

Recording the Message

Four Easy Ways to Capture Services!

By Dani Teagarden

Getting a great-sounding recording of your worship services has never been as easy or affordable as it is today. In fact, there are a number of ways to do it, and they're all simple enough for any volunteer in your congregation to manage.

To choose the best way for your church to record, though, you'll want to think about the ways you intend to use these recordings. For example, would you like an extremely fast and affordable way to archive the message, or do you want to get ready for full-scale, radio-ready worship song productions? Whatever your goals may be, we'll walk you through four easy worship recording methods and help you determine which one is right for your church.

1. You Want to Record Services the Way the Congregation Heard Them on Sunday

Go with a palm-sized portable recorder. You can put these lightweight and compact gadgets right on a microphone stand, either up on the platform or back by the main mixer. Since there are microphones built in, when you push record, you'll be able to capture the service just the way the congregation heard it. Some even let you tailor the way the microphones pick up sound, so you can get a great sound whether you're recording the

entire worship team from far away or capturing a specific instrument up close.

Don't forget that, while these portable recorders are perfect for capturing your full services, they'll also come in handy in a number of ways throughout

the week. Because many recorders feature built-in speakers, they make it easy to review last week's services. This is a great feature for the worship leader who wants to go over portions of the previous week's service while working on a sermon for the upcoming week.

Once you've captured audio, it will be easy to transfer the files to your computer for editing, saving to a hard drive, e-mailing, or posting to your church's website. That's because these recorders feature a convenient USB computer connection — use the single included cable, and you're ready to go. Some recorders even feature an integrated USB cable, so they plug straight into your Mac or PC!

An alternative to the handheld portable recorder variety is a standalone recorder. If all you want is to capture the sound in the room, then you can put up a pair of microphones, plug them right into one of these units, and hit record — you'll be set. (For this task, we suggest a small-diaphragm "pencil" condenser microphone. These are on page 16.) A major benefit of this type of recorder is its very intuitive layout, which is much like a mixer's; there's a fader, a knob, or a button for each task, so any volunteer will feel comfortable working with the unit. Best of all, many of these recorders can be all-in-one, 100% computer-free recording and small-scale duplication solutions for your church. Using the built-in effects, you can polish up and edit your worship sound, then immediately burn a CD using the CD burner that's right on the unit. Many pastors enjoy this feature because they listen to the last worship service in the car, either on the way home or throughout the week. The CD burner also makes it easy to archive each week's worship services for safekeeping — just organize the recordings in an affordable CD binder.

Handheld Recorder
See More on
Pages 60-61.



Edirol R-09HR
Capture great-sounding recordings anywhere!

\$299⁹⁶

To Learn More, Go to Page 61.

Zoom R16

Here's an all-in-one recording system!

\$399⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 63.



Standalone Recorder
See More on
Pages 62-64.

Call us today at (800) 222-4700



Rackmountable Recorders
See More on Page 74.

Marantz PMD560
One-button solution
records up to 36 hours!

\$499⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 74.

2. You Want a Fantastic-sounding, Volunteer-simple Solution That's Connected to Your Main Mixer

Choose a rackmountable recorder. These recorders are designed for installation right next to your church's primary mixer. Instead of using microphones, rackmountable recorders take a "feed" from your church's mixer. For example, if your mixer has a set of auxiliary outputs, you can easily send the same signal you're sending through the main PA speakers right to your rackmountable recorder. There are a couple of varieties available.

When your goal is to get a CD ready for very fast duplication, you'll want a direct-to-CD recorder. Some even allow you to connect a QWERTY keyboard so that you can add track names. If you pair a rackmountable CD recorder with an affordable CD-duplication system (see our article on duplication on page 78), you can have copies ready to sell or distribute just a few minutes after services. These all-in-one CD-recording systems offer the same benefit as the standalone recording solutions we discussed earlier, in that many worship leaders love having that CD available right after the last service of the day.

Our other rackmountable solutions record to CompactFlash cards or built-in hard drives. You can easily connect these units to your computer to transfer files when you need to free up storage space. Whichever type you go with, the main benefit here is that you can easily get the clean, clear sound right off of your mixer, yet you still have the ability to go in and make subtle adjustments to the audio. The sound of the congregation will also be less audible since you're not recording "the room"; you're recording the sound straight from the microphones on the platform.

3. You Want a Mixer That's Great for Everyday Use But Can Connect to Your Computer for Recording

Mixers with built-in recording outputs are becoming more and more popular — and we can understand why. These mixers plug right into your computer and then record straight into popular audio editing and production software (see pages 65–71). With the affordability and rapid speed of today's laptop and desktop computers, this is a viable solution for the modern church. Because your volunteers will need a basic knowledge of how to set up recording software,

though, the learning curve does go up a bit — but the benefits here are many.

Record-ready Mixers
See More on Pages 32-34.

With this setup, your church's main everyday mixer doubles as a recording solution, so you can cut down on extra gear, cabling, and expense. The mixer will function just as you need it to from day to day, but you'll have the option to connect it to a computer via USB or FireWire when you'd like to record. You can choose between a mixer that captures a basic stereo recording or one that outputs individual tracks of each channel on the mixer. The major benefit of individual track recordings is that you'll be able to later edit them inside recording software, so you can make adjustments to individual instrument and vocal sounds instead of the basic stereo sound. That way, if the balance of the worship team instruments wasn't quite right on Sunday, you'll still be able to fine-tune the levels down the line.

Digidesign 003 Rack
Expandable recording interface
includes Pro Tools LE software!

\$1199⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 71.



Audio Interfaces
See More on Pages 70-73.

4. You Want Studio-quality Recordings, Ready for Professional Production with Your Mac or PC

You need an audio interface solution. What an audio interface does is take individual track feeds from your mixer and send all of that audio information to your computer. Just as with a record-ready mixer, an audio interface connects to your computer via a FireWire connection or a USB connection, and it requires recording software to operate. Many of these interfaces come with basic recording software programs, however, so you may be ready to record right out of the box. Of course, it's always wise to upgrade to software that can perform at the level your church demands. If you choose a recording software program (pages 65–71), we do have a number of DVD tutorials and educational books available to help your church quickly get up and running with your new software.

Audio interfaces range in size, just as mixers do — you can choose very small solutions for capturing services with just acoustic guitar and voice. You can also capture very large multitrack recordings. One thing to keep in mind is that to use an audio interface you'll need a mixer that has direct outputs on every channel, or one that at least has a series of auxiliary outputs. You can use the aux outputs to send your main and/or submixed signals to the interface — maybe you want to record drums, choir, keyboard, guitar, and the pastor. Then you can mix just those signals later down the line.

Taking the Next Step

The recording possibilities for today's church are truly exciting. Whatever your church's ambitions are, there's a system that's right for you. Here at Sweetwater, your Sales Engineer is available to develop a system that best meets your goals and fits nicely in your budget. To learn more, call (800) 222-4700. We're here to help.



PreSonus StudioLive 16.4.2
Powerful mixer connects right
to your Mac or PC!

\$1999⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 32.