New Space Opens with Notable Updates for Florida Church

by Andres Caamano | AVL Projects, Case Studies

ORLANDO – For Discovery Church, based in central Florida, massive change came after moving from its longtime Orange Avenue venue to its new Sand Lake location in February.

The campus had been at the same site for 25 years. That was before Discovery took up a new home in a rehabbed facility that once was a Sports Authority.

A view of Discovery Church in Orlando, Florida during the church's grand opening worship in February 2020, after the church moved to a new venue for its Sands Lake location, and underwent significant audio, video and lighting upgrades to the space.

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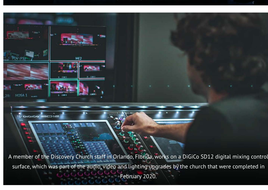

A member of the Discovery Church staff in Orlando, Florida, works on a DiGiCo SD12 digital mixing control surface, which was part of the audio, video and lighting upgrades by the church that were completed in February 2020.

With the move, came a significantly larger worship space – from a 750-seat auditorium to one featuring 1,100 seats. The church also made notable audio, video and lighting upgrades to its space, aside from it being a larger venue.

Leading the church's AVL install was integration firm ProSound & Video, from their Orlando office. As noted by Sean Kruckenberg, Discovery's technical services director, "They worked through the entire thing, until the final install."

AVL Install Work Completed In Three-Four Months

On Wednesday, February 19, the church held its grand opening services. The site's first weekend services were held the following weekend, on February 22-23.

As explained by Kruckenberg, "It was a long building project. The AVL install part became very accelerated. The cable install started in August (of last year), with it starting full-fledged in late November. The work took about three to four months."

As a result, the tight time window was one of the more demanding aspects of this project, Kruckenberg admitted. He noted that it was particularly challenging "keeping timelines, while still meeting the needs of the church."

Shortly after the move to the new space – located in a former shopping center – the church averaged between 3,000 to 4,000 in weekly attendance across its three locations. Only recently, though, has the church reopened – just Wednesdays thus far – as Florida works through the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent months, churches have worked to remain connected to their congregations.

LED Wall Stands Out In New Discovery Worship Space

Among the most consequential AVL updates includes an 18-foot by 63-foot LED wall, manufactured by Vanguard Systems. As explained by Kruckenberg, the LED wall is "a huge dynamic element" in the space. Specifically, the LED wall, on the back of the stage, is comprised of 450 Vanguard P4 Rhodium panels. Paired with the wall are 162 panels configured for side screens, using Vanguard P2.85 Rhodium panels.

"The visual element is huge. For the everyday attender, there is a 'wow' factor, with the LED wall," explained Kruckenberg. "It really ties in with the new lighting and moving lights we were able to incorporate into the new space." By making the change, the church "moved from outdated projection to an LED wall backdrop," he added.

Audio Upgraded With Meyer Sound, DiGiCo, KLANG

Beyond that most obvious visual element in the space, Discovery made notable audio upgrades, featuring Meyer Sound gear. Standouts in that system include 16 LEOPARD Compact Linear Line Array Loudspeaker units (09.245.001.01), and eight 900-LFC Compact Low Frequency Control Element subwoofer units, with six flown and two on the ground (09.246.001.01). Other Meyer Sound speakers in the space include eight front fill UPM-1XP speakers (09.173.094.01) and a pair of ULTRA-X42 side fill speakers (09.294.001.01).

In deciding on the ideal audio system, Kruckenberg cited Discovery opted against a "formal A/B shootout of anything. We did, though, look at many different products throughout the process. For the PA, Meyer came in with a very strong product that made sense to us."

With the Meyer Sound upgrades, Kruckenberg added, "It takes the audio system to the next level, with the LEOPARD system."

To control the audio gear, Discovery turned to DiGiCo. Among the notable additions were three SD12 control surfaces (SD12-96 X-SD12-WS-ST), as well as DiGiCo's 4REA processing engine. Other DiGiCo additions were two ACONTROL8 fader control panels, and a DiGiCo 4REA4 A168 portable stage box with 16 inputs and eight outputs.

