



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

**MEMBER
CONTRIBUTIONS**



**COCO NEWS, SEASONAL
REFLECTIONS, EVENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS,
ORIGINAL ART**

Unitarian Universalist Womenspirit Newsletter

SHE SPEAKS



Arctic Henge

Photo by Lisa Sherman

The Arctic Henge is located in a remote village in the northeastern tip of Iceland. The arches are set in the four directions and are several meters high.

From The Editor

Dear sisters,

Going forward, I would like to play with exploring a more specific theme in each newsletter. The theme will be a single aspect of the cross-quarter day when the newsletter is published and will be announced in the call for submissions. I hope that the themes will inspire your creativity and motivate you to contribute your offerings.

This Imbolc season, I am exploring the concept of rooting. When I consider Imbolc, I remember first the blessed return of sunlight, and I imagine the quickening of life. Many of us use the metaphor of small shoots of green growth appearing from the earth in the life cycle of a plant, representing our intentions, our goals, the first tiny manifestations of our New Year's resolutions.

What I often overlook is the step even earlier of rooting, when a seed awakens and its first growth is actually down deeper into the soil. There, it absorbs nutrients, stores resources, and stabilizes the plant. The plant must root to rise: we must also root to rise. Only from nourished and anchored roots can we reach and aspire for change and then weather the changes we bring about as well as those changes we don't choose and cannot control.

Change is in the air unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. A pandemic, unprecedented and devastating climate events, radical shifts in ecosystems, heartbreaking losses of species, the erosion of the American democracy, global inflation, the rising threat of nuclear war, I could go on. We all know what it looks like. Many of us feel helpless and want to hide - to put our heads in a hole. But while hiding offers a momentary escape, it does nothing to take away the reality of what is. It might look a bit like rooting, but the outcome is different. Rooting helps us maintain stores of resilience so that we can fully emotionally process what's really happening and then act according to our values.

In the spirit of rooting, I would like to take time in this issue to revisit some of UUWomenspirit's foundational organizational principles and values. Like I imagine is true for others, I starting coming to events without knowing or minding very much what the Unitarian Universalist church was all about. In my trying to conceptualize the make-up of UUWomenspirit's roots, I did some research to remind myself.

CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor and Reflections on Our Organizational Roots.....2-3

Important Dates.....4

Winter's Fire by Scarlett Haven.....4

News from the CoCo.....5-6

Spring Event Preview.....7

Imbolc and Rooting.....8

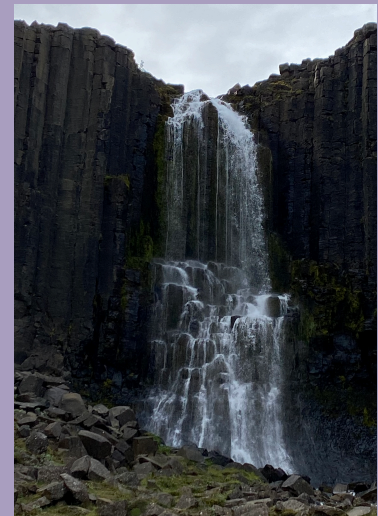
The Wizard and the Peacock by Mary Carlin.....9

Fall Event Preview.....10

Animal Communicators by Clara Marguerite David.....11

Original Carving by Oreon Millard.....12

Vendor Directory.....13-16



Basalt Column Waterfall
 Photo taken by Lisa Sherman in the eastern fjords of Iceland.

There are many opinions in our membership about whether or not we should be affiliated with the UU church. The answer is not for the scope of this article. As it stands now, we are affiliated, and we grew out of that church. And acknowledging that, perhaps you can ponder with me what that means more closely.

There are Seven Principles listed on the Unitarian Universalist website.

[1st Principle](#): The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

[2nd Principle](#): Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;

[3rd Principle](#): Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

[4th Principle](#): A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

[5th Principle](#): The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

[6th Principle](#): The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

[7th Principle](#): Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

There are also six shared values.

