



St Pauls, St Nicholas and Woosehill Church

Guide to setting up and use of Online Virtual Meetings & Messaging

You will no doubt have seen reports in the media of a surge in the take up of a variety of Online Virtual Meetings & Messaging. These free applications offer the ability to stay in touch with friends and families. For some this may seem something of a black art. This guide is intended to explain how to get started and then use these various platforms.

The use of these methods for communicating is particularly important while many of us are living in isolation as a shield from the spread of the Coronavirus. We are hoping that by using the available technology we shall be able to continue our various church groups and add to them to stay in contact with more people around the Parish.



Free to use

Mainly messaging, but with video conferencing

Encrypted

Best on Smart Phones

Limited to 4 people on a call



WhatsApp

WhatsApp is primarily a messaging system, designed for Smartphones. It requires your mobile phone number to connect to groups

To set it up you need to download the software onto your phone from Google Play on Android devices and from the Apple App Store on iPhones. Ensure all of the users in the group do the same and then save their mobile numbers in your contacts.

To create a group:

1. Open the App and select the Chat tab.
2. Click the 3 vertical dots and select New Group
3. Select contacts to add to the group then tap the green arrow
4. Enter a group subject. This the name participants will see
5. Tap the green check mark and you are ready to go

When you type on a group page everyone in the group will see it. When someone responds you will get a notification.

You can use WhatsApp to make calls to one or more members of the group by clicking on the call icon and selecting everyone you want to call. This will start a conference call

Messages and calls all go through the data connection so it is free if you are connected to wi-fi, but will use up your data allowance when using mobile data

For more information go to the WhatsApp website:

<https://www.whatsapp.com/>

Free

Video Conferencing

Available on Desktops and
Smartphones

Straight forward

Practically unlimited time+people

8x8 is part of the 8x8 virtual office suite, but the video conferencing is provided for free.

It can be run as a Desktop or Smartphone App, or on a desktop browser. Using a browser is simpler but is only supported on Chrome and the new Edge. The Apps can be downloaded from <https://download.8x8.vc/>

For more information go to the 8x8 website:

<https://www.8x8.com/university/free-online-training/video-meetings-standalone>



8x8 Video Meetings

To setup 8x8 either download and install the app, or browse to <https://8x8.vc/>.

1. Create a free account from the same initial page,. Click 'Sign up for Free' and sign in using an existing Facebook, Google or Microsoft account, or just create an account using an email address and a password.
2. This takes you to your Personal meeting space where you can start a meeting by clicking Start. Or create a named meeting by giving it a name (at the bottom of the page)
3. When the meeting starts you can click the I in a circle at the bottom right of the page and copy the link to send to anyone else you want to join. (others can also join by phone using the call-in number)

There are two ways to add additional security with a meeting passcode.

You can either wait till the meeting starts and add the passcode in the information box (an I in a circle),

Or you can set it in advance for your personal meeting space under 'My Profile'. Click the 'Edit' under the passcode line to change the passcode

When joining a meeting on a desktop app just select Start/Join as a guest

In the meeting the icon in the bottom right

Toggles between tiled (everyone visible) or just the speaker



Free

Video conferencing

Available on Desktops and Smartphones

Popular, but has Security Issues

Limited to 40min call time



It can be run as a Desktop or Smartphone App, or on a desktop browser. Using a browser is simpler but is only fully supported on Chrome and the new Edge with more limited support for Safari and Firefox. The Apps can be downloaded from

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/207373866-Zoom-Installers>

Using the browser on a desktop is more secure than using installed App

If you do use the App make sure it is upgraded to the new 5.0 release, as that has significant security improvements

To setup Zoom, either download the App and open it, or use the web browser to go to <https://zoom.us/signin> You can use an existing Google or Facebook account or create a Zoom account using an email address and a password. (using the 'Sign Up Free' link)

Start a meeting by clicking 'Host a Meeting' and selecting 'With Video On'. If the app is installed that will be launched to start the meeting, otherwise, follow the browser prompts to get to 'start from your browser'

Invite others by sharing the meeting ID. Click the 'Manage Participants at the bottom of the screen, and then click the Invite button.

