



HONORING THE FEMININE DIVINE
 IN OUR OWN
 DEEP BEINGS,
 IN EACH OTHER,
 AND IN THE
 WORLD

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS



COCO NEWS, SEASONAL REFLECTIONS, EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEW MEMBER WELCOME

Unitarian Universalist Womenspirit Newsletter

SHE SPEAKS



Center altar at the spring event - Gather at the Crossroads.

From The Editor

My husband and I got married (...again - long story) over the summer in my parents' backyard. They always grow a huge, beautiful vegetable garden. I noticed that a few sections of the garden weren't producing, and my dad summed it up this way: "We have a pollinator problem." Obviously, this is only one of the many social and environmental crises we are witnessing.

This Lammas season, I am honoring the myth of the Corn Mother from parts of Northern Europe. The story goes that the spirit of the

corn (or any grain harvested, as “corn” was an umbrella term for grains) would reside for the winter in a doll crafted from the last husks or pieces of grain. Corn Woman or Mother would be displayed and centered in feasting celebrations and kept and revered until Spring when she was returned to the ground, to her home, to ensure a bountiful harvest for the next year.

I know I’m preaching to the choir when I ask, but what if we all, all of us, first saw our gardens and our fields not as a resource for us, but as a home for the spirits of the plants themselves? It is our job as cognitive and conscious beings to steward the homes of all the nature spirits and beings because *we know better than to take without giving back.*

Grain or corn dolls can be made simply out of husks or stalks and a little twine. They can be decorated with other natural harvest items or bits of ribbon and fabric.

I suggest we all make one this harvest season, invite her to the table to feast with us, and introduce her and her purpose to all of our friends.

In loving service,
Iris Padgett

Welcome New Members

The following are new members of UUWomenspirit since our last issue, and they are being recognized with their permission:

Becca Daniels - Charleston, SC
Shannon Davis - Kingsport, TN
Carolyn Miller - Greenville, SC
Siobhan O’Neal - Raleigh, NC
Judy Skelton - Fort Worth, TX

WELCOME and a warm thank you to these women for connecting with and supporting UUWomenspirit!

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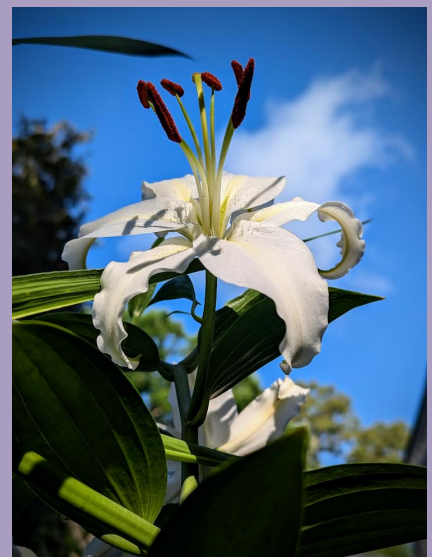


Photo by Shauna Ireland

SAVE THE DATES FOR OUR NEXT EVENTS
OCTOBER 2-6, 2024
MAY 14-18, 2025

Virtual Fall Event Preview

August 8, 2024 6pm EST

Intrigued but still undecided about attending our Fall event? Attending but want to get even MORE excited? Join on Zoom and learn more about the inspiration for our theme, more specifics about the wonderful tracks and workshops, and meet some of the facilitators, worship leaders, and PC members. Join us and get inspired!

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82010571545>



Candle in Brigit's Bazaar made by Rachel Daigle



Photo by Sherri Philpott

Pearl of My Heart

The green wavelets of the Pamlico
 sparkle silver-tipped in the morning light.
 An egret glides low and silent over the sound.
 The metal deck hums beneath our feet
 as raucous gulls scavenge in our churning
 wake.

We wave to the lucky island-bound travelers
 as our ferry nudges toward Hatteras:
 brown skinned, mosquito bitten, barely sated
 with saltwater, sand and cedar.

