

# CHESA STREAMLINES CATDV MEDIA ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO HELP **NEW PSALMIST BAPTIST CHURCH** SPREAD HOPE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

CHESA solves workflow challenges to boost church's capabilities to reach 7,000-member congregation with Sunday services and special events.



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## OVERVIEW

Baltimore, Md.-based New Psalmist Baptist Church (NPBC) has a rich history that spans more than 120 years. The church's current 4000-seat worship facility - its home since 2010 - features a full control room with advanced audio and video production and post tools. This has enabled the church to broadcast its worship services on a local TV station, as well as stream to YouTube, to its over 7,000 members.



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As NPBC planned to further expand its VOD and streaming services, the church recognized it was under-utilizing its CatDV media asset management system, along with facing a workflow challenge from its integrator at the time, who provided the church with an incomplete archive system. Preparing to take on a wider role at the church beyond just overseeing the media department, the pastor's son, Rev. Joshua Thomas, felt he was missing the guidance and support he needed from his integrator. So Rev. Thomas began looking for a new partner - and he turned to CHESA to disentangle his systems and boost capabilities by better defining the workflow and documenting procedures. Then when the COVID-19 pandemic completely disrupted normal operations, Rev. Thomas engaged a CHESA Service Level Agreement (SLA), knowing the increased value of steadfast support at such an unstable time.





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## ABOUT NEW PSALMIST BAPTIST CHURCH

Based in Baltimore, Md., NPBC has a rich history that spans more than 120 years. The church was founded by Rev. Junius Gray in 1899. Named the Right Independent Freewill Baptist Church, it had its beginnings in the basement of a house on Russell Terrace, with fewer than 20 members. The congregation grew considerably over the years, particularly under the leadership of its current senior pastor, Bishop Walter S. Thomas, who was called to the church in April of 1975. The church continued to grow and in the fall of 2010, it moved to its current 4000-seat worship facility.

NPBC's offerings span Sunday services, daily Bible study classes, a 3-year discipleship program, leadership classes, catering ministry, and ministry school for future ministers of the Gospel. Designed to minister to the needs of individuals in the 21st century, the church also has a fully functioning broadcast facility with audio board, multi-camera setup, and video editing so that it can distribute programming live and on-demand through its website and YouTube channel. Additionally, a twice weekly television show, "Empowering Disciples," is broadcast both locally and nationally to reach NPBC's over 7,000 members. Staying connected to its congregation is of the utmost importance to the church, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## THE CHALLENGES

Perceiving the need to properly serve its members throughout this period of remarkable growth, Rev. Thomas - who has a background in film and media arts - ensured that the church's latest facility would have an HD-capable production and post studio on-premises. "In 2010, churches weren't going HD because there weren't as many HD delivery options," explains Thomas. "But we wanted a system that would last us five to 10 years, so we went full HD. We were broadcasting XDCAM to our local CBS affiliate, WJZ. Our goal was to capture everything native, so that from day one we would have HD masters. We had AJA KI Pro file-based video recorders capturing every Sunday service since we moved in with the ProRes 422 codec in full HD."

When Rev. Thomas was transitioning from director of media to a wider role as director of ministry - which would take him away from the production operation - he needed confidence in a capable and reliable integrator that could help address challenges and keep things moving forward. As an additional complication, the integrator the church was working with at the time had supplied NPBC with an archiving system without any way to put data on it - and could not solve that challenge without trying to sell the church additional, pricey solutions. NPBC also recognized that it wasn't taking advantage of the myriad capabilities of its CatDV, deployed along with a Quantum StorNext Storage Area Network (SAN).

"We added CatDV when we installed the storage in 2012," explains Thomas. "And CatDV was the hub of our system. But even with that, one of the things we learned over time - as with any database, is that you almost never utilize the system to its fullest capability. And so, in around 2018, we began looking at how we can utilize this more, how we can get more out of CatDV, which is when we also realized some of the flaws in how it was set up."



## HOW CHESA HELPED

Rev. Thomas knew he would not only need a new integrator who could address the church's media asset management challenges, but a real technology partner as well. That's when NPBC began a working relationship with CHESA.

"One of the biggest drawing cards with CHESA was the amount of CatDV deployments the company had done and the CatDV knowledge that was in-house, that would allow us to utilize that knowledge and help us change some of our best practices," explains Rev. Thomas.

"I had gone to NAB that year, and CHESA had suggested we stop by and visit with XenData. CHESA said that XenData had a product it had used previously and that it had confidence in. We went to the XenData booth, and I think it was a half hour later that the biggest problem I had was solved right there on the show floor."

Rev. Thomas' new role at NPBC prevented him from being devoted full-time to media production tech support, and he lacked any other in-house staff with comparable knowledge. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this situation, so NPBC turned to CHESA again. Despite budget cuts that had previously put it off, they signed up for an SLA to give Rev. Thomas some backup and a much-needed respite.

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**- Rev. Joshua Thomas**

New Psalmist Baptist Church

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## HOW CHESA HELPED

"We were really thrilled that NPBC put their trust in us at a time of considerable uncertainty, when budget dollars were extremely tight," comments CHESA Account Executive Louise Shideler. "The higher stakes actually made clearer for them the tremendous value of a CHESA SLA."

Within the first few months of the SLA, Rev. Thomas noted vast improvements. He saw how a better-tended environment ran smoother overall, revealing that some perceived limitations around their equipment had not been the real problem. Most of all, he was happy to relinquish the title of "primary troubleshooter."

"On the support side, if something goes down, I feel confident knowing that there's someone who will troubleshoot it," adds Rev. Thomas. "For me...when something goes down, it no longer stays down until I fix it. Now, I can submit a ticket that something's down and come in the next day, either virtually or on-site, and know it is fixed or there's an update on its status. That is probably the biggest asset that CHESA has, in addition to its vast knowledge base."



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## THE CHESA DIFFERENCE

In working with CHESA, Rev. Thomas says, he felt for the first time that he had found a company on both the sales and engineering side that completely understood what NPBC was trying to do.

"I knew from conversations that the systems CHESA was designing and spec'ing out for us were systems that the company had installed before and was familiar with," says Rev. Thomas. "I felt confident in their knowledge and that the solutions they presented were presented off of facts, not off of theory. Oftentimes, integrators will pitch you something that's supposed to work, just because they saw it at NAB -- but with Chesapeake, it was always 'this will work because we installed it.' They said they had experience installing XenData with Quantum and CatDV, so that was a major shift for us on the project side."



## OUTCOME

By partnering with CHESA, NPBC was able to make CatDV the hub of its workflow, as it had originally intended. "Before we were connected with CHESA, our desire was for CatDV to be at the center," says Rev. Thomas. "But we didn't have the knowledge base on our end, and neither did our integrator. Now, we have the relationship we need in place with CHESA and the right systems in place for us to be able get it to be what we want and need it to be."

Rev. Thomas adds that the shutdown due to the pandemic also made the church more aware of its workflow from a media asset perspective, as staff continued to work remotely and push content to its members. "As we continue to refine the workflow, we're now looking at how we create a more seamless experience for our editors and for our team members that may be working in the building or who are working offsite," says Rev. Thomas.

Ultimately, it's about the congregation maintaining its own sense of community, especially now in these unprecedented times. "We're full steam ahead now on creating even more content," adds Rev. Thomas. "Everyone is looking to consume as much as they can right now. We do believe in social distancing and staying safe, so we're looking at new ways to stay connected because we believe connection is important."



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This case study demonstrates how CHESA can enable organizations to take full advantage of existing media management tools, along with offering ongoing support that fits your needs.

**Ready to discuss how we can support your organization?**

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