The Spring Term

2027 Syllabus

Session I: Discerning Our Calls
February 27 – March 20

Session II: Practice in Community
March 21-April 17

PENDLE HILL
A Quaker Study, Retreat, and Conference Center

Contents

1. Learning: Course Syllabus 3

Session I: Resting & Discerning *3*

Session II: Practice in Community March 21-April 17 ..... *4*

2. Work 7

3. Worship, Epilogue, and Spiritual Nurture 8

4. 2027 Spring Term Community 12

Touchstones *12*

Community Meeting *12*

5. Spring Term Leaders, Teachers, and Residents 13

6. Community Across Time 16

1. Learning: Course Syllabus

Session I: Resting & Discerning

Are you in a moment of transition or an inflection point in your life? Taking time apart from the multiple crises we are living through, we will rest in the eternal and seek greater clarity about how the Spirit is calling us to live and work. Together we will pause to center down, practice methods of spiritual discernment, and support each other in being attentive to guidance that comes both from within and without. We will cultivate skills for deep listening, including attention to our dreams, as well as Quaker practices of discernment, such as the clearness committee and faithfulness groups.

In the classroom, we will sift through our various motivations and identify those that are divinely inspired, using journal writing and sharing with others in pairs and small groups, and informally with the wider community. Experiential exercises will help us hone our skills in helping each other toward greater clarity and faithfulness. During the three-week course, each person will have the opportunity to be the focus of a faithfulness group session as well as participate in supporting others, helping all of us to go forward with renewed clarity and courage. We will also learn how to bring these practices for discernment and support of faithfulness back to our home communities.

The classroom time will be supported and complemented by Pendle Hill's rhythms of communal worship, meals, and learning, as well as opportunities for guided and individual creative exploration in the art studio, mindful work supporting the campus and collective practices of rest and reflection. Pendle Hill also pairs each Spring Term student with a spiritual nurturer – a staff member, scholar, or Friend-in-Residence to accompany them and provide support for reflection and support on their spiritual journey at Pendle Hill.

Daily Schedule

7:30 am – Breakfast
8:30 am – Meeting for Worship
9:30 am – Monday/Wednesday/Friday – Discerning Our Calls
Noon – Lunch
1:00 pm – Personal time for reflection, creativity, and integration
6:00 pm – Dinner
7:15 pm – Epilogue/ Evening reflection /Community learning

Session II: Practice in Community
March 21-April 17

Participate in Pendle Hill's traditional rhythm of worship, learning, work, and rest in community, with opportunities to register for afternoon classes and to practice supported individual discernment in small faithfulness groups.

As in Session I, the classroom time will be supported and complemented by Pendle Hill's rhythms of communal worship, meals, and learning, as well as opportunities for guided and individual creative exploration in the art studio, mindful work supporting the campus and collective practices of rest and reflection. Pendle Hill also pairs each Spring Term student with a spiritual nurturer – a staff member, scholar, or Friend-in-Residence to accompany them and provide support for reflection and support on their spiritual journey at Pendle Hill.

Daily Schedule

7:30 am – Breakfast
8:30 am – Meeting for Worship
9:30 am – Weekday Community Work (Monday through Thursday)
Noon – Lunch
2:30-5:00 pm – Optional Weekday Elective Courses and Faithfulness Groups
6:00 pm – Dinner
7:15 pm – Epilogue/ Evening reflection/ Community learning

Afternoon elective courses will include:

Writing as a Spiritual Practice with Liadhaín Saoirse Reilly

Writing as a spiritual practice is one way to connect with, uncover the paths to, and access the wisdom that is within us. The intention of this class is to take us deeper into our spiritual center and free us from external trappings which can sever us from our creativity, which is a divine gift. What we are inspired to create is a direct channeling from Spirit. In tapping into that which only our deepest indwelling self can recognize, we can unlock and give voice to deeper truths and knowing in our writing practice.

We will have time for writing in forms familiar and new, experimenting with breaking down our barriers to letting our creative voice spill unhindered onto the page. Through exercises in free writing, guided group and pair reflection, out of class daily creative and spiritual practices, and experimenting with form, we will find new ways to channel our divine creativity, and strengthen the methods we already know.