- Sherri Philpott

News from the CoCo

The Coordinating Council, or CoCo, is the governing body of UUWomenspirit. The current members are Victoria Frederick (Marketing and Outreach Coordinator), Shauna Ireland (Volunteer Coordinator), Christine Grewcock (Registrar), Judy Padgett (Membership Coordinator and Treasurer), Rev. Maggie Lovins (Program Resource Liaison), and Melissa Christopher (Scribe and Keeper of the Sacred Text).

From the Marketing and Outreach Coordinator (Victoria Frederick)

Hello beautiful spirits!

I hope that all of us have been rocking our own crossroads after the Spring event. It's remarkable to me how often what I need in my own life intersects with the beautiful events that all of you create for us. To get to step into a gift of love like that not once but twice a year is remarkable.

I spent some time prior to the last event meditating on the theme, and I believe that made my experience deeper and richer. That leads me to ask... what could we be thinking about prior to our experience this October with **Fire & Feather, Stone & Bone**? Here are the beautiful words prepared by the PC to help us get our heads, hearts, and spirits in the right place:

*Come, enter the cave, and gather with us around the fire...
Rediscover universal threads running through ancient spiritual practices...
Rekindle the fire of connection...*

I love this so much. To me it's an invitation to reflection, to going deep and coming back strong. Even stronger when we come together, as if we lived in an ancient world where those around us are the lights in our night and the sun of our days. Consider spending some time on what this theme means to *you* in the next couple of months. Registration is open!

The CoCo will be holding our first in-person meeting on the weekend of 8/23 – 8/25, which we are warmly looking forward to. In the meantime, if you could share the flyer far and wide – paper your villages & towns with them – that would be lovely. Also, please consider including the small announcement included below in your church or personal newsletters as well as any church or organizational calendars that might reach women who would welcome reaching us. If you love what we offer, this is the best way to help us keep it going.



UUWomenspirit Fall 2024

FIRE AND FEATHER, STONE AND BONE

October 2-6 at The Mountain - Highlands, NC

Join us in our quest to learn, explore, and rediscover the universal thread running through ancient spiritual practices, as we connect with divine energy, raise our power, and reconnect with our own primal nature.

www.uuwomenspirit.org

From the Treasurer (Judy Padgett)

At this time, our cash flow remains stable and healthy. We'd like to express our gratitude to everyone who attended the Spring 2024 event. Our purpose as an organization is to provide opportunities for our members through our events, and it is crucial to our well-being that we have good attendance. Other sources of income are dues, which fund the background workings of UUWomenspirit, donations to our general operating fund and our scholarship funds, and sales commissions from Brigid's Bazaar. A big thank you goes out to everyone who has shown their support by shopping, by donating, and by participating in our silent auctions at events (which benefit our scholarship funds).

For the Spring 2024 event, we were able to award four general scholarships and two Young Women's Scholarships. There is more information on the website about our scholarship opportunities.

The Spring 2024 event showed a profit, in part because of the generous in-kind donations of the Planning Committee members. Thank you! Here are the figures for the event:

Event Income

Program Fees (UUWS portion of your event cost)	\$7520.00
Merchandise Sold	<u>1065.00</u>
Total Income	\$8585.00

Event Expense

Credits given (Planning Committee, Track and Workshop Facilitators, Chaplain)	\$6280.00
Expenses (Meetings, worship, registration, social hour, merchandise cost, bank processing fees)	<u>1838.01</u>
Total Expense	\$8118.01
PROFIT	\$466.99

All of our in-depth, detailed, official financial records are available at all events and to any member at your request. Email treasurer@uuwomenspirit.org for copies.

At this time, we have 78 paid memberships. Don't forget that our annual dues of \$45.00 supports all the organization expenses outside of events including meetings, technology, insurance, bank fees, and event credits given to Coordinating Council members and their support volunteers. Paying dues enables you to receive the discounted "member's rate" for attending events, but even if you cannot attend every event, it is vital that we have your financial support to carry on our work. Dues are for one calendar year and can be paid online through our website. Just click on "Join" and be sure to fill out the membership form, as it gives us the most current updated information for you. If you prefer, you can mail a check made out to UUWomenspirit and send to Judy Padgett, Treasurer, 241 Pheasant Creek Road, Casar, NC 28020. Thank you for joining UUWomenspirit!



