



St. Benedikt Home Association: Better integrating their people in need into community life



Avaya IX™ Workplace enables quality livestream connections to Visbeker Assisted Living and Nursing Home

Religion has played an important role in Visbek for over 1,200 years. The municipality in the Oldenburger Münsterland has been considered the "nucleus of Christianization" since the year 819. The church still plays a central role in the religious community life. In order to ensure that the elderly and movement-impaired parishioners do not miss their Sunday Mass, the Roman Catholic parish of St. Vitus is now broadcasting its service to the local assisted living and nursing home via video live-stream. Avaya is providing the required IT infrastructure.

Sundays, at ten thirty, in Visbek: Senior citizens at the St. Benedikt home wait in the lounge for the St. Vitus mass to begin. A 60-inch flat screen television displays their historic hall church, and they can see how the benches slowly fill and then hear the children's choir begin to sing. The Parish's church services have been streamed to the neighboring assisted living and nursing home via a live video stream since the beginning of 2019.

Viewership is also growing: two thirds of residents now watch the live-stream regularly. "They are happy to be able to participate in the mass and thus in their community life," says Dr. Bernward Wefer, chairman of the St. Benedikt Home Association. Those who are not in the lounge at the time of the livestream, can alternatively follow the service from the TV in their own room also. "St. Vitus-TV airs on channel 60 every Sunday", says Dr. Wefer.



At a glance

- The St. Benedikt home association in Visbek has looked for ways to integrate elderly people into the community.
- The services of the St. Vitus Church have been live streamed since the beginning of 2019 with the help of Avaya IX™ Meetings video conferencing system and via Avaya IX™ Workplace.
- The solution allows for a number of additional scenarios, including the transmission of informational events, town hall meetings, and plays or concerts.
- In the meantime, the live broadcasts of the Visbek church services are making a name for themselves across the region also, and some of them have ten thousand views. Many neighboring communities are inquiring about the concept.

St. Benedikt home: Streaming via Avaya IX™ Workplace is becoming increasingly popular. It allows senior citizens to participate more in the community.

The idea to broadcast church services from the St. Vitus Church to neighboring nursing homes was conceived back in 2017. At the time, pastoral workers Christian Hoge and Bernward Wefer were looking for ways of integrating the elderly into the community. Participating in events like these contributes significantly to a higher quality of life in older age. All the more reason to enable residents and movement-impaired persons to participate as widely as possible. "Video streaming seemed to be the right tool for this," says Hoge. They were fortunate that the necessary expertise was already available in their community. Visbeker Christian Kuhling works as a sales engineer at Avaya, and knows video conferencing systems very well. He was able to quickly organize a test setup. "For the 2017 Christmas Mass, we installed a video camera in the crèche and broadcast the service one-to-one to the retirement and nursing home via livestream," says Hoge.

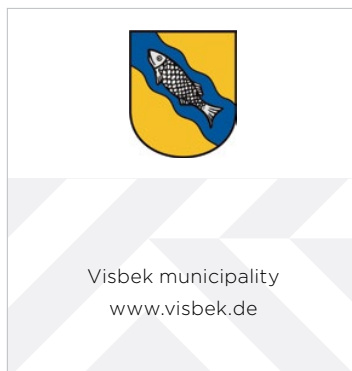
Experience all kinds of events live on the Internet

The enthusiasm was tremendous – and a successful first step towards regular live transmissions of the mass to the St. Benedikt home. "Now it is about doing the job properly," explains board chairman Dr. Wefer. For the financing, he led a strong advertising campaign and was able to get the buy in of committed citizens of Visbek as well as the political municipality. The concept was convincing because, among other things, it also envisioned the transmission of non-church events such as plays or concerts. And all that via the Internet for everyone worldwide to see, either live or recorded. "In the long term, we may even, for example, stream information events or the council meetings," says Visbek Mayor, Gerd Meyer, as he lists further possible applications for the technology.

In no time at all, the necessary funds were made available and a skilled implementation partner was found in GreenIT24. Compared to some of the other providers, Osnabrücker Systemhaus was particularly convincing with its complete all-in-one solution. "It was clear to us that the use of a classic video conference solution in Visbek was out of the question", GreenIT24 CEO Jorg Gentz says.

"It is also important for municipalities to open up new methods of communication. If we can lead the way thanks to Avaya, we will gladly do so."

