Zoom Video Conferencing

Zoom is an online video call platform that is free for anyone to use. A "host" of a video call will need an account, but someone can use Zoom as a participant without an account. A free account enables video conferencing for up to 40 minutes per meeting. There is a paid version available ($15/month) that allows for unlimited time.

All someone needs is a device with a camera/microphone (smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop) and someone can call in with a phone and be "audio only" if others are using video.

Note: If you plan on using a smartphone or tablet, it's difficult (or sometimes, not possible) to run Zoom from the browser/internet app on your device. The easiest way to use Zoom on a smartphone or tablet is to download the Zoom app and create a free account.

Creating an Account

Someone does not need an account to be part of a Zoom video call. You only need an account if you want to host/schedule a video call or if you download Zoom to your device. (Zoom can run from within an internet browser but the functionality tends to be better when using the dowloaded program/app, which would then require a free account.)

- Go to www.zoom.us and click "Sign Up, It's Free" and create an account. You'll need to follow the instructions provided, which includes activating your account via an activation email.
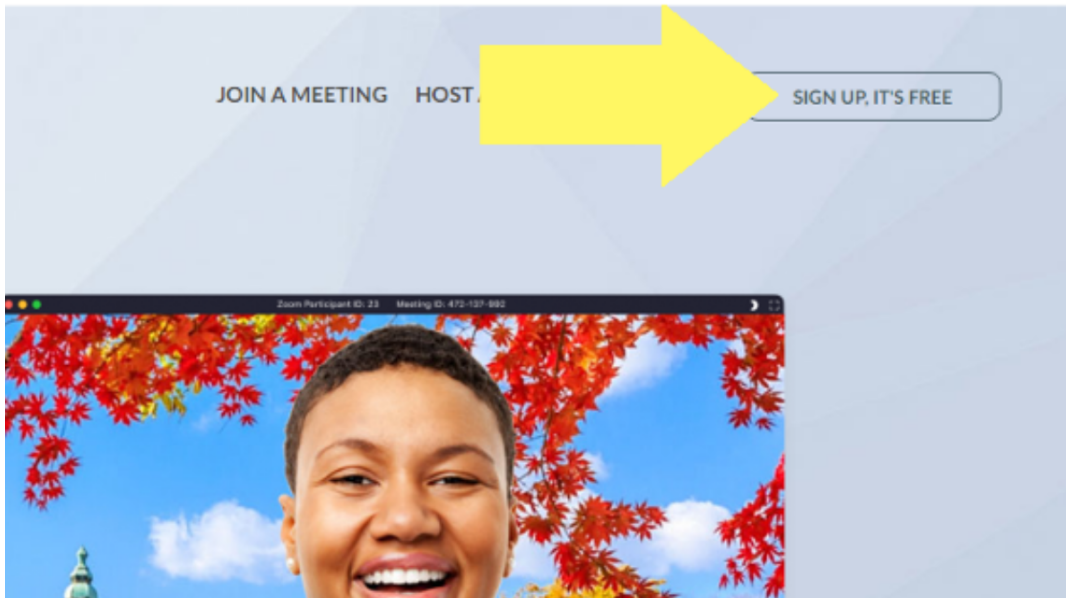
- Once you have your account set up, go to "Account." On the left hand side, you'll see a column of options. Under your Profile, make note of your Personal Meeting ID as well as your Zoom link that you can send to anyone for a video call.
    - *Note: Never share your Zoom Personal Meeting ID or Account Number publicly*

- **Meetings:** Here you will find any scheduled or previous meetings. (More on that later.)
- **Webinar:** This section is for people with pro/premium plans and you won't need to use it.
- **Recordings:** If you choose to record a call, a copy will be saved here.
- **Settings:** For changing settings... we'll do that next!

Video Call Settings

Go to Settings, and we will make some changes. Your account will be set-up with some default settings and the below instructions walks through changes to those default settings. It won't walk through each setting, only the ones that would potentially need to be altered.

Note: If you've had any concerns about using Zoom or seen various sources expressing concern, those things will likely be resolved by your account settings. For more information on this, check out the FAQ section at the bottom.

Host Video: Turn ON – This makes starting a video call easier on you, it will just automatically turn everything on.

Participants Video: Turn ON – I turn participants' videos on because someone entering a video call is already expecting to be on a video call. For those who aren't tech-savvy, it can take too much time for them to figure out how to turn their video on and this eliminates that complication.