Send an email or copy and share the URL

When you share the URL it contains both the meeting link and the password, so be careful who receives this link because anyone with it can join the meeting.

As host you can control who joins by enabling the waitingroom and only allowing people into the meeting that you know and want in

The gallery view (where you see everyone on a grid) is only available on the app, not in a browser.

For more information go to

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

Free

Messaging and Video Conferencing

Best on Desktops, available on
Smartphones

Tried and Trusted

Max 50 people on a call



Skype

Only Chrome and the new Edge
Browsers are supported for video
calling without the App

The video on Skype is not always
as good as some other systems,
but it does provide a lot of func-
tionality

To quickly set up a conference call
go to [https://www.skype.com/en/
free-conference-call/](https://www.skype.com/en/free-conference-call/) Type in a
meeting name in the Topic box and
click create a free meeting.

Copy the link and send it to the
rest of the group using the Share
invite

You and everyone invited can then
join the call .

For more information go to

<https://www.skype.com/en/>

Skype was designed to provide a num-
ber of 1:1 communications (chat, video
call, and telephone), but has grown to
allow group chats and video meetings

To use the full functionality you need to
download the App onto your device,
(use [https://www.skype.com/en/get-
skype/](https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/)),although it is possible to have a
video meeting on a browser without the
App (use <https://web.skype.com/>)

To use the web or the App you will need
to sign in with a Microsoft account.

To set up you need to have all of the peo-
ple you want to connect with on your
contact list.

1. Open the App, or the site on your
browser
2. Log in using your Microsoft Account
(or create an account)
3. Using the panel on the left, click
Contacts, and select someone to
talk to
4. You can then use text. Or call with
video or audio only

Free

Video Chat

Chrome browser on Windows

App on Mac, iOS, Android

Provides games to play

Limit of 8 people on a call



HouseParty

HouseParty is a video chat system which uses its own set of online accounts to connect people. It can use the email addresses in your contact list to find those with a HouseParty account and add them to your list. Otherwise you will have to ask the others in the group for their username, or invite them to join and create an account themselves

To get started you must first download the App (on windows it is an extension for the Chrome browser.

You will then be asked to create an account, for which you need your email address, a phone number, a new username and a password

When you launch it for the first time you will be asked for access to your contacts list, so that it can add existing users.

When you launch the app you will see a list of users that you have connected to recently, and any house parties that are already in progress. You can join one of these, or create your own

Dismiss the popup menu and click the + in the top right corner and you will be in your own room. When your friends log in they can see your house party and join you. You can lock the room by clicking the padlock at the bottom of the screen, then anyone who wants to join will have to ask first.

To play games hit the dice icon

For more information go to <https://www.trustedreviews.com/how-to/use-houseparty-app-4018959>

Summary

Application	Available on Desktop Browsers	Desktop Apps	Smartphone Apps	Accounts	Max people in a meeting	Time limit	Share/Invite meeting details	Notes
 WhatsApp	No	Yes, but needs phone present	Yes	Uses mobile phone number	4	none	Call via app	Good for group messaging
 8x8	Chrome, Edge and Safari	Windows and Mac	Yes	Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Own	No limit	none	Copy details and share on email or other channels	Good video with chat
 Zoom	Chrome and Edge (less functionality than Apps)	Windows and Mac	Yes	Facebook, Google, Own	100	40 min	Copy details and share on email or other channels	Good video with chat. Some security issues which may have improved with version 5.0
 Skype	Chrome and Edge	Windows and Mac	Yes	Microsoft	50	none	Copy details and share on email or other channels. Or Call on Skype	Best to use App. Reasonable video. High functionality
 Houseparty	Chrome	Windows and Mac	Yes	Own	8	none		Easy to join meeting, but limited to 8

Conclusion

WhatsApp is a great way to stay in touch, through messaging, with a group of any size, but may not be the best option for having video meetings

8x8 sets no limits on time or users, and is very straight-forward for most users. It is less well known that some of the other systems

A combination of WhatsApp and one of the other video systems may be the best option for groups of more than 4.