

FREQUENTLY ASKED COPYRIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST HYMNALS

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1. My church is going to show words to hymns on a monitor during our live-streamed services. Do we need permission to show the words to the hymns on the monitor?

Yes. The publishers of **New Century Hymnal** and **Sing! Prayer and Praise** negotiated use of and paid for copyrighted material with the various copyright holders—publishing houses or individuals—to publish the songs in the hymnals. Every time a hymnal is sold, the various copyright holders get paid a royalty. The copyright permission does not extend further than that; an individual church, though it owns a hymnal, cannot reproduce or stream copyrighted material from that hymnal into an electronic or paper bulletin, onto a screen during an in-person worship service, onto a monitor during a remote service, or into a video without further permission.

There is no blanket permission to reproduce or stream **copyrighted** material published in our hymnals, **New Century Hymnal** or **Sing! Prayer and Praise**. Music which is in the **Public Domain, that is, no longer under copyright**, may be reproduced and streamed.

2. How does my church obtain permission?

Your church needs to obtain a license from the copyright holder. This can be done by contacting the copyright holder directly, or by using a music licensing service (see #3).

In **New Century Hymnal** the copyright index begins on page 888. If the hymn number is not listed there, the song is in the public domain. All other music is copyrighted with details given. **Sing! Prayer and Praise** includes copyright information at the bottom of each song.

3. What is a music licensing service and how does it work?

Copyrighted music is licensed with a service to ensure that the copyright owners are compensated for their work. Churches can subscribe to music licensing services, such as OneLicense.net or CCLI. Through the license you purchase limited rights to use the music without obtaining a separate agreement for each song. To see if the song you want to use is covered by the service, you will need to go to the licensing site and look up the song in the service's catalog to see if it is covered; if it is, then you report your use of copyrighted material to the licensing service, and the service distributes the royalties. If it is not covered, then you will need to get a license directly from the copyright holder, unless the song is in the public domain.

Most of the music used in **NCH** and **Sing! Prayer and Praise** is licensed under OneLicense.net, which specializes in hymnody. CCLI (Christian Copyright License International) specializes in contemporary praise music.

The music licensing fee is an annual fee. Congregations should factor license fees to their annual budgets as a routine expense.

4. Isn't there a way that the denomination could get a blanket permission for all UCC Local Churches to display words to hymns on screens or reproduce the words in bulletins for purposes of worship?

Copyright law doesn't work that way. The Pilgrim Press and United Church Press honored their copyright obligations by negotiating and paying for copyrighted material to be included in the hymnals. As long as the hymnal owners are sticking with the books, they are fine, but once they reproduce or stream the copyrighted works, different laws apply. Licensing services make this easy—they are well worth the fee (which is prorated according to congregation size).