Join before Host: Turn ON – This means people can join the video call before you're on it. This way if people are early (or you are late) the call can still get started.

Alternatively, you might **Enable Waiting Room.** The waiting room feature allows participants to join the meeting before the host but then the host gets an opportunity to "approve" each person. This isn't necessary if you're not sharing your link publicly, but can still give an extra measure of protection. It is also likely selected "ON" automatically for you by Zoom so if you want to make a change, you'll need to disable this.

Require a password when scheduling new meetings: Turn OFF – This isn't necessary if you specify who you sent the link to, it would just be another step someone would need to take to join the call and I try to eliminate as many as possible to make it easier for people. However, this is a setting Zoom has to prevent problems with unknown people joining calls (see FAQ's for more information) and again, if your link isn't shared publicly, shouldn't be necessary.

Chat: Turn ON, but check the box that says "Prevent participants from saving chat" -- There have been concerns about chat features (See FAQ's). The simple way to avoid this is to make sure the chat cannot be saved. The chat feature is very helpful for technical difficulties (even if video/audio isn't working, a participant could send a message to the group) and for sharing prayer requests.

Note Jacob's Well accounts do not allow chat saving.

Private Chat: Turn OFF -- This means that the chat function would be limited to messaging the entire group at once as opposed to individuals, privately. This eliminates some of the concerns that have been raised about the chat function. (See FAQ's)

Note Jacob's Well accounts have this feature turned off.

Screen Sharing: Choose ON or OFF – This allows you to share your screen. You can choose to allow the host only or anyone to have screen sharing permissions. I recommend only allowing the host to alleviate concerns over screen sharing. (See FAQ's)

Note Jacob's Well accounts have this feature turned off.

Breakout room: Turn ON – This allows you to have breakout rooms in the video call. Having a discussion with 10+ people can be difficult but you could split the group into multiple mini-video calls. You can choose to sort randomly or choose which rooms people go into. When you pull them back to the main video call, they get a 60 second warning to wrap up their conversation and then are automatically put back in the main call.

Show a "Join from your browser" link: Turn ON – This is a helpful work around for those who do not want to download Zoom on their device and will run Zoom in their internet browser.

Go back up to the top of the Settings list. The above settings were all under the "Meeting" section. **Now click on the "Recording" section settings.**

Turn all recording functions OFF -- This eliminates concerns over recordings and chat features (See FAQ's).

Note Jacob's Well accounts have this feature turned off.

Starting a Video Call Meeting

You don't have to schedule a meeting in advance if you don't want to. You can simply click "Host a Meeting" "With Video On" from the top right task bar. Once you click "with video on" the screen will look like this:

Please click **Open Zoom Meetings** if you see the system dialog.

If nothing prompts from browser, click here to launch the meeting, or download & run Zoom.

You might need to use the link "click here" to launch. You don't have to have Zoom downloaded on to your computer to use it, but it does make things more seamless as

the host. (But remember, you do need to create a free account if you download the program or app.)

Scheduling a Video Call

You can schedule a meeting in advance. See the [Scheduling a Meeting](#) video for more information.

One tip for you: I don't recommend sending out the automated email invitations! They come with lots of different phone numbers and links and tend to look like spam. In addition, they can be confusing for people who aren't used to connecting via video call.

Instead, I send out my own email with only the pertinent information. You can copy and paste from the template below, just fill in the colored portions with your information:

- Meeting: **Tuesday, March 24th at 1:30 PM**
- Join Zoom Video Call Here: https://zoom.us/j/123456789
- Meeting ID: **123 456 7890**
- If Joining by Phone (audio only), Call: 1-312-626-6799 (this should be a consistent phone number)

Your video call link and meeting ID can be found in your account profile (we pointed it out in the "Creating an Account" section).

We don't recommend sharing your "Join Zoom Video Call" link anywhere public. Keep in mind that anyone with that link can join your meeting. Only share the link with those you have planned to be in a meeting with and avoid sharing on social media, unless it's within a private group.

If you're hosting your own meeting (not using a Jacob's Well account), one helpful feature can be the "Waiting Room" feature. You can read more about this in the settings section.

