

# Clear-Com Arcadia Upgrade Expands Northridge Church's Creative Boundaries

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Northridge Church's fusion of technology and creativity - as evidenced by their praise band playing against an LED backdrop of digitally rendered but stunningly effective stained glass 'windows' - is immediately compelling.

That fusion is integral to their mission at their Plymouth, Michigan main campus, says Brandon Schultz, Northridge's Live Video Director, emphasizing behind-the-scenes communications' role in their wide-ranging ministry services. More importantly, he notes how critical their pre-existing Clear-Com® infrastructure and the recent integration of Clear-Com's Arcadia® Central Station are as tools for realizing their broader vision.

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Brandon cites the perspective of Senior Pastor Brad Powell, who has been with the church for 35 years, as a principal influence on their approach. “[Pastor Brad] places high value on technology and innovation,” he says. “He regularly says, ‘God is a creator, and his people are made in his image.’ We love to be creative, to use technology to bring about that creation, and we’ve been blessed to try out all kinds of technologies, experiment with them, and push our creative boundaries.”

The adoption of Arcadia as part of an overall upgrade to their intercom infrastructure is a prime example of optimizing technology to allow for more creativity, as it allows the church’s production team to leverage their intercom system more effectively to create ever more immersive and high-impact worship services. “We already had an extensive comms system based on the Clear-Com Encore® Analog Partyline system that we’ve ‘grafted’ onto over the years, but we wanted to bring it forward in a way that our growing creative ministry needs,” Brandon says.



Northridge had already been evaluating Arcadia as a solution, but the release of the integration of Arcadia with HelixNet® Digital Partyline, Schultz says, “sealed it for us. Once we understood what Arcadia was capable of, it was a slam dunk. We looked at competing options, but nothing had the same comprehensive feature set and native integration.”

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Arcadia checked all the boxes: “Not only for our existing needs but the more creative ideas we have had about how we can use our intercom system beyond how we’ve used it before,” Brandon says. Plus, they were able to retain their legacy wireless system and integrate it into the new Arcadia-based system seamlessly. “We didn’t have to change out our entire system to go digital, or redo how we send comms to cameras and distribute them to video control,” he adds. “And, frankly, the price point was far better than I had imagined it to be, given what Arcadia is capable of.”

Ultimately, Arcadia was installed in the campus’ production booth, with FreeSpeak Edge® 5GHz IP transceivers distributed in multiple zones in the church to support FSE wireless beltacks.

Overall, Arcadia has delivered far more functionality and flexibility, allowing IP connectivity and greater channel capacity over a single network cable instead of via multiple runs of copper through the building, thereby substantially increasing wireless coverage across the entire campus (as well as the number of production staff who can be on comms simultaneously), and, by extension, simplifying their workflow.



That was a game-changer, particularly for Northridge’s annual Christmas production, “The Glory of Christmas” – which requires up to 50 users to connect via intercom at once. “Arcadia gives us

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the ability to have unique user profiles that can be re-assigned with the click of a button or remotely, instead of getting into the matrix or moving knobs and faders like we used to and having multiple systems we need to configure independently. Arcadia just works, and it's all in one place. We can do that from anywhere with an Internet connection.”

That, he adds, is a feature they didn't know they needed until they had it. “Then, suddenly, we felt like we didn't know how to go without that. And with so many channels on a single pack, we can assign unique, point-to-point private lines rather than have everybody on one channel, so our comms experience is much more peaceful and efficient than ever before.”



More importantly, Northridge Church's leadership and production teams are no longer bound by their older system's limitations. Instead, in the future, they're free to expand at will and give their creative impulses free rein.

“The integration of Arcadia, how the whole system works together – two-wire, four-wire, HelixNet, FreeSpeak – Clear-Com's offerings are so numerous and well-integrated, it's plug and play. As long as we're in that massive Clear-Com ecosystem, I'm confident we'll have smooth integration anywhere in our building.”