Interdependence: We honor the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge our place in it.

Pluralism: We are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology.

Justice: We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all feel welcome and can thrive.

Transformation: We adapt to the changing world.

Generosity: We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.

Equity: We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.

From being clear about what we value, we can also get clarity on what we don't value. In order to truly be inclusive - to create safety for all of our human, plant, animal, and spiritual diversity - we have to dig down to our shared roots as an organization and agree to not tolerate intolerance, planetary destruction, the weaponization of privilege, the removal of human and civil rights, hate speech, expression that dehumanizes another, or authoritarianism.

In our most honest moments, we may all be able to agree that honoring differing beliefs becomes more challenging AND more important the more polarized our political climate becomes. I believe there are tools for creating effective inclusivity, and two of these include both radical kindness as well as strong boundaries. The two, while they can seem paradoxical, are not mutually exclusive.

We have all taken a collective breath as we brace for what additional chaos comes next. We simultaneously face a kind of end and a kind of beginning this Imbolc, and none of us know where it will lead. Root down and hang on. Rooting is more than where we came from; it's how we're able to keep going. Let's nourish ourselves during this period of unknown so that we can grieve our losses, advocate when we see the need, act when we have the chance, hold firm in our values, maintain hope, help each other, and hold this difficult and changing world with all its beauty and all of its pain with our loving and compassionate arms and hearts.

In loving service,
Iris Padgett



SAVE THE DATES FOR OUR NEXT EVENTS
MAY 14-18, 2025
OCTOBER 1-5, 2025

Important Dates for Spring Event

Registration opens: 3/5/25

Early bird deadline: 4/2/25

Scholarship application deadline: 3/26/25

Merchandise sales end: 4/11/25

Last day for registration: 4/23/25

Vendor application deadline: 4/30/25

Institute: 5/14-5/16

Gathering: 5/16 - 5/18



Glacier Lagoon

Photo taken by Lisa Sherman on the south coast of Iceland.

New Members

If you joined UUWomenspirit in the past year, you did not see your name listed in the newsletter, and you want to be acknowledged, please reach out to our membership coordinator to give her permission to publish your name.
treasurer@uuwomenspirit.org

Winter's Fire

Winter turns trees icy
 Snow swirling through the air
 It's firelight that guides me
 To the sacred rite we share
 In circle round I find them
 Sister spirits far and near
 The center light a sun gem
 Our prayers a song to hear
 Oh Great Mother Goddess
 Our plea to You we raise
 Awake from Your sweet bodice
 The Earth a washed in rays
 The Sun is near returning
 The Darkness soon shall end
 The birth of all is coming
 Summon Spring, our dear friend
 - *Scarlet Haven*

News from the CoCo

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

Blessed post-Imbolc greetings, beautiful ones.

The newsletter is a little late because the CoCo held our first 2025 in-person meeting from 1/31 – 2/2, and we wanted to share relevant updates with all of you. Raven joined us as Scribe, and she is fantastic! Many thanks to her for taking on the role and to Melissa Christopher for stepping in last year when most needed.



Coming together on behalf of UUWomenspirit felt especially meaningful this time. Many of us are likely experiencing a range of emotions in light of recent government and political actions. Many of us may be part of groups being targeted by the current administration. All of this is a lot; it's designed to instill fear and confusion and disorder.

What is needed at such a time as this? I don't think any of us entirely know, but we want to encourage each of you to take excellent care of yourselves. Feel the feelings, but please know that you are needed by your sisters, this country, and this world now more than ever. Care for yourself first, whatever that means. In some cases, that may mean sharing and discussing fears, hopes, and plans. For others, it may be important to maintain times and spaces in which we *don't* hold these discussions. Our hope is that we can all be mindful of this at the upcoming event, in terms of knowing that our sisters may be in a different place regarding what they need at any given time. It's okay to cocoon for a while and hold ourselves in healing space when we need to step back. It's okay to be angry, afraid, and sad. But we need each other more than ever.

