

FAQs re Zoom Retreats

Three hours on Zoom? No thanks!

We won't be on Zoom the whole time. Periods of 20-45 minutes on Zoom will be interspersed with breaks and periods for individual reflection, similar to group and individual time at an in-person retreat (more below).

I'm not so sure about a virtual retreat. What will it be like?

It will be similar to an in person retreat. We will gather to introduce ourselves, then Cheryl will present a concept, scripture, poem or other "focus" for contemplation and discussion. Then we'll have a break, followed by another "focus" period. Then a longer time apart for individual reflection, followed by a final gathering and closing. The Zoom segments will be only 20-45 minutes each.

I often find Zoom meetings exhausting. I find it hard to keep my attention on the presentation, and discussions can sometime feel chaotic - or one person monopolizes the conversation.

As with an in-person retreat, the amount of "presentation" will be minimal – most group time will be centered around a contemplative experience, reflection or discussion. And we as a group will agree to allow for spaciousness between speakers and to both allow space for all to speak, and to offer hospitality to those who need more time for processing or do not wish to speak.

Cheryl has been facilitating small gatherings by Zoom for several months now, and has found that the depth of reflection and sharing have mirrored that of in person gatherings. [get a testimonial or two?]

I don't have a webcam. Can I still participate? *Yes, you can call in by phone. If you have the ability to participate by video, we encourage that, as it will provide a richer experience for both you and the rest of the group (don't worry about your hair!) But if that is not possible, you can dial in and participate by telephone without video, as you would to participate in a conference call.*

One thing I love about in-person retreats is the opportunity to get away and spend time in a beautiful and relaxing atmosphere. I'm not sure I can really focus on the retreat if I stay home. There are so many distractions!

If you participate by phone (either with or without video), one option is for you to leave your home and take yourself on retreat to a local park, a friend's yard or spare room, your church grounds, or another space you find welcoming, and where you are away from the distractions of home and unlikely to be interrupted.

If you are a caregiver, try to arrange for help, even if you still need to also be present in event of emergency. If the distractions of your own mind and "things to do" are the challenge, set yourself up for success by clearing a space for yourself, perhaps including a candle, religious symbol, flower or other object of beauty as a visual symbol of your intention to take this time to nurture your soul and open to Spirit.

Still not sure whether you'll like it? *Give it a try! There is little to lose and much to be gained.*