



# WATER'S EDGE

A VISION FOR CENTRAL

# AUDIO VISUAL LIGHTING UPGRADE

## *Observations on the Pending AVL Upgrade*

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The Central leadership has approved a limited upgrade to our audio visual and lighting equipment (AVL). The upgrade will take place through the summer and be completed before the fall season kicks off. In an effort to help the congregation understand the whys, hows and what-fors of the project, we've put together a brief, eight-statement outline of some of the critical factors pertaining to the upgrade. It is our hope that what the congregation has known to be true of Central in the past—our commitment to excellent stewardship and prayer-filled discernment—is true today. The decision to upgrade our AVL was taken with much prayer, due diligence and has excellent stewardship as its foundation. The upgrade will be paid for in cash in full from existing funds. No debt will be assumed.

### Why the AVL Upgrade?

#### 1. **Our Technology is Outdated**

The technology dates back to 1995. It was six-year-old technology when installed in the Worship Center back in 2001/2002. The speed of technological advancements has gathered pace over the previous 15 years. Over the last decade alone we have witnessed technological breakthroughs with smartphones, apps, social networking, WiFi, tablets, e-commerce, HD, wearable technology and augmented reality—to name but a few. All of these pose compatibility issues with our current technology.

#### 2. **The Parts are Obsolete**

The parts for our AVL system are discontinued. We can only find spare parts if we source them. For example, a critical box for our online live-stream is made by a manufacturer no longer in business. We have no guarantee that we are able to source the spare parts we need. This part alone is critical to our live stream that serves over 700 people each week. Since the technology is out of date, switching for a new part isn't possible. By the way, more people tune in for our live stream than attend worship in 95% of Wesleyan churches in North America! We can't allow this service to go down!

#### 3. **We've Out-lived the Technological Life-Expectancy**

While innovative (medical) technologies claim to have made 72 years of age “the new 30,” the reality is that technology itself has a definite life cycle. All technology has a product life cycle. The life cycle varies for each product type and the technology in question has out-lived its product life-expectancy by many years.

#### 4. **Big Worship Centers Cost Big Money to Upkeep**

I heard a gentleman complain about the size of his heating bill in his new house. He'd previously lived in an apartment and was surprised that his 3,000-square-foot home cost so much to run. Central Wesleyan is a big church with a big sanctuary, and it'd be wrong to expect apartment-like costs when we've built a farm. We have to spend significant dollars on the upgrade because that's what gathering in a near 3,000-seat auditorium costs!

#### 5. **We Remain Committed to Intergenerational Worship**

Our commitment to intergenerational worship means that the financial investment in our worship arts technology will be greater in the “Big House.” Churches who only have one worship style will typically spend less on worship arts staff and supporting technology than churches with more than one style



or with a choir and orchestra. Our commitment to “one style not fitting all” means that our support costs will be higher. It also means that our technology must be: a). capable of serving the needs of both worship hours, and b). changed over in the short time between the services. Our current setup for the contemporary service is not conducive to the needs of the younger generation and consequently endangers our adding younger goal. Our upgrade will take this in to account. Any changes will allow us to “turn down” and “tone down” the tech uses for the first service to minimize the discomfort for the older generation. We want to minimize any discomfort. At the same time it will enable us to “turn up” the settings create an entirely new feel conducive to the adding younger goal.

## **6. Big House versus Small Houses**

Our on-location research (March 2015) into cutting-edge Next Gen ministries in the USA has revealed that getting cutting-edge Next Gen ministries without reflecting this in the main Worship Center only serves to prepare our children and students to graduate from our church when they graduate from high school. Our on-location research has shown that by not upgrading we set younger churches in our neighborhood up for success at our expense. They will grow through the migration of Central’s younger community. The cost of not upgrading is higher therefore than the cost of the upgrade. There is nothing more painful than seeing our kids graduate from church when they graduate from high school.

## **7. Communication Ability**

Central’s teachers and leaders are visual communicators who want to do more visually than our current technology allows. The recent example of Craig and Brad using physical white boards is outdated and unnecessary, not to mention hard for people to see. New technologies are far more interactive.

## **8. Stewardship Lessons**

When we upgraded our sound system a few years back our tech staff also presented our AVL tech needs to the deacons. The deacons said that this was a priority and reserved the sinking funds for tech for this specific project. The project is estimated to cost \$1.5–1.6 million. Central has invested in sinking funds for technology for many years but we underestimated the replacement cost.

The bad news is that replacing all our AVL equipment through tech sinking funds would take us over thirty years at current sinking fund saving rates and we are replacing after fifteen years! Back then the church leadership could never really come to an agreement of what the true value of the fund should be. We had an idea that we were underfunding it, but we really had no real idea of how much more was needed. Remember, in 2001–2002 no one could anticipate the smart phone phenomenon, the rapid pace of tech change, and the speed with which technology would become obsolete and unsupported. In great Central fashion, however, money was aside. Unfortunately it wasn’t enough.

There is good news however!

The good news is threefold. First, we are not replacing our entire AVL tech! Second, with the surplus this year we have all the cash we need on hand without raiding other sinking funds or jeopardizing other projects. Third, the 2015–2016 budget proposes an increase in sinking fund savings, partly to right the ship on this segment.

Rest assured that we are now better placed to provide funding through our sinking fund plans to keep pace with necessary tech changes. We recognize that we will always be behind the curve as far as technological change goes. It is neither our aim nor our intention to keep pace with tech changes. We will only change when not changing has the potential to sabotage our ministry.