Photo by Penny Featherstone

From Scribe and Keeper of the Sacred Text (Melissa Christopher)

I'm excited to let you know that we'll soon have the new and improved Sacred Text available on our website! It will be available on the 'members' area of the website, accessible through the same login you use for registration.

The Sacred Text is conveniently separated into three sections: Operations, Event Planning, and Appendix (forms, resources and templates). Even though it's a large document, at 150 pages in total, it's easy to find what you're looking for with keyword searches and hyperlinks embedded in the table of contents.

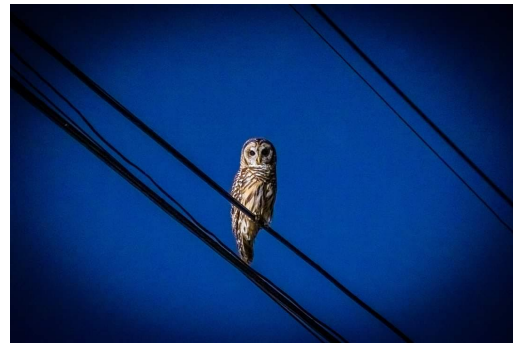


Photo by Shauna Ireland

It's been a blessing to dive deep into the inner workings of UUWomenspirit, and to access my inner word nerd. I'm looking forward to seeing you all soon.

From Registrar (Christine Grewcock)

As you register for the Fall 2024 event, please notice the option of Bunkhouse Lodging. We now can offer a stay in a bunkhouse for \$20 less per night than the regular double occupancy rate. Bunkhouses are somewhat more rustic than other lodging spaces, but there are two regular single beds and one shared bathroom, as well as several bunk beds. The Mountain only requires us to place a minimum of two women in a bunkhouse for the discounted rate, so it's a great way to save a little money. And bunkhouses are fun for groups larger than 2, also! First-come, first-served, of course.

From Volunteer Coordinator (Shauna Ireland)

The CoCo would like to send a huge THANK YOU to the Spring 2024 Planning Committee (Lisa Sherman, Alice Carnes, Helen Rogers, Claire Lending, Arianna Bara, Magi King, and Nancy Hagman) for such a meaningful and deeply impactful event. I know for me personally, I found myself at a crossroads during this event and every bit of what was offered spoke to me as I imagine it did for many others. The worship space was beautifully decorated, and I was impressed by how much the Planning Committee (and other volunteers) really leaned into their roles during worship. I thought the skits were a great way to convey the powerful messages of "Gather at the Crossroads." Thank you to all of our Track and Workshop leaders (Lisa Abbott, Tina Whittle, Amy Gonzales Nelson, Beth Butterfield, Iris Padgett, Melissa Christopher, Shelley Graff, Sue-Anne Solem, Raven Stephenson, and Amira Jones) for providing incredible opportunities for growth and connection with our sisters.

We are happy to announce that we have a full Planning Committee in place for the Spring 2025 event. Margaret Schmidt will be our Event Coordinator. Sherri Philpott and Farrunnissa Rosa will be leading worship. Shannon Davis, who was new to UUWS at the Spring 2024 event, is jumping right in and will be doing Sales & Activities. Carolyn Pilgrim will be Scribe and Amber Grey will be heading up Tracks and Workshops. The Spring 2025 PC is already hard at work creating an exciting event for all of us next spring. We can't wait!!

So much time, love and commitment are put into creating each of these inspiring events every spring and fall. We really want to honor what that means from all of you who have volunteered and given your energy to create a space that is transformative and sacred. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! We absolutely could not do without you!!!

