

A guide to
Filming Worship Services

and other

Unitarian Events
with

UKunitarianTV



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This guide has been written to help congregations who are going to have a service filmed for the internet. It has been compiled by some of those involved in *UKunitarianTV*.

The guide is intended to:

- Optimise the quality of films produced
- Make it a positive experience for the congregation
- Minimise the editing time after the event

1. Purpose of Filming

The purpose of filming is to enable people who may be interested in joining us, see a Unitarian service at safe distance. Walking into a church for the first time takes a lot of courage and people are worried that they are going to find strange people doing very odd things and pressure new-comers into doing things that they do not wish to do. Seeing a service on film or hearing people talking about their faith, will give someone a great deal of information to work out if they wish to attend a service or at least find out more. Many new members of a congregation will say that they had no idea what a Unitarian service was like before they started to attend and many will admit that what they found was far more normal than they expected. We know British people who have started attending services having watched American Unitarian services available on the internet.

The UK Unitarian community has many members isolated from congregations. Providing online worship material provides a service to these people.

We have found it really helps to explain to a congregation or group why we are producing a film.



2. Film Crews

The filming is carried out by one of three crews. These are run by Kevin Lowe of Dukinfield in the Manchester area, John Wilkinson in Derbyshire and James Barry in Sussex. Please do not think that if your congregation is some distance from all of these places that it means that filming can not occur. All three often travel around for a number of reasons and it is sometimes possible to visit a church on a journey.

Both Kevin and John have travelling accommodation.



Kevin Lowe, John and Joan Wilkinson and James Barry

3. Congregational Concerns

Our experience so far has shown that some members of a congregation may have concerns about filming a service. They consider it a very personal experience and don't wish to have outsiders watching. We have found it helps to explain why the filming is happening and what it is attempting to achieve as detailed above. It should be stressed that we are doing this primarily to help the congregation, not UKunitarianTV.

If the congregation has members who can no longer attend worship, it might be useful to explain that a DVD of the service can be made available for them to watch. Copies can also be kept at the back of the church and can be handed to anyone who may wish to view the service.

The *UKunitarianTV* crew are very willing to discuss any concerns with either the worship leader or members of the congregation if required.

We suggest that you try and turn the experience into a celebration - an opportunity for other Unitarians to see your Church at its best - encourage the congregation to bring a friend. Statements like 'this is our version of Songs of Praise' will help.

UKunitarianTV
www.ukunitarian.tv

What is going to happen to the film?

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If you have any concerns please do contact me on 07770 441088 or at jbarry@kyla.co.uk.

Thank you for helping with this film.

James Barry
UKunitarianTV Chair

4. Permissions

From a legal perspective, it is important to warn the congregation that filming will be taking place before the day to give them the option not to attend. Of course we hope this doesn't happen as it is important to have as many people in the church as possible and we feel it is all a positive experience.

It should be explained that our experience has shown that we do need to include the congregation in the film. Just holding the shot on the worship leader gets very boring. If you watch programmes like 'Songs of Praise' you will see that they are continually changing from one camera to another to keep it interesting.

If anyone under the age of 18 attends your church, you will need to get their parent/carer to sign a very simple consent form as shown below. If the child is brought by a grandparent, or very close friend of the parent, who is considered to have 'loco-parentis' status, they can sign. It might be very difficult to edit out the child after filming. If possible get parents to sign the form a couple of weeks before the day of filming to ensure it is done - the day itself will be very hectic. The form is at the end of this document.

UKunitarianTV
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Permission to Film Child

I give permission for my child _____ to appear in the Unitarian film created today. I understand that the film will be used to promote the Unitarianism and will available on the internet. The child's name will not be given.

Date _____ Parent/Carer _____

5. Site Visit

If possible it is better to have a site visit with the worship leaders and the UKunitarianTV crew before the day of filming. Many things need to be discussed including:

Camera positions

It is much better if the cameras are not seen in the finished film, so their location is very important. It might be that there are people who do not wish to be filmed, so it is important to work out where they can sit. While the cameras can work on batteries, it is much better if we can get mains power to the location of each camera.

Mixing Desk

It might be necessary to set up a mixing desk where audio and video signals can be mixed. The location of this piece of equipment needs to be decided. Mains power is required.

