



## Dakotas-Minnesota Area

The United Methodist Church

### Video conferencing via UMConnect

UMConnect is a video conferencing service used by the Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church to connect people across our three-state area. The vendor our system uses is BlueJeans; it is a cloud-based video conferencing platform that can be used for video conferencing meetings, phone conferencing, webinars, recordings of meetings, and live chat. The Dakotas-Minnesota Area has a negotiated BlueJeans contract for our staff and ministry teams. However, during the coronavirus outbreak, our local churches have been granted permission to use our BlueJeans account, provided that meetings are set up through a conference staff member. If you find this to be a helpful tool and would like to [set up your own account](#) so you can do your own scheduling, we can also help you do that.

#### Here's what you need to know if you'd like us to help you set up a meeting:

- BlueJeans can be used for local churches' staff and leadership team meetings.
- Please alert us to your meeting at least 24 hours in advance. (Note that staff schedulers will respond to requests between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.)
- Scheduling requests must be made by a local church's pastor or staff member.
- For technical support and troubleshooting assistance, you are welcome to contact BlueJeans customer service 24/7 at 480-791-2830. Be sure to indicate that you are a member of the Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church so that BlueJeans can identify the contract that covers your group.

#### To schedule a meeting:

- Dakotas and Minnesota church leaders should email Gail Johnson ([gail.johnson@minnesotaumc.org](mailto:gail.johnson@minnesotaumc.org)). Include in your scheduling request:
  - the title of your meeting/name of the team that's meeting
  - the date of the meeting
  - the start time of the meeting
  - the end time of the meeting
  - the email address for the leader of your meeting (the person who will invite others to join it)
- After your meeting is scheduled, a conference staff scheduler will email you within one business day to provide the meeting host with a link to your meeting, along with a phone number for participants who need to join that way and some tips to share with meeting participants. You can then send forward the link, phone number, and tips to all of your meeting



## Dakotas-Minnesota Area

The United Methodist Church

participants. You might want to also send this [video tutorial](#) and [written guide](#) to participants to assist those who might not be as proficient with technology.

### **Video conference best practices:**

When you send out the meeting link, encourage meeting participants to:

- Test your video connection in advance of the meeting [here](#).
- Be sure your computer's microphone and camera are turned on.
- Use the [free BlueJeans app](#) or the Google Chrome browser and a wired ethernet connection for best results.
- Wear a headset or earphones if possible to minimize echo and background noise.
- Consider location and lighting before entering a meeting; you'll be seen best in a well-lit room and without a window directly in back of you.
- Join the meeting a few minutes early. Make sure you can hear and be heard.
- Mute your microphone when you aren't speaking to minimize background noise (coughs and keyboard clicks are louder than you think).