Cross Quarter Days

Lammas

August 1, 2024

LET US FEAST

Welcome to Harvest Season, sisters! Lammas is the first in a string of harvest holidays in the Wheel of the Year. Specifically, we celebrate the grain harvest during Lammas (also known as Lughnasadh). The forerunner of the modern agricultural fair and carnival, Lammas is the season for reaping and celebrating abundance and the fruits of our labor both literally and metaphorically.

Food and sharing meals is arguably the most universal and common way to mark an occasion. All cultures seem to have traditional or special foods for certain celebrations or to mark certain times of the year. Some examples of food-centric or food-ritualistic occasions or feasts include Passover, Día de Muertos, Thanksgiving, Oktoberfest, Mardi Gras, Chuseok, and Iriji. Most recently, it is the Bacchanalia that has been drawn to our attention through the Olympic Games opening ceremony controversy.

Deities have been depicted widely - particularly in Renaissance art - feasting, gorging, and engaging in debauchery and revelry. These festivals of grandeur feature a variety of Gods and Goddesses: Bacchus/Dionysus of course, but also Minerva, Venus, Apollo, Flora, Diana, and others.

Not as famous are the mysterious Maenads, or the women worshippers of Bacchus. The Maenads are sometimes simply known as priestesses of the God of wine. They are known as nymphs, and as nurses to the infant Dionysus. In other myths, they were known to ecstatically break into a frenzy: wailing, shaking, singing piercingly, losing the senses, and sometimes ripping apart animals and eating meat raw. In the culmination of their rapture, they fell onto the ground, completely united with divine spirit, and surrendered to a still state of peace and serenity. Sometimes, this orgastic behavior was voluntary, and sometimes the possession was forced by the God himself. Paradoxically, though, the Maenads represent the dangers of women left unchaperoned by men, women unfettered by the chains of patriarchy, without husbands or politicians to control them. The energy of the Maenads is what we feel when we imagine the Bacchanalia of the Romans. Wild yelling, cacophony of music, intoxication, sumptuous indulgence of the senses. The power of women play a front-and-center role in a story.

How can we bring in this Wild Woman energy - the energy of ultimate freedom - this season and harness it for the good of all? A Bacchanalian-style feast is one way. Feasting is not necessarily about food foremost. The feast is a way to practice joy and gratitude, build community, provide a structured outlet for transgression, connect to meaning, and facilitate important conversation.

Your Own Harvest Feast

Intention: Imagine the scene you'd like to create. What would you like to accomplish with your feast?

Guests and Invitations: Explicitly state the intention for the evening. Set expectations for the evening including party and ritual rules, costume guidelines, date and start and end times, and what the guests should bring.

Decor and table preparation: Decorate the space and table settings with symbols of harvest and abundance: grape clusters, vines, grain stalks, corn dolls, squashes and gourds, flowers.

Invocation to the Deities and Spirits: Choose specific deities to invoke in the beginning of your feast according to your intention.

Food and Drink/Cakes and Ale: Choose seasonal and local foods and offer many choices or have a potluck of seasonal foods. Props for making dishes with home-grown items. Wine is an obvious choice. Offer a special mocktail for non-drinkers using herbs or seasonal ingredients.

Ritual Eating: Give the guests a ritual activity or words for each course of the meal, according to your intention and theme. At some point, leave room for an expression of gratitude for the harvest, the land, the land spirits, and for your guests.

Revelry: Central a Bacchanalia is dramatic performance. Have guests bring instruments and stories. If you are playing background music, increase the tempo and energy of the music throughout the night.

After the Feast: Thank your guests and clean mindfully with continued attention to your intention. Thank and release the deities and spirits.