Link to Audio System

If the church has an audio sound system, either for a PA or a loop system, it is important they that the crew see this equipment to work out how they are going to record the sound. It might be that a special adapter is required.

Service Structure

It is important that the crew have an idea of what is going to happen during the service to ensure a good recording. For example the location of people when they speak, how many different people there will be, which musical instruments are to be used and if the sound they make will be picked up by any loop system, etc.

Where people sit

It is very typical for churches to fill up from the back and to have many pews at the front empty. This looks very sad on film and it is very important to show as many people as possible. If the church looks half empty it gives a very negative message to anyone viewing



the film. While we do not wish to give a completely unrealistic idea of the number of people attending, we do need to do the best we can. This might mean roping off a few of the pews at the back to bring people nearer to the front.

6. Filming a Service

There are many small things that can be done in the service to ensure a good quality film. These include:

Candles of Joys and Concerns

Candles of joy and concerns are very personal stories and it is very unlikely many will be happy for them to be filmed. While the stories might be interesting to those who know the people involved, it is not to outsiders.

Hymns that are Known

Please try and pick hymns that are well known so they can be sung with enthusiasm.

Personal References

While it would normally be suitable to bring individuals into a sermon, or other parts of the service, these will mean nothing to outsiders. Church notices will be edited out of the broadcast, but do bare them in mind if the broadcast is going out live - then it will not be possible to edit them out.

Sermon Content

It is much better to select a subject that is something which explains where Unitarianism is different to other religions. Light and fun is better than intellectual and heavy. Bear in mind that the recording will be watched several months after the day of filming so any references to an event in the religious calendar will be lost.

Avoid Distractions

One of the rules of producing a good video is to ensure that there is nothing to distract the viewer. This could be something odd in the background, a bad habit of the presenter, poor audio or video quality etc. Any of these mean that the person watching becomes more interested or intrigued with the distraction and not with what they are meant to be watching. Wearing horizontal stripes or checks can create a strange 'banding' effect on video which can also be distracting, plain colours or large block colours are better. Women should understand that without make-up they can look very pale.

Dirty Washing

Please remember that *UKunitarianTV* is not a vehicle for dirty washing, it is to show the best of the Unitarian movement.

Where to Look

There are two distinctive filming styles. One of these is where the presenter is looking straight at the camera as if they were talking to the viewer on a one-to-one basis. When filming services we are using the other style, where the viewer is a fly on the wall and it is as if they are not present. What is very important is not to mix up these styles, which will happen if you look straight into the camera. So while it is important that you look up as much as possible, keep eye contact with the congregation as usual.

Mistakes and Errors

UKunitarianTV is not currently transmitting services live. This means that everything is edited afterwards before being made available. If you make a mistake while delivering a reading or sermon, for example you muddle up your words, just stop, state you are going to say it again and go back to the start of the sentence. We can edit out the part we do not want and cover the 'cut' with a shot of the congregation.

Good Audio

Getting good audio in a large church is extremely difficult. If the microphone is more than a foot away from the speaker's mouth, it will not be good quality. We will need to ensure that anyone speaking during the service can be recorded. This might mean moving them to a lectern with a microphone or asking them to wear a radio microphone.

Tasks on the Day of Filming

Notices

On the day it is important to have notices displayed to ensure members of the congregation understand that they could appear on a video which will be available on the internet. An example of the type of notice is shown at the back of this guide.

Information

The *UKunitarianTV* crew try and ensure that there are some information sheets with details about where the film will be shown. This will ensure the congregation feel more involved. An example is shown at the end of this guide.

Seating

As mentioned before, empty pews or seats look very poor so it might be considered wise to rope off an area towards the back of the church to ensure people sit further forward. Wardens can also encourage people to seat near the front.

7. Other Filming Services

'Why I go to Church' Interview Films

As well as recording the service, we have tried to interview members of the congregation asking them why they attend the church. From these we create a short film only 3 to 4 minutes long which tries to encourage people to come to your church. The idea is that we hope those being interviewed may say things which resonate with members of the public. For example someone might say, "I left my last Church because I was not allowed to question some of the things I was told I had to believe - here they welcome questions and I am not told what I must think." If someone watching feels the same way, they might decide to research 'Unitarianism' on the internet or even consider coming to the church.