This experience is rooted in creating a classroom where our hearts are open and safe to be heard in their fullness of expression. Where we can listen deeply, without fear, to the

movements of the Spirit within and among us. When we unblock our connection to our inner voice, we can discover radical points of transformation within our lives, and move closer to the indwelling light through our words. The method of this work is to open ourselves to what we didn't know was within us and so discover the possibilities and new pathways which Spirit invites us down through liberating language.

Lamb's War with Matt Rosen

"The Lamb's quarrel is not against the creation… but we fight against the spiritual powers of wickedness," wrote James Nayler in 1657. Amid social and political turbulence, intense persecution, and a growing Quaker movement, Nayler and other early Friends called people to take up the spiritual weapons of patience, faith, truth, and prayer, to overcome evil with good. They spoke of living in the cross at a time when the sword predominated, and they called this the Lamb's war.

This course explores the meaning of the Lamb's war for us, here and now. How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to join in this quarrel against inward and outward voices of fear, hate, and greed? How do our faith communities help us to hear and follow the Lamb's voice? Over four weeks, we will walk with the Hebrew prophets, the apostles, the early Quakers, and contemporary Friends, so that we may together join in this long work of love, and even in the littlest act of love, taste something of the Lamb's victory.

Each of the four sessions will include waiting worship, reflection on readings from scripture and early and contemporary Friends, group sharing as the Spirit leads, and time in small groups. We welcome Friends with diverse faith experiences, as we hope to learn together from each other's journeys and from the Inward Teacher.

Gardening: A Season of Emergence with Brendan Stiteler and John Baird

"Help us to be ever hopeful gardeners of the spirit, who know that without darkness nothing comes to birth, and without Light nothing flowers." -May Sarton

The garden is a place of greatly profound and mundane experience; the beauty of nature is tempered by toil and dashed expectations, and a hard-won harvest can sometimes seem like grace. There are some ground rules to be learned, but when our hearts and minds are open, creativity and intuition can lead us to new techniques in the garden and perhaps our lives.

This class will be an opportunity to become "hopeful gardeners," learning about planning our garden through the seasons, germinating and sowing seeds, composting, soil fertility, and the interconnected relationships that support growth as we get the Pendle Hill garden started this spring. Tending a garden takes patience, reciprocity, and trust; anchored in the rhythms of work, worship, and community life, we will also reflect on the garden and the natural world as source of inspiration for living and acting with reverence and courage in these challenging times. We will create trustworthy space for exploring questions that are alive for us in this

season, considering such themes as: Where are you seeing sprouts of possibility emerging in your life? How can the compost of your experience turn into fertile soil to nourish new growth? What needs tending, thinning, watering, cultivation? What is ripening in you?

A garden is a nursery for nurturing connection, the soil for cultivation of practical reverence." - -Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass.

Connecting with Spirit and the Trees with Jeremy Ruzich

In this workshop, we will foster our relationships with Spirit and the natural world via the trees and plants of the Pendle Hill arboretum. Spirit is present everywhere, but where can we experience Spirit more directly and brightly than in other living breathing creatures and the diverse timeless and "timeful" natural world? Trees and ecosystems have so much to teach us, so much wisdom that is freely and abundantly offered, so much prophetic witness: through the quietest rustle of leaves or the most thunderous storms, by the cursive of roots or the bold statement of a trunk. Every moment, the landscape is being reshaped, life is being reinvented, and new possibilities of survival and thriving and beauty are being explored. There is a fierce urgency in our world to slow down and be present. How might the integration and abundance of the natural world help heal our societies plagued by division and scarcity?

In this course, we will foster our relationships with Spirit, the natural world, and ourselves through intentional, mindful time with the trees of the Pendle Hill Arboretum. We have so much we can learn from trees and ecosystems, so much wisdom that is abundantly offered, so much prophetic witness: through the quietest rustle of leaves or the most tumultuous storms, by the cursive of roots or the bold statement of a trunk. Every moment, the landscape is being reshaped, life is being reinvented, and new possibilities of survival and thriving and beauty are being explored. How might the integration, reciprocity and abundance of the natural world help us heal ourselves, our communities, and our societies plagued by division and scarcity? Could slowing down, being present, and stepping into the pace of photosynthesis help us return to our true nature?