Navigating Video Call Features

Below is what will appear at the bottom of your video call.
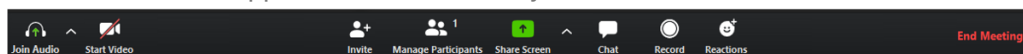
Here's what each of those buttons do, from left to right:

Join/Start Audio: This will prompt you to set up the audio connection with your computer, this likely will happen automatically.

Start Video: This will begin your video stream. You will likely need to give Zoom access to your camera once you click this button. It also allows you to turn your video on or off throughout the call. Someone in your group without a webcam could still participate with just audio and be able to see the other group members.

Invite: This will enable you to send an email to all of your group members. When you click "default email" it will show you a sample email with links that you can send you your members so that they can join the "meeting."

Manage Participants: This is where you can see all of the members… and you can mute them (they might have some background noise that is disrupting the group… I wouldn't generally advise using this as a tool for your chattier members 😊).

Share Screen: You can use this to share your computer screen with the other participants. You might do this if you choose to study a passage together – you could pull up Bible Gateway and have everyone read from the same passage. (Remember, you may have turned this off in your settings.)

Chat: While the video chat is happening, there can also be a text chat happening at the same time! This is useful when someone is talking and one person says something like "Gonna run to the bathroom, be right back!" They don't need to interrupt the call, but you can still chat. It's also useful for troubleshooting if someone can't get their audio or video to work.

Record: This is for recording the video call, but it's likely you turned that function off in your settings as we recommended.

Reactions: You can give reactions to what people say without speaking or pulling the conversation to yourself. (It's similar to "liking" a Facebook post.)

End Meeting: This will end the meeting. You can choose to end the meeting for all people or assign someone else to be a host and then you can leave the meeting and the others can stay.

If you edited your Settings to allow Breakout Rooms, a button would also appear on this toolbar to create breakout rooms.

Viewing the Video Call

There are two settings when viewing video calls – Speaker View and Gallery View. You can change this in the top right corner of an active video call. Here's what the difference is and why you would choose each one (featuring my cat, Lucy…).

The above images is Gallery View which will show each video equally. It's helpful for when you want to see everyone and their reactions all at once. I recommend using it the majority of the time. Notice how you can appreciate both Lucy and I equally!
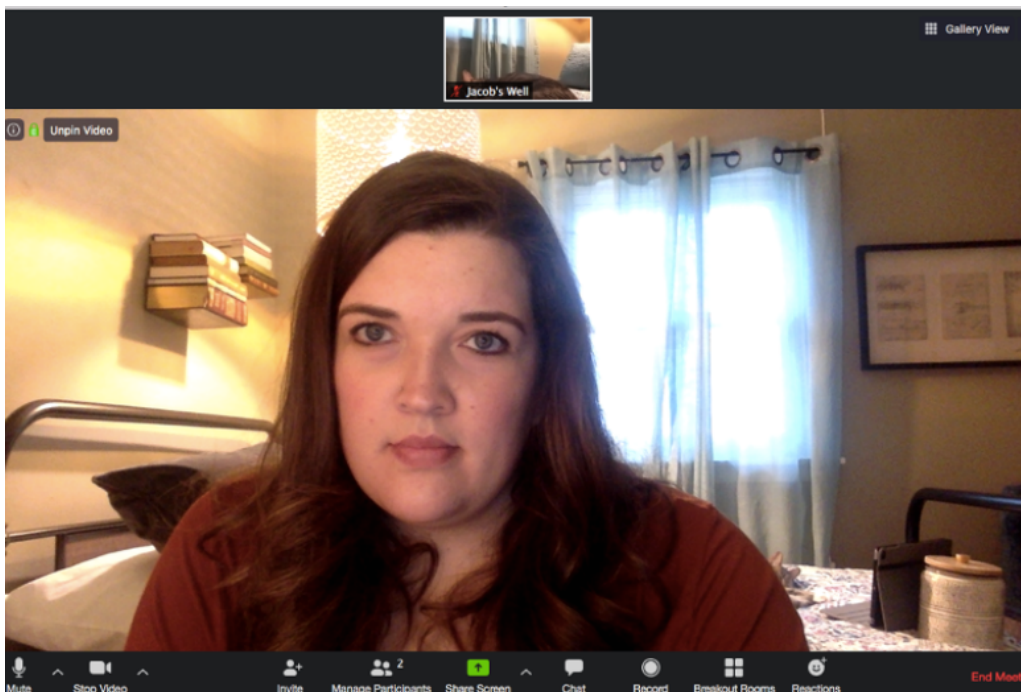
The above image is Speaker View – it makes all videos, except the person who is currently speaking, smaller. It's good for when one person is talking the majority of the time and everyone is muted but it can get awkward when some people are in noisy environments… one person sneezes (and wasn't on mute) and suddenly they're the largest person on the screen! Plus, you hardly even can notice Lucy and she's obviously the crowd pleaser in this situation!

