



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends

Pendle Hill's Hybrid Worship Experiment

Written on: **JULY 22, 2020**



As many Friends know, Pendle Hill has been hosting daily meeting for worship (<https://pendlehill.org/explore/worship/join-us-online-for-worship-in-the-barn/>) – both ‘in-person worship’ in Pendle Hill’s Barn, and with

Zoom. It’s a spiritual and community wide success that we believe many meetings will want to replicate as they find it’s possible to reopen monthly meeting buildings.

We are grateful to Traci and Walter Hjelt Sullivan and the team at Pendle Hill for sharing their suggestions on how to manage a 'Hybrid Worship Experiment'.

Technical Details

Tools needed:

- two laptops
- 45 inch HD Monitor with HDMI and usb ports (Pendle Hill uses Toshiba 46G31OU)
- external camera and microphone set (Pendle Hill uses Logitech HD 1080p)
- HDMI cable

Two laptops are needed – one for display to those present, and the other for tech support.

Meeting room display laptop #1

Laptop #1 (Meeting Room Display) logs into the Zoom account and then connects to the zoom event. Pendle Hill connects an external camera and microphone set that does a good job of picking up noise in the room. (Logitech HD 1080p).

Because Pendle Hill's Barn has so few people in it, and wooden floors, there is a slight echo that bothers some people – they think this has to do with The Barn more than the microphone.

Next: connect the HD Monitor to the laptop with an HDMI cable. Its useful to have a monitor that has both HDMI and usb ports with speakers that are powerful enough for the room. (Pendle Hill has Toshiba 46G31OU)

Go through this check list:

- Ensure monitor speaker is turned up;
- Close all programs—like email—that might ding on the display laptop;
- Ensure the display Laptop Zoom is using the external microphone and camera, and the external monitor and speakers.

The ‘Host’ Tech Laptop #2

The #2 laptop is the Tech laptop and serves the Zoom as host. It is essential the Tech Laptop’s mic is muted and speaker turned off.

The Tech laptop operator lets people into worship, changes their display names (as possible), answers technical questions via chat, turns off microphones accidentally turned on. At the very end of worship, Tech unmutes everyone for “Good morning.” After a minute, the Tech mutes everyone, then unmutes Meeting Room for introductions and announcements. Then at very end, the Tech unmutes everyone for “Goodbye”.

Checklist & responsibilities for the tech laptop operator

- Tech laptop microphone has been muted
- Tech laptop speaker is turned off
- Admit people to worship
- Manage display names as needed
- End of worship – Unmutes everyone for ‘good morning’ then mutes everyone
- Unmutes meeting room for announcements & introductions
- Unmutes everyone for “goodbye”

Specifications for the Zoom Meeting Setup

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There is no meeting password because Pendle Hill chooses to be open to all. Monthly Meetings are urged to consider this carefully and choose what works for their own capacity and community.

Pendle Hill Set-up checklist:

- Video On for Host and Participant
- Audio: Select telephone and computer
- Disable the feature ‘*Enable participants to join before host*’ to prevent a zoombomber from showing up before meeting is started.
- Mute participants upon entry
- Enable waiting room
- Host must log in to start the meeting
- Screen Share: limited to host or turned off all together. This is essential to prevent zoombombing.

Some Pendle Hill Thoughts on Gallery vs. Speaker View and Spotighting

Pendle Hill believes that many Friends’ worship experience is enhanced by seeing the worship room (The Barn). Because the display laptop is logged into Zoom, The Barn video is always set to be on the first “page” of gallery view.

Distant participants may be using speaker view, and so their screen will automatically stay with the last speaker until someone else speaks – depending on the vocal ministry this can be a long time.

Pendle Hill starts with the HD monitor on ‘gallery view’. For a while, Pendle Hill participants would cough in the meeting room to return the “speaker” focus to The Barn, but recently, they have instead turned on the Spotlight feature after the first message, then removing the Spotlight when the next

feature after the first message, then removing the Spotlight when the next piece of ministry is given.

Turning on the Spotlight results in everyone being taken out of gallery view, although they can manually return if they wish, which some people find distracting. The monitor in the Barn (which is the focus of the Spotlight) continues to display the most recent speaker unless someone manually changes to Gallery View on the Display laptop.

Caring for Worship

The following care of worship practices were developed by Pendle Hill. There are other reasonable choices that a meeting can make.

Routine Messages Get Posted in the Chat

When entering a Zoom meeting, one does not see chat messages posted prior to arrival, therefore about five minutes after the official start of the meeting or when most of the expected people have arrived a welcome message is posted. This is Pendle Hill's message:

“

Good morning Friends. Welcome to Pendle Hill daily Zoom meeting for worship.

Please remember:

- *Keep yourself muted unless you are ready to offer ministry.*
- *Mute yourself again when you are done.*
- *Speak clearly into your mic.*

In offering ministry, wait for the guide to prompt you. Leave time between offerings so all can fully receive the previous message. Consider if this message is for yourself, or for a single person after worship.

If you unmute yourself and do not speak after a few seconds, I will mute you again.

During Meeting for Worship, chat will be exclusively reserved for technical questions shared with the host. At the close of Meeting, the host will open chat to public posts to “everyone” during prayers and concerns and introductions.

A minute or two later more is shared:

“

After a piece of ministry is offered and completed, the host will return the video to focus on the Barn. If your computer is set on gallery view,

this process will boot you over to speaker view. Nothing is wrong with your computer. You may simply return to gallery view by selecting that option. We apologize for this inconvenience. It is the quietist way to return the focus back to the group and not leave it on a single person just because they were given ministry to share.

If you do have a technical problem, please chat with me privately (find my name in the chat list by searching for the letter “w” and select me). I will do what I can to help.

If you would like help changing the name displayed on your video, send the correct spelling to me privately in chat as well. Having a name posted correctly will help others to contact you outside Meeting through the Meeting Directory.

“

Most of all, please respect that we are a large group seeking spiritual sustenance from the inner guide. We are together for only about 30

minutes.

Let your ministry respect and nurture the healing guide that friends can find in the silence.

Thank you Friends.

Some Closing Thoughts

Chat Restrictions: When Meeting opens, participants may only chat Host. At prayer time, though, participants may chat Everyone. Pendle Hill does not allow private chats between participants because (1) they feel that is not in the spirit of worship (2) they have heard about zoom meetings in which bullying happens via private chat.

Meeting Directory: Participant contact information can be shared with the advance approval of participants. This allows people to contact each other directly after worship.

Worship-Sharing: They offer opportunities for small group worship-sharing twice a week. Groups are created randomly by Zoom – usually only three to four per group. Sometimes a Zoom connection is holding two people, and this increases the size of the group.

Queries: They'll allow 15 minutes for one query before bringing people back into the large group. Once recombined as one big group again, two or three people can share some of what their group discussed.

Care of Worship: Participants need to know who is 'caring for worship' so that there is less spontaneous intervening in the case of problematic worship. This can be announced, or it can be demonstrated by the actions of the person on the facing bench (or its equivalent) in the meeting room.

Sound Quality: Pendle Hill has a small number of people physically present and a medium sized worship space, so the acoustics in a bigger room might be different and may demand other microphone choices. They have not yet had the experience of having even as many as ten people worshipping together, so the above report is all based on a very small in-person meeting.

Thank you Pendle Hill – for leading the way into the Hybrid Worship Space!