

*Have you ever wondered what goes in to making Sunday morning live streams happen?*

*Way way back on 17 March 2020, the Congregation Council of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church officially suspended in-person worship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Your Precentor and your Pastor, after it was decided, looked at each other and said, "Well, we have four days to learn how to stream worship over the Internet and set it up." Those four days were a whirlwind of researching software, hardware, and licensing; and frantically setting it all up. Susan had a camera. I had downloaded and learned the very basics of the software to get the video to YouTube on my laptop. Together, we managed to get a setup working, and on 22 March 2020, BLC's first Sunday morning live-stream hit the Internet. It was grainy. It was ugly. But it worked (much to our shock, and relief)!*

*Our worship streams have become much more sophisticated since then (though we haven't yet had a Sunday where something wasn't setup correctly, or went wrong despite all our preparations!). We purchased permanent cameras to mount in the sanctuary. We upgraded our microphones and learned how to connect them to our streaming. We learned (and continue to learn) the wonders and capabilities of OBS, the software we use to encode our stream and send it to YouTube. We figured out how to adapt the liturgies of the church so that we could make worship as participatory as possible. The work we've been able to accomplish has been extraordinary, and it's all thanks to the hard work and dedication of a team of volunteers working with staff and your rostered ministers.*

*So what does go in to making Sunday mornings happen? Well, every week, it looks a little something like this:*

*1. Well in advance, Karen McCune, Karen Rider, Deacon Jody and/or Nancy Slover recruit volunteers to record themselves leading different sections of the liturgy. They maintain a huge spreadsheet that holds all of this information. Volunteers are*

*provided the texts they will be recording and instructions on how to produce a quality recording. These recordings are uploaded to folders in a Google Drive for each Sunday.*

*2. Susan finalizes the hymns and other musical selections that will be included in the service. Pastor Ken likewise finalizes the shape, structure, and texts of the liturgy that will be used that day. Tweaks are made as necessary.*

*3. All of that information is put into a "Content Document". Using that document, Debbie Ranos produces the slides (usually between fifty and seventy each week!) used in the stream. The slides are what display the texts and artwork seen in the stream.*

*4. Those slides are sent to Nancy Slover, who puts the slides in their appropriate scenes in OBS. She sets up the appropriate microphones and cameras for each scene, and loads that Sunday's videos into their scenes.*

*4b. Ideally, once the slides and OBS build are finished, multiple pairs of eyes go over them to spot any typos, mistakes, or make corrections.*

*5. On Sunday morning, whoever is running the computers (yes, two of them) makes sure that OBS and YouTube are talking to each other properly. Microphones are tested to make sure nothing's out of whack. The scenes are quickly checked to make sure the camera is responding to commands from OBS and pointing in the right direction.*

*5b. When (not if, when) something goes wrong or isn't set up quite right (or a microphone is unplugged, and who checks that? We do now!), everyone present puts their heads together and quickly tries to find a solution without panicking. This usually happens at the worst possible time, like after worship starts.*

*One of the factors that makes live streaming so stressful is that there are multiple single points of failure. If a microphone doesn't work, no one hears anything. If the camera malfunctions or breaks, no one sees anything. If OBS is malfunctioning, it doesn't send anything to YouTube, and no one sees OR hears anything. Same thing if OBS and YouTube aren't talking to each other (the streaming key is incorrect), or if there's an Internet problem and the computers can't talk to each other OR YouTube. One problem in a critical system means the live stream simply doesn't happen.*

*6. When the time for worship begins, the person running the computers tells OBS to send its stream to YouTube, and then in YouTube hits GO LIVE. Assuming everything has gone according to plan, you the viewers see and hear and participate in worship.*

*7. Here Susan, Pastor Ken, Deacon Jody, and singers do what we've been trained to do: lead worship, preach, lead songs, and administer the sacrament. The person running the computers manually advances the scenes in OBS, and hopefully nothing goes wrong.*

*8. Once worship ends, and both YouTube and OBS are shut down, everyone breathes a collective sigh of relief—we made it through another week! Everyone takes the afternoon or evening off, and the next day, it starts again.*

*Yes, we've come a long way indeed from the humble beginnings of our live streams. And there are some people who deserve to be recognized for their outstanding work and dedication. I give my most heartfelt thanks to:*

***Kyle Bredehoeft**, our technology guru. Kyle did the research on cameras, made the purchases, set them up, and still comes in to tweak, reprogram, and fix our*

equipment. He's the reason the video looks and sounds so good! And if it weren't for his technological know-how, none of this would have been possible.

