Church and School Reap Divine Life Safety Systems Results
Calvary Church, Naperville, Ill., is a large congregation affiliated with the Fellowship of the Assemblies of God and part of the world’s largest Pentecostal denomination. The church offers a variety of programs and classes, including Spanish-only programs, recovery programs, Bible studies for singles, and classes for Baby Boomers.

The original church sanctuary was completed in 1993 and more than 20 years later, underwent a renovation, which included the addition of 2,000 to about 3,500 seats – making it one of the area’s largest houses of worship. Among the many renovations, brand new lighting and sound systems were installed too.

The south end of the church building was also expanded to house a K-8 school and children’s center, music room, two gymnasiums, meeting auditoriums and a teen center.
All of these changes required fire alarm system upgrades to meet new codes, support more field devices and provide key functions, such as voice evacuation.

The sanctuary renovation necessitated a new fire alarm control panel with larger capacity, and the increase in occupant seating led to the addition of a voice evacuation system. A new fire alarm system with voice evacuation was also needed to protect the south end addition and its school.

Installing the systems involved wiring throughout the building to support the new speaker-strobes and other voice evacuation components. To avoid interfering with the building’s architectural design, wires had to be hidden in the walls or surface-mounted.
The pairings of a Fire-Lite Alarms MS-9600UDLS fire alarm control panel with a side-car Emergency Command Center (ECC) 50/100 audio system were installed in both buildings. The fire alarm systems protecting the Church’s sanctuary and its new addition operate independently, by design, because of the different functions of both buildings.

Derek MacLennan, Technical Manager, Sonitrol Chicagoland West, managed the project and installation. “It’s an extensive system,” says MacLennan, “Designing and engineering the system took a significant amount of time as the design had to be just right to meet code requirements and the organization’s needs.”

The sanctuary’s existing fire alarm devices were tied to the Fire-Lite system, in addition to 49 new speaker/strobes to support the ECC’s audio. The Jurisdiction Having Authority (Aurora, Ill.) required that any seat in the sanctuary be able to see a strobe and hear the voice evacuation speaker, which required a portion of the speaker/strobes to be placed up to 40 feet off the floor. Another 14 speaker/strobes were also placed outside the sanctuary in the hallway/vestibule area.

The south end addition’s fire alarm was tied to approximately 65 smoke detectors, 80 horn-strobes and 30 combination speaker-strobes.

A fire alarm annunciator was installed by the main entrance of Calvary Church to offer emergency responders quick access to the system’s information, and arm them with full system functionality.

Callison says the fire system at Calvary Church is mostly on standby in case of an emergency. “But as soon as I hear it, I am running toward the annunciator or the main panel to easily decipher what is the cause,” he says.

The Fire-Lite Systems also monitor the sprinkler system through sensors inside water pipes to detect changes in water flow, leading to possible sprinkler issues, including a broken pipe or a sprinkler head malfunction.

“I love Fire-Lite equipment,” comments MacLennan. “It’s easy to work with, easy to program and design. We only install Fire-Lite equipment, and we have several hundred installed systems. Their technical support and my local rep are phenomenal. The equipment is also easy to purchase through my distributor, who has everything in stock.”
Calvary Church uses one of the voice evacuation system’s **14 default fire evacuation messages** (a generic woman’s voice telling occupants to exit the building). However, the ECC-50/100 offers the option of recording up to 14 field-programmable messages (maximum of 60 seconds each) for other events such as severe weather. Customizable pre- and post-announcement tone generators are another option available through the ECC system. Using any of the ECC’s microphones, emergency response personnel can bypass automated messages and send live voice alerts directly through the system’s speakers during an emergency.

Both systems at Calvary Church – serving the south end school facility and the sanctuary – include remote microphones, one in the school and two in the sanctuary. Anytime there is an emergency, such as a tornado warning, the microphones can be used to make live announcements in lieu of default messages.

“It’s a good reliable system that does what it’s designed to do – detect fires and monitor water flow in my sprinkler system,” Callison adds. “It’s well designed and easy to use.”
Fire-Lite Alarms by Honeywell

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