

Now that I've mastered remote worship, what about remote meetings?

A quick tutorial on holding congregation meetings
during this time of COVID 19



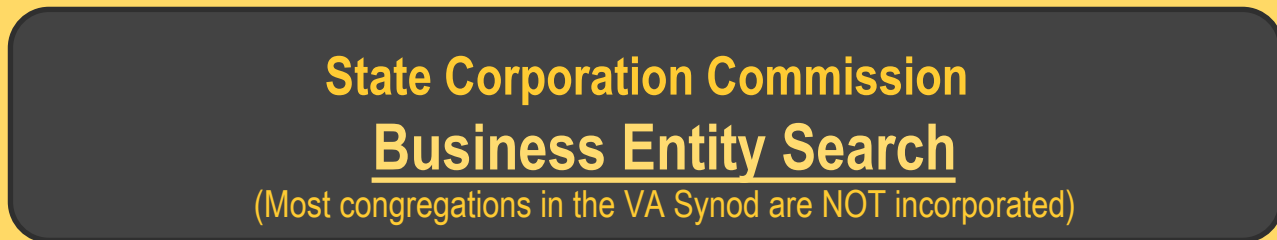
Guidance on Remote Congregational Meetings by Virginia Synod Congregations

(With input from Bradley J. Moyers, Virginia Synod Attorney)

The information contained herein is general guidance and should not be considered legal advice. Each situation should be evaluated using the individual congregation's constitution and/or bylaws. A congregation should contact an attorney if legal advice is needed or desired.

Can we legally conduct congregation business remotely?

STEP 1: Determine whether your congregation is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia



(Click the “Business Entity Search” line to get to the website; then enter your congregation name)

YES

- Virginia law allows for corporations to meet remotely, whether your constitution includes the provision or not.
- You **MUST** still follow constitution guidelines for the meeting.

NO

- See next slide

Can we legally conduct
congregation business
remotely?

STEP 2: Check your Congregation Constitution



Check your Constitution

C10.08 “The congregation
may hold meetings by
remote communication...”
(added 2019)

C12.13 “The Congregation
Council and its committees
may hold meetings by
remote communication...”



Check your Bylaws

Make sure that nothing in
your bylaws overwrites your
Constitution

WHOA!

What if remote meetings aren't authorized by our Constitution?

1. If your congregation is incorporated and your constitution doesn't forbid them, or even is silent, you can hold the meeting. Virginia law authorizes the meeting outright.
2. In Virginia, unincorporated associations are typically governed by the bylaws or constitution of the association. There is very little guidance that Virginia law provides regarding structure and/or governance of unincorporated associations. Use your constitution's guidance for regular congregational meetings.
3. If your constitution has language to prohibit these meetings, you're stuck.

Note: When this is all over, consider updating your constitution to allow for remote meetings.

The Congregation Council:


- ✓ Adopt a resolution permitting a remote congregation meeting
- ✓ Create the structure of the remote meeting
- ✓ Set forth in the notice to the congregation how the meeting will be conducted
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for instruction for all congregation members as to how to participate in the remote meeting (consider having some serve as a contact person, with a phone number to call with questions)





What kind of notification is required?

The same notification normally required by
your constitution and bylaws.

The background is a solid yellow color. In the center, there is a large, light-yellow, irregularly shaped circle. Inside this circle, there are several stylized, yellow, rounded shapes representing clouds. At the bottom left and bottom right of the circle, there are dark blue, stylized leafy branches. The text "To hear and to be heard" is centered within the circle in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

To hear and to be heard

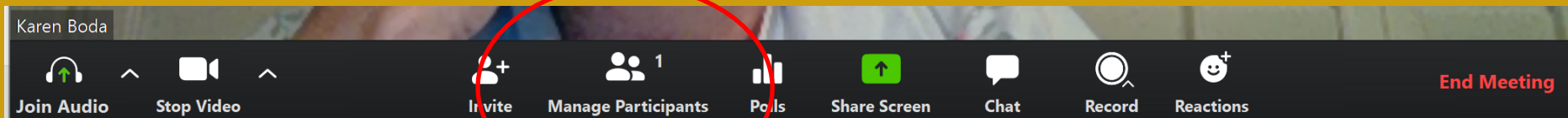
Congregations
should make every
effort to ensure
that everyone in
the meeting can
hear/be heard

How do we certify
who's in
attendance?