In this four-week seminar, students will select one specific tree (or shrub) on the Pendle Hill campus with which they will dedicate their attention. The objective is most of all to be present with all of your senses, observing this living being, the surroundings, the interactions, the changes… Here, the tree itself will be your primary teacher and companion. The leader will facilitate the group, offering supportive readings, potential practices of attentiveness, answering any practical questions about the trees, and encouraging a spirit of following delight and curiosity. We will gather weekly to share the observations, stories, experiences, or insights that have arisen for us.

2. Work

As part of your active contemplative life nurtured in the Spring Term, students will have Community Work components to your term. This supports the hospitality needs of our guests, but we also believe that this kind of manual labor is a spiritual part of our everyday community experience. It is an expression of love and concern for those with whom we share this life. Whether chopping vegetables, weeding, washing dishes, cataloguing books in the library, or cleaning up the dining room, this work is important and can become a tool to develop, enrich, and nourish our lives. We believe that simple household tasks can be an opportunity to exercise and expand our caring, our effectiveness, and our responsiveness to others. This engaged physical work can also provide a balance to the intellectual and emotional work that often takes place here, as well as invigorate the body and energize the mind. It can be as deeply enriching and meditative experience as your worship and study.

In Session I, students will be invited to participate in mindful work opportunities that can be performed at a time.

In Session II, students will be invited into the rhythms of Pendle Hill community work, including weekly jobs in the kitchen, and morning community work four days a week in one or two of the following areas: gardening, hospitality, housekeeping, grounds, library, or administration. You will be assigned an area and work with the staff of that department. This labor contributes greatly to the community as well as supports your personal journey at Pendle Hill.

3. Worship, Epilogue, and Spiritual Nurture

Worship

Daily participation in morning worship is a fundamental part of the program.

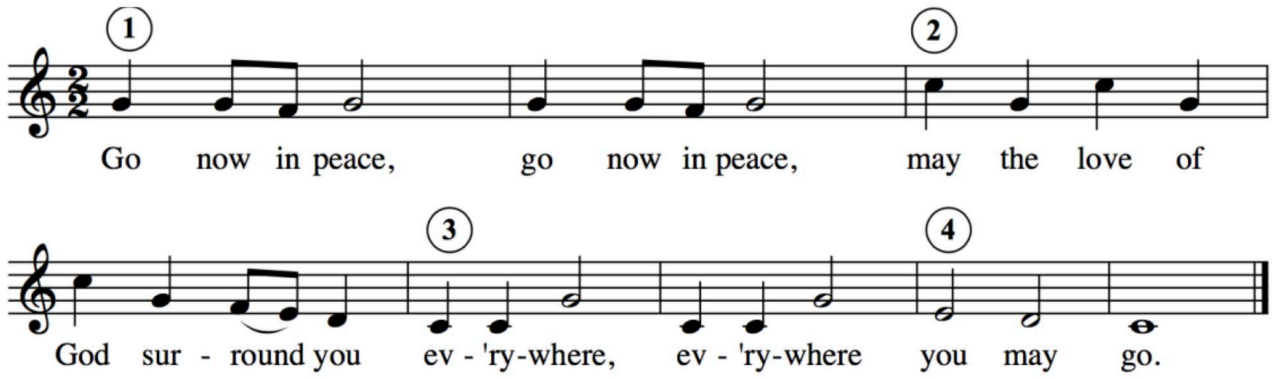
Please review the resident handbook's introduction to worship at Pendle Hill. Daily participation in morning worship is a fundamental part of the program.

Epilogue

Epilogue is an opportunity for Spring Term participants to gather worshipfully at the close of each day– like compline in the monastic rhythm. It takes place in the library and is led by Spring Term participants. Students and residents are invited to take turns holding care of Epilogue and offering some prompt for worshipful reflection such as a poem, song, meditation, or spiritual practice. A binder of poems and ideas for Epilogue is available in the library.

We have sometimes used the round "Go Now in Peace" to close Epilogue and wish each other a good night.

Go Now in Peace



Words and music: Natalie Sleeth, Sunday Songbook © 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc.
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714599.

