YAMAHA
Make Waves

EASTER

LET'S GET PREPARED

Churches are getting ready and planning for one of the biggest holidays of their year, Easter. Some will produce large productions, while others will offer more intimate services of sharing communion and reflecting on the true meaning of the holiday. One thing that is common for all of them—they all want and need everything to work as they planned it.

Although each church is unique in how it presents the message of Easter, whether big, medium, or small, they will all put a tremendous amount of time, energy, and preparation into making sure that their gathering is full of meaning and wonder. Traditionally, more energy is spent producing Easter and Christmas services than any other service throughout the year. It is with good reason because those are also the most well-attended gatherings of the year.

As Easter approaches, it may be easy to sit back and meet the creative team's needs as they submit them, or you can be proactive and make sure your team is ready for the big event.

The following is a list of things to check to make sure your Easter event goes just the way it was planned.

First, a few things to be aware of:

DON'T PUT OFF TOMORROW - WHAT CAN BE DONE TODAY

Do not add unneeded stress by leaving things for the last minute. Ensure all your church media needs are taken care of ahead of time. The last thing you need is having to call tech support for system failures the night before. Plan and execute a thorough run-through of the full service with the production team, giving yourself time to fix any system failures or glitches. Just like musicians practice and prepare, the production and tech teams must do the same.

SOFTWARE

Your system(s) relies heavily on software and computers; make sure all software is up to date. If needed, create a checklist that includes computer OS version numbers and available updates, include media presentation software, digital mixing console updates, and version numbers. Verify that any updates from any component will continue to work with computer OS versions, Dante, etc. In some cases, you may need to reload an older version of Operating Software to get a component to work correctly in your system. Double-check with manufacturer websites for any updates and downloads, as well as any warnings or cautions. Do not upgrade software on any component unless you have enough time to fix any issues before your rehearsals.

REPLACE UNRELIABLE TECH

If you have equipment or software that has been creating problems recently, this is an excellent time to replace it. You need every piece of the service to run smoothly and do not need faulty tech taking away from the service that everyone has come to experience.

SAY THANK YOU

A lot of work goes into preparing and serving on one of the busiest Sundays of the year. Show your team appreciation by saying thank you and acknowledging their sacrifice to serve.

SAMPLE PRODUCTION TECH TEAM TIMELINE:

AUDIO

1)   **30 days** – An audio engineer(s) should audit the entire sound system. Identify hums, feedback, microphone quality, new battery supplies, and cabling. Place any orders for needed replacements. If you have translation or accessibility equipment, that should be checked and audited as well. Create a well-organized "Punch List" of things that need to be completed.

2)   **15 days** – Make sure everything on the "Punch List" has been fixed and/or replaced. Church volunteers and the worship team should meet simultaneously to prepare and stay in sync together. Make sure everyone is up to date on how to run the audio tech they are assigned to, especially if it's new. Use this time to answer any other questions volunteers may have.

3)   **Week of** – Run a full sound check and dress rehearsal. Make sure you have plenty of time on the morning of Easter to rehearse, identify and fix any other glitches.

LIGHTING

1)   **30 Days** – Audit all the lighting in the sanctuary, including fixed ceiling lights. Walk your sanctuary and take note of lights that are out, light bulbs that are the wrong colors, and any stage lights that need replacing. Consider whether any lights need to be moved or relocated altogether. If required, make plans to have a correct height ladder or scissor lift available to replace bad bulbs or reposition lights hung on truss work.

2)   **15 Days** - Start fine-tuning lighting scenes for the Easter presentation. If you are renting gear for the service, make sure you are familiar with the models they are sending. If needed, try to set up a gear demo to eliminate last-minute learning. Also, gather your

lighting volunteer(s) and do a quick re-training to answer any remaining questions they may have.

3)   **Week of** – Continue to test the lighting system while doing a few run-throughs.

PROJECTOR & COMPUTER CHECK

1)   **30 Days** – Audit all projectors/LED walls and ensure everything is working correctly. If any of the projector bulbs are high on hours operated, it's probably a good time to go ahead and replace them. Make sure to order extra bulbs to have on hand for Easter morning.

2)   **15 Days** – If they have been created, load sermon slides, videos, sermon notes and check for any incompatibilities. If possible, get a recording of the band/choir performing the service so volunteers can practice timing. Ensure the media computer is up-to-date and turn off auto-updates; you do not want an update triggering at the last minute. Take this week to meet with church media volunteers to do a quick re-training session and answer any questions they may have.

3)   Week of – Run through the service and all the media and make sure nothing is missing. Additionally, it would be a good idea to triple-check everything with the Worship Leader.

STREAMING

1)   **30 Days** – If you already live stream services, double-check, and audit all the equipment point-to-point. Check with the volunteers for any issues they have experienced when operating the gear. Carefully note the glitches or problems and start fixing them. If you plan to add live streaming for this service, it is strongly recommended that you use an experienced System Integrator to make sure the system will be adequate for your needs and seamlessly work with your systems.

2)   **15 Days** – By now, all issues that need fixing should be complete. Start setting camera positions and overall camera scenes. If possible, create a live camera "Go-To" script to be used during the live performance. Make sure you know your streaming software backward and forwards. Also, reconfirm that the platform you use for people to view the stream does not have any restrictions or copyright rules that could result in the stream being shut down mid-service. Finally, make time to meet with volunteers to do a quick re-training session and answer any remaining questions they may have.

3)   **Week of** – Test the stream and confirm video and audio quality.

MAKE SURE TO:

BACKUP CRITICAL FILES

If you have any files that are not hosted in the cloud, you should have them backed up on at least two hard drives and the cloud if possible. Be prepared for disaster to come in any form, especially on big days.

HAVE ENOUGH REMOVABLE MEDIA

Take an inventory of your supplies and ensure that you have enough media to cover all the technology that may require it. No tech station should have to share removable media with any other station.

MEET WITH THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP EARLY AND OFTEN

It is crucial that all parts of the production are in sync with the message that senior leadership is trying to get across for this service. Meeting with an effective agenda, asking questions, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page will go a long way in creating a great production team and excellent service.

BE PREPARED FOR MURPHY'S LAW

Anything that can go wrong will go wrong; there is no way to plan for everything. Knowing that there is a backup or contingency plan can go a long way in keeping things under control. What happens if the power goes out? What happens if the sound console fails? What happens if a microphone on stage fails? All these kinds of failures can occur but planning to address them and making sure all the team, those on stage and behind, are well informed could mean the difference between an effective service or a complete failure.

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