As it is normally quite chaotic after a service, we have found it best to ask key members of the congregation before the day if they are happy to be interviewed. The two basic questions we normally ask are "Why do you come to a Church on a Sunday?" and "What is it about a Unitarian Church that you like?" It is good to try and get a good mix of people, normally five or six is a good number.



Promotional Films

UKunitarianTV is happy to consider creating a film to promote any aspect of the Unitarian movement. To date we have created films for The Nightingale centre, Unitarian College Manchester, London District, Simple Gifts and many for the youth department.

We have studio equipment with a 'green' screen system allowing us to create branded footage as seen below.

If your Unitarian society, or group, want to promote themselves or a particular event, do contact us.



The Auto-Cue

The auto-cue is an essential piece of kit if the film is in a 'talking-head' format and the person is looking straight into the camera.

Without the auto-cue, the presenter either have to remember the whole script or if they are reading it they cannot be looking directly into the camera. Even if the script is placed very close to the camera, it is still very obvious that the person is not looking down the lens.

Currently UKunitarianTV has one auto-cue that is normally located in Derbyshire, but we are looking to purchase a second one very soon.



Event Filming and Webcasting

If you are running a Unitarian event, do consider asking *UKunitarianTV* if it can be filmed or even webcast.

Creating a film can have many advantages.

- It will help get the message and information discussed across to far more people than those who managed to attend the event.
- It is a great trailer of a follow up event.
- It gives you as the organiser feedback presentations.

UKunitarianTV has broadcast some events live and have found it adds an exciting new dimension to an activity. It is better if the location has internet access, but it is possible to transmit an event on a dongle.

If a webcast is not going to be particularly interesting to members of the public, it is normally broadcast to the www.uccn.org.uk web site, as this is more for Unitarian activists.

The YouTube account has several films by Rev Peter Owen-Jones that have all had about 1,000 views.



8. What Happens After Filming

Editing

A service filmed by multiple cameras can take about 8-12 hours. With shorter films where there are many edits, we estimate it takes about 1 hour for every minute of finished film. This means that it doesn't happen straight away, but we can keep you posted on the progress we make.

Once Completed

Once the film is finished it is normally added to the Ukunitarians *YouTube* account. We will then contact the worship leader and ask them to check the film to ensure they are happy. This really needs to be done quite quickly, because although we will not promote the film, we do have subscribers on *YouTube* who will watch new films we added to our account.

If you are not happy with any aspect of the film, we can remove it from *YouTube* and re-edit it. We try and do this only once as after an edit the film has to be 'rendered' and on a film of a service this can take about 4 hours of computer time.

Once you are happy with the film it is possible to send out a link to enable people to watch it, or it can be embedded on a web site. It is important not to do either of these until we are sure that the film is not going to be taken down, re-edited and uploaded again, because this gives it different link and embed codes.

The film will also be added to the '*Show Guide*' on demand feature of the main UKunitarianTV website: www.ukunitarian.tv. Normally we will also feature it on the 'New this month' facility, which means it will be seen automatically by anyone watching the channel without using the 'on demand' facility.

Issues and Problems

If there is an issue with any footage, it is very important that you contact us as quickly as possible so the situation can be resolved. The group aims to providing a useful service to other Unitarian groups and wishes filming to be a positive experience.

9. Information and Forms

Copyright

While technically the copyright of the film is with *UKunitarianTV*, the group has been set up to work with Unitarian congregations and other groups and making the films available to anyone wishing to promote Unitarian values.

Music Licence

We have a '*Limited Online Music Licence*' to allow us to have music in our films.

Insurance

UKunitarianTV has its own public liability insurance through David Edwards Insurance.

Contact

The Chair of *UKunitarianTV* is James Barry who can be reached on jbarry@kyla.co.uk or 07770 441088

Costs

UKunitarianTV does not normally charge for producing a film but all donations are very welcome as this is our only form of income.

UKunitarianTV

sharing unitarian values

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Thank you for helping with this film.

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UKunitarianTV Chair

Filming
today for the
Unitarian
internet based
TV channel
www.ukunitarian.tv

Filming Here Soon

A crew from
www.ukunitarian.tv
will be coming soon to this
church to create a film to help
with publicity.

For more details please talk to
a member of the committee.