

Community Church Adds Advanced Phone Features and Reduces Costs with 8x8

Indian Creek Church, religious organization



Indian Creek Church had a 20+ year-old phone system that was dropping calls and was not worth repairing. A volunteer who had worked for Verizon stepped up to help the church migrate to an 8x8 cloud communications solution. Now Indian Creek has more phones, electronic fax and other advanced features that are helping to extend its ministries and make its employees more productive. Best of all, the church is paying 25% less than it did for traditional analog phone lines.

Indian Creek Church was established just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After years of meeting in farm houses, the church built the original meeting house, which has since been rebuilt on the same property. Additions over the years have resulted in a three story building with a library, nursery school, various class rooms, office space and a large sanctuary.

Antiquated Avaya System Became Too Expensive to Fix

As a small church, Indian Creek has simple communication needs. For nearly 20 years, its Avaya phone system easily met those needs by supporting three phones and an answering machine, along with a fourth line for fax and security system reporting. The church also used Verizon as its phone service provider. But as the Avaya phone system aged, technical problems emerged and the church phones began having intermittent problems.

With its maintenance contract long expired, Indian Creek felt it was not worth pursuing a fix or upgrade to its aging Avaya system. That's when church member Bob Lane, a retiree who had spent 37 years working for Verizon, their current service provider, stepped up and offered to help Indian Creek find a replacement.

"Having spent my entire career working in telecom, I was familiar with traditional telephone technology and had a conceptual understanding of VoIP telephony," recalls Lane. "With a little research it became apparent that we had a great opportunity to not only obtain a higher quality of service but add new features and reduce costs by 25% by migrating to VoIP."

Customer: Indian Creek Church

Industry: Religious organization

Location: Harleysville, Pennsylvania

8x8 Products:
Virtual Office—5 lines

Favorite 8x8 Features:

- Mobile app
- Conference calling
- Electronic fax

Primary Reason Chose 8x8:

Wanted a cost-effective cloud communications (hosted VoIP) solution that would improve phone service and reduce costs.



8x8 knows how to treat customers right. Although we're a small church, we were treated like a major enterprise account. From the beginning, our account team was professional and prompt: anytime I call 8x8, I'm connected to someone who can help me right away. With that kind of service, we're not going anywhere. 8x8 creates customers for life.

—**Bob Lane**, Indian Creek IT advisor

Poor Technical Support Made Verizon Solution Untenable

Because Verizon was already providing the church's Internet and phone service, Lane initially placed the order for VoIP service through his former employer. After weeks of delays and unexplainable missteps, however, Lane had second thoughts.

The biggest problem he encountered was not being able to get through to Verizon's technical support using the automated prompts and menus. "It was like being in VRU (voice response unit) hell," says Lane. "I'd spend 1.5 hours on the phone and couldn't get ahold of anyone who could help me. Eventually somebody would pick up the call and their system would disconnect me!"

Even when Lane did eventually get through, he found that the Verizon representatives on the other end could not help him resolve problems with the VoIP service. Exasperated, he finally reached a supervisor in Verizon's Pittsburgh business office. To establish a way to get back to this helpful supervisor if needed, he asked for a direct telephone number to call. He was told that Verizon's business office has no direct phone lines! That was the last straw for Lane. He canceled the church's VoIP order and calls dealing with Verizon "the worst experience of my life."

Fast Response from 8x8 Starts the Replacement Process

Lane began researching other VoIP solutions and quickly narrowed the field to Comcast and 8x8. Comcast's service was more expensive and would require the church to rent phones, a solution that Lane did not consider cost-effective for the church. Nevertheless, he sent inquiries to both companies and was impressed to get a response from 8x8 just a few hours later on a Saturday.

By Monday, Lane had scheduled a conference call with the 8x8 team, and less than a week later he received and activated the 8x8 phones. The whole process was incredibly fast and easy.

8x8 Project Manager Ensures Seamless Deployment

Before implementing 8x8 service on a full scale, the church was rewired to better support the new phone service. Lane notes that "8x8 was ready to go before we were."

While waiting for Indian Creek's phone numbers to be ported over from Verizon, church employees simply forwarded their phones to temporary 8x8 numbers so they could start using the new service immediately. "8x8 did a superb job for us," says Lane. "We were assigned a project manager who explained and oversaw everything, including the porting process. There was no disruptive cutover like in the old days. Everything was seamless."

Expanded Service Costs 25% Less

With its new cloud-based 8x8 phone system in place, Indian Creek now has five phones instead of three, along with electronic fax capability. Lane is delighted to report that this expanded service actually costs 25% less than the church paid previously for four traditional phone lines.

CASE STUDY

Mobile App Makes Pastor More Accessible

Other advanced 8x8 features have come in handy as well. One is the mobile app, which enables the pastor to make and receive calls on his smartphone without revealing his personal cell phone number. "The mobile app gives us better phone coverage because our pastor is frequently out and about," says Lane. "With 8x8, he can manage the phone no matter where he is."

Conference Calls Enable Remote Church Attendance

Like many churches today, Indian Creek wants to reach young millennials who are sometimes more comfortable with the virtual world than the physical one. Using 8x8's teleconferencing features, members and prospective members can now dial in to attend Sunday school classes and other church events without appearing personally. "Young people today expect to have these kinds of capabilities," says Lane. "Now we can use 8x8's business technology to benefit our church members."

Automatic Forwarding Ensures Continuity During Outages

Lane notes that 8x8 also provides excellent business continuity/disaster recovery by automatically forwarding all church phones to the pastor's cell number if for some reason service goes out. "Now we have a backup plan and a survivable phone system in case of emergency, a standard feature that was a pleasant surprise to an already impressive system" he says.

Electronic Fax Improves Administrator Efficiency

Indian Creek employees have quickly adapted to the 8x8 system, despite being new to the technology. Lane recounts that the church's long-time administrator was able to quickly and easily use the 8x8 fax without any training. "8x8's fax feature is very convenient for us," says Lane. "It tells you when the fax went out and sends an email confirmation that it was sent. It's much easier than sending faxes manually, like we did before."

8x8: A Superior Solution for Small Organizations

8x8's cloud-based phone service has worked so well for Indian Creek that Lane plans to recommend it to other small churches in the area. "This is a no-brainer for organizations that just have a few phones," he says. "With 8x8's cloud solution, you get more lines and more features for a lot less money. Why pay for expensive analog lines and Centrex service when you can get a superior solution from 8x8?"

Creating Customers for Life

Lane believes that the secret to 8x8's success lies not just with its industry-leading technology, but also with its "textbook" approach to customer service. "8x8 knows how to treat customers right," he says. "Although we're a small church, we were treated like a major enterprise account. From the beginning, our account team was professional and prompt: anytime I call 8x8, I'm connected to someone who can help me right away. With that kind of service, we're not going anywhere. 8x8 creates customers for life."

Find out how 8x8 can help your business. Call **1.866.862.2811** or visit **www.8x8.com**

