

jeff's corner

The statistics prove that most churches and Houses of Worship will purchase three or four audio systems before they finally have satisfactory results and something that will serve their current needs and also be upgradeable for the future. Needless to say, those earlier investments were not necessarily the best use of funds but were probably what was thought to be all that could be afforded at the time. And that begs the questions, "How important is your audio system to your church's stability and growth?" "How effective is your sermon if a person can't understand all the words?" "How inspiring and meaningful are the hymns and music if the sound is inconsistent?" "How good is a first-rate message if it is delivered over second-rate gear?"

Creating an optimal audio system is very challenging. Intelligibility, acoustics, speaker and microphone placement, equipment selection, sight lines, cabling, system control and interfacing with video systems are but a few of the issues. Not very simple. And not inexpensive either.

And this is where Keith Plasse comes into the picture. Since 1990 Keith and his company, Click4Loans, have been providing Churches and businesses with unique, outside-the-box financing options and allowing his clients to fulfill their dreams of growth and success. Audio-Video Group has worked hand-in-hand with both our clients and Click4Loans to secure financing for A/V systems on a number of occasions.

What makes Keith unusual is that he will go the extra mile not only to obtain a loan, but to get the best loan available by searching for his customer's strengths which might not be readily visible to others. He has helped arrange financing without personal guarantees, helped churches refinance at lower interest rates and established credit by having affiliate churches co-sign loans. By purposefully avoiding a cookie-cutter approach, Keith has been making dreams come true for Houses of Worship for years.

So the question is not whether your Church can afford a first rate audio system—it can—the question is, "Can you afford not to?"

Jeff Miller-operations



VOICE & VISION

Summer 2007

A Quarterly Newsletter Dedicated to Audio & Video Issues for Houses of Worship in the Mid-Atlantic

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An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

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Westminster, Maryland

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Training for your Sound
People

JEFF'S CORNER:

You can have a first-rate
audio system now.

the soundboard

HAVE YOU BRUSHED YOUR TEETH TODAY?

Well, of course you have. And you probably also go to the dentist at least once a year to have a thorough cleaning and checkup. And while that doesn't guarantee that you won't eventually have to have a major overhaul in your mouth, it is the next best thing. Americans have come to embrace the benefits of preventive maintenance measures from their personal health to their automobiles and it only makes good sense to do the same for your audiovisual systems.

At least once a year a professional should perform a thorough review of all your components; clean consoles, fans and filters; check cables and connections and make sure everything is in proper working order. Hard-to-reach projectors should be evaluated and replacement lamps should be ordered before the existing one reaches the end of its life. This is the time to catch small issues before they become big problems.

AVG can provide these services on an as-needed basis or, for larger systems, it is an excellent idea to enter into a service contract which not only does scheduled maintenance, but also gives you priority scheduling on your service calls should you need us in a hurry. Even if we weren't the folks who installed your system, give us a call; we're happy to help.



◀ AVG at Work

Steve and TJ work together building and testing equipment racks for the audio and video system installations we are doing for Metro Morningstar Church in Northern Virginia