Related to this topic is a discussion held during our meeting about our organization's current use of Facebook, given the company's changing policies regarding hate speech and fact-checking. For those not familiar with the issues, [this article](#) lays out the changes and their potential impact fairly well. We posted this question on the UUWomenspirit Facebook group to gain a sense of where you all are at with this question. Some of you indicated you will continue using the platform because it's how you keep up with family and friends, several of you shared that you are contemplating leaving Facebook, or at the very least, pulling back from actively engaging with the platform. Discord was mentioned several times as an alternative that our members and friends have been able to use successfully for groups such as ours.

What does this mean for U UWomenspirit? We aren't going to make any changes immediately, but we are going to hold some conversations with you all at the spring event about what kind of online platform you would like to see. After that, we are going to schedule a membership Zoom meeting to discuss the question and allow time for our membership to tell us what you would like in terms of an online community. We haven't scheduled it yet, but this conversation will likely take place in June or July.

I'm writing this update with a deep sense of gratitude for what all of you and U UWomenspirit have brought into my life. Groups such as ours need to continue to exist, now more than ever.

With love,
Victoria, on behalf of the CoCo

From the Treasurer, Judy Padgett

Another year is here and for many of us, the hope is that 2025 will be brighter and more joyful than 2024. It was a hard year for many of us for many reasons: personal loss, difficulty, disappointment, and the devastation of hurricane Helene. We canceled the fall event due to the widespread damage from the storm. Through it all, as sisters in U UWomenspirit, we reached out to one another with love, comfort, and assistance. Our community endured!

Although we were not able to meet in October, the behind-the-scenes work of U UWomenspirit continued. Many of those functions are supported by the annual membership dues. **Now is the time to renew your membership for fiscal year 2025.** Paying dues assures that you will receive the member's discount when registering for either or both of our events this year. You also support our newsletter and gain the satisfaction of knowing you keep our 38-year-old organization alive and well.

Our very successful Spring 2024 event showed a profit of \$466.95. A big thanks to the PC! Refunds were sent for the canceled fall 2024 event. During that process, we gave members the option to donate to The Mountain to help them recover from lost revenue during the aftermath of the storm. We were able to send \$6000 to The Mountain. Thank you to all who donated. After an analysis of our accounts, the Coordinating Council decided to distribute some extra money to the next several planning committees. Those funds come from the interest earned by our CD's, which have been in place for many years as a safety net to cover unforeseen circumstances.

As of the end of 2024, we had 103 paid members. When it was necessary to cancel our Fall 2024 event, we made the decision to apply membership dues paid by brand new members during the event registration period to their 2025 dues. Hopefully these first-time members will attend an event in spring and/or fall and will consequently receive the member's discount. Also, if you received a scholarship for the fall event, it will be honored at one of our 2025 events without reapplying.

Our annual dues remain at **\$45** and are good for the 2025 calendar year. You can join by going to the website and clicking on "Join." Be sure to fill out the **Membership Form**, so we can confirm your current information. If you'd like to pay by check, please make your check payable to U UWomenspirit and mail to Judy Padgett, Treasurer, U UWomenspirit, 241 Pheasant Creek Road, Casar, NC 28020.



**The Beginning is the End
The End is the Beginning
May 14-18, 2025 at The Mountain**

In the cycles of our lives, we constantly move through changes: from Maiden to Mother to Crone; from Teacher to Warrior to Queen; from known to unknown archetypes of being. With each change comes a new awareness, a new self, a new way of being in the world, of looking at ourselves, our relationships, our humyn kin, All Our Relations. Sometimes change is pressed on us from external circumstances, changes that we might not necessarily welcome or agree with. Often change can seem threatening: we feel we're not ready or are inadequate. Join us as we embrace and celebrate all life's changes - the endings and the beginnings and how they flow and merge with and into each other.

