*Written by Lenore Bajare-Dukes for Soul Matters facilitators at the UU Church of Lancaster (**Lenore@uuclonline.org)**, revised April 7 2020. Much comes from experience participating in a Wellspring group led by Libby Moore.*

*Technical tips for participants:*

* **Muting:** Plan to mute yourself and only unmute when you are ready to speak. (Hover cursor over the bottom left-hand corner.)
	+ The meeting host is able to mute people and invite them to unmute, if need be.
* **Noise:** If there is background noise or audio cutting in and out, I encourage people to use headphones with a microphone (such as iphone headphones); this helps with audio quality and helps prevent freezing with bad Internet connections.
* **Audio:** After clicking the link to join a Zoom call, a box pops up to help people choose between joining via computer audio or telephone. If you have unstable Internet connection, you may choose the option to join via phone, and it will prompt you to dial in. Otherwise, you should choose computer audio.
* **The chat:** Use the chat feature to indicate if your Internet is freezing or if you have audio problems.
* **Active Speaker vs.** **Gallery View**: practice toggling between different ways of viewing others by clicking the Active Speaker or Gallery View button in the upper-right-hand corner (on a computer). Use Active Speaker to focus on deep listening to one person. Use Gallery View when you are all talking back and forth, or meditating, or when you are sharing to your group.

*Facilitation tips for facilitators:*

* **Make a plan!** Make sure everyone has access to the email with the invitation to join the meeting, including the link to join and the call-in information. Make a plan: if someone gets kicked off due to Internet connection, they will click the link again to join back in. If they have trouble hearing or speaking, they will dial in by phone.
	+ If the meeting is interrupted by malicious persons (this is unlikely!), the host should shut down the meeting, and an email should be sent out to the group with an alternate plan for gathering that is not on the same zoom address. This is not likely to happen now that Zoom has instituted better security.
* It is good to **greet** people as they enter in by name--especially those who join after the meeting has started.
* If someone is **participating by phone**, please remind people to say their names ("this is Jonathan, and I think...") each time they speak. Prompt them if they forget, and model it yourself.
* Please encourage people to **take care of their bodies** by stretching, sitting on the floor if they need to, getting water, etc. They do not need to hold themselves in a "professional" pose (some may be accustomed to doing that in front of a work computer)! You should consider calling for an official 5-minute break if the call will last longer than an hour (the call will stay on, and everyone will just mute themselves and turn off video until they return).
* **Moving around can cause freezing.** So, people should turn off their video if they plan to move around a lot (e.g. stretching, eating). The more rapid movement on the screen, the more likely it is for some people's videos to freeze for a moment.
* **Encourage your group to be kind to themselves and generous with others.** Using a new-to-many technological tool while also doing spiritual work can be emotionally draining. Sometimes it is frustrating to feel slower to learn this new tool than a fellow participant. Sometimes it seems like someone is interrupting, but they may simply be experiencing an audio delay or a frozen computer. Assume best intentions, and remind yourself and others that we are all learning and adapting in order to connect with each other in these times!
* Facilitators may designate a **tech host** who is just responsible for the Zoom hosting, not for facilitating. This person can be the “host” of the call (the person who is logged in to the zoom account that set up the call); they can also monitor the chat and help people with problems with audio. This takes the pressure off of the spiritual facilitator to ‘do it all.’
* [**Active Speaker vs. Gallery View**](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362403-Active-Speaker-Video-Layout-)**:** Each person using Zoom has the option to switch between Active Speaker and Gallery View. These viewing options influence how you see one another as a group. Ask your group to practice switching views: hover your mouse over the top right hand corner of your Zoom call, and an option will appear to change to the other viewing options.
	+ **Active Speaker** **view** causes the video of the person who is speaking to be largest, with a few of the other people's videos visible but smaller. (Note that the person speaking will see other people’s videos; that person may wish to use Gallery View.) I encourage you to remind all participants to use this view when individuals are doing long check-ins or deep sharing. Ask your group to treat this as a way to help them in their practice of deep listening and sharing from the heart.
	+ **Gallery View** is wonderful for seeing everyone together at once. This is good for back-and-forth conversation (cross-talk), or things like meditation time when you want to see everyone's faces.
	+ Phone users are limited to seeing 4 videos at a time, and may need to swipe to the left and right in order to see everyone.
* You may wish to use the **chat** **to share** **resources** - links, poems, readings, etc.
* One facilitator or tech host should **keep an eye on the chat** (an orange bubble will appear to let you know if there is a new message) and be prepared to bring someone's voice into the circle in that way if they are having audio problems.
* Ask people to minimize distractions on their computer as they enter into sacred time with one another. Encourage them to use Active Speaker view as a way of reminding themselves that they are listening deeply when others share.
* **“Passing” to the next person**: I recommend a practice of digestive silence between each person's sharing. People can unmute themselves as the equivalent of leaning forward in their chair: unmuting is a sort of signal that you can watch for that someone intends to talk next (hover your mouse over the video screen to see the red icon that indicates who is muted and who is unmuted).
	+ Alternately, you can ask one person to call on the next person visible to them. This is great for check-ins.
* [This link](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362643-Sharing-Computer-Sound-During-Screen-Sharing) explains how to **share computer sound**, such as a song you want to play on your computer for everyone to hear. This can be a powerful way to invite people into sacred time together.