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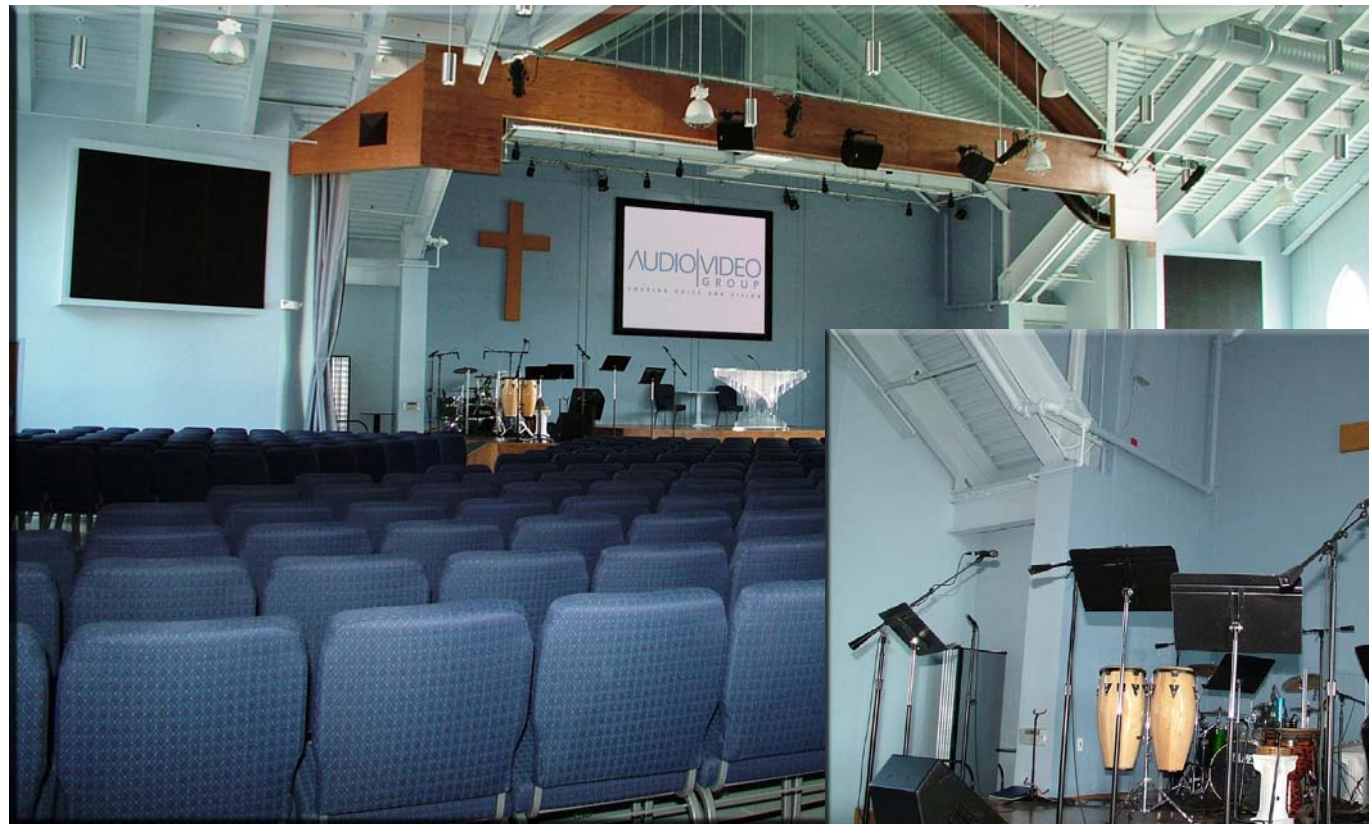
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Grace Lutheran Church Family Life Center Westminster, Maryland

Audio-Video Group worked closely with acoustical consultants Miller, Beam & Paganelli, Inc. in the design and integration of the sound and video systems for this multi-purpose room. Our team became involved before ground was broken and collaborated with the church council to meet their requirements within the budgetary restraints of the project. While certain components were omitted from the project, we did install the infrastructure and cabling to make future upgrades attainable and affordable.

Audio-Video Group provided all video components including a projector and a fixed, large format screen at the back of the stage. Small monitors for on-stage viewing plug into recessed floor pockets which also contain computer input, microphone and audio monitor jacks. All of the video sources (computers, DVD/VCR and future cameras) are switched from the control booth via a Crestron touchpanel, which also handles system power on/off and operating mode select functions.

The Family Life Center doubles as both a worship and recreational space, so the audio system had to be flexible and, more importantly, user friendly. In the "worship event" mode, the entire system is manually controlled, with three speakers mounted on the proscenium providing even coverage of the seating areas. In the "recreational event" mode, six speakers are distributed over the entire floor area to provide even coverage without any localization of the sound source. Specific microphone jacks distributed around the room are controlled by an automatic microphone mixer, so the system can be operated hands-free.

