

## **15 2<sup>nd</sup> month 2026**

### To Friends Everywhere

More than 70 women from 18 meetings and one camp gathered at the tranquil Pearlstone Retreat Center for the 2026 Women's Retreat held February 13-15. The theme for the weekend was "Renewal Through All Seasons" and it was planned by women from Herndon Friends Meeting. Women filled with wisdom, joy, Light, and compassion walked, worshipped, puzzled, sang, ate, and talked. We held focused discussions during lunch on Saturday, collaborated on a jigsaw puzzle, laughed and sang at the evening coffeehouse, made new friends, and celebrated connecting with long-standing BYM friends from other states.

We worshipped in small groups, sharing our experiences elicited by queries relevant to the theme. We helped each other make meaning in a safe environment. Those bringing heartaches and fears tapped into the loving resilience and hope to enable them to move forward.

The keynote speaker, Linda Garrettson, spoke to our theme as she revealed her personal journey overcoming hardships, and she posed additional queries for our consideration. Workshops held on Saturday involved movement, breathing, singing, writing, yoga, and goal setting. Permission was given to disregard the schedule allowing for naps, walks, and puzzling.

For some the best part of our retreat is the chance to sing together. We sang old favorites, learned resistance songs, and gathered for healing chants. On Sunday song led us into worship before we left.

The community formed annually is never the same, yet it provides solace and stability and respite for those who come hungry for those qualities. The hard work of the kitchen staff and in truth the whole Pearlstone staff is truly appreciated. The devoted and diligent work of the planning committee is received with love and enormous thanks by us all. We give thanks for the volunteers from Adelphi Meeting who will plan the retreat for 2027.

Sincerely,

**The women of 2026**