Your Spring Planning Committee is: Margaret Schmidt (Event Coordinator), Farrunnissa Rosa (Worship), Sherri Philpott (Worship), Amber Grey (Tracks & Workshops), Shannon Davis (Sales & Activities), and Carolyn Pilgrim (Scribe).



IMBOLC

February 1

Rooting...

is the theme for this Imbolc's newsletter. Healthy roots are vital for a plant's ability to survive and thrive. Roots are the beginning of life after dormancy. Roots connect us to our past and to each other. Roots feed and stabilize. They give nutrients back to the soil. They prevent disease. They communicate with other roots and the mycorrhizal network. Without roots, we would all - plants and humans alike - wither and topple at the first sign of a storm.

Roots are more than our ancestors or our hometowns or our families of origin. Roots are the current spiritual practices that keep us inspired. They are our connections to our lovers, friends, families of choice, animals, nature. Roots are the quality of the food we eat and the sleep we get at night. The cleanliness of the air we breathe and the water we drink. Roots are our ability to give as well as take, to practice reciprocity. Roots reflect our safety and security in the world. All of these facets of the root are essential to how resilient we are.

What can you do to strengthen your own roots?

Meditation for Rooting

Find a spot, preferably outside where you can make contact with the Earth with your skin - bare feet or some bare part of your body. If it's comfortable, close your eyes and relax. Take a round of ten deeper breaths - focusing on slowing down and lengthening each exhalation. Acknowledge all the emotions you notice, all the thoughts that arise, and what sensations you feel with absolutely no judgement. Welcome it all with equanimity.

Visualize yourself growing roots out of your feet. Take time to see or feel them grow as far as they can to the center of the Earth. Imagine them intertwining with the Great Mother's energy at the center of the Earth. Receive her love and vitality and strength. Give her yours in return and ask her to heal your weariness, burn-out, anger, stress, and fear. Continue this for as long as feels helpful and good.

Create an intention to remember your roots and your connection to the Earth and to the Goddess - to give and receive strength and love - throughout each day. Take a few more deep breaths and slowly open your eyes. See if you can maintain that sense of connecting down as you return.



Sacred
Stones

*Photo taken
by Lisa
Sherman in
central
Iceland.*



The Wizard and the Peacock *by Mary Carlin*

The Wizard created the Peacock out of the colors of her robe. She whirled her robe in a swiftly spinning circle, and the colors fell to the ground around her. She then called the Bluebird, who alighted on the ground before her. She made a sweeping gesture over the colors, and the Bluebird rolled in them, spreading his wings and pressing all of his body to the ground to absorb the colors.

When he stood, the Wizard raised her right hand, fingers spread like a fan, and touched his tail. His figure expanded, his legs lengthened, and his tail grew into a brilliantly colored fan. The blue feathers on his body carried over from Bluebird to Peacock. But the cost of his beauty was to lose his birdsong. His cacophonous new voice formed a stark contrast to his outside beauty.

The Wizard stood, mounted the Peacock, and flew to the Heavens... There the Wizard taught the Peacock to find his own songs to sing with his new voice, which was both beautiful and strange. Only this new voice was capable of communicating all that his spirit had to sing.

From that day forward, whenever the Wizard and the Peacock journeyed together, people would be drawn to their beautiful colors. When the Peacock started to sing, some, repulsed by the strange new sounds, covered their ears and fled. But those who stayed felt their heart strings singing the same song as the Peacock. Their own stories interlaced with his song story, and the experience became imprinted on their souls. For the rest of their days, if they focused their attention on their inward spirit selves, they could play their own heart strings and sing their own stories in their eerily beautiful cacophonous new voices.

2025 Fall Event!



Fire and Feather,
 Stone and Bone:
 Welcome to the Cave

The Fall PC is looking for one more track leader (we may need another workshop facilitator as well). We invite you to join us if you have an idea for a track that vibes with our theme.

[Submit a Proposal](#)

UUWomenspirit Fall Event -
October 1-5, 2025

**Fire and Feather, Stone and Bone:
 Welcome to the Cave**

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.

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.



