

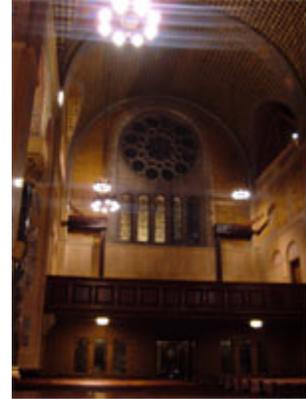
Christ Church United Methodist Upgrades its Sound with Biamp's AudiaFlex

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Located at Park Avenue and 60th Street in Manhattan, [Christ Church United Methodist](#) was designed by one of America's foremost ecclesiastical architects, Ralph Adams Cram. The interior is decorated with a glittering array of 7 million tiles of Venetian mosaics, covering 14,000 square feet, and 34 varieties of marble. The church is capable of housing an audience of 500 for its Sunday worship services, in addition to providing space for regular meetings and Bible studies.

Christ Church United Methodist consists of four floors: the sanctuary, Phillips Hall, Bowne Hall, and the Woolverton Room. The sanctuary is the main worship space for all services at Christ Church United Methodist. Phillips Hall acts as the main meeting room for various activities at the church. Bowne Hall and the Woolverton Room accommodate smaller meetings.

The Sunday worship services are recorded for church archives, for members who subscribe, and for those who would like a copy of the service. For each service, the church uses a piano/organ unit to accompany its usual choir. In addition, the church occasionally plays host to a full orchestra or guest instrumentalists. Works performed on the church's newly renovated 4-manual Casavant organ heighten the musical experience. To provide an even more enlightening atmosphere for attendees, the church recently called on audio system installers [Monte Brothers Sound Systems](#) to completely upgrade its sound system from an analog to a digital network with AV capabilities. Regardless of the musical accompaniment, the new network provides reliable mixing and distribution of sanctuary, choir, and instrument sound.



Christ Church United Methodist called on audio system installers Monte Brothers Sound Systems to upgrade its sound system to a digital network with AV capabilities.

To do this, Steve Minozzi and Bob Pelepako, founders and owners of Monte Brothers Sound Systems, and their team installed AudiaFlex, the most powerful digital audio processor in the [Biamp Systems](#) Audia platform. The installation also included an [Audio-Technica](#) wireless microphone system, an [Aphex](#) DA-120 distribution amplifier, [Crown](#) amplification, [Denon](#) audio components, and [CAMM](#) speakers. The AudiaFlex is responsible for automatically distributing and routing sound in the sanctuary as well as in the church's three other meeting spaces.

In the church's previous analog audio system, sound had to be managed on a much more modular level to ensure maximized output. This required time and did not ensure acoustic accuracy. Furthermore, it meant that the system needed to be manually reset after each use to ensure that there was no interruption during future use.

"The upgrade has enhanced the church's sound," comments Steve Pilkington, director of music for Christ Church United Methodist. "The playback is much sharper and very clear. Our staff and all of our musicians have been very pleased with the recorded aspect of the system product."

Using the AudiaFlex logic capabilities, Monte Brothers designed a system that controls all of the network processes with easy-to-use automatic presets, eliminating the need for church staff to control the system by hand. The AudiaFlex, configured with 16 input channels and eight output channels, runs a logic program developed by Monte Brothers that can subjectively equalize wireless microphone outputs as they are assigned to each of the church's rooms. It can also equalize different speaker zones throughout the church based on the specific audio signatures of each space. Each unique preset is designed to accommodate the logistics and acoustics for any event or meeting that might occur at the church and can account for distribution of sound from the six wireless mics, a CD player, video feeds, audio from the choir, and recording functions for the choir.

To make this advanced level of control easy to use, the Monte Brothers worked with Biamp to manufacture a custom-made VS8 control panel that enables all church employees to power on and adjust the audio system as needed. Designed specifically for the Monte Brothers, the customized Biamp VS8 "button" panel allows users to select between the eight preset audio settings programmed into the AudiaFlex. With just the push of a button, this VS8 panel gives users the ability to maximize audio settings for the various microphones and speakers throughout the church facilities.

Perhaps the most important benefit of the VS8 panel is that it allows users to restore default settings throughout the entire church with the push of a button. This eliminates confusion when switching between presets and ensures that presets are not incorrectly set for following services or events at the church. The sound system will also automatically reset to the "default" preset each time it is turned on.

By inputting the Audio-Technica wireless microphone feeds into the AudiaFlex processor, wireless mic users enjoy the freedom of being able to take their microphone anywhere in the church or Phillips Hall and know its output will be maximized, regardless of location. Two Audio-Technica master antennas are strategically located in the worship space, and two "alternate" Audio-Technica master antennas are located in Phillips Hall, to receive wireless microphone signals and relay each microphone position within these locations to the AudiaFlex processor. The AudiaFlex can then equalize the mic output to maximize its sound quality within the particular space in which it is being used. For example, if one of the priests conducting a service in the sanctuary moves with the wireless mic into Phillips Hall, the processor will automatically change microphone output levels to maximize audio for Phillips Hall when that preset has been selected. The AudiaFlex processor can also be used to accurately equalize various speaker banks throughout the church to maximize sound output in each space within the church.

Furthermore, the digital capabilities afforded by AudiaFlex now provide an added level of control over both live and recorded choir sound. Christ Church United Methodist records each one of its choir performances so that church members can purchase audio CDs of these performances after the service. The Audia digital audio platform allows the sound manager to sub-mix the choir sound so that their sound is not amplified within the sanctuary, but is audible and accurate in the recording mix.

"The previous analog system was inefficient and difficult to use," Minozzi says. "Obviously this new digital system is intuitive and solves a number of problems that had been plaguing the church. The new system sounds great and really gives new life to all of the audio that Christ Church United Methodist incorporates into their services.

"From an installation point of view, the combination of a wireless Audio-Technica microphone system and Biamp's AudiaFlex made retrofitting this historic church much easier. Implementing the AudiaFlex was really the only solution that afforded us the ability to do everything we wanted to."

The network has also been designed to give Christ Church United Methodist excellent expansion options should it decide to add on to this new network. The most recent network installation provides the facility with video capabilities and the capability to add an alternate mixing board in the future.

For more information, visit www.montebros.com.