

2026 Old Presbyterian Meeting House All-Church Retreat at Massanetta Springs, Virginia

Frequently Asked Questions

Who comes to the

Retreat? All ages of Meeting House members come to the Retreat, from babes-in-arms to older adults, from singles to families with children. Some folks have been coming for years; it will be the first time for others. About 100 to 120 people attend each year.



What are the Retreat dates for 2026? This year's Retreat will be from Friday evening, November 6 to Sunday noon, November 8. We hope you can arrive in time for dinner at 7 pm on Friday – it helps to leave Alexandria by 3 pm because of traffic, giving you enough time to get your room and settle in before dinner.

Where is the Retreat held? Massanetta Springs is a Presbyterian conference center nestled on 200 acres of woodlands and meadows in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, near Harrisonburg (130 miles, about a 2 ½ hour drive west of Alexandria). It is a designated National Historic District that includes the original spring house and 1910 historic hotel, with wide front and rear porches with rocking chairs. We will check-in at the old hotel, which has a lobby with comfortable seating. We will also eat together in the hotel dining room.



**THE RETREAT IS A TIME,
PLACE AND SPACE IN WHICH
WE CAN BE RENEWED IN
FAITH, RELATIONSHIPS AND
FELLOWSHIP.**

The center also includes separate lodging facilities, and a building with meeting rooms where the children and youth meet for their programs and where our intergenerational fun activities occur. The adult program takes place in the Hubler Lodge conference room. For more information about the facilities, including photos, visit www.massanettasprings.org.

Where do we sleep? We stay in rooms in two separate buildings:

- The hotel annex (**Richardson Dorm**) has rooms with two twin beds that share a bath with an adjoining room. Don't expect much in the way of decorating - they are spare dorm-like rooms but are clean, neat, and quiet.
- **Hubler Lodge** offers hotel-style rooms for an additional fee, each with two queen beds and a private bath. **NOTE: Lodge rooms are very limited and assigned in the order reservations are received.**
- Children will share a room or suite with their parents. Cots for children can be requested and added to those rooms. Teen often stay together in rooms or a separate cabin with adult supervision.

What is the cost to participate? Fees include programming and childcare, lodging for two nights and six meals. The fees vary depending on the number of people in your family sharing rooms and the type of lodging you choose. About one-third of the Retreat cost is offset by the Hough Fund. A detailed cost list is available on the registration page at opmh.org/retreat. A small number of scholarships are available, please contact a member of the Retreat committee (see the last question for contact details).

What if I don't know anyone attending the Retreat? Don't worry! One of the best reasons to attend the Retreat is to get to know other Meeting House members. We devote a great deal of energy to help people feel welcome at the Retreat: everyone wears name tags, there are Friday evening "icebreaker" activities, shared meals at large community tables, discussion breakouts in the adult and youth educational program and social activities throughout the weekend.

The small group setting at the Retreat and the relaxed pace of the weekend also help to make it easier to meet and talk to new people.



What will we do during the weekend? The Retreat includes a combination of stimulating educational programming, group fun, community worship and time for quiet reflection during the weekend. It's a schedule and program that is designed to appeal:

- **Friday.** Arrive in the early evening for registration and room assignment, dinner at 7 p.m. and a group "get to know you" activity which ends with evening vespers.



Saturday. Awake in the morning and meet on the hotel front porch for morning prayer and reflections. After breakfast, we're off to our educational programs for the morning: separate activities for adults, pre-school, school-age and youth.

Following lunch is free time for games, crafts and activities including a hike in the woods. Or if you prefer, read a book under a tree, visit with a friend while rocking on the front porch or take a nap.

We meet back for another educational program before dinner. Saturday evening is filled with fun and fellowship all together including songs, stories, square dancing, campfire and s'mores.



- **Sunday.** After prayer, reflections and breakfast, we meet in groups for our final educational program time. We close the weekend together in community with an intimate, laity-led worship service that some say is one of their favorite services of the year. Lunch is served before we depart home.

What is the adult educational program like? The adult program consists of three in-depth sessions together, two on Saturday and one on Sunday morning, giving us an opportunity to dig deep into this year's topic: ***Called to Adventure***. We will wrestle with the many ways we are called to be the church today. By exploring the book of Acts and the history of the church, we will meet other "adventurers" who have also asked similar questions and have wisdom to share.

Our leader this year is **The Rev. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon**, Lassiter Chaplain and Dean of Spiritual Life at Presbyterian College. In his role at Presbyterian College, Dr. Wilcoxon combines deep theological training, pastoral experience, and commitment to Presbyterian tradition to guide the spiritual life of the campus community.



He previously served as Associate Pastor at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC, and as Senior Pastor at Spring Hill Presbyterian Church in Mobile, AL. Beyond parish ministry, Dr. Wilcoxon also serves the broader church and theological education, serving on the Columbia Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, and numerous committees at the Presbytery level and the PC(USA). He is a gifted writer, hymn writer and liturgist.



What about the program for children and youth?

Children and youth programming is provided by our gifted Meeting House professional educators and volunteers and includes Bible lessons, crafts, games and songs. They are also given opportunities to participate in Sunday worship.

What about childcare? For young ones up to three years of age, tender-loving childcare is provided by our own Meeting House childcare staff. Childcare is provided during Saturday and Sunday adult program times and during

worship. Small children are welcome during all meals and intergenerational activities. Cribs in your room are available for a small fee.

Where do we eat? Shared meals are a wonderful time of fellowship at the Retreat. We'll eat together at large tables in the dining hall located in the historic hotel. Meals are served buffet-style; a typical meal consists of two entrees, several side dishes, and for lunch and supper, a salad bar and dessert. Meals are basic and hearty family-style cooking. Coffee and tea are also available early in the morning in the hotel lobby, and during the adult education morning sessions.



What about food allergies and special dietary requirements? Please let us know about any food allergies or special dietary requirements when you register for the Retreat on-line. The conference center will be informed and do their best to accommodate your needs.



What if I still have questions? Call or email Retreat committee members Martha Gibson (eadg@verizon.net or 703-489-8451), Mary Hill (crpowell@verizon.net or 703-231-7167) or Karen Waller (karenwaller@gmail.com or 703-838-9898) who are happy to answer your questions. **Martha can also help arrange transportation with others if you are unable to drive.**

Sounds great! How do I sign up? Retreat registration is available online and will begin at 10 am on the Monday after Rally Day, September 14th at OPMH.org/retreat. The last day to sign up is Monday, October 19th. If you need assistance with registration, please contact Ellen Haas or Vicki Stones in the church office (703-549-6670).