**Susan Powell**, our Precentor. Susan had only been with us two months when the pandemic forced us to suspend in-person worship. Surprise! Since then, she's been the trailblazer, working overtime adapting choir performances, instrumentalists, and video recordings in new and creative ways to keep the strong tradition of quality music at BLC alive and well.

**Jody Winter**, our Deacon. Deacon Jody stepped up and took on more preaching dates during the pandemic. She's constantly working behind the scenes to make sure everything else goes smoothly while I devote most of my attention to worship. And she's a "Jordan Buddy" (someone who keeps Jordan busy when both Debbie and I are running worship on Sunday), which is probably the most difficult job on Sunday morning!

**Karen McCune, Karen Rider, Susie Swenson, and Nancy Slover**. Either currently or in the past, these women made the initial calls, follow up calls, sent follow up emails, and arranged for dozens of you to record and submit videos. It's incredible work that takes focused and organized minds, and they never let anything get in the way.

**Debbie Ranos**. Debbie took on the weekly job of putting together all of the slides for worship. If you see it on your screen, it's because Debbie did it. It takes hours each week to get all of the texts in the right place and formatted the right way, and she gets it done. Debbie also runs the computers on Sunday mornings, on a rotating basis with Fred Winter and Tim Wott.

**Nancy Slover**, our interim office assistant. Nancy came on to fill a need in the office, and had to learn very quickly how OBS worked. Now she sets up all the technical

*backend stuff in OBS, something she had no experience in whatsoever, but learned (on-the-fly, no less) how it all worked. She arrived at a critical moment, and has been a life-saver!*

***Fred Winter and Tim Wott.** Along with Debbie, Fred and Tim run the computers on Sunday morning. In the very beginning, I or Susan had to advance the scenes in OBS ourselves. Kyle started coming in to do it so Susan and I could focus on leading worship, and now Fred, Tim, and Debbie take turns running the programs on Sunday.*

***All of our musicians!** Whether you've come in to lead the assembly's songs as a soloist, or sang in one of the two half-choirs, or played an instrument, **YOU** have kept alive one of the great Lutheran traditions in worship, and that's our musical heritage. Being unable to be together and sing together has been heartbreaking, but your gifts of your voices and talents to our streams are often the highlight of the week.*

***Children's Messengers.** While many people are willing to record a video for worship, you go above and beyond. You don't just record a pre-written text, you craft a message on your own that resonates with children. It's not easy in-person, let alone remotely when you can't interact with the kids you're talking to, but you don't let it stop you. You're amazing!*

***Lastly, I want to thank everyone who has ever submitted a video to be included in worship since we started live-streaming in March.** What can I say? Your willingness to do this not only keeps alive the tradition of lay leadership in worship, but it also demonstrates your dedication to worshipping safely during this pandemic. Every Sunday you put your faces and your voices out there to remind us that we are not alone, that we are still worshipping together (albeit imperfectly), and that the church and this congregation will not die simply because we can't gather together like we used*

*to. Nobody wants to hear or watch me lead everything in worship by myself (and neither do I).*

*You have always—and I mean always—been supportive of what the folx putting together our live streams are doing. Even when it was rough. Even when things went wrong. Even when you were sick and tired of sitting at home watching worship on your screen instead of being in the building with everyone else around you. Your feedback and your graciousness have motivated us when things weren't going right and when we would have rather given up on a Sunday and stayed at home. Your thanks has been the best reward for all the hours we've put into streaming our worship. You constantly remind us that what we're doing is worth it and appreciated.*

*So, thank you. Thank you for sticking with us. Thank you for tuning in every Sunday, greeting each other, sending us your prayer requests, and continuing to support the mission and ministries of our congregation. Thank you for these last nine months of difficult and challenging, but ultimately wonderful and exciting online worship. I speak for everyone named above when I say that your openness and positive attitudes have made our jobs so much easier.*

