

# Accuvant Helps Growing Community Church Implement Reliable, Secure WiFi to Expand and Support its Ministries

## Company:

[Watermark Community Church](#)

## Business Challenge:

In an effort to support its growing ministry, Watermark Community Church wanted to build a free WiFi network that would cover its expanding campus complex—including the worship center, meeting spaces, a coffee shop and the church's offices. The main goal was to provide secure and reliable WiFi coverage without being intrusive.

## Solution:

Accuvant provided a best-of-breed solution for Watermark to fulfill its WiFi security and performance requirements. First, Accuvant helped the church determine their information security needs. It then designed and implemented a new high-performance, highly-secure wireless architecture. Finally, Accuvant helped the church develop best practices for cost-efficiently managing the network.

## Products:

- Aruba for wireless LAN
- Juniper for firewall and VPN
- Palo Alto for perimeter security

## Benefits:

- Employees, members and guests have high-performing, secure wireless access throughout the church campus
- Users are authenticated upon sign-in, protecting private church information
- Cost-efficient, secure and manageable network enables a small IT support team
- Church can rent out meeting space to corporations or events that require robust wireless coverage

## Overview

Watermark Community Church—a 5,000-member non-denominational congregation in Dallas—relies on a robust information technology strategy to articulate its mission and follow through on its ministry of spreading the gospel. However, with its fast-growing community, small IT staff and limited expertise, Watermark needed to engage outside talent to help build a secure and powerful wireless network that would cover a growing congregation and protect the church's IT infrastructure. As a result, Accuvant helped Watermark expand free wireless coverage throughout its campus while protecting the church's IT and information assets.

## Business Challenge

Watermark utilizes technology in an effort to help its members communicate and embrace their religious beliefs. The church's Web site is populated with video, audio and Flash animation, and classes are taught using rich multi-media tools. The church's 100 employees are given VPN access to the network so they can work from home or on the road. Free wireless internet is also made available to members and their guests, cultivating a community-type feel throughout the campus.

"We strive to support our members in any way we can," said Scott Miller, director of IT, Watermark. "We operate a coffee shop on campus and provide free wireless internet where members and local business leaders can congregate and conduct business. We want to make this place as open and friendly as possible."

However, as the church continued to grow in both campus size and number of members, keeping up with IT demand proved difficult—especially considering Watermark's ministry focused budget and staff. As usage rose, bandwidth became scarce and performance suffered. Soon, another problem surfaced. With an open campus, Miller couldn't be sure who was accessing the network, where they were and what they were doing—presenting a serious security risk.

"It was obvious we needed a robust security strategy to go along with a new infrastructure," Miller said. "Unfortunately, we just didn't have the time, experience or manpower to pull something like that off."

## Selection Process

Early in the planning stage, Miller realized he and his staff needed help. He wanted to replace the existing wireless network with a solution from Aruba Networks but didn't have the knowledge or resources to deploy the network or manage it efficiently. His contact at Aruba suggested he call information security service provider Accuvant, and the blind date soon blossomed into a long-term relationship.

"The team from Accuvant was exactly what we needed. They came in and assessed our WiFi network security needs, formulated a deployment strategy and taught us how to manage it properly moving forward," Miller said. "In fact, they were coming up with ideas we hadn't even considered because we'd never done this before."

## Solution and Benefits

Accuvant boosted Watermark's perimeter security with robust authentication products from Juniper and Palo Alto, ensuring that employees, members and their guests can access the



network while the bad guys are kept out. Accuvant then helped set up 48 wireless access points throughout the church's seven-story office building, worship center, the coffee shop and meeting spaces. Additional authentication was added to provide employees secure access to the church's business applications that keep track of financials, member records and donation information.

"Our new security strategy keeps our data safe while maintaining our users' freedom," Miller said. "We value the best practices approach that Accuvant took in helping us build our secure and powerful network, providing us with a best-of-breed solution ideally suited to our needs."

As a result of the new robust wireless network, Watermark is able to open up its meeting spaces to conferences and local businesses, building its reputation in the community as well as nationally. The church recently hosted Echo Conference—an event that educates church leaders how to use multimedia in their ministries—partly because its wireless network is able to handle the huge traffic required to host an event that relies on moving and accessing a massive volume of network traffic.

The wireless network also enabled Miller to implement a new registration kiosk solution for services on Sunday and during the rest of the week. Families simply walk up to the kiosks from multiple locations on the campus, sign in their family and check into Sunday school and child care. Consequently, the church knows exactly how to dispense volunteers and resources (ushers, class helpers, parking attendants, baby sitters, etc.) around campus to accommodate demand—a useful organization tool for the 5,000-member congregation. Parents can even print off name tags that they can attach to their kids that correspond to a pick-up voucher. When services are over, they have to show child care providers their ticket to claim their children.

Most importantly, Watermark's IT network is hassle free. "Accuvant did a great job architecting a wireless environment that will scale to meet future needs while not requiring additional internal resources," Miller said. "A staff of two and a half is able to do the work of five or six; that saves us a lot of money and resources that are better suited for other ministries."

*"The proof is in the pudding. Accuvant solved all our information security needs. Without them, it would have been cost- and resource-prohibitive to build out our wireless network."*

*Scott Miller,  
Director of Technology  
Watermark Community Church*

## **About Accuvant**

Accuvant is a leading provider of information security, risk and compliance management consulting services, with more than 2,000 customers across North America and Europe. The company's security advisors use industry expertise and proven methodologies to help large enterprises assess their environments, improve their compliance postures and secure their infrastructures. Headquartered in Denver, Accuvant has 25 offices across the United States. For more information on Accuvant, please visit <http://www.accuvant.com/>.

## **About Watermark Community Church**

Watermark Community Church is a 5,000-member community church in Dallas, Texas. Founded in 1999, the church's goal is for each member of the body to have a clear understanding of passion for Christ and to be able to clearly communicate that passion to others. For more information visit [www.watermark.org](http://www.watermark.org).