's CCLI)
- Copying material for resale
- Content published online (different copyright rules apply)

Typical cost:

- Approximately £60–£100 per year for most churches

Useful if: You regularly photocopy from books for study groups, sermons or training.

7. CVLI Church Video Licence

What it covers:

- Showing films, DVDs or streamed films (e.g. from a streaming service) at church events
- Film nights, youth group movie screenings, holiday clubs
- Showing film clips during sermons or talks

What it doesn't cover:

- Streaming the film online (a separate licence or the distributor's permission is needed)
- Charging admission, advertising the film's title publicly or showing films away from your own premises. Film nights, indoor or outdoor, are covered, but a showing outside worship also needs your PRS licence for the soundtrack

Typical cost:

- Approximately £100–£200 per year

Essential if: You ever show films at church events, including short clips in services.

Who provides it: CVLI operates in the UK in partnership with **CCLI** and **MPLC**, and covers the catalogues of participating studios. Buy it through CCLI, and check the catalogue before you plan an event around a specific film.

A CVLI licence does not unlock Netflix

Two separate permissions are needed to show a film publicly: the **copyright** permission (that's CVLI) and the **platform's own terms**. Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ licence their consumer subscriptions for **personal, non-commercial home viewing only**, and CVLI cannot override a contract you signed with them.

A CVLI licence plus a Netflix account is still not permission to screen a film. Use a DVD or a legitimate public-performance source. *(Netflix does separately permit one-off educational*

screenings of a set of its own titles listed on its educational screenings page - a narrow exception, on their terms, not a general route.)

8. Ordnance Survey maps

What it covers:

- The OS Publishing Licence covers reproducing OS mapping in church magazines, service sheets, event flyers and on your website, up to the extract limits in the licence

What it doesn't cover:

- Using maps in commercial publications

Typical cost:

- From £49.75 + VAT; check whether your denomination holds a blanket arrangement before buying your own
- Check with your denomination first – some have collective or regional arrangements

Useful if: You print maps in church magazines or welcome leaflets.

Common Mistakes

These are the errors we see most often. Each one is easily avoided.

1. Streaming without a Streaming Licence

"We have a CCLI licence, so we're covered for livestreaming."

Wrong. The standard Church Copyright Licence does not cover streaming. You need the separate CCLI Streaming Licence. This catches many churches out, particularly those who started streaming during the pandemic and assumed their existing licence was sufficient.

2. Printing hymn words without CCLI

Printing lyrics in a service booklet – even just for a wedding or funeral – requires a CCLI Church Copyright Licence. This includes words projected on screen.

3. Recording sermons with copyrighted music playing

If your sermon recording includes the worship band playing copyrighted songs, or recorded music playing in the background, you need the CCLI Streaming Licence to distribute that recording (online or via podcast). Simply editing out the music is a practical workaround if you don't have the licence.

4. Showing YouTube videos in services

Playing a YouTube video during a service is a public performance. YouTube's terms of service permit personal viewing, not public screening. For music videos, you'd need appropriate PRS/CCLI coverage. For film clips, you may need CVLI or direct permission from the copyright holder.

5. Using images from the internet

"I found it on Google, so it's free to use."

Wrong. Almost all images online are copyrighted. Use royalty-free image sites (Unsplash, Pexels, Pixabay) or images explicitly licensed for reuse (Creative Commons). Check the licence terms - some require attribution.

6. Playing background music at church events

Playing recorded music at a coffee morning, church fete or social event requires a PRS licence (and PPL coverage for recorded music). Many churches don't realise this applies to informal events as well as services.

7. Photocopying from books for study groups

Copying pages from a book to hand out at a home group requires a CLA licence. This includes scanning pages and emailing them to group members.

8. Assuming you can stream whoever is at the front

Musicians and preachers have rights in their own performance, separate from any copyright in the music or the words - and a visiting preacher owns the sermon they wrote. If someone knows the service is streamed and carries on regardless, that's generally taken as agreement, but "generally" is doing a lot of work in that sentence. Say clearly that the service is streamed, and ask anyone visiting rather than assuming. Where people are recognisable on the recording, you also have a data protection duty to them - see our [GDPR checklist](#).

