

Martin Audio WPS for Apex Baptist Church

Picture: Ed Ricker



To support dynamic, full-production modern worship services and ensure absolute clarity for spoken-word sermons, Apex Baptist Church in North Carolina has recently undertaken a huge audio upgrade. Thanks to AV integrators, S&L Integrated, the sanctuary has been completely transformed by a Martin Audio WPS Wavefront Precision line array system, delivering a "night and day" upgrade in both audio fidelity and coverage.

"We've had a long-standing relationship with Shawn Walden, the Worship Pastor at Apex Baptist," says Gage Helton, Director of Operations at S&L Integrated. "When they realised their previous audio infrastructure was holding back their worship experience, he reached out to us to design a complete, top-to-bottom system redesign."

The primary driver for the upgrade was to enhance overall intelligibility and worship engagement. "While the church had grown significantly, the old system just couldn't keep up," Helton continues. "Speech clarity was lost due to a lack of coverage, particularly in and under the balcony sections. The upgrade was also designed to

remove previous technical barriers to elevate their Sunday morning experience, building a scalable platform that could support future growth and higher-production events.”

Sunday morning worship is the heartbeat of the space, but outside of these services, the sanctuary also hosts special musical events, holiday productions, youth gatherings, and conferences. “They needed a system that could seamlessly transition between subtle, high-intelligibility spoken word and high-energy, full-spectrum concert-level reinforcement without distortion or fatigue,” notes Helton.

The sanctuary features a large main floor with a deep balcony and highly reflective side walls. “Acoustically, it was a classic house-of-worship puzzle,” Helton describes. “High RT60 reverb times, flutter echo off the side walls and balcony face, and severe acoustic shadowing under and above the balcony.” S&L Integrated addressed this by combining physical acoustic treatment on the walls and balcony face with the precision directional array control of a Martin Audio WPS system. The newly installed system comprises flown hangs of 10 Martin Audio WPS elements per side, driven in single-box resolution for the ultimate precision. A flown centre array comprising three SXHF218 subwoofers delivers extended low-end, deployed in a cardioid configuration to help keep energy off the stage. Additionally, six Martin Audio FlexPoint FP6 loudspeakers act as front fills, while six FlexPoint FP4 enclosures provide upper-balcony fill. “I look for a fill to get out of the way and do what it’s supposed to,” Helton notes. “Martin Audio’s FlexPoint models are small and sound great.”

The entire system is powered by three Martin Audio iKON iK81 and three iK42 amplifiers. Martin Audio’s DISPLAY software was used to model the space and define trim heights, pick points, and x/y dimensions. “It is one of the easiest PA modelling products I have used,” he says. “We also use it as a sales tool to show the client what coverage is going to look like in their space.”

Helton confirms the transformation is night and day. “The room sounds open, warm, and exceptionally clear. Vocals sit effortlessly on top of the mix without ever feeling harsh or pushed, and the low-end coupling from the flown cardioid sub array gives worship music a visceral, high-fidelity impact without room boominess.” Helton praises the support provided by Martin Audio throughout the project. “Martin Audio is a joy to work with,” he says. “I trust the sales and design team to point us in the right direction as we work through projects.” The result has been overwhelmingly positive feedback from church leadership, the worship staff, and the congregation: “Gat,” Helton concludes. “They’ve told us it has elevated their entire Sunday morning worship environment, which is the ultimate compliment for us at S&L Integrated.”

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