—Gerd Meyer, Mayor, municipality Visbek.



Finally, the video feed from the historic church building had to meet completely different requirements than would not normally be the case. For example, there were extremely long cable runs, and they had to observe careful monument protection requirements as well as ensure first-class picture and sound quality. "The GreenIT24 GmbH experts bravely overcame all the obstacles in the project," says pastoral officer Christian Hoge.

While the initial test transmission was sometimes difficult to understand in St. Benedikt's house, it was thanks to the Avaya IX™ Meetings video room system that the elderly can now enjoy a level of sound quality that lets them truly enjoy their normal TV programs. "That is because the Avaya solution also connects seamlessly to the high-quality microphone system of the church", explains Jorg Gentz. In the future, an audio mixer and additional microphones should also enable more flexible sound control. He is convinced that "the organ playing will then be even better".

St. Vitus TV impresses with first-class quality

There is also nothing limited or inferior with the video image transmission. The video components from Avaya installed in Visbek deliver razor-sharp, high-resolution images, and the moving camera can easily be controlled from the church sacristy. The videos are transmitted via a dedicated radio link. This ensures availability of sufficient bandwidth for transmissions from the church at all times. At the assisted living and nursing home, the stream is then fed into the local network via a small PC and made accessible via the screens in the rooms and lounges.

About two months after St. Vitus TV went on the air for the first time in Visbek in the Spring of 2019, the streaming of the Catholic congregation had already become increasingly popular, and not just among the residents of the St. Benedikt home. Additionally, the virtual service is accessible to everyone via Avaya's IX™ Workplace platform via PC, tablet or smartphone – worldwide via the Internet, live or recorded. If you miss a service, you can always watch it later. "Many citizens are now taking advantage of the solution", says Christian Hoge as he refers to the website statistics of the Catholic congregation. "The number of hits has doubled since St. Vitus TV has been on the air," the pastoral worker confirms.

Sermons going viral: 70,000 clicks in six weeks

The live Visbek church service transmissions are making a name for themselves nationwide. A Spring 2019 sermon by priest Hermann Josef Lückner went viral on the Internet. Within a period of six weeks, it was watched more than 70,000 times. The church congregation and municipality also see this as proof that they are on the right track with the live stream.

In the meantime, many neighboring municipalities are also asking questions about the concept. Word has apparently got around about how well church live streaming is being received by the public. "It is also important that municipalities are open to new methods of communication. If we can lead the way thanks to Avaya, we will gladly do so", summarizes Mayor Gerd Meyer.



St. Vitus-TV is now being used by many citizens. The number of hits have doubled since the beginning of the broadcast.

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we've enabled organizations around the globe to win by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we're committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what's next. We're the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.

The success of this project is certain in the opinion of the pastoral worker, Christian Hoge and the head of the home association, Dr. Bernward Wefer. It has already been decided that the celebrations for the 1,200th anniversary of the municipality will be streamed to the Avaya IX™ Meetings platform via the mobile video system. Numerous other possible uses are currently being explored.

Solutions

- Avaya IX™ Workplace (Avaya Equinox®)
- Avaya IX™ Room System XT5000
- Avaya IX™ Room System XT4300
- Avaya IX™ Meetings

Virtual church service accessible to everyone

"The streaming process via Avaya IX™ Meetings is not only used by the seniors in the nursing home, but by many other members of the public also. The number of hits has doubled since we went on the air." Pastoral worker Christian Hoge, Parish St. Vitus, Visbek.

About the Catholic church of St. Vitus, Visbek

St. Vitus is the Roman Catholic parish church in the Lower Saxon community of Visbek in the Oldenburg Munsterland. The broadcasts of the Visbek church services are making a name for themselves across the region, and some of them have ten thousand views. In addition to three kindergartens, two libraries and the St. Vitus clothing store, the parish also looks after the St. Benedikt nursing home, which opened in 2012. There is also a branch church (St. Antonius) in the Visbek farming community of Rechterfeld. Find more information at www.st-vitus-visbek.de.

About GreenIT24 GmbH

From software clients to desktop systems to space solutions and corresponding infrastructure solutions, GreenIT24 is a competent partner for audio and video conferences. With in-depth knowledge, extensive expertise, and a global partner network, the Osnabrück systems solutions company ensures a "perfect view of things" even in the most remote places of the world, suitable sound systems, controls and lighting. Further information is available at www.greenit24.de.