By moving to KLANG, the church also updated its personal monitoring. "We were looking at KLANG a couple years ago. We saw more integration now with the DiGiCo systems, with (DiGiCo) having bought KLANG' in December 2018, he said. The church went with four fabrik-B in-ear monitoring master units.

Video Upgrades Feature Sony, Ross Video Gear

Aside from the audio upgrades at Sand Lake were extensive video updates. Previous to the move, the church worked with SD cameras, and by updating, modernized to HD. The upgrades allowed Discovery "to refresh our broadcast infrastructure," explained Kruckenberg. The transition was complete by adding four Sony HD CMOS Based HD Studio Cameras (HDC-3100L). To best offer production switcher control, the church turned to Ross Video, with one Carbonite Black 2M/E frame to 3M/E (CBF-ADD-ME3), one Carbonite Black 3ME panel (CB3X-PANEL) and one Carbonite Black 2ME panel (CB2S-PANEL).

The church originally looked at few video switcher manufacturers, before deciding on Ross. Kruckenberg noted, "When our needs became clear, it made more sense for us to switch to the Ross switching."

Discovery Pairs With AC Lighting On Updates

For lighting updates to the space, Discovery worked heavily with AC Lighting to develop a lighting plan for the space. Using all AC Lighting products, Discovery upgraded house lighting with 72 Chroma-Q Inspire XT fixtures. Other additions were fixtures from ProLights, including 20 Stark 400 Moving Washes, 28 Jet Spot3 spots and 24 Ra 2000Profile moving profiles. In addition, the space features 17 CHAUVET Professional COLORado Batten 72 wash lights.

Working to control the church's fixtures are a series of control surfaces from Chroma-Q, with four Vista Mv™ units, one Vista EX™ unit, and one Vista M1 unit. Lighting networking and control is achieved with a series of Luminex units: GigaCore 26i (three), GigaCore 12 (three), Luminode 1 (one), Luminode 2 (five), Luminode 4 (nine), and Luminode 12 (two).

"From the improved visuals with the large LED wall, to the HD imagery on camera, to the audio system, we have created a higher quality and higher impact to our worship," explained Kruckenberg. "It has changed and enhanced their worship experience, through technology, bringing and drawing people closer."

Training Crucial In Achieving Successful Transition

Discovery has transitioned well to its new equipment, though, thanks to training coordinated by DiGiCo and Ross Video. "DiGiCo came in to train and assist during practices, and for a road show training session," noted Kruckenberg. "Our audio engineers got in on that, to learn about the DiGiCo ecosystem."

In addition to DiGiCo, "Ross spent quite a bit of time with (Discovery), training us on the Ross systems." Training by Ross included details about the Ross MOSAIC portion of the system for routing and the LED wall.

No services were either cancelled or delayed at Discovery, following its transition to the new location. The church achieved this by renting some gear for its final few weeks at the older campus. By doing so, it allowed the church to move some equipment, without negatively impacting services.

Having only had a few weeks prior to the church moving exclusively to streaming in March through June, Kruckenberg said, "Our greatest appreciations in the new space, is having this new backbone of video and prerecording of services. We are far better equipped now. Being in the new space, we were able to quickly transition to an outward position of our production."

Having worked through this project, the church has learned various lessons as part of the process. Above all, key among them, "was to encourage the need to interview, getting to know integrators early. Also, it is best to partner with them through the entire process, and be realistic with budgets and timelines," noted Kruckenberg.

By keeping the lines of communication open, he said, it will help to ensure a church's AVL team and the integrator are on the same page. Doing that work will then avert any financing or scheduling pitfalls down the road.

Project Seen As Meeting Goals For Discovery

With the extensive updates at the church now complete, Discovery has begun to see how the project has come to benefit the church long-term. "From a 40,000-foot view, in terms of the largest goals, the worship experience, for the congregants, and being in a new space, has dramatically improved," explained the church's technical services director.

"From an art standpoint, and a technology standpoint, it was really to have the larger space," added Kruckenberg. "It was also to make it feel intimate, and a close worship experience. These new technical elements of worship will allow us to engage our audience at a higher level and reach more people for Jesus Christ."

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