

Planning a Meeting via Skype or Zoom

Videoconferencing is a great meeting tool and may be the perfect way for a Diocesan or Provincial meeting or for representatives from various churches to meet together. Most videoconferencing tools allow the transmission of text, audio and video. The main benefit is you can interact with anyone anywhere in the world and thus reduce travel costs. The software allows users to collaborate and share files. Your computer needs to be equipped with a microphone, headphones and a web camera to use video conferencing software. Two of the highest rated videoconferencing systems are Skype and Zoom.

Skype is a web-based communications tool that offers video chat, international calls and texting via the web. Dubbed by users and experts as one of the best videoconferencing solutions providers in the world, Skype offers instant messaging, group video conferencing, video chat, group chat, and collaboration functionalities such as document and image sharing. Contacting actual landlines and mobile phones is also offered for super low rates with no peak times. Currently, Skype is owned by Microsoft, and brings on board all functionality and responsiveness expected from this reputed provider. While its basic form is offered as a free service, Skype offers business functionalities and features for a very low price of \$2 per user per month. Up to 250 people can come into a Skype conference without leaving their desks or the comforts of their own homes. Skype operates on all devices, from the trusty desktops to mobile smartphones, making it easy for users to link up and communicate with each other and help each other stay on top of their business, ideas, projects and more.

Zoom is designed exclusively for hosting webinars, teaching online courses, and conducting online training, video demonstrations, virtual meetings and video conference. It represents an easy-to-use online video conferencing and meeting software that integrates video conferencing, simple online meetings, and group messaging into a single cloud-based platform. Group video meetings can also be conducted effortlessly wherein the host can screen-share from their desktop or mobile device. Zoom's basic plan is free. It allows you to host up to 100 participants with a 40-minute limit on group meeting. However, you may host an unlimited number of meetings. They offer online support and have great online instructions on how to get started.

It is recommended that if you decide to use videoconferencing for a meeting, that the meeting participants familiarize themselves with the site information prior to the meeting. Tutorials can easily be found online.