Spiritual Nurture

Pendle Hill pairs each Spring Term student with a staff member, scholar, or Friend-in-Residence to accompany them through the term in weekly meetings. This relationship is meant to be intentional and grounded in Spirit. Throughout the arc of the term and its various classes, experiences, and events, weekly spiritual nurture offers a "home base," an opportunity for each student to receive individual accompaniment, reflection, and support on their spiritual journey at Pendle Hill.

The primary goal is for the spiritual nurturer to accompany the student in their listening to Spirit. To do so effectively, spiritual nurturers must themselves be grounded and attuned to their own inward guidance from Spirit.

These passages from spiritual teachers offer guidance for the practice of spiritual nurture:

> *"To listen another's soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service one human being ever performs for another."*
> *–Douglas Steere*

> *"The human soul doesn't want to be fixed, it simply wants to be seen and heard. The soul is like a wild animal - tough, resilient and shy. When we go crashing through the woods shouting for it to come out so we can help it, the soul will stay in hiding. But if we are willing to sit quietly and wait for a while, the soul may show itself."*
> *– Parker Palmer*

> *"To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations. True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept. Listening is much more than allowing another to talk while waiting for a chance to respond. Listening is paying full attention to others and welcoming them into our very beings. The beauty of listening is that those who are listened to start feeling accepted, start taking their words more seriously and discovering their own true selves. Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you."*
> *–Henri Nouwen*

The practice of spiritual nurture is not bound by a specific structure or rules: students and nurturers are encouraged to seek the structures and practices that best support their grounded, faithful sharing and listening. This will be different for different people; the format will look different for each pairing, and may need to change over time.

Here are some guiding principles, questions, and ideas for spiritual nurturers to consider:

Center your work in Spirit. Grounding yourselves in worship, determine what the student would like for this time. They may or may not have ideas for how they want to meet and what they want to do. Listen for hopes and fears, recognize leadings of Spirit that may influence direction, and give space for flexibility as the term progresses.

Establish a regular time. Try to meet approximately once a week for an hour or so. Determine where you want to meet. We are unfortunately not able to reserve rooms for these meetings, but we encourage you to find a space on campus that will provide you with the ability to speak openly. We ask that you give space and structure to build the relationship but

also feel free to set boundaries, as needed. If the student seems to need more than approximately an hour per week, please talk with the Director of Education for additional support.

What to do when you're together? You could meet over a meal in a private place, take a walk, work in the garden, create in the art studio, or just sit together. Start with silent worship. Get to know each other and discern together how this time can best support their experience in the Spring Term.

Below are some prompts that might be useful to get the conversation started

- How have you experienced the movement of Spirit in your life in the past week?
- What hopes do you have for the Spring Term? How has this week spoken to those hopes?
- What has been stirring in you this past week?
- Have you felt [choose one] surprised/excited/uncertain/troubled by anything since you began the term?
- How do you think you'll integrate your Spring Term experience when you return?

Some of you may want to spend all your time in open worship; others may engage more actively in sharing; others may want to bring some poetry or writing to discuss.

Lead with curiosity. The student-nurturer relationship is not a counseling, correcting, or advice-giving relationship. Students will have a variety of known and unknown needs as they participate in this term. The personal and community work students are asked to do can be difficult and may stir complicated thoughts and emotions within them. We invite the nurturer to accompany students through the term without attempting to "fix," diagnose, or analyze the student.

Confidentiality and discretion. Please respect the confidentiality of any sharing between student and spiritual nurturer. Do not share the content of the conversation without permission. The exception to this is if the nurturer thinks the student is going to physically harm themselves or someone else. Please then get help immediately by calling the Director of Education.

Listen deeply. Generally, we ask the students to do most of the talking and the nurturer to listen deeply. The spiritual nurturers should give their full attention to the student and to Spirit, listening not only to the words being spoken but to what may be underneath the words. Spiritual nurturers should seek to attune to how Spirit is moving in the student and in themselves.

Witness and respond deeply. Here are some ways spiritual nurturers can offer deep witnessing and responding to students. We emphasize that these are simply examples and that the most important guide is the prompting of Spirit in the moment. Some of the ways that spiritual nurturers may be led to respond to a student's sharing include:

- asking clarifying questions to make sure they have understood correctly

- mirroring back important elements in what they have heard the student say
- asking open-ended questions to invite the student deeper into their own listening
- briefly naming what happened in their bodies as they listened
- inviting the student to notice what is happening in their own body
- naming and uplifting spiritual gifts they observe in the student
- offering a prayer for the student

It is important to ask for the student's consent–– "May I pray for you?" "May I ask you a question about that?"–– and important to respect their answer.

