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Fairhaven Church's New 'Future Proof' Elation LED Video Screen

Ohio church ensures decade of visual quality with versatile high resolution EPV Series video screen

The 1,500-seat Worship Center at the Centerville Campus of Fairhaven Church in Ohio has been in the process of renovation for the past few years. Installed just in time for this year's Easter services by Scenic Solutions was a 135-panel Elation Professional EPV6 LED video screen with high resolution 6mm pixel pitch.

"We chose to go with an LED wall due to our desire to 'future-proof' the Worship Center and set us up for the next decade or more visually," explains Mike Rall, who heads a full-time video staff at Fairhaven. "The debut of the LED wall at our Easter services provided an incredible visual experience for the nearly 8,000 attendees that weekend as we were able to create custom in-house videos that spanned the entire length of the wall, really tying in the themes of our songs and other special elements together well."



Out with the old

In March 2012, some of Fairhaven's Ministry Arts staff attended the Seeds Conference at Church on the Move in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and were blown away with their two 16x9 LED screens and how much "pop" it gave to their visual experience. "I think all of us were sold on the idea at that point, rather than just replacing old projectors with new, better projectors," Mike says.

Dan McLaughlin, a partner at Elation dealer Scenic Solutions of West Carrollton, Ohio, a full service studio that was responsible for all aspects of the installation ranging from design and assistance in product specifications to engineering, rigging, and electrical installation, explains what the church was looking for in an LED video panel. "Fairhaven wanted a high definition, seamless yet easily configurable video solution," he says. "The EPV panels provide that. They are durable, look great, and are easy to service."

Before installation of the LED wall, Fairhaven used three projectors that were over 10 years old and positioned nearly 100' away from the actual screens, which were starting to warp. They were going through lamps every 6 months, if not sooner, and the visual quality was deteriorating, especially within the last couple of years. "At times, we would even intentionally overexpose our camera shots in an attempt to at least have something half-decent looking on screen," Mike states, adding that since the projectors were in the control room, there was a 20+ degree

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temperature increase on Sunday mornings. “That could get pretty uncomfortable during the summer months since the HVAC couldn’t keep up with all the heat generated in the room.”

Fairhaven’s EPV6 LED wall

The EPV6 LED wall at Fairhaven is 9.5’ tall by 51’ across and play as three 9.5 x 17 foot screens with 45 panels per screen for a total of 135 panels. Fairhaven currently has each screen tethered together to create a wall with a 3:1 (16:3) aspect ratio and adjust its height from time to time depending on the specific service or weekend needs. All three screens, which can be individually operated, are free hung on separate trusses via Stagemaker Motors (2 per truss). On Saturdays the center wall is flown in to the deck for a pre-taped sermon while on Sundays it is lifted into position and laced together as one screen for live performances. Working with the new LED panels from an upstage truss are 8 Elation Platinum Spot 15R Pro fixtures, full color-mixing 300W moving heads with an output that matches 1200W fixtures but at a fraction of the power consumption.



“At this point, we want to ease our congregation into this new gear and be conservative with our usage of the panels, although from time to time we will still produce special in-house videos that span the entire length of the wall,” Mike comments. Eventually the vision is to either install a grid system in the ceiling and replace the existing, even dangerous, catwalk to allow the wall’s placement to shift from side to side, front to back, and up or down; or split up each of the panels to use for additional staging elements, integrated into the platform design for a particular weekend or message series.

Easy assembly

Mike appreciates the density of the EPV6 (“It even looks good from on stage,” he says) as well as the contrast ratio and ease of connectivity. The EPV6 has integrated power / data onboard (Powercon in/out for power link, Ethercon in/out for video signal) and can be easily daisy chained. “They are surprisingly thin and light panels,” Mike says, “especially considering their incredible quality. Our own Ministry Arts staff team was able to assemble each 9x5 panel screen together with simple directions from Red Walter at Elation and Dan’s team at Scenic Solutions.”

New presence

The most obvious advantage of the LED wall, Mike says, has been the visual impact it has had throughout the entire space. “It adds an entirely new presence that can even overwhelm you if not used tastefully. We’ve been joking that we went from having gear that was nowhere near good enough to gear that is too good. It’s definitely been a process adjusting from old projectors to high-end LED’s, but I’m confident that our team will be able to creatively and tastefully use the LED wall as we continue learning what we find works and doesn’t work to suit our particular needs and preferences.”



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Currently, Fairhaven uses the video wall primarily for worship services each weekend, and occasionally other church-related events, but also make it available for outside events. They recently hosted a "Sovereign Tour" concert with Michael W. Smith and will be welcoming the "Love Worth Fighting For" conference with Kirk Cameron & Warren Barfield in June, where they plan to use the wall more extensively.

"As time progresses, our desire is to become more creative as we adapt to this new technology, really seeing ourselves and our own creativity as the limiting factor now, rather than the equipment," Mike states. "Even on a 'typical' worship weekend with no specials per-se, the clarity and quality of the IMAG and text makes for an outstanding experience from anywhere in the room."

Processing and content distribution

Video processing is from six Elation EVP VSC video controllers, two processors per screen working on separate circuits to provide complete failsafe redundancy. The EVP VSC processors are located some 250 feet away from the screens in the media room. A pair of Elation EPV DVI 4 splitters feed the six EVP VSC video controllers for duplicated signal processing of separate areas of the same video signal feed. Content to the screens comes from an Elation ZEUS media server with Arkaos Media Master Pro utilizing a 3840x1080 signal path. Visuals are triggered via keyboard shortcuts and for Easter services, volunteers reportedly handled the visual content with less than 5 minutes of training thanks to the Arkaos presets.

A professional combination

Working to ensure that everything ran smoothly for the opening Easter weekend was Elation's Red Walter, a level of service that was appreciated by Scenic Solutions and the church alike. "Red was incredibly professional and knowledgeable throughout the entire process," Mike stated. "We appreciated him staying throughout the week and into the weekend, ensuring that there were no issues during any of the services." Dan McLaughlin at Scenic Solutions echoed the sentiment. "Our installation rep is extremely caring in providing a clean installation. He was also very good at educating the client on how to get the most out of the product. Elation, The Healy Group, and Lyntec were all involved in this project and did their best to provide a high end install. We are proud to work with such a professional combination."

Jon Lough: Director of Audio and Lighting, Fairhaven Church

Mike Rall: Video Lead, Fairhaven Church

About Elation Professional

Elation Professional is one of the world's leading lighting and visual solutions providers and is the global brand of Elation Lighting. Founded in 1992 and headquartered in Los Angeles, with European sales, distribution and support based in The Netherlands, Elation designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of innovative yet affordable lighting and video products that are distributed through a global network of dealers and distributors. Made up of a spirited team of dedicated personnel, Elation is setting new efficiency and performance standards in Platinum lamp and LED technology and is acknowledged for a comprehensive commitment to Total Support. As a company in expansion with a presence in a growing variety of market segments, chances are you've experienced Elation lighting at a concert, special event, TV, theater, late night venue, House of Worship, theme park, cruise ship, exhibition, architectural space or elsewhere. For more information, please visit www.elationlighting.com

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