



Meeting Ritual

While meeting Ritual was not written by our founders, it has long served an important purpose within our sisterhood: creating a shared experience that connects Pi Phis across chapters, generations and geography. For more than 130 years, meeting Ritual has helped establish a unifying tone for conducting Fraternity business while reminding members of the values and bonds they share.

History of Meeting Ritual

The Fraternity's first constitution called for meetings to begin with a devotional exercise, but the execution was left up to each chapter to decide. As a result, Pi Beta Phi meetings varied in how they were opened. Some chapters included a reading, often from founder **EMMA BROWNLEE KILGORE**'s Bible, followed by a prayer and reflection to open their time together.

When D.C Alpha **EMMA HARPER TURNER** served as Grand Secretary in the 1890s, she recognized the Fraternity was in need of greater cohesion among its chapters. Emma believed Pi Phi deserved a consistent

meeting experience that could unite members and strengthen the bonds of sisterhood across chapters. She envisioned replacing chapter-specific devotional

exercises with a shared meeting Ritual that all Pi Phis could use, regardless of where they gathered.

To bring her vision to life, Emma turned to fellow D.C. Alpha **ANNA S. HAZELTON** to write the meeting Ritual. Anna later reflected, "I did not have any assistance in writing it. It is entirely my own composition, but to Miss Emma should be given the credit for originating the idea."

In 1890, Anna completed the meeting Ritual that would be formally adopted at the 1893

Chicago, Illinois, Grand Alpha—an event now known as convention. What began as an effort to create

consistency across the Fraternity became one of Pi Beta Phi's most enduring traditions.

A Tradition That Continued to Evolve

Although meeting Ritual quickly became an important part of the Pi Phi experience, it has never been a static tradition. Throughout the Fraternity's history, members have reflected on its purpose, meaning and relevance.

In the 1960s and 1970s, meeting Ritual was formally studied, and members were surveyed about how it shaped their experience. At the

1975 Miami, Florida, Convention, members discussed how meeting Ritual could remain meaningful and inclusive for every sister. These conversations continued into the 1990s and 2000s as chapters shared feedback, proposed updates and explored how meeting Ritual could best serve a growing and evolving sisterhood. Some chapters noted that meeting Ritual hadn't been a practice within

their chapter in many years, and others said members opted to remain silent during parts of the recitation that didn't align with their beliefs.

These discussions reflected the same desire that inspired Emma's original vision: ensuring meeting Ritual continued to connect members through a shared experience.

Meeting Ritual's Evolution

In January 2023, Grand Council established the Meeting Ritual Research Committee (MRRC) to better understand how members experienced meeting Ritual today. Over the next two years, the MRRC undertook one of the most comprehensive studies of meeting Ritual in Fraternity history.

Nearly 7,000 Pi Phis participated in surveys, representing members from all 50 states, Canada and every chapter with living members. More than 200 members also participated in focus groups, sharing their perspectives through thoughtful and honest conversations.

Several themes emerged throughout the research process. Members described meeting

Ritual as "the tie that binds us" and expressed appreciation for the connection it creates across generations of Pi Phis. The Creed stood out as a beloved element that resonated with members across all beliefs and backgrounds. At the same time, some members shared that portions of the language felt difficult to understand or did not fully reflect their beliefs and experiences. Others noted that certain religious references felt exclusionary to non-Christian or non-religious members.

What emerged from these conversations was not a desire to abandon tradition, but a desire to preserve what members valued most while ensuring every Pi Phi could find meaning in the

experience of meeting Ritual. After two years of research and reflection, Grand Council decided to carefully and respectfully evolve meeting Ritual.



ANNA S. HAZELTON, D.C. *Alpha*
Who wrote the Ritual, 1890

Crafting the Evolved Meeting Ritual

Following the research process, a committee of Pi Phi women worked to thoughtfully evolve meeting Ritual while honoring its history and purpose. Led by Fraternity Archivist and Historian **FRAN DESIMONE BECQUE**, New York Alpha, the committee considered member

feedback alongside Pi Beta Phi's traditions, symbols and values.

The evolved meeting Ritual preserves the original purpose that has guided it since 1893, though it no longer includes references to Christ, God or the Trinity. The Creed

remains unchanged, while updated language reflects the diverse sisterhood Pi Beta Phi is today. References to Fraternity symbols, colors and themes relating to the member experience are woven throughout.

Meeting Ritual Today

At the 75th Biennial Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, members recited the evolved meeting Ritual together for the first time. For many attendees, it was a powerful moment that connected generations of Pi Phis of all ages, backgrounds and experiences. Following Convention 2025, the evolved meeting Ritual was

distributed to collegiate chapters and alumnae clubs throughout North America and was formally implemented in fall 2025.

Today, as in 1893, meeting Ritual continues to bring members together through shared values, shared experiences and a shared commitment to one another. ✨