Other Helpful Logistics

Frankly, the best way to become familiar with Zoom is to just host a call. Call one other person and try the features out! (Do you have multiple devices in your house? You could call someone else in your household, or set up an iPad or smartphone with your favorite family pet.)

Here's the link to download Zoom. "Zoom Client for Meetings" is for PC/Mac use, and the first link. Zoom Mobile Apps are listed farther down the page for Apple & Google.

How to Join a Meeting is a helpful video for what it looks like to join a meeting – perhaps for your group members!

Here are instructions on how to join a meeting without a smartphone or device with microphone/speaker.

More about Host & Co-Host Controls

FAQ's

Why do you use Zoom (as opposed to other platforms)?

We have found that Zoom is the easiest to learn while also maintaining the best quality. Learning new technology is vulnerable, so ease and quality are important things to consider when choosing a platform. Additionally, Zoom integrates two tools, video conferencing and conference calls. This means it's accessible for people regardless their set-up. There are many in our church who do not have internet access or access to webcam technology but since Zoom has the ability to integrate a standard phone call, nobody gets left behind.

What happens when I run out of time on my call?

A free account with Zoom allows for up to 40 minutes on a call. It is very likely you will surpass this time! However, Zoom won't kick you or your group members off the call without a warning and you can even extend your time for 10-15 minutes.

If you're still running out of time, you and your participants can leave the call and click the same link you started the call with mere seconds later to restart your time. It's a tad annoying, but it's the thrifty answer! You can also also purchase a licensed Zoom account for $15/month which will give unlimited meeting time.

If you're a Jacob's Well Group Leader, you can contact Jenna Kaiser, Formation Director, to get connected to one of the church's licensed Zoom accounts for your group.

Is Zoom secure?

Zoom does not monitor or use customer content for any reason other than as part of providing our services. *Zoom does not sell customer content to anyone or use it for any advertising purposes.* You can read more about [http://]Zoom's privacy policies here.

Currently, the Jacob's Well staff is comfortable and confident using Zoom's services.

That being said, you should remember that anyone with a link to your video call will have access to your Zoom meeting. This means we don't advise sharing your link on social media, unless it's a private group. As long as you're sharing your Zoom link with people you know, you shouldn't run into any issues.

Zoom automatically enables two features, passwords and waiting rooms, to any call to help prevent this. (See more about these settings above.) If your link is not being shared publicly, you can discern whether to use these settings.

What is Zoombombing?

'Zoombombing' is a reference to virtual meetings that are disrupted by graphic or threatening messages or actions. These incidents can largely be attributed to "internet trolls" without particularly malicious intentions. We have never had any issues with 'zoombombing' and our guidelines and suggestions for settings (pertaining to recording, screen sharing and chat functions) will protect users from 'zoombombing'.

What about call recording and chat features?

Similar to the above question, there have been concerns about the use of private chats and call recording features. Again, we have never had any issues with call recording or private chat issues and our guidelines and suggestions for settings will protect users from potential concerns.

What if I'm leading a Jacob's Well Group?

Good news! Jacob's Well has a few licensed Zoom accounts for Group Leaders to use. Contact Jenna Kaiser to get a recurring meeting set-up for your group. You will not be required to create an account and the settings will follow the above recommendations to protect you and your group.

You are certainly welcome to lead your group using your own free account if you would prefer. We advise you follow our suggested settings and read the above question about working around the free account time limit.

If you choose to use a Jacob's Well account, know that your meeting will happen without an official "host." This limits some abilities, such as muting/un-muting participants, enabling the waiting room and running breakout rooms. The large majority of groups should function fine without the hosting abilities and our accounts

maintain all our recommended settings. *Note: We can only have a certain number of calls at a given time, so you might need to be flexible on your meeting time.*

Have More Questions?

Contact Jenna Kaiser, Formation Director, with any questions.
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