Animal Helpers

By Clara Marguerite David

I became an Animal Communicator to help humans understand and find peace before, during, and after the passing of their beloved pets. Animal Communication is like opening a door to a new understanding of the world. Back to a time when humans and animals sat around the fire together. When we respected each other and were interdependent.

Today, there is an international network of Animal Communicators including Pea Horsley and Anna Breytenbach (and many others, mostly women) who communicate with animals in zoos, wildlife refuges, and in the wild. The animals freely share their wisdom about living in our time of Earth changes. I continue to be touched by the depth of their knowledge, kindness, and willingness to help humans despite us often destroying their habitats and treating them cruelly. The animals are very spiritual and live with a great knowledge and wisdom that extends beyond our current reality. They let us know that we are not alone. Animals, insects, and all species are eager to help us. We just need to slow down and ask.

The good news is that we are all Animal Communicators! The ability to communicate with animals is an innate ability we all have. We just need to reconnect. On your walk you may notice a bird or butterfly who seems to follow you. You can ask them any question that is on your heart. Phrase your question simply, ask without expectation, and be patient. Know that you may receive a thought or an image when you least expect to.



Original Carving in Wood Cut Style
By Oreon Millard

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 and is appreciated greatly.

Clara Marguerite Pet Loss Support and Animal Communication

Support before, during, and after your pet passes. I can communicate with your pet to find out their wishes.



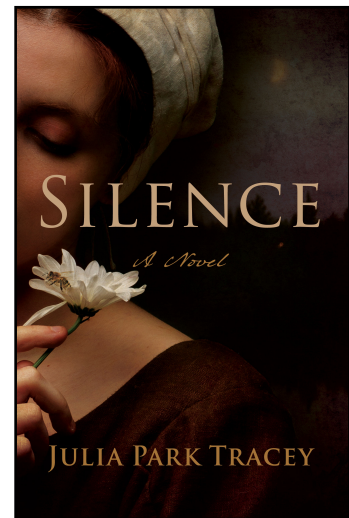
Sessions via phone or computer. Sliding scale \$45-\$120 per hour.

434-409-1937
offtheleashcoaching@gmail.com

SILENCE

A Novel
 by
 Julia Park Tracey

[Click to Order](#)



“After three grievous losses, Puritan woman Silence Marsh dares to question God aloud in the church, and that blasphemy lands her in trouble—she is silenced for a year by the powers that govern...A whiff of sulfur and witchcraft shadows this literary Puritan tale of loss and redemption.”



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!

Gretchen Ohmann - CoConvener

Morgan Libby

End of Life Doula

850-855-3796

<https://owlinthewindhealingllc.com/>

owlinthewindhealing@gmail.com



828-674-5978

www.KateStockmanDesigns.com
etsy.com/shop/KateStockmanDesigns

Kate Stockman Designs

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

Nancy S Hagman

M Ed, LMHC

Wellness Activist,
 doTERRA Essential Oils
 Healing One Drop at a Time
 850-206-5638





Arianna Bara Jewelry

www.ariannabara.com
arianna@ariannabara.com
(919) 308-3700

Original sterling silver and gemstone jewelry featuring Australian Boulder Opal and fossils.



Just Kidding Productions, LLC

Shauna Ireland

shaunac47@gmail.com 336-707-0136
<http://www.justkiddingproductions.com/>

I sell original photography based items: (coasters, greeting cards, prints, magnets, playing cards, coffee mugs, ornaments).



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

Handmade, personalized items for you, your home, and your kitchen.

https://www.etsy.com/shop/TwoWitchesinaKitchen?ref=search_shop_redirect



Rain's Obsessive Stitchery

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

Hand-dyed yarn and clothing, embroidered items including towels, tarot bags, and UUWomenspirit logo items, chainmaille jewelry, and various other shiny things.



Wise Woman Woods

Intuitive Readings

Certified Energy Healer

Tarot

<https://wisewomanwoods.com/>
diane@wisewomanwoods.com