Hail to the Firefly

Like fireflies in children's eyes
 We follow Life's charm and light
 At flickering signs, we leave behind
 Our terrors and endless plights
 A spark of gold, a way of old
 We chase the trail through dusk
 A spirit of mirth against the Earth
 To our feet the way we trust
 In Summer's breeze against the trees
 We lay our hands and dream
 For easy days and lighted ways
 To find our hopes unseen
 Resting on grass the eve has passed
 Night rules from dusk till dawn
 But like fireflies in children's eyes
 The light is never gone
 - *Scarlet Haven*



2024 Fall Event!



UUWomenspirit Fall Event - October 2-6, 2024

Fire and Feather, Stone and Bone:

Enter, come and gather with us around the fire as we step back to the origins of humanity and experience our deeper connection to life force. You are invited to reconnect with your deep Self through many offerings: tracks and workshops, worship services, and other activities as well as through taking in the vistas from our mountaintop or the forest that holds us. Join us on our quest to learn, explore, and rediscover the universal thread running through ancient spiritual practices, as we connect with divine energy, raise our power, and reconnect with our own primal nature.

Tracks and workshops will focus on practices and activities found across cultures and religions throughout time. Special activities include extra meet-up time, a fire circle for sharing music and songs, a healing circle, movie night and slumber party, a brief talk and discussion on the role of psychedelic substances throughout history and evolution and for modern mental health care and personal growth, recovery meetings, tea, games, sacred shopping, cabaret, dancing, and drumming!



Photo by Jay Woodard

Fall 2024 Planning Committee from left: Beth Butterfield (Scribe), Nina Brewer-Davis (Event Coordinator), Donna Carson (Sales & Activities), Iris Padgett (Tracks & Workshops), Kallie LeFever (Worship), and Shannon Browning-Mullis (Worship). Not pictured: Adrianna LeeLee (PC Assistant), Ellen Hitchcock, (Chaplain).

2024 Fall Event!

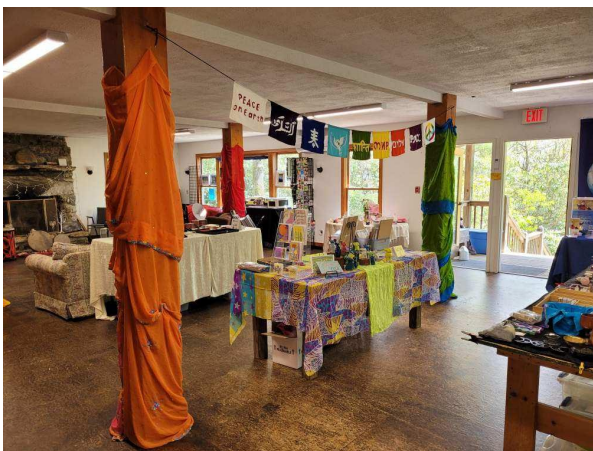
WORSHIP

During worship time, we will journey deep into the cave of our ancestors to explore the earliest and most universal spiritual practices developed by humanity. What came before named goddesses and gods? Before individual songs? Before kings, queens, priests, and priestesses? How did our earliest ancestors transcend the mundane world to enter altered states of consciousness? Some spiritual practices can be found in the archaeological record independently all over the world. Join us as we strip away individual cultures and return to universal humanity and connection to Great Mystery.

REGISTER
HERE



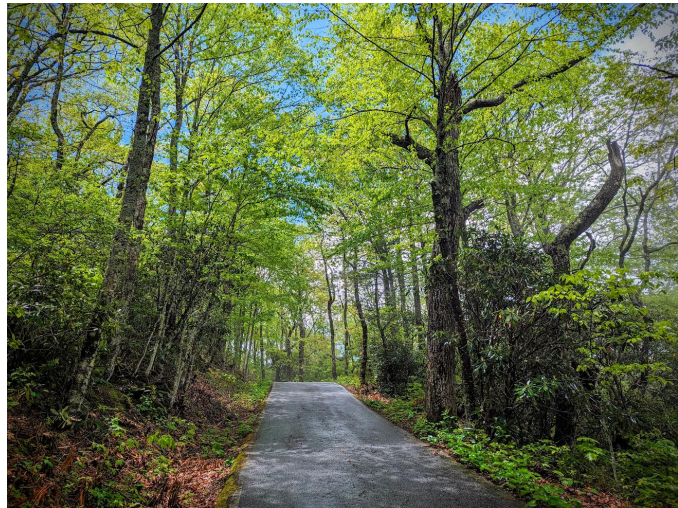
Photos from Spring 2024 - Gather at the Crossroads



Clockwise from top left: Toni Stephenson gazes at the view from the lodge deck, UU bumper sticker, Arianna Bara and Claire Lending enjoy the view from the deck (photos by Arianna Bara), treetops (photo by Shauna Ireland), and Brigid's Bazaar (photo by Arianna Bara).



