

Chapel Hill Friends Meeting
Clerks' Retreat
September 26, 2020, 10:00 AM
Summary

The annual Clerks' Retreat is convened by the Ministry & Worship Committee as an opportunity for committee clerks and other members and attenders to review and clarify expectations, roles, responsibilities, and Quaker process. This year, in the midst of a pandemic, 25 Friends gathered online on a Saturday morning.

After opening worship, Clerk of the Meeting, Chris Stanley, led a discussion of the basic logistics of committee clerking and Quaker process. In brief, clerks are servants, organizers, and communicators. Discussion touched on agendas, minutes, and committee calendars, and more importantly worshipful spirit-led meetings, care for personal relationships, building community, and communication between committees. Clerking skills include careful listening to each committee member, finding unity, using silent worship to reset a discussion, framing in terms of the Meeting community, and shepherding time and task orientation in worshipful ways.

Friends discussed a committee's role in Quaker process of discernment. A committee threshes concerns, problems and solutions; sits with leadings; and strives to reach unity on minutes. A committee is responsible for making a recommendation to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business and being ready to explain its process and leadings and how the committee reached unity. Friends were reminded that a committee is authorized by the Meeting to do certain tasks and is expected to get approval from the Meeting to seek information from other organizations or to represent the Meeting outside of the Meeting

community. Also, Committee clerks are expected to take the lead on work that relies on cross-committee communication.

Friends discussed challenges of being limited to online committee meetings during the pandemic. A combination of the Meeting's Zoom Pro account and personal accounts of committee clerks have met the need for online meetings so far. The Zoom working group offered assistance to committees in setting up meetings via the Meeting's account.

Jeff Brown

Clerk of the Ministry & Worship Committee

October 18, 2020