Scenario Guide

Sunday Service (In Person)

Activity	Licence Needed
Singing hymns/songs (live) in an act of worship, in person	Usually nothing - see the waiver note above
Displaying lyrics on screen	CCLI Church Copyright Licence
Printing lyrics in service sheet	CCLI Church Copyright Licence

Activity	Licence Needed
Playing recorded music	PRS for Music + PPL
Playing a film clip	CVLI
Reading a short extract aloud, in the room, with acknowledgement	No licence needed (CDPA s.59 – see the note below)
Reading that same extract on a livestream or recording it	s.59(2) covers a recording or livestream of the reading , provided the recording consists mainly of other material (a whole service, not a clip of the reading alone)

Livestreaming a Service

⚠ Start here, not from the table above. The in-person waiver does not carry over to a stream, so work this section out on its own rather than adding to what you already hold.

Activity	Licence Needed
Displaying lyrics on screen during the stream	CCLI Church Copyright Licence
Streaming your worship band or organist playing copyrighted songs, on YouTube or Facebook	CCLI Church Copyright Licence + CCLI Streaming Licence
The same, on your own website, Zoom, Teams or Vimeo	Those two; ask PRS for Music (or CCLI) whether a PRS Digital Music Licence for Worship is also needed before you rely on the CCLI licences alone
Streaming hymns from Taizé, Iona, OUP, Stainer and Bell or Kevin Mayhew	OneLicense as well – CCLI does not cover these publishers
Streaming with commercially recorded music playing	CCLI Streaming Plus (participating labels only), or the rights holder's permission
Streaming a film clip	Not covered by CVLI – seek permission from the rights holder

Recording and Uploading to YouTube

Activity	Licence Needed
Uploading a recording of your service with live worship	CCLI Streaming Licence
Uploading a sermon only (no music)	No music licence needed – but get the preacher's agreement first (see mistake 8)

Activity	Licence Needed
Uploading a recording with commercial music	Not covered by standard licences – seek permission

Showing a Film at a Church Event

Activity	Licence Needed
Film night / youth group movie	CVLI Church Video Licence
Film clip during a sermon	CVLI Church Video Licence
Streaming from Netflix/Amazon to a group	Not permitted: consumer streaming terms forbid it and CVLI does not change that. Use a DVD or Blu-ray with CVLI

Photocopying from Books

Activity	Licence Needed
Copying pages for a study group	CLA Church Licence
Copying a whole book	Not permitted – buy additional copies
Copying song lyrics from a hymn book	CCLI Church Copyright Licence

Playing Background Music at Events

Activity	Licence Needed
Music at a coffee morning	PRS for Music + PPL
Music at a church fete	PRS for Music + PPL
Music at a fundraising concert	Separate PRS concert licence

Using Images

Activity	Licence Needed
Using a photo from Unsplash/Pexels	Free (check attribution requirements)
Using a photo from Google Images	Almost certainly copyrighted – don't use without checking
Using a stock photo (Shutterstock, Getty)	Paid licence from the provider
Using your own photos	No licence needed (but get consent from people in the photo)

Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies

Copyright law is the same across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the licences above are sold for the whole of the UK. We found no separate Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish scheme, so there is nothing to buy instead of them.

- **Scotland:** Nothing changes for licences. Ask your Presbytery clerk whether your congregation already holds a CCLI licence before you buy one; we found no Church of Scotland arrangement that replaces it.
 - **Wales:** Nothing changes for licences. If you sing in Welsh, check the song is in the CCLI catalogue before you rely on the licence, exactly as you would for any other song.
 - **Northern Ireland:** Nothing changes for licences. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland both have congregations on either side of the border, and CCLI runs a separate Irish operation for the Republic. A congregation in Northern Ireland buys through CCLI UK; one in the Republic buys through CCLI Ireland.
 - **Crown Dependencies (Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man):** These are not part of the UK. Licensing arrangements may differ. Contact CCLI and PRS directly to confirm coverage.
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How to Check If You're Covered

