



Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council  
YOUTH INITIATIVE

## Virtual Youth Groups

## Technology Discussion

### Hardware

**The Computer or Computers**—You will need at least one computer with a camera. If your group is large and all in the same room, you might want to set up a second computer and face the camera in a different direction from the first one. One of these computers *must* be on *MUTE* or the feedback loop will make the call impossible.

Another alternative if the group is large and you have the equipment is to split in two groups and have them in different locations. If you do this, you will want a moderator for each room.

**Sound for the Conference call**—We recommend that the U.S. partner purchase for themselves *and* their partner a USB external conference microphone. We ran our beta groups without this. The feedback from those groups is that it made it impossible for everyone to hear what was said. Therefore, the person sitting nearest the computer had to repeat everything. The external conference microphone listed here seems to solve that problem.

*Recommended:* USB external conference microphone from **SoundTech Model #CM-1000USB**. Cost is about \$70 each.

### Software Platform

Many of you are familiar with Skype and you can use the free version for these calls, provided that only two computers are connected.

In our test sessions, we used a product called Zoom. It is very easy to use, and it is free—as long as your meeting only lasts 40 minutes. If you want longer meetings you must *pay* for the account. But you only need one account—at \$10 per month (or annually for a reduced price of \$100), you can connect up to 25 different computers. The screen image on each computer is visible at the same time to all other computers. We believe the flexibility and ease of use make this the best platform for these sessions—and your church can use it for other meetings as well.

In either program, if you are using the USB external conference microphone you will need to tell the program. In Zoom, click the up arrow next to the mic icon on the control bar, and then select USB PnP AUDIO DEVICE. In Skype, do the same.

The YOUTH INITIATIVES TEAM will be happy to talk with you about this technology [• Rev. Sara Ascher, Team Chair: [sascher@uuwellesley.org](mailto:sascher@uuwellesley.org) • Rev. Kelly Crocker, [kellyc@fusmadison.org](mailto:kellyc@fusmadison.org) • Melody Moberg, [Melody.moberg@uuchurch.org](mailto:Melody.moberg@uuchurch.org) • Rev. Jennifer Emrich, [yarmouthminister@yahoo.com](mailto:yarmouthminister@yahoo.com)] or contact UUPCC Executive Director Cathy Cordes, [ccordes@uupcc.org](mailto:ccordes@uupcc.org) , 781-275-1710.

*Asking the teens to help with the technology piece of this is a great way to get them involved in partnership in general. Once they have helped with this, it is easy to get them to help with adult-to-adult connections as well.*