



Asbury United Methodist Church Lighting Director Tim Ottley reviews the video room setup shortly after the install was completed in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

# Significant Video Upgrades Achieved at Oklahoma Church

Expansive upgrades allowed church to transition from standard definition and add standalone video room. **BY ANDRES CAAMANO**

**A**BOUT 17 YEARS ago, Asbury United Methodist Church, had video technology in what was then a new worship space that more than met their needs.

Over time the church progressively upgraded their worship technology in the sanctuary, however, much of the video gear originally installed in the space remained largely unchanged.

As described by Asbury's video director, George Schulze, "We were so far behind in our media, with a (camera) system which was originally in this facility when it first opened in January 2002." The church's video switcher had also been aging, he adds,

since it was installed a year or two after the building opened.

With the help of Ford AV senior vice president Bryan Burdick, a longtime member of the church, as well as an AV volunteer, the firm has worked with the church on various audio, video and lighting installation projects over the last two-plus decades. The most recent project, which included Ford AV replacing the dated video switcher and video cameras, resulted in the new system going live during the week of an open house at the church, on Sept. 29.

Among the various items featured in the install included an expansive selection of

Blackmagic Design products, such as three URSA 4k Broadcast Cameras, an ATEM 4 M/E Broadcast Studio 4K production switcher (SWATEMRRW4), along with four Sony PTZ cameras (two SRG-300HPC5 and two SRG-300SE units), three fixed position Marshall CV345 cameras, to go with a series of AJA Video Systems converters.

Schulze noted that originally the video install project was to be completed sometime in August. Despite issues with scheduling conflicts and paperwork before work began, Preston Pinkepank, the church's audio director notes, "(Ford AV) graciously fit us in for the hardest part, and it only took about four weeks for the technical people on-site." Bur-



Asbury United Methodist Church staff member sitting in the front row, upper left, is handling switching for the livestream. Center front row, a staff member is handling switching for the worship space. To their right, a staff member is coordinating worship lyrics.



One of two Blackmagic Design URSA 4K Broadcast Cameras are shown set up along the back wall of the worship space.

dick explains that the project's timeline was impacted in part by having "to work around the church's existing services." Despite those challenges, no delays or cancellations of services occurred during the project.

As part of the most recent improvements at Asbury - a church which typically runs close to 2,500 attendees across three Sunday morning services - the camera upgrades allowed the church to move away from standard definition, and to create a standalone video room.

Among the items added to the new room are 65-inch and 55-inch Samsung television screens, each working multiviewer feeds, to capture the various views by the cameras in the worship space. In addition, a station was created featuring a Blackmagic Design ATEM Camera Control Panel (SWPANLC-CU4), which handles iris, black level and color control for the three URSA cameras.

With the Blackmagic switcher set up in the room, as described by Pinkepank, one of the benefits is that it can run up to four simultaneous outs. With that capability, the church now has "two simultaneous outs, one for the video room that goes to our projectors, and the second to the livestream, to the web." In addition, the switcher's abilities will allow the church to work around, he adds, "those times when we can't get all eight of our volunteers for an event," allowing one to run PTZs, livestream and graphics from a remote location, if necessary.

In the worship space, the biggest change came courtesy of the Blackmagic Design cameras, paired with Fujifilm MS-01 lenses, providing a much longer zoom reach. As a result, it allowed the main camera positions to be moved from the middle of the room, to the back wall.

Beyond just a stronger zoom, the church now has at its fingertips an array of new angles courtesy of the third URSA camera set up to move around easily, along with the angles captured by the Sony and Marshall cameras, offering action and crowd shots previously not possible before. "With the new



Equipment installed in the video room space at Asbury United Methodist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma is shown in a rack, including a Blackmagic Design ATEM 4 M/E Broadcast Studio 4K production switcher.

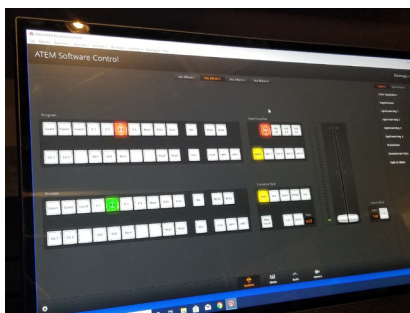
lenses, we can technically get closer than we were able to ever before," added Pinkepank.

As explained by Burdick, with the previous setup camera setup, "if (a congregant was) behind a camera operator, their view would be partially blocked. Now, it is very clean, from what it was," with the number of cameras for the new system increasing from three, to 10 now in the space with the new configuration.

