



Canon Broadcast Equipment Helps Church of the Highlands Broadcast Live Across Alabama

// PRODUCTION MANAGER JUSTIN FIRESHEETS AND VIDEO DIRECTOR GREG MCKINNEY TALK ABOUT THE EASE OF USING CANON LENSES & CAMERAS

Alabama's Church of the Highlands has a lot of stories to tell. With a regular weekend service schedule augmented by a network of thousands of congregationally led small groups, Highlands broadcasts 350 live services and events per year to 16 campuses across the state. Each Sunday, their services reach more than 40,000 people at the campuses. The services also stream live online to over 9,000 screens, and several thousand more screens stream services and events on-demand. In addition, they also broadcast a service to 14 correctional facilities across the state of Alabama.

To tell these stories every week, they rely heavily on Canon lenses and cameras. Church of the Highlands' Broadcast Team handles the live show production, and their Creative Team produces 3-4 minute packages to incorporate into the broadcasts.

// STANDARDIZING ON CANON //

When they upgraded their broadcast environment in 2010, their system integrator recommended Canon lenses. Church of the Highlands' Production Manager, Justin Firesheets explained his satisfaction with the Canon DIGISUPER 60 broadcast lenses, "We were thrilled with the quality of the images that we saw; the quality of the servo controllers is excellent and easy to use. As we decided to start upgrading cameras, it was natural to consider Canon since we had a positive experience with Canon lenses and were very pleased with the image quality and color reproduction. It also helped that we have a great

relationship with our Canon reps. The resulting image quality of the cameras has been excellent."

At their main broadcast campus, Church of the Highlands uses Canon DIGISUPER 60 HD field lenses paired with four broadcast cameras. Additionally, they are outfitted with a suite of Canon XF Series Professional HD Camcorders. Their XF305, XF205 and



ABOVE Church of the Highlands' main broadcast auditorium uses Canon's DIGISUPER 60 broadcast lenses during their five services every Sunday. The broadcast auditorium is a 2,450-seat room that features a flat floor and stadium seating around the rear of the room.

XF105 cameras are utilized in many configurations; for example, they use an XF205 camera on a dolly and XF305 cameras are used both handheld and on tripods at some of their remote campuses.

Their multi-camera live productions average about 65 minutes each, with about 350 live broadcasts per year. “We have been amazed with the quality of Canon’s cameras and lenses. We can’t imagine considering anything else,” remarked Firesheets.

// CREATIVE PRODUCTION //

With dynamic lighting scenarios, Church of the Highlands faces challenges when broadcasting live events. The three 1/3-inch CMOS sensors in the XF305 camcorders allow them to replicate colors and the environment for broadcast. “We have found that the XF305 has excellent color and low-light reproduction to help match the quality level of the other broadcast cameras we are using,” Firesheets noted. “At some of our off-site locations, we use Canon’s XF Series cameras with the RC-V100 remote controllers. The remote camera operation allows the operators to stay attentive to shot selection while another team controls the iris and gain remotely. Having the remote cameras works great!”

Church of the Highlands’ Creative Team produces about 175 segments per year to incorporate into broadcasts, usually around 3-4 minutes in length. To produce these segments, they have an array of Canon Cinema EOS and DSLR cameras. “Our decision to invest in Canon Cinema EOS cameras for the Creative Team was initially based on the video capabilities of the EOS 5D Mark II. That one camera made us buy into the Canon family with all the lenses. The EOS 5D Mark II was a special camera – it was a bridge between the unobtainable Hollywood standard and amateur enthusiast, enabling anyone to make great looking art. Then, when Canon’s EOS C300 Cinema Camera came out, it was a no-brainer,” recalled Video Director Greg McKinney.

