

Diocesan Synod 2021 - A Digital Synod

For the first time, the Diocese of Kootenay is hosting it's triennial Synod digitally. We're working hard to prepare for a smooth meeting that allows for important conversation and debate. Obviously, there is no substitute for being gathered together in one room and digital meetings mean that we're going to have to work harder to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

So, how will this work?

Almost all of us have attended a few Zoom meetings or worship services at this point. The main difference for Diocesan Synod is that there will be more of us! Just like every other Zoom meeting we've attended there will be a link distributed to you. To join the meeting all you'll need to do is click the link. You will be admitted by the host and you'll be able to participate. Please find a link below on Zoom basics if you'd like a refresher.

What might be a little different than other Zoom meetings you've attended is how we're going to use the Chat box. Frequently, the Chat box is used for comments and interactions that attendees want to share but don't necessarily need to say out loud. There are going to be over 110 people attending our digital Synod and so we need to strictly limit how the Chat box is used. No comment or question that is written in the Chat box will be recognised by the Chair of Synod. Just like if we were gathered in person, we want to hear your questions and comments out loud and we don't want any member to miss it. So at Synod 2021 the Chat box will only be used to set the speaker list.

When we gather in person, those who wish to speak need to approach a microphone and be recognised by the chair before they can raise a point of order, ask a question, or debate a motion that is on the floor. When we gather digitally, the Chat box will be similar to our microphone. Please write your name and whether you wish to raise a point of order, ask a question, or participate in debate. We will have a volunteer whose only job will be to keep track of the speaker's list. As in every Synod, only those recognised by the Chair will speak and we are all subject to the Rules of Order provided by our Canons. We will begin the meeting by muting all participants. We ask that you only unmute your microphone if you are recognised by the Chair to speak.

We will not be removing the Private Chat function from Zoom for Synod. However, please be aware that the meeting is likely to be recorded and we will have a transcript of all chats, private or otherwise.

What if I want to make a motion?

It will be almost impossible to develop a properly worded motion and to give our Resolutions Committee the opportunity to vet any draft motion once our digital Synod begins. We are asking that you refrain from making any motions once we have begun.

What about voting?

At Diocesan Synod, in addition to voting on motions, we elect various of our members to sit on Diocesan Council, other committees, and to represent our Diocese in the wider church. We will be using a digital voting platform called Simply Voting for all elections and ballots at our digital Synod. There are a couple of brief tutorial videos below. The Simply Voting platform is accessible through your email address. You will receive an email that provides you a link to the voting page. There you will find the questions up for voting as we get to them.

Will there be an opportunity to practice all of this?

On Wednesday, May 12th at 7 pm pacific time we will gather for a rehearsal with any Synod Member who wishes to join us. We'll practice voting on a motion, having an election, asking questions, and having a debate. This is new for all of us but the technology is in place and we are not the first people to do this. We are confident that this will go smoothly and well.

On the days of Synod we are going to have a tech support person available by phone to anyone who has trouble. Our hope is that we will iron out any wrinkles during the rehearsal but our tech support will be there to guide you if you have any trouble.

Where is the Simply Voting and Zoom link?

Please look for these in your email early next week. We don't want to send out either until everything is ready. There will be a separate link for the rehearsal on May 12th.

Some Zoom Tips

1. Be sure to mute your mic (lower-left corner of your screen) as soon as you sign on and whenever you are *not* speaking. This is important and perhaps the most critical tip on this list to avoid background noise and distractions for others.
2. Please be mindful that while there will be many of us at the meeting, if your video is on, we can see you. If you need to turn your video off to take a break you are welcome to do so. Please avoid walking around with your laptop or tablet during the meeting.
3. Close unneeded applications on your computer to keep the video optimally functioning.
4. You might want to use a headset with an external mic for best hearing and speaking capabilities.
5. When you are speaking, let others know that you are finished by saying one of these sign-offs: "That's all." "I'm done." "Thank you." So that everyone knows you have finished your comments.

6. Be mindful of your background lighting. If you are sitting in front of a window, you may be completely darkened by the light coming through the window. Your overhead light also might need to be turned off or dimmed as well.

Video Links:

Zoom Basics: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygZ96J_z4AY

Simply Voting Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThzL85kFz3E>

Another Simply Voting Tutorial (no audio)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1S7d5xwfX8&t=29s>