

Shelter in Place Options

In past columns, I wrote about tele-medicine options instead of actually going to the VA hospital. In order to do that, you need a device, phone, tablet or computer connected to the Internet. Phones and tablets have a camera, mic and speaker, as do laptops. If you use a desktop computer, you may need to add a webcam and speaker. The webcam has a built-in mic. If buying new, make sure you get the webcam and speaker that connects to the computer via USB. There is a shortage of webcams in several retail stores. I checked Walmart and BestBuy stores down here in Arizona and many did not have a webcam. I found one for a friend at a family owned computer repair business. You know, places such as Computer Wrench in Moorhead.

Many places have started using on-line meeting software to continue to do business. I'm helping a local non-profit in their efforts to use Zoom to continue to do business. Zoom is software using the Internet, a digital device, webcam, mic and speakers to conduct business on-line. It works really well. I've been in session with up to 22 people. Zoom can be used for short meetings for free, but the meetings are limited to 40 minutes. During the Coronavirus time, Zoom has removed that restriction, however. The annual license for non-profits through TechSoup is only \$65. Our non-profit down here is signing up this morning after a few days of testing. There are other software options such as Skype and GoToMeeting which I've used. Zoom, in my opinion, is the easiest one to use. Software can be found at [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us).

Churches, synagogues and mosques are also using technology to provide their followers with on-line access to services. With the shelter in place guidelines, large meetings are discouraged. Clergy have streamed live or recorded services for their members for some time. In these troubled times it is more important. I've been asked to record several services for a local Jewish Temple. We've done three so far, loaded them on YouTube.com and the links can be found at bstc.us. I found Rabbi Roman to be a wonderful and caring person and enjoy working with him. The Temple has a membership of about 170 people and as of Saturday, the first weekly service had 91 views.

Families who want or need to see and hear from other family members have many options available to them. Again, there are on-line software options. If you are a user of Google mail, you can use Hangouts for free to connect with others on-line. It works on any device that supports google mail. Facetime, if you are an Apple user is perhaps the best software to use. Duo is a software application for smart phones, both Android and Apple. Facebook users have that option.

On a personal note, my good friend Bruce Chambers died last week. Bruce and I met when we were in college. We enjoyed many good times camping, golfing, skiing and just sitting around. His two sons, Mike and Matt were my 'adopted' nephews. We miss you Bruce.