



If It Is Not Possible to Have a Face-to-Face Program

Accompanying Resource:
United Methodist Women Program Book
2020–2021: *Knitted Together for God's Good Work*



There are times when gathering in person is not possible, whether it be due to illness, transportation issues or distance. Technology offers wonderful solutions to help us to continue our fellowship even in trying times.

There are several videoconferencing platforms available. Two of the more popular options are described below. An internet connection and a working camera and microphone on your device is necessary to fully participate. These platforms allow you to share your screen, making it possible for everyone to view documents and PowerPoint slides and additional videos together.

WHAT IS ZOOM?

Zoom (zoom.us) allows anyone with an internet connection (phone, computer, tablet) to join in a videoconference. Zoom has free as well as paid options depending on your meeting needs.

TIP This video is a quick overview from Zoom on how to get started: youtu.be/qsy2Ph6kSf8.

And here is a video from United Methodist Communications on getting started with Zoom for worship and small groups: youtube.com/watch?v=a2FZD1d_yFQ.

GOOGLE MEET

Google Meet is free videoconference software similar to Zoom. All participants need a Google account to participate.

TIP This video provides a brief guide to the Google Meet platform: youtu.be/J_ywOjB1c4Q.

Considerations:

- Allow time for individuals to sign on and become familiar with the platform. You might want to have a test meeting to allow everyone to sign on for a casual chat before your first program.
- Welcome people as they join the call. It takes a few seconds from the time they join to the time their audio begins to work.
- Ask multiple people to be involved in the program so all feel included and engaged.
- Be available via text, phone or other form of communication for those who are struggling to access the meeting—especially before your first few meetings on the platform.
- Recording your meeting is an option so that those who cannot attend can watch the material at a later time. You can upload the recording to YouTube and share the link for easy access. (See “Recorded Meetings,” opposite.)
- Meeting facilitators can mute all participants during portions of the meeting when just one leader needs to be heard to eliminate background noise.
- Give time for people to socialize even though you are online. It is different in that only one person can speak at a time, so it will take some getting used to.

How to Adapt Programs

It will take some creativity to adapt the monthly programs to online meetings, but it can be done! The following are some ideas:

- Allow extra time at the beginning of the meeting for everyone to get online and greet one another.
- Invite participants to show and share items from their home for the worship table or altar to create a virtual altar.

- Ask different individuals to read the prayer, Scripture and litanies.
- Use YouTube recordings of songs to help lead singing and worship. You can share your screen to show the video. (Practice this ahead of time with a small group to see how it works.)
- Send a list of needed materials and instructions ahead of time (or mail them) for activities, so that each member can do them individually and perhaps ahead of the meeting and be ready for discussion.
- Explore Zoom breakout rooms as a way to have small group discussions during your session. Check out: unitedmethodistwomen.org/Media/PDF/HowToHostVirtualEvent.pdf.
- Set up PowerPoint slides for reading materials and discussion questions during the meeting.

You can share your screen and show the slides from your computer.

Recorded Meetings

If you are recording the meeting, be sure participants know, as it may change what they choose to share (and wear!) during the session. A recording is a large file, and you may wish to upload it to YouTube to more easily share it with those not present. If you upload it as an unlisted video anyone who has the link can easily view and share it with someone else, but it would not be searchable. To limit circulation, you can also mark the video as private. When a video is private, it can only be seen by an approved list of people and the link may not be shared.

Carefully consider if the information shared in the meeting should be shared with an audience outside of those present. Also, you may choose only to record a portion of your gathering.