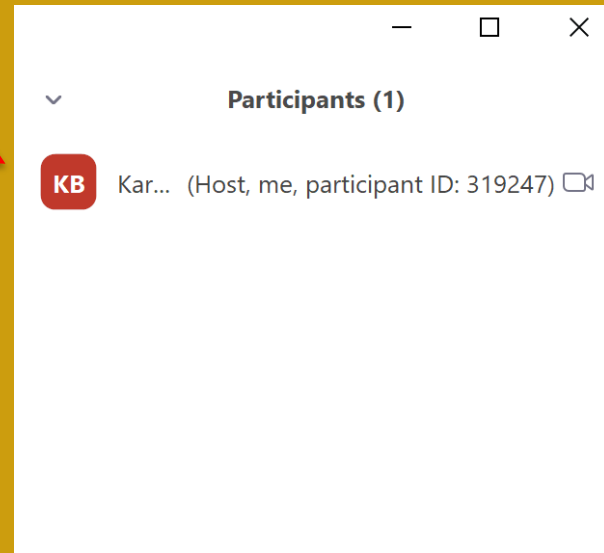


Same quorum requirements as in a regular congregation meeting

Do a low tech roll call or
Use ZOOM (see next slide)



- Host clicks: “Manage Participants”
- [Click here for a Zoom tutorial to Manage Participants](#)
- Host can create a report within 30 days
- [Click here for a Zoom tutorial on Generating Meeting Reports for Registration and Polling](#)
- ZOOM Gotchas!
 - More than one voting member at a single location
 - Log in with phone number instead of name



How do we vote?

(Unless required by your constitution, we strongly encourage you NOT to have a secret ballot vote, as this complicates the remote meeting process.)

- Vote by spoken yea / nay
 - if the majority is not clear, individual polling may be required
- Raise your hands
 - PRO: allows multiple people at the same location to vote
 - CON: doesn't work unless everyone has video access
- If your meeting is large, the host may want to divide the group into Breakout Rooms, with a Council member serving as the counter for each Room. ([Click here for a tutorial on Zoom Breakout Rooms.](#))
- Drive in the written ballots after the electronic meeting
 - Must *only* allow ballots from those who have attended (absentee ballots are expressly prohibited in the constitution [*C8.02.e.6.])



What if a member doesn't have electronic access?

Note: The host must do everything reasonable under their power to ensure that the meeting is “fair”.



- Have someone physically sit with them and assist
 - Only works if stay-at-home and social distancing requirements are met, i.e. elderly family member
- Provide a dial in line with no video required
 - Zoom has call-in phone numbers in addition to video (If you choose to use Zoom)
 - distribute meeting materials prior to the meeting
- Provide a paper ballot for the individual to complete and then snail mail in
- Have someone call them on the phone and then use speaker phone.

Can we record the meeting?

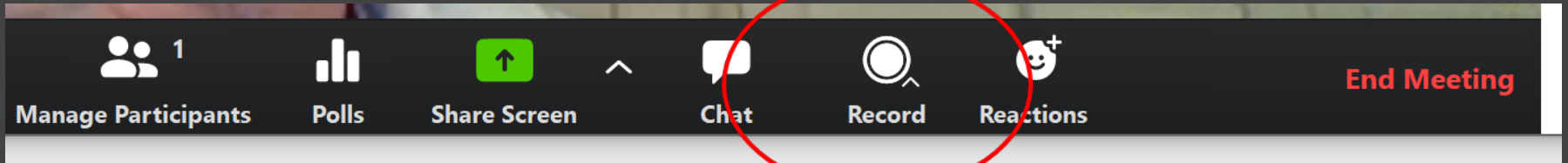


Yes. ZOOM has the functionality. Save the recording on your computer, not the cloud.

When the meeting is scheduled, also announce that it will be recorded.

When you begin the meeting, announce that it will be recorded.

Consider putting on all of your slides that the meeting will be recorded.



Best Practices

Send out as much information before the meeting as possible.

ZOOM instructions, slide decks, motions

Practice. Practice. Practice.

Make sure the host is familiar with the technology.

Send out the ZOOM instructions and test by someone not familiar with the platform

Mute by default.

Give the host access to mute and unmute the attendees.

Call Meeting

For meetings which will call a rostered minister,
we recommend that you include one of the synod staff.





The Virginia Synod website has helpful information about using Zoom: <https://www.vasynod.org/zoom/>

Contact any of the synod staff.