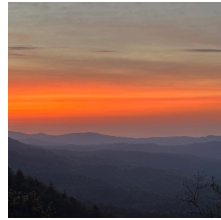


HONORING THE FEMININE DIVINE
 IN OUR OWN
 DEEP BEINGS,
 IN EACH OTHER,
 AND IN THE
 WORLD

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS



COCO NEWS, SEASONAL REFLECTIONS, EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS, ORIGINAL ART

SHE SPEAKS



From The Editor

Dear Women,
 Here we are. We have arrived gladly at Beltane, and another fantastic event has come and gone. The theme of the spring event last week - Be Where Your Feet Are - inspired the theme of this newsletter, which is Presence. Part of our journey last week was to learn more about and celebrate being on The Mountain. The deeper invitation was to allow ourselves to sink in to a state of being

Photo by Shauna Ireland. View of a rainbow from the deck of the lodge at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center during the biannual membership meeting.

present in the here-and-now that can often be elusive to many of us.

At the fall event, we explored universal spiritual practices that weave through different periods of time and through different religious and spiritual traditions. One practice that we can find over and over again - whether it is in the form of meditation, mantra, prayer, sharing, breath awareness, forest bathing, or just going to therapy and talking about feelings - is surrendering to the here-and-now and entering the Sacred through the present moment.

The Buddha said, "Be where you are. Otherwise you miss your life." Eckhart Tolle says that too much focus on the past causes guilt, depression, and resentment while too much future results in anxiety, unease, worry, and tension. Christian hymns and verses insist that we can feel Divine presence by focusing our awareness on God. Buddhist practitioners ground in present awareness to seek Nirvana and the true nature of reality. Modern witches tune their present awareness to sharpen intuition, focus their will, and strengthen connections to nature and Spirit.

For me, there is often a layer of emotional processing that needs to happen when I turn to the present moment, which can be uncomfortable. In our culture, I think we're often encouraged to run from depth and processing - and in turn, we can miss out on the present moment or cover it with media or some other numbing process or substance. What would it be like if all of us leaned a little more into the present moment every day? I am grateful that our circle is full of women who can share more of these practices and tendencies in their wider communities.

“Be where you are. Otherwise, you miss your life.”

I hope you enjoy the beautiful art and photos that were submitted by our membership this time!

Warmly,
Iris Padgett
Editor

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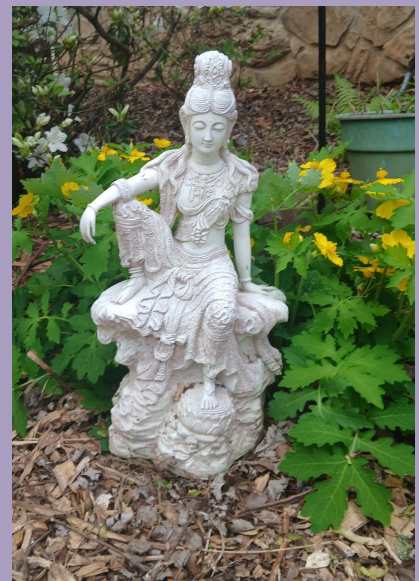


Photo by Toni Stephenson. Kwan Yin from her garden.

New Members

Welcome to our newest UUWS members! We're glad you've chosen our organization as a way to connect with other women and the Divine Feminine. Thank you for joining our organization, and it was wonderful to get to know you at our last event.

Abby Thompson

Statesboro, GA

Julie Patton

Pensacola, FL

Claire Helton

Pensacola, FL

Carol Murray

Clayton, NC

Thea Hagepanos

Wilmington, NC

Suzanne Medders

Seneca, SC

Elise Boren

Franklin, NC

Spring 2026 Gallery of Memories

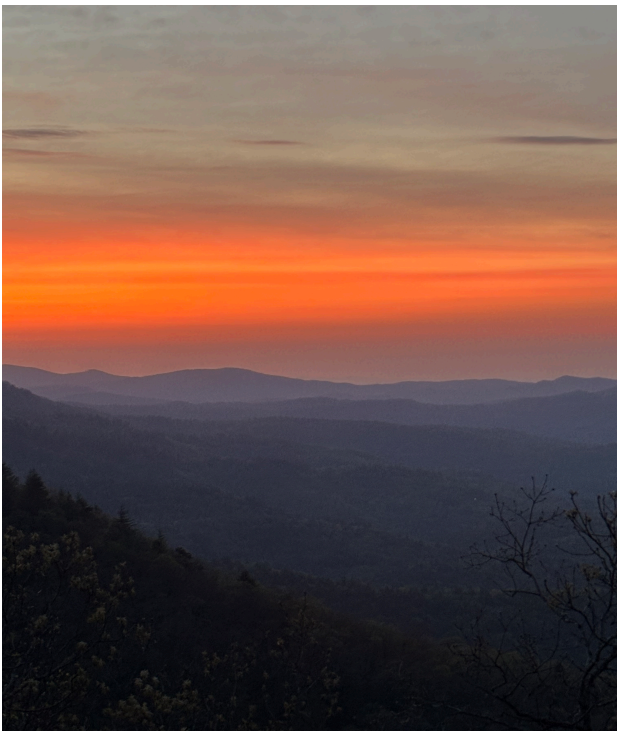



Save the Dates!
**OUR NEXT
EVENTS**
 SEPT 30-Oct 4, 2026
 MAY 12-16, 2027
 OCT 6-10, 2027