*I did my very best to comb through the documents I had available to find the names of everyone who has contributed to our worship live streams in some way. It's a lot of names. These are the people who have made Sunday mornings possible. I am **positive there are some names missing**, either because I accidentally skipped over them or because they weren't recorded in the documents I had. **If your name is not here and it should be, please let me know!** You deserve the recognition and the thanks.*

*We're going to be worshipping online for a few more months, if current trends continue. It's not what we want, it's what we've got. But I'm confident—absolutely,*

*100% positive—that with people like you, it will not only be bearable, it will be phenomenal and life-giving.*

*Thanks be to God, for all of you. I love you.*

*Peace,*

*Pastor Ken*

### ***Worship Leadership***

*Pastor Ken Ranos  
Deacon Jody Winter  
Precentor Susan Powell  
Kerri Pickel, Student*

### ***Technology***

*Kyle Bredehoeft  
Debbie Ranos  
John Seest  
Nancy Slover  
Fred Winter  
Tim Wott*

### ***Coordination***

*Karen McCune  
Karen Rider  
Susie Swenson*

### ***“Jordan Buddies”***

*Sarah Slover  
Deacon Jody Winter*

### ***Soloists***

*Nathan Bouman  
Sara Jaax  
Maury Plambeck  
Todd Rainer  
Debbie Ranos  
Kent Steele  
Shelby Wehrenberg  
Claire White*

### ***Choir Members***

*Stephanie Barringer  
Tonya Bergenson  
Nathan Bouman  
Sarah Clark  
Carl & Norma Crabiel  
Caio Lopes  
Deb Lutyen  
Maury Plambeck  
Todd Rainer*

### ***Musicians***

*Susan Powell  
Heidi Radtke  
Tim Wott*

*Debbie Ranos  
John Seest  
Kent Steele  
Andy Swenson  
Sarah Tam  
Bev Todd  
Claire White*

### ***Children's Sermons***

*Bethany Champley  
Sarah Evans  
Natalie Goss  
Juanita Keck  
Becky Kendall  
Mary Loe  
Al Rider  
Jennifer Scharbrough  
Judy Simpson  
Susie Swenson  
Erik Tysklind  
Deacon Jody Winter*

### ***Other Videos***

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*Steve, Sherry, & Alicia Aaholm  
Barb & Kent Alder  
Stephanie Barringer  
Marty Benson  
Tonya Bergeson  
Kyle, Katie, Zazel, Ezekiel, & Ezra Bredehoeft  
Bill Brown  
Julie Keck & John, Nathan, & Bethany Champley  
Benjamin, Sarah, James, & Rowan Clark*



*Jennifer, Michael, Quinten, & Ali Demotte*  
*Karen Feder*  
*Natalie Goss & Marco II, Beatrice, Antonio III, Lucia, and Marta Ladron de Guevara*  
*CJ Haldeman*  
*Katie, Tim, Fitz, Felcie, Izzy, & Lewis Harber*  
*John Hazlett & Sarah & Levon Evans*  
*Brent Hege*  
*Art Hennig*  
*Ardy Hollingsworth*  
*Laura, Eli, & Luke Hreno*  
*Amy & Mayde Joss*  
*Becky Kendall*  
*Elliot, Stephanie, Sophia, & Benjamin Levine*  
*Monroe Little*  
*Deb Lutyen*  
*Sarah Morgan*  
*Shari Morgan*  
*Wendy Myres*  
*Karen & Ken McCune*  
*Gina, Jeff, Carter, & Griffin Mooers*  
*Audrey, Christopher, Charles, & John Olry*  
*John Pitts*  
*Rob Pritchard*  
*Heidi Radtke*  
*David Rees*  
*Al & Karen Rider*  
*Traci Rodgers*  
*Chuck & Eloise Scharbrough*  
*Dan and Jennifer Scharbrough*  
*Julie, Mike, & Madeline Smith*  
*Andy & Susie Swenson*  
*Sharon Swinford*  
*Bill, Nancy, William, & Sarah Slover*  
*Nancy Stephan*

*Sarah Tam*

*Candice, Josh, Lydia, Phoebe, & Noah Tatum*

*Abbi Todd*

*John, Bev Todd*

*Derek Urban*

*Janice & Jesse Vadas*

*Lori Van Every*

*Brent Vaughn*

*Courtney & Nick Vurva*

*Fred, Jody, Alex, & Delaney Winter*

*Claire Wood*

*MaryBeth & Tim Wott*

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