// CANON CAMERAS AND LENSES MEET PRODUCTION DEMANDS //

“The breadth of the Canon lens lineup allows me to really think about how and what I want the viewer to both feel and experience. We do a lot of comedy in our videos, and something that I really like to play with is what I am intentionally showing – and not showing – the viewer. Various lenses are essential in approaching this. Having a wide-angle lens close to a subject gives me a completely different feel than

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ABOVE Volunteers and Staff members man the live production cameras and lenses at Church of the Highlands.

if I were to use the beautiful 135mm prime. It's the perfect balance of documentary, studio, B-Roll, and interview flexibility. I love having various tools on a set – it really helps me tell stories successfully,” noted Greg McKinney.

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// Greg McKinney

When shooting highly-produced, 3-4 minute videos, the Creative Team often has demanding turnaround times – sometimes less than a day. Pre-rigging their Canon EOS C100 Mark II and EOS C300 cameras with a variety of lenses helps them move quickly and allows them flexibility in the field. The color reproduction of the Cinema EOS cameras helps bring their stories to life. They also need their cameras to be lightweight and low-profile for easy mobility. “The breadth of the Canon lens lineup allows me to really think about how and what I want the viewer to both feel and experience,” noted Greg McKinney. “We do a lot of comedy in our videos, and something that I really like to play with is what I am intentionally showing – and not showing – the viewer. Various lenses are essential in approaching this. Having a wide-angle lens close to a subject gives me a completely different feel than if I were to use the beautiful 135mm prime. It’s the perfect balance of documentary, studio, B-Roll, and interview flexibility. I love having various tools on a set – it really helps me tell stories successfully.”

// TELLING STORIES WITH LENSES //

For shooting pre-recorded interview pieces, McKinney has a set of Canon cinema prime lenses, which have performed fabulously. “You can’t beat that sharpness and clarity of the Cinema Prime Lenses,” he declared. “We use them mainly for interviews on our shoots. We love the detail you get on skin tone and faces. We also really love how those cine primes look in the highlights. They really make the grading of images pop and stand out. They are great.”

Church of the Highlands also uses a series of Canon DSLR cameras, including EOS 5D Series cameras,



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the EOS 7D, and EOS 60D. When traveling, or doing a story in one of the prison locations where they broadcast services, Canon's EOS 5D Series cameras are used as second cameras due to their light weight and low profile. Church of the Highlands also employs DSLR cameras for capturing still images to incorporate into their programs. To capture these images, McKinney utilizes an arsenal of Canon EF lenses for various production scenarios. “Canon's EF lenses help us achieve our shot ideas quickly. The lenses are low profile, but pack so much power,” he explained. “You can pack a backpack with 6 to 8 lenses, and cover ANY and EVERY shot on your shot list and storyboard. Often, we only have one day at a



ABOVE Church of the Highlands' production team may need to shoot entire videos in one day or less. Having the various Canon cameras and lenses help them move quickly to tell stories successfully.



location and need to get 30 or more angles. Having the EF lenses allows us to get the shots quickly and easily. I love the versatility of the 70-200mm and not having to switch lenses. It makes my life easy! Love it! And, you just can't beat having a 100mm macro on hand to get you that close up shot. It's great to have various lenses on hand when you have the last-minute idea of getting that extra shot before moving on. Sometimes that last minute idea saves you later in post-production. Having a variety of Canon's L-Series lenses with you on set really comes in handy."

// SERVICE AND SUPPORT //

Cameras are operated by both staff members and volunteers. For volunteers who express interest in serving on their camera team, Church of the Highlands developed an extensive training process with benchmarks for each camera to ensure that trainees learn to operate a camera to their high

standards. They use experienced camera operators to provide personalized mentoring and coaching. When it comes to prior experience or skill, there are no prerequisites, but there is specific terminology, camera features, framing, and technique taught before they can begin crewing.

With constant use and wear that sometimes comes from having handheld gear, Church of the Highlands relies on the Canon service and support team to clean, repair, and source replacements and loaners quickly. They time their cleanings and maintenance with slower seasons of the year. "We have been blessed to have excellent relationships with our Canon reps over the last several years," Firesheets said. "This has given us the confidence that Canon will continue to be attentive to our needs and will respond quickly whenever we need help or guidance. Their team has always been great at handling support requests and helping us expedite the process." //

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