Depth of conversations and expectations. Nurturers will try to meet students where they are without placing expectations on the time together. Some students will go very deep, very fast, and others will take some time, or not go deep at all. If and when it feels appropriate, take a little time to reflect together on what is working or not working in your relationship and what changes you both might like to make (if any).

Resources for further reading:
friendsjournal.org/listening-as-a-spiritual-practice
pendlehill.org/product/an-invitation-to-quaker-eldering-on-being-faithful-to-the-ministry-of-spiritual-nurture-among-friends

4. 2027 Spring Term Community

Touchstones

As we build this community together, we will be rooted in commitments we make to each other. To set the tone, we offer these initial touchstones (inspired by the Center for Courage and Renewal touchstones), to guide the boundaries of creating a trustworthy space together:

• Give and receive welcome. People learn best in hospitable spaces. We support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

• Be present as fully as possible. Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

• Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth. Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say.

• No fixing, saving, advising or correcting each other. This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

• Observe deep confidentiality. Safety is built when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share, and are not repeated to others without our permission. (Share what we learn, not the specifics of people's stories.)

Community Meeting

Once a week, the Spring Term students, scholars, and teachers and the Director of Education will meet together. We will share worship, a brief learning, and an opportunity to address together needs of the whole community, both logistical and spiritual. The structure and content of these meetings will evolve as the community evolves.

5. Spring Term Leaders, Teachers, and Residents



Brendan Stiteler (elective teacher) has served Pendle Hill as Gardener and Grounds Associate since 2021. His experience with farming includes work in management of Weavers Way Coop garden in Philadelphia, Red Hill Farm in Aston, Pa and Hill Garden in Elwyn, Pa. Regarding his lifelong love for gardening he writes, "Participating in regenerative agriculture makes me feel like every day, every pound of vegetables grown is a small answer to larger problems that feel overwhelming, and I love to teach what I have learned with others!"



Cayden Learey (they/them) (Friend in Residence) is a playwright, educator, and interdisciplinary artist currently splitting their time between Vermont and Philadelphia. A practitioner of theater for both youth and adults, they hope that their plays may provide a meeting ground in which all may feel shameless in their laughter, sorrow, confusion or joy, and always be met with compassion.



Dwight Dunston aka Duns (Session I teacher) is a West Philly-based facilitator, hip-hop artist, educator, and activist with roots in the Carolinas and deeper roots in West Africa. His passions/gifts include supporting folks to tap into their superpowers and supporting communities to develop the tools, skills, and techniques to stay connected across different identities.



Frances Kreimer is the Education Director of Pendle Hill. She previously taught and directed Villanova University Law School's Clinic for Asylum, Refugee, and Emigrant Services, focusing on mental health, trauma healing, and movement lawyering. She is inspired by nurturing experiments in spiritual learning community at Pendle Hill and outside of it.



Francisco Burgos is the executive director at Pendle Hill and has facilitated spiritual retreats and lectio divina sessions for many audiences. Francisco was a De La Salle Christian Brother for almost ten years, serving in Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, and has been a Friend since 2004. He is a member of Harrisburg Friends Meeting and an attender of meetings including Monteverde Friends Meeting in Costa Rica and Adelphi Friends Meeting in Maryland.



Jackie Coren (chorus director), classically trained as a choral singer and conductor at the University of California and Westminster Choir College, has taught in a number of capacities, including as Music Director at George School (Quaker) in Newtown, PA, and Artistic Director for the Anna Crusis Women's Choir in Philadelphia. She proposed and developed the music curriculum at Pendle Hill in the late 70's, and formed the Pendle Hill Chorus in 1993. Jackie has a particular love for the "Y'all Come," non-audition community chorus, welcoming singers from the shy beginner to the confident experienced. She encourages everyone to sing because we, our voices, are instruments of beauty and transformation in the world.