The folks at Grace Lutheran took advantage of both our extended warranty and preventive maintenance service as well as extra training sessions for their operators.



Praise Team's Area: Floor pockets keep the cabling neat and allow for versatility for either vocalists or instruments.



The Audio Console: is located in the sound booth in the back of the room and features a Soundcraft mixer. The video elements are controlled from an adjacent position in the same location.

"It's a true gift to be able to communicate technical ideas so everyone in the process has the same level of understanding. We had a lot of expectations and questions about the new systems. We got solid, honest answers, and the final decisions we made together lead to an incredible room of sight and sound."
— Erik Piisila

off the rack

There's No Reason to Fear the (A/V) System

I suspect that most folks look at an audio console or an A/V equipment rack and put their hands in their pockets or behind their back in fear that they might accidentally push the "wrong" button and send everything spinning out of control. And I approve. Especially if you are untrained on the system.

Like every other technology, today's audiovisual systems are better than ever and rapidly changing to make it easier for the end user to operate the equipment and make it perform as desired. Digital Signal Processors can be a huge asset and can open the door for more and varied use of your audio system without fear of messing up the settings for the next guy. Wireless systems get rid of the clutter of cables and allow for user mobility. Video switching has become less intimidating and almost anybody with a laptop can plug and play.

But, as the saying goes, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." The manufacturers and contractors have done their best to make the interaction of very complex components fairly simple, but there is no substitute for knowledge. Education can help you realize the full potential of your system, and also establish a working understanding of the gear in case anything goes wrong.

While it is standard procedure to offer a training session when we have completed an install, that typically doesn't account for turnover of personnel or equipment upgrades or replacement which take place over time. Often we encounter situations where folks with limited knowledge and experience have trained their replacements and passed on information of questionable quality. What we offer, along with our other services, is comprehensive training of your people on your equipment. Here's how it works:

We work closely with your organization to establish and schedule a time which allows for your key people to be on hand for training. The optimum number of participants is from six to 12 (over 12 folks typically doesn't work as well due to the hands-on nature of the training). Myself or another AVG team member will show up early and familiarize ourselves with your system and tweak it for optimal performance.

Upon the arrival of the trainees we will give an overview of the system and then review the components from the microphones, speakers and monitors to the gear in the rack and the mixing board. We will define

and explain the signal flow through your console and make sure you understand mixing basics including the all-important concept of "unity gain." Throughout the session, we are open for questions and we try not to move on to a new component or concept until we are sure that everyone understands what has already been covered.

Common mistakes and problems are discussed to help prevent feedback and other sound quality issues.

We also show participants the proper workings of video switcher/scalers and mixers. This makes sure your visual presentations have the quality and seamlessness which augment your message and don't become a distraction.

Every effort is made to make sure that the participants have a firm grasp of the system and its operation and are confident and ready to go.

So, if you think your A/V crew could benefit from our training program, whether we installed your system or not, please give us a call. It is a great investment in both your people and the quality of your services.

—Steve S.

FYI: Due to the ever-changing nature of the business, all Audio-Video Group technicians and sales personnel regularly participate in continuing education themselves. Besides being educated by manufacturers such as Crestron, we also participate in training programs offered by industry trade associations InfoComm and National Systems Contractor's Association.



On 5/31/07 Steve came by to install new equipment and train members who were new to audio engineering. Steve made complex things simple, an intimidating mixing board easy and people who had no knowledge of sound engineering confident. He was patient with us and made sure we understood before he left. He was a pleasure to work with. Thanks a bunch.

—Rev. Tim Hunter, Associate Pastor at Fellowship Baptist Church

Call us at 1-800-668-4988 or visit us on the web at www.audiovideogroup.com