

A word about Zoom from your friendly Regional Council

Zoom, Zoom, Zoom all the time! Zoom is software that lets groups of people meet with video and audio, or only audio. The United Church is using it non stop during this coronavirus pandemic. Many of our Regional Council check ins, meetings with resource people, and governance meetings are happening through Zoom, so you may well have experienced it already. It can be very handy for your community of faith or organization, and with a little practice is easy to use. Below are some basic explanations of how it works; how to access it; and some resources.

How it works

You don't need internet to join a Zoom call! Yes! For too many of us who suffer from bad rural and remote connectivity, or for those who don't have a computer, this is good news.

What you do need: a phone, **or** a computer/ smart phone, **or** both. And: you need a meeting web link. The link gives you the meeting ID number you'll need if you're phoning in.

You have three options:

- 1) **Join by phone only**, if you have zero internet or it's horribly slow and unreliable. Use the toll free number (**1-855-703-8985**), and enter the meeting ID when asked. The meeting ID is always in the website link itself. Unless your phone is truly magical, you won't have video. But at least you can participate, all without worrying about the state of your hair.
- 2) **Join by phone for the audio and by computer for the video**. This works well if you have a slow or uneven internet connection or speed. Follow the dial in instructions, and open the web link below. Make sure your computer mic is off or you'll get screechy feedback. (Hosts can help you do that- just join the meeting a little early.)
- 3) **Join by computer only**, if you have relatively fast internet. Skip the phone entirely and use the link you've been sent. Choose "use computer audio".

Ok, fine... how do I get hold of Zoom?

Accessing it: If you're going to use it for meetings of more than two people that need to last longer than 40 minutes, you'll likely need a paid account. Unfortunately, the Regional Council doesn't have the space within its account to host all communities of faith gatherings.

Step 1: Sign up for a free account and see if you like it. (Two of you can talk as long as you want, and three or more can meet for 40 minutes, then start a new meeting after you get cut off.) www.zoom.us

Step 2: Have a look at Zoom's plan options: <https://zoom.us/pricing>

Step 3a: Before you sign up, consider going through Tech Soup Canada to get a 50% discount on Zoom subscription rates: <https://www.techsoupcanada.ca/en>

Tech Soup is a Canadian non profit that verifies you're a registered charity or charitable entity. Have your charitable number handy. Once you're approved, Tech Soup allows you to access major software

packages at big discounts. You need to go through their approval process and get an account with them, so it will take longer. But it's worth it, because you may well find other software your ministry can benefit from. ([Have a look at their catalogue.](#))

Or

Step 3b: just say to heck with it and get a regular Zoom subscription. BUT take note: once you're on a Zoom plan, you cannot do Step 3a until your plan expires.

Step 4: Learning to use it. Once you have your Zoom account, play with it. You won't break anything. Experiment with online prayer and bible study as well as meetings. The more you practice, the more natural it becomes.

Resources

Here's a handy Zoom meeting guide from Shining Waters Regional Council; note that you don't need an internet connection to use Zoom, though you do need it for video:

<https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Zoom-Meeting-Participant-Guide.pdf>

And from the horse's mouth:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-PC-and-Mac>

Or if you prefer video: *How to Zoom* (it's a verb now...)

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKpRxBfeD1kEM_I1Ild3N_XI77fKDzSXe

24 March 2020, Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils of The United Church of Canada.

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