Jeremy Ruzich serves as Arborist & Grounds Coordinator at Pendle Hill. He has been helping care for the grounds and arboretum since 2022, shortly after moving to the area from his hometown, Kansas City. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and is passionate about cultivating healthy urban forests and healing our species' relationship with the rest of the natural world. A self-described ecological artist, he works in diverse mediums, including photography, poetry, and sculpture made with carefully collected materials of the forest. A lifelong student of the world's religions, he thrives in spiritual communities that are diverse, inclusive and rooted in reciprocity - much like the ecosystems and trees he loves and cares for.



John Baird (elective teacher) has served as clerk of two Friends Meetings, head of two Friends schools, a board member at Pendle Hill and the Friends Council on Education. He's spent time as a religion and a biology teacher, as well as a Friend in Residence at Pendle Hill and Woodbrooke Study Centre. He has been prepared as a facilitator by the Center for Courage and Renewal, and has led retreats and workshops for schools, meetings, conference centers, and churches. John is a member of Durham Monthly Meeting (NC). He and his wife are the parents of three grown children. John loves singing, gardening, painting, and birding.



Liadhaín Saoirse Reilly (Friend in Residence) is an Irish Friend and member of Waterford Meeting in the south-east of Ireland, where she was raised. She holds a Master's degree in Writing from the University of Galway with a focus on Poetry and Non-Fiction. Liadhaín has a ministry around sharing the experience of Extended Meeting for Worship as it was practiced by Early Friends. She is currently following a leading to travel amongst Quakers and looks forward to deepening her understanding about that journeying and visioning the next steps while serving as a Friend in Residence at Pendle Hill. She will be co-teaching the Spring Term and spending every free moment working in the garden and walking in the woods.



Mary Comfort Ferrell (spiritual nurturer) has a ministry of spiritual nurture and eldering which brings her great joy. She recently retired from the Friends Committee on National Legislation after working for many years in non-profit management, fundraising and consulting. She has also served as a community activist, although of late she identifies more closely with contemplative traditions and practices. In 2007, Mary Comfort took a sabbatical to become a resident student at Pendle Hill and ended up staying on as staff for 8 years. She is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and a Leadership Philadelphia Fellow.



Marcelle Martin (Session I teacher) has led workshops at retreat centers and Quaker meetings across the United States, and has a long history as a core teacher of Pendle Hill's Resident Student program. The author of Our Life is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey, and A Guide to Faithfulness Groups, she has also written about faith in four Pendle Hill pamphlets and many articles. She feels a great affinity with the first Quakers in the 17th century, but also is clear that we are urgently called to something bold, radical, and new in our time. On her blog, A Whole Heart, she shares inspiration to help us be all God has created us to be. She is a member of Swarthmore Friends Meeting and lives in Chester, PA, with her husband, Terry.



Matt Rosen (elective teacher) is a convinced Friend and member of Stillwater Monthly Meeting, Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative). He lives in England and has been part of the Oxford young adult Friends worship group. He has traveled in the gospel ministry throughout Britain, under a concern to learn together with Friends from Christ our Inward Teacher. He was the Henry J. Cadbury Scholar at Pendle Hill in 2023 and is the author of the Pendle Hill pamphlet *Awakening the Witness: Convincement and Belonging in Quaker Community*. Matt's writing has also appeared in *Friends Journal* and *the Friend*, including "In the Deeps & in Weakness: The Work of the Spirit among Friends."



Rev. Rhetta Morgan (Session I teacher) is a singing healer, spiritual activist, and interfaith minister who has been gathering tools for healing and inspiration for over 40 years. Through her gifts of prayer, poetry, facilitation, and sermonizing, she cultivates hope and nurtures connection in her community as a pathway back to belonging and wholeness. As a facilitator and coach, Rhetta is known for her ability to support others to be bold, heal their self-limiting beliefs, and integrate their internal healing with their social movement work. This support is essential to cultivate the powerful spiritual activism that is needed in these times.

6. Community Across Time

Pendle Hill's community extends through generations of students and teachers who have shared in this ongoing experiment in spiritual learning community. You are encouraged to view the student handbooks of years past and more recent student epistles in the Main House Reading Room, knowing that you will be joining in this ongoing community.

As an introduction, we share with you the 2026 Spring Term Epistle:

pendlehill.org/the-2026-spring-term-student-epistle