November 14, 2021

Top Ten Tips for Avoiding Copyright Infringement

1. Remember that copyright infringement is 100% preventable.
2. Owning a copy of the work doesn’t give you the right to copy a work!
3. Purchase the appropriate blanket license or licenses for your church’s music licensing needs and follow the terms of those licenses.
4. Be cautious and attentive to licensing concerns when considering use of videos.
5. Contact authors or publishers to obtain licenses to use poetry, speeches, or other literature in your worship services and other events, whether in-person or live-streamed.
6. Do not post photographs that you find on the internet on your church’s website. Use photographs that are owned by the church.
7. Keeping infringing materials off your website and social media platforms is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of infringement.
8. Hyperlinking on websites and in emails and using the share functions on social media are ways to share the works of others without copyright infringement. Don’t copy and paste!
9. Attribution is necessary when using the works of others, but not enough to avoid infringement. Get a license.
10. Do not ignore a takedown notice or you might waive important rights.

Remember that compensation for use of a creative work is a justice issue.

Excerpted from Copyrights Compliance: What Churches Need to Know, by Heather Kimmel, General Counsel, United Church of Christ