CCLI SongSelect

- Visit songselect.ccli.com
- Search for any song to check if it's covered by your CCLI licence
- Lyrics are included with your licence; chord charts and lead sheets need a paid SongSelect subscription

PRS Licence Checker

- Visit prsformusic.com
- Use the licence finder tool to check what type of PRS licence you need
- Or call PRS customer services – they're generally helpful

CLA Check

- Visit cla.co.uk
- Search their "Check Permissions" tool to see if a specific publication is covered

Checking whether a film is covered

-  **Do not check filmbankmedia.com.** Filmbank is a **separate, competing** licensor selling Single Title Screening Licences; its catalogue tells you nothing about what CVLI covers

- CCLI's own answer is that a title list is not possible with near-blanket coverage. Check the **Authorised Producers List** instead, via ccli.com/is-my-film-covered

Typical Annual Costs

⚠ **Treat every figure below as indicative, and get your own quote.** Pricing is banded by attendance, capacity and activity. **CCLI does publish its bands** – every product page has a "View Pricing" link, so the real number for your church is one click away and worth having before you budget. The ranges here are indicative only, gathered from churches and third-party sources rather than from a published tariff. **Get a quote for your own church before budgeting**, and don't hand these numbers to a treasurer as though they were firm.

These are indicative costs for a church with an average weekly attendance of 50–100 (a common size for UK churches).

Licence	Approximate Annual Cost
CCLI Church Copyright Licence	£130–£200
CCLI Streaming Licence	£75
PRS for Music (Church)	£120–£250
CLA Church Licence	£60–£90
CVLI Church Video Licence	£110–£170
Total (all five)	£495–£785

Two more sit outside this table because neither publishes a tariff: the PRS Digital Music Licence for Worship (if you stream anywhere other than YouTube or Facebook) and OneLicense (if you sing hymns from publishers CCLI doesn't cover). Both are quote-only, so ask before you budget.

But start from the assumption that you don't need all of them. A church that sings hymns in services, doesn't livestream, doesn't photocopy from books and doesn't show films needs **CCLI alone**. Work up from nothing, not down from the total. *(None of these figures state whether they include VAT – ask, because most churches cannot reclaim it.)*

Tip: You may not need all of these. If you don't livestream, you don't need the Streaming Licence. If you never show films, you don't need CVLI. Start with the CCLI Church Copyright Licence, then add only what your actual activities require.

Annual Renewal Checklist

Use this checklist each year (many licences renew in the autumn):

- ☐ **CCLI Church Copyright Licence** – check renewal date, update attendance figures if they've changed
- ☐ **CCLI Streaming Licence** – renew if you're still livestreaming or uploading recordings
- ☐ **PRS for Music** – check renewal date, update seating capacity if the building has changed
- ☐ **PRS Digital Music Licence for Worship** – if you hold one, renew it while you still stream on Zoom, Teams or your own website
- ☐ **OneLicense** – renew if you still stream hymns from publishers outside the CCLI catalogue
- ☐ **CLA Church Licence** – renew if you still photocopy from books regularly
- ☐ **CVLI Church Video Licence** – renew if you still show films at events
- ☐ **Review CCLI reporting** – submit your song usage report (CCLI uses this to pay songwriters fairly)
- ☐ **Check for new activities** – have you started anything new this year? (New podcast? New social media video content? Film nights?) Check whether you need additional coverage
- ☐ **Update your records** – note licence numbers, renewal dates and costs somewhere accessible (not just in one person's email)
- ☐ **Brief your team** – make sure anyone involved in worship, AV, streaming or communications knows what's covered and what isn't
- ☐ **Budget for next year** – include licence costs in the church budget so they're not a surprise

Quick Reference: Do I Need a Licence for This?

