



What to Expect at the Upcoming Hybrid Annual Gathering

Hybrid Meetings ARE Different

The last two Annual Gatherings were totally virtual, this one is hybrid so being very clear about the process is even more important as it's critical that ALL have access to speak, whether attending virtually or in person. The AG Planning Team hopes that posting this information NOW will allow attendees the opportunity to ask questions or express concerns about the process before the meeting. While significant planning has been done to facilitate a smooth meeting, this is new for everyone; so a bit of grace will be appreciated and if the feedback is that our pre-planned process isn't working as anticipated, onsite adjustments can be made.

What IS the Plan?

The plan is to TRY and make the Annual Gathering ONE meeting; so those attending virtually feel fully included. For this reason, the electronic **platform we will use for those attending the meeting virtually is ZOOM**; not ZOOM webinar, but regular ZOOM. This is the platform most familiar to everyone and experience shows that for virtual attendees it is easier to become distracted and to feel like an observer on ZOOM webinar than it is on regular ZOOM. There will be large monitors in the chapel so those attending in person will be able to see those attending virtually and there will be cameras in the chapel so those attending virtually will have a view of the attendees and of course the podium. **This works best of course if virtual attendees join and keep cameras on as much as possible.**

This also means that ZOOM etiquette is very important.

- Please enter the meeting and immediately use the mute function. Throughout the meeting, if we find that microphones are not muted, the tech team in very unlike UCC fashion, they will simply take control and mute everyone.
- Again, you are encouraged to turn your camera on as it promotes a more inclusive meeting. At the same time, you may wish to consider what's in your background. It's your home, but AG is a meeting; and there are boundaries on what should and shouldn't be seen. We simply ask that you are respectful.
- Please enter your name on your screen and indicate if you are a delegate or visitor. We realize you may be sharing a screen with someone; if one person is a delegate and the other a visitor, please enter the name of the delegate and indicate the delegate status for voting purposes.

Remember there are a couple of ways to display your screen.

- In the upper right, you will find the GALLERY view that provides thumbnail views of several participants; the number depends on the size of your screen. Using the up and down arrows, you can page from screen to screen to see others who are also in the meeting. Your screen highlights the person speaking.
- Sometimes this can become distracting, so you might want to switch to SPEAKER View where the person speaking is the primary person on your screen, and you have very small pictures of a few additional persons. This sometimes works best for major presentations. But it's your choice, it's your screen, and it's totally in your control.

Using Chat

You are likely already familiar with the "CHAT feature". It is found at the bottom of your screen, in the middle, you will find the CHAT feature. It looks like a little bubble. Feel free to use the chat feature when you enter the and before the meeting is formally called to order, throughout worship, to comment and offer words of support. However, when AG begins a formal business section and the Moderator is requesting formal questions, please reserve the chat for formal questions. This is how the tech staff will know there is a person virtually that wishes to be recognized to speak. That process is reviewed below.

Discussions in Hybrid

The Annual Gathering Standing Rules will continue to guide the process for discussions. The only thing that will change is how the Moderator will assure that both in person attendees and virtual attendees are recognized in an orderly and consistent process.

When a motion has been made and seconded (a second is not required if the motion comes from a committee) the Moderator will open the floor for discussion and the process will proceed as follows:

- The Moderator will recognize (2 speakers; 2 min each) who are in person attendees who wish to speak.
- Then the Moderator will recognize (2 speakers; 2 min each) who are attending virtually who wish to speak.

This process will be repeated as long as there are questions or until the time allotted expires.

Virtual Attendees who Wish to Speak:

- Indicate the desire to speak in the chat function
- Provide your name and the name of your church
- Shannon Clay who is monitoring the chat will recognize you when it is your turn to speak.
- Unmute, identify yourself by name and church; you have 2 minutes to speak

Voting

Voting on **routine items** can be laborious even in the best of circumstances; it can be brutal in a virtual environment. Many meetings manage routine items more effectively as the Moderator simply asks if there are any objections to a given item; if there are none, the Moderator notes the item is adopted. This can be used to adopt the agenda, grant voice to guests, or other items that are likely to be non-controversial and routine in nature. This process will be used at Annual Gathering.

When Actual Voting IS Required

There are actions for which the process described above is NOT appropriate; approval of minutes need a formal vote, as do budgets, nominations; and the call and election of a new Conference Minister and other business that may be submitted. If a motion comes from a committee, a second is not required. If it does not come from a committee, following a second, these are the steps:

The Moderator will indicate the action and the vote required to pass the action. Virtual participants will use the ZOOM polling feature to vote; those attending in person will vote by voice.

The Moderator will request that voting begin:

A “voting pop-up” will appear on the screen of ZOOM participants and virtual delegates should begin voting as follows.

- Click on “yes” if you are in favor of the proposed action.
- Click “NO” if you are not in favor of the proposed action
- Click “Abstain” if you do not wish to vote or register an opinion on the proposed action.

While the delegates who are attending virtually are voting, the Moderator will call for a VOICE vote from in person attendees.

After the voice vote has been registered, the Moderator will ask the tech staff to show the results of the poll. When the results of the poll are shown, the Moderator will make the call about the passage or defeat of the motion.

As in all actions in all meetings (even when meetings are all in person), the Moderator has the responsibility to make the decision about the passage or failure of an action. The decision of the Moderator can be challenged. If that happens, a hand count of ZOOM participants will be taken, and a division of the house can be taken of in-person delegates as well.

No need to memorize this, we'll review them at plenary!

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