GCI CHURCH HACKS

Setting Up Wifi for Your Congregation's Needs

One thing we heard a lot just before our 2021 Virtual Celebration was, "We just don't have internet where we meet." But what if you did? What could you do if you did have internet where you meet? Having it during our Celebration would have meant you could have met in a group to share the experience. You could live stream your service so that people who can't normally attend could worship with you. But isn't internet expensive?

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

That's where Mobile Beacon comes in.

» They offer discounted mobile hotspots to non-profits.

» This allows your church to have internet wherever you are. It probably won't be as fast or as reliable as a hardwired connection, but it's internet.

» There are limitations, and if you are using it to live stream, you will want to restrict connections to the hotspot to those computers that need to be connected to make it work so your bandwidth is stable enough to do it.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

» First, know that it runs on T-Mobile's network. If you have a regular meeting location, you will want to verify that you have coverage before doing anything. You can do that easily here: https://www.t-mobile.com/coverage/coverage-map. T-Mobile has pretty good coverage in most areas, but as with any wireless network, there are spots where the coverage just doesn't work well. If you know someone with a phone on T-Mobile, have them check their coverage inside the meeting location.

» You will also need to set up an account with TechSoup to manage your Mobile Beacon. See the "Getting Started" section for more information.

GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL

GRACECOMMUNION

WEAREGCI

BUT HOW MUCH IS THIS GOING TO COST US?

Here is what you'll end up paying:

» $15 TechSoup admin fee

» $336 5G hostspot

» $120 1 year of internet service

Note that the $15 and $336 are one-time charges. After that, you pay the $120 per year for internet service. It's a great value for what it provides.

GETTING STARTED

» Your church will need an account at TechSoup. https://www.techsoup.org/. Unless your church is incorporated, you will need to join as a "branch" of Grace Communion International. You will need a copy of the GCI IRS determination letter and a statement that you are covered by our group exemption. You can get those by emailing legal.office@gci.org.

» Once you have a TechSoup account, you will need to purchase the HotSpot for Mobile Beacon product. https://www.techsoup.org/mobile-beacon. TechSoup will send you instructions for ordering your HotSpot and service. We would recommend you order the 5G hotspot.