I want to...	You need...
Project song words on screen	CCLI CCL
Print song words in a booklet	CCLI CCL
Livestream our service on YouTube or Facebook	CCLI CCL + Streaming Licence
Livestream on Zoom, Teams or our own website	CCLI CCL + Streaming Licence; ask PRS for Music whether a Digital Music Licence for Worship is also needed
Stream hymns from Taizé, Iona, OUP or Stainer and Bell	OneLicense as well
Upload service to YouTube	CCLI CCL + Streaming Licence
Play a CD during coffee time	PRS + PPL

I want to...	You need...
Show a film at youth group	CVLI
Photocopy a chapter for home group	CLA
Use a photo from the internet	Check the licence (use Unsplash/Pexels for safety)
Play live music in an act of worship, in person	Usually nothing - see the waiver note
Record a sermon (no music)	No music licence needed - ask the preacher first

Sources

Figures in this guide were checked against the pages below on 3 September 2026. Prices and product names change; the date at the top of the guide says when they were last confirmed. Claims that rest on pages we could not reach at the time of checking are not listed.

- **CCLI Ireland:** [Church Copyright Licence \(Ireland\)](#). Confirms CCLI licenses churches in the Republic of Ireland through a separate Irish site from the UK one (checked 5 September 2026).
- **All-Ireland denominations:** [Presbyterian Church in Ireland](#) and [Methodist Church in Ireland](#). Confirm that both churches have congregations across the whole island (checked 5 September 2026).
- **CCLI Church Copyright Licence:** [Church Copyright Licence](#). Confirms lyric projection and printing, recording services for archive or limited distribution, and that streaming and sheet-music photocopying need separate licences.
- **CCLI UK pricing table:** [CCLI licence pricing \(UK\)](#). Confirms the published annual bands by average weekly attendance for the Church Copyright, Streaming and Music Reproduction Licences.
- **CCLI Streaming Licences:** [CCLI Streaming and Streaming Plus Licences](#). Confirms streaming cover extends the Church Copyright Licence, that Streaming Plus adds master recordings, and the entry prices.
- **CCLI streaming licence terms:** [CCLI Streaming Licences Summary](#). Confirms what each streaming licence permits and prohibits, including no charged or donation-gated events.
- **CCLI Music Reproduction Licence:** [Music Reproduction Licence](#). Confirms photocopying, scanning and file-sharing from songbooks and music publications, and the separate typographical right.
- **CLA Church Licence via CCLI:** [CLA Church Licence](#). Confirms non-music publications only, songbooks excluded, newspapers under NLA Media Access and the extent limits by church size band.
- **PRS and PPL Church Licences:** [PRS for Music and PPL Church Licences](#). Confirms why both are needed for recorded music, the acts of worship position, up to six concerts a year and that

neither reaches website or social media use.

- **PRS Church Licence terms:** [UK PRS for Music Church Licence](#). Confirms CCLI as PRS's appointed agent, cover limited to the licensed premises, the exclusion of broadcasting or transmission beyond the precincts, and VAT payable on top.
- **CCLI Church Video Licence:** [Church Video Licence](#). Confirms the CVLI, CCLI and MPLC partnership, the activities covered, the no-admission-fee rule and why no title list exists.
- **Church Video Licence terms:** [Church Video Licence Terms of Agreement](#). Confirms the restrictions on publicising titles, charging admission and showing outside the named facility.
- **Films and TV in church:** [Showing films and TV in church](#). Confirms films shown outside worship also need the venue covered by a PRS for Music licence, and that streaming services' terms usually bar public screenings.
- **SongSelect:** [SongSelect](#). Confirms lyrics are free to licence holders and that chord, lead and vocal sheets require a paid subscription.
- **Netflix educational screenings:** [Educational screenings of Netflix titles](#). Confirms the narrow one-time, non-profit, non-commercial permission and which titles carry it.
- **OneLicense:** [How to Buy a License](#). Confirms the licence types and the size of the member publisher network.
- **Ordnance Survey:** [OS Publishing Licence](#). Confirms the OS product for reproducing maps in a publication or on a website, with its extract limits and minimum fee.
- **Public reading exception:** [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, section 59](#). Confirms public reading or recitation with sufficient acknowledgement, and the limited extension to recordings and communication to the public.
- **Performers' rights:** [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, section 182](#). Confirms consent is needed to record or broadcast a performance.
- **Unsplash:** [Unsplash License](#). Confirms free use for commercial and non-commercial purposes, attribution appreciated but not required and that resale of unmodified images is barred.