Clockwise from top left: Hecate at the center of the labyrinth (photo by Arianna Bara), morning on The Mountain, the drive up The Mountain in springtime, Tarot spread (photos by Shauna Ireland), South altar art piece by Helen Rogers.



Photos from Spring 2024 - Gather at the Crossroads

SHARE YOUR CREATIVITY

Interested in contributing original poetry, prose, ads, photography, art, tribute, gratitude, healing support requests, rituals, news, announcements, or other original content?

Send your submissions to:
newsletter@uuwomenspirit.org

Please include your full name and a brief, sentence-long bio with your original submissions - let's get to know each other even better! If you submit work by another, please attribute it accordingly. Send names when submitting photos with faces, please.

Submissions should be no more than two pages or about 500-600 words.

Your work makes the newsletter more vibrant

We Love Our Cats!

Alice Carnes and Judy Padgett stop at the American Museum of the House Cat on the way home from The Mountain.



A Tale of Three Cats – Kitty Limericks

- Sherri Philpott

Phoebe

I met a sweet tortie kitten
With a dear little apricot mitten
(But I have two boy cats
I should think about that)
She mewed "Too late, you're already smitten."

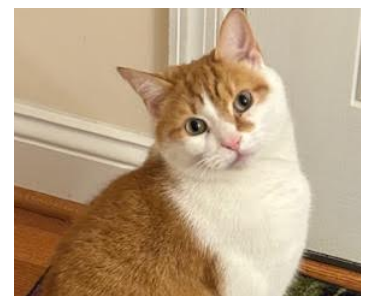


Z

A handsome white cat named Zander
Humphed "You know what gets up my dander?
I was indulged for five years,
Now that brat nips my ears.
She's cute but I'm certainly grander."

Mr. Handsome

Sammy boy is a fine fellow,
With a disposition exceedingly mellow.
Fur orange and white,
A whimsical sight,
With his striped tail he plays the cello.





Unitarian Universalist Women and Religion

<https://www.uuwr.org>
info@uuwr.org

Networking * Resources * Herstory
 Our online store offers UU feminist books and gifts, all by UU women artists!

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Kate Stockman Designs

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/KateStockmanDesigns>

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Wingshuck Corn Shuck Dolls

Anne Freels

anneofriel@gmail.com 865-705-9755
www.wingshuck.etsy.com
Facebook: Anne Freels and Wingshuck

Colorful corn shuck dolls representing the seasons, the holidays on the Wheel of the Year, traditional Appalachian, altar dolls, kitchen witches and Halloween and Samhain witches.



Annie Egypt Herbals

Anne Freels

anneofriel@gmail.com 865-705-9755
Facebook: Annie Egypt Herbals

All natural herbal soaps and skin care made in small batches without synthetics or preservatives.



Susan Baylies is designing new t-shirts and others things available at her online **Suzebilia** shops!

<https://snakeandsnake.com>



**Two Witches in a Kitchen
Maggie Lovins**

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Rain's Obsessive Stitchery

From the Editor
Rain Pope 615-238-7760
<http://rainsews.com> rain@rainsews.com

Hand-dyed yarn and clothing, embroidered items and more. Each weekend prior to May Day, our local community college holds a craft fair. Rain Pope, a talented seamstress, will be selling her handmade items, chainmail jewelry, and various other shiny things.



Wise Woman Woods

Intuitive Readings

Certified Energy Healer

Tarot

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