

To Friends everywhere,

Over forty-five women Friends gathered together on October 8, 2022 at Adelphi Meeting to meet on the theme: "Making Room for What's Important." Over twenty-two of these participants joined online via Zoom.

Friends entered worship with the chant, "We are strong, we are wise, we are filled with light." This was a lovely way to center together and it helped us leave our daily lives behind, making room for our time together.

One Friend shared a reading about the purpose of our Meeting for Worship to start our day. She spoke about sharing gratitude and to give deep listening to spirit. The intention is to listen inside, and discern if a Message is for one's self, or for the greater gathering.

Friends observed the "cozy" feeling during Meeting for Worship, with shared gratitude for being able to be among Friends we have not seen in a while. Sharing focused on the reasons why women come together for this annual retreat. A Friend observed Adelphi Meeting's location was discovered by a woman, and queried what are the other foundational ways women helped form Friends' communities.

We transitioned into Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. The discernment focused on the future of the Women's Retreat. Friends invited volunteers to form a planning committee, identifying Covid and other concerns related to timing and venue for the retreat as part of the considerations the planning committee may make.

After a lunch break, participants convened in small groups for Worship Sharing. We focused on the following queries: "What matters most in my life today?" And "How has the spirit moved in me recently?"

Women then transitioned to one of several workshops. Some women stayed in the main Meeting room and chanted together. A group of women had fun exploring props and their own spirit-led bodies, in a workshop called "Circus Skills for Every Day Life" by Jodi Rose. Cameron Hughes led a workshop about "Rebuilding our Meetings after Covid," and Katherine Cole, Debby Churchman, and Martha Solt led a workshop about "Women's Reproductive Rights."

After the workshops, women gathered to enjoy refreshments and social time with their Friends followed by a joyful sharing of talents, stories and songs in the coffeehouse.

We closed the evening with a discussion on the future retreat. Women from Adelphi Meeting have said they are willing to take up the staff and work towards planning the next Women's Retreat. The day finished in worship followed by announcements.

Making room in our lives for one another at this retreat invites us to deepen our relationships further in the coming year.

Yours in the Light,
The Women of Baltimore Yearly Meeting