

Zoom ad hoc Committee report, November, 2020 (Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business)

The Zoom ad hoc Committee, also known as the Zoom Working Group, was formed in mid March, 2020, under the care of the Ministry and Worship (M&W) Committee. Its express purpose, at that juncture, was to transition meeting for worship online as a result of the COVID-19 shuttering of the meetinghouse. The initial members were the then-co-clerks of M&W, joined by others who had a working knowledge of Zoom and/or digital technology. Due to our steep learning curve, the Zoom Working Group met weekly, in addition to after each week's meeting for worship. The after-worship meeting now occurs only as needed, but the weekly meetings continue. Minutes from weekly meetings are provided to M&W as well as requesting their ongoing guidance with regard to Zoom concerns that may impact meeting for worship. The term "tech hosts" was coined for those working group members who were stewards of the zoom process while online.

Shortly after the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting (CHFM) went online for worship, the Adult Religious Education Committee (ARE) transitioned forum programming to its usual spot, prior to worship, also online. Zoom working group members then became tech hosts for ARE forums as well.

Concurrent to the events of going online, it became clear that many Friends and attenders were not yet familiar with Zoom technology (rather like the initial members of the Zoom working group!) Simple graphics were created for downloading, using, and troubleshooting Zoom. The CHFM website homepage has links to these graphics. These graphics were also shared with Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting (PFYM), Eno Friends Meeting, and the national Facebook page "Quaker Expressions: best practices." Additionally, several members of the working group continue to provide phone assistance to Friends and attenders who have Zoom issues.

CHFM purchased an annual Zoom Pro account in June so programming could be switched from the private member account being used until that point in time. In October, CHFM purchased a second host license for the first Zoom Pro account. The Zoom Working Group facilitated the Children and Youth Religious Education Committee's (CYRE) transition from private member accounts to the use of the second CHFM license for their programming.

A virtual online calendar was created to indicate tech host slots that needed filling, focused on Meetings for Worship, Forum, and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. It became clear that the time burden on Zoom working group committee members to tech host all of the above mentioned events was untenable. With a particular focus on tech hosting Forums, a training document was created and an invitation for new tech hosts was disseminated in the meeting. 7 CHFM members volunteered, two of whom already had excellent zoom skills. Five Friends experienced a two-part training, and have for the most part, taken over Tech Hosting duties for Forums. Until each tech host volunteer is comfortable in their role, they are accompanied by a member of the Zoom working group to provide any needed support while online. Each forum tech host makes contact with the moderator of the weekly forum to assess possible tech needs. One of our Zoom Working Group members is an ongoing liaison to ARE for any issues that may arise.

With the support of the Publication and Communications committee (P&C), a CHFM Zoom Folder was created in Google Docs. This folder is replete with Zoom meeting minutes, ongoing information on hybrid meeting equipment and costs, tech host training instructions, the M&W closer statement, and instructions.

This ad hoc committee has been a work in progress and continues to be so. Thus far, the Zoom working group has provided the Zoom infrastructure for the 3-day PFYM annual meeting in August. Zoom working group members have tech hosted the annual Clerks Retreat, Spiritual State of the Meeting, and are prepared to do the same for other annual CHFM events. This includes supporting an interactive online Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service, which is under the purview of M&W. Zoom ad hoc committee members continue to schedule online meetings for various committees and have been requested to schedule ongoing meetings for several small interactive CHFM groups.

The Zoom working group also provides an ongoing and active interface with both US and UK Quakers during COVID-19, with a particular, but not sole, focus on Zoom. For those who use Facebook, Quakers created several sizable private groups to share information about our collective Zoom journeys during Covid 19. Thus far, these groups include: "Quaker Expressions: best practices" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/quakergatherings/?ref=share>) and "Quaker Communications and Outreach" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/QuakerComms/?ref=share>). An additional Facebook resource is "Zoom Faith" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/zoomfaith/?ref=share>), the sharing of Zoom questions and experiences among many different faith communities. The information and challenges of hybrid meetings gained from these pages, including hybridized worship structure, viable technical equipment and its costs, meetingroom arrangement, and signage, are continually shared with M&W, the Finance Committee, as well as Building and Grounds, when appropriate.

Additionally, arising from the COVID-19 challenge, there have also been 2 private Religious Education Quaker Facebook pages created: "Valiant Together: RE Support During Covid 19" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ValiantTogetherQuakerRE/?ref=share>) and "Quaker Parenting Initiative" (<https://quakerparenting.org>.) Both have been shared with CYRE.

In addition to researching and keeping abreast of Zoom technology, our ad hoc committee continues to thresh our capacity for Zoom responsibilities and tasks. Ultimately, one of our Quaker testimonies has been a very useful guide for our actions and commitments - Simplicity. We are best able to make discernments about action when looking through the prism of Simplicity.

We would like to tender many thanks to Naveed Moeed for his early and vital support. Additional thanks to both Deborah Gibbs and Tom Munk.

Respectfully,
Jeff Brown, Buzz Borchardt, Quaker Harmon, and Jan Hutton (convenor).