

CASE STUDY: LIFE CHURCH WISCONSIN

A Seat For Everyone: Life Church Creates Online Campus with Panasonic AU-EVA1 Cinema Cameras

Challenge

Founded in 2000, Life Church Wisconsin is a multi-site church with four campuses located in-and-around the Milwaukee-area that serves about 2,300 congregants each Sunday. As the church continues to grow, the need for AV technology that can seamlessly sync all four locations became imperative. As a result, Life Church began exploring the use of video technology to live stream its services as an opportunity for people to preview the church at their leisure.

As social distancing measures were put in place, the Church had to quickly rethink the way it uses technology to deliver the engaging and dynamic worship service its congregants have come to expect virtually. Having prior experience with professional camera systems, Life Church sought a solution that would produce a more cinematic, modern-looking worship experience than what currently existed online.

"Technology is the stained glass of the 21st century; it's what we use today to paint a picture and artistically tell the story of the gospel. And in these times, where people are not even coming inside buildings, this couldn't be more true," said Nando Herrera, executive director of weekend experience at Life Church. "When the pandemic hit, we knew something would shift in the church world. So it was inevitable that video and satellite campuses were going to be part of the equation."

Solution

With its main broadcast campus in Germantown, WI, Life Church made a decision to change its online service to be a different version of an in-person gathering, but an experience of its own. To deliver on that goal, every part of the service needed to feel like it was intentional for the people watching online. After testing different cameras, Life Church invested in a total of five Panasonic AU-EVA1 cinema cameras to support its new endeavor.

"I knew that if we were going to continue our online service, it needed to look different than what most churches have. We needed a camera that could capture the rich colors and dynamic blacks of a church auditorium, as well as create a more cinematic look. We also needed a camera system that would fit within our budget. These cameras were a perfect fit."



Life Church uses five AU-EVA1s to capture the services it streams online.

Customizing the Solution

As the Church began putting together the pieces of its new online experience, there were a few key features the new system needed in order to deliver on the cinematic look and feel it envisioned. In order to create an online environment that is comparable to an in-person experience, Life Church needed to go from three cameras to five cameras.

“Every detail of the platform and the people needed to be captured, and we knew the best way to do that was to give us more shot flexibility and variety.”

Similarly, the camera system needed to record at least 1080p and have multiple frame rate options to deliver a more cinematic look in 24fps or other frame rates. Since the Church uses multiple lighting scenarios throughout its services, the cameras needed to have the ability to shoot in a variety of lighting environments, including low light, without degrading the overall image quality.

“If we’re going to have an online service that’s going to be bigger than any of our in-person services, then it needs to be treated differently. It can’t be a second-rate reflection of what’s happening.”

Once Life Church deployed Panasonic’s AU-EVA1 cinema cameras into their existing infrastructure, the production team noticed an immediate difference in the quality of their broadcast. The cameras’ Super 35 sensor, 14+ stops of dynamic range and Dual Native ISO (800 and 2,500) allowed the team to not only clearly capture the little nuances of the service such as the fog from the smoke machine or the steam coming off the pastor’s mug, but also provided them with the creativity and versatility needed to combine a virtual experience with an in-person experience. Additionally, the camera’s compact size (only 2.6 pounds) allowed the Church’s production team to move freely on stage and throughout the auditorium.

Unlike some online church programs, Life Church’s online broadcast is a brand new experience intended specifically for online viewers and avoids awkward transitions, church bulletin announcements or jokes that only work in front of a large crowd. Instead, the program is streamlined, episodic in style and edited in a way that keeps the audience engaged and coming back.

“The biggest thing for us is we’re happy to be finally outside of the box we were in. Panasonic has enabled us to feel free to explore and create when it comes to cameras and video. No matter what we’re filming, we know it’s going to be good.”

Photos courtesy of Life Church Wisconsin.

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– Nando Herrera, executive director of weekend experience, Life Church Wisconsin



The AU-EVA1 shoots in a variety of lighting environments, including very low light, at Life Church.

Summary

Since implementing Panasonic’s AU-EVA1s into the Church’s AV infrastructure, Life Church created a brand new online service – its virtual campus – that can cater not only to its current congregation, but also to people around the country.

“The goal for the project is for this to be something that can be used as a supplement to the in-person church service and still serve as an extension to our own congregation – at the same time.”

With the addition of their new online campus, the Church has grown its online audience exponentially – from its humble beginnings of 100 people to 1,700 online worshippers.

For more information about Life Church Wisconsin, visit lifechurchwi.com.

For more information about Panasonic AU-EVA1 camera, visit bit.ly/2LqtqZW or contact Panasonic at 877-803-8492.