Despite the new main cameras being significantly further back in the space, for those viewing services online, Pinkepank shares that with the improved zoom capabilities, "No one noticed, when we had cameras moved to the back wall, versus being in the middle of the auditorium, having moved them back 60 feet."

The wiring for the cameras in the space was also upgraded with a great degree of flexibility in mind, as Burdick adds, "All the camera runs are fiber, and the pan-tilt devices have HD-SDI connections, where it can be upgraded to 4K in the future."





A view of Blackmagic Design's ATEM Software Control is shown on a screen in Asbury UMC's video room.

In terms of what part of the project was the most challenging, both Pinkepank and Burdick each referenced one particular PTZ camera position, with Burdick stating, "The eye in the sky was a bit of a challenge as there was no conduit (for the wiring), while Pinkepank noted, "The most difficult part was with the PTZ camera being stationed on our 35-foot balcony ceiling."

With a month-plus since the upgrades were finished, Schulze adds, "It's been going very well. While there have been some quirks, overall the volunteers have really picked up (working with the new gear)."

By Asbury opting to go with Blackmagic Design for a large portion of the gear chosen for this project, Burdick explains that the church was able to go further in meeting

A view of the recently completed video room, which features Samsung television screens, and Blackmagic Design video gear.



their needs, purchasing "products that are cost effective and of excellent quality," while keeping the overall price down on the project, which amounted to around \$200,000.

In describing some of the goals of the completed project, Burdick says, "They wanted the ability to have it in-house to run a switcher, to show the screens in the sanctuary, and another switcher that shows what is being displayed on the internet."

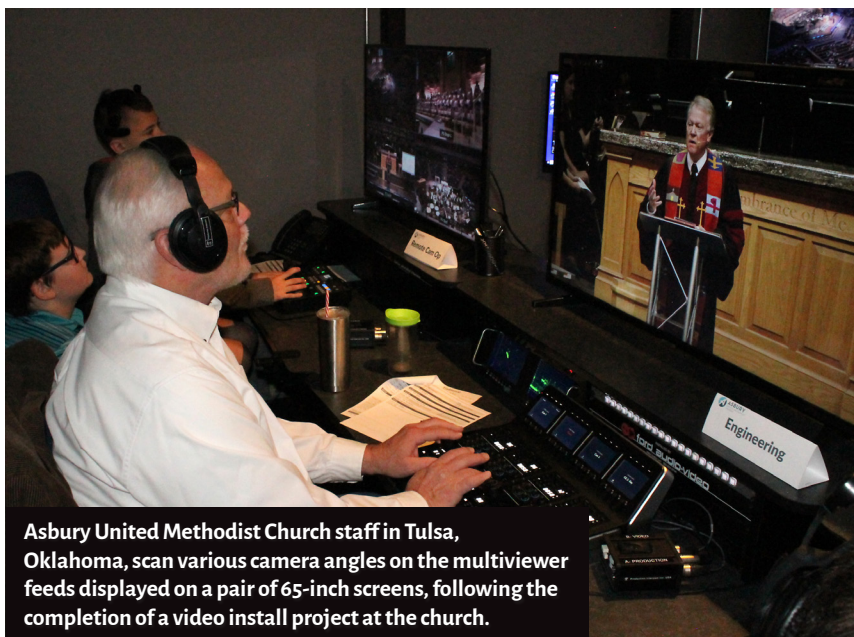
Prior to the recent upgrades, the video system was run through a single switcher, tasked with displaying the same content,

The viewing experience online, and in the (worship space), is a night and day difference."

—George Schulze.

whether one was in the worship space or watching a service online. With the install of ATEM 4 M/E Broadcast Studio 4K in the video room, "The viewing experience online, and in the (worship space), is a night and day difference," Schulze explains and adds, "It's a cool sight to see, when the room is packed, getting the angles that we could not get with our old system. This year we will even be able to see everything during our upcoming Christmas services, including the facial expressions when a parent is lighting a child's candle."

Talking further about how things have changed since the upgrade, Pinkepank elaborates, "We wanted you to feel engaged with what is happening on a Sunday (with the updated system). If you go and watch (an archived worship service), before the install, it feels like you could be recording it in a live studio." The upgrades have resulted in an improved experience. Now you can get shots of our audience, where they can now feel like they are part of the community. All while still providing the closeness and the nearness for those who are there." **WF**



Asbury United Methodist Church staff in Tulsa, Oklahoma, scan various camera angles on the multiviewer feeds displayed on a pair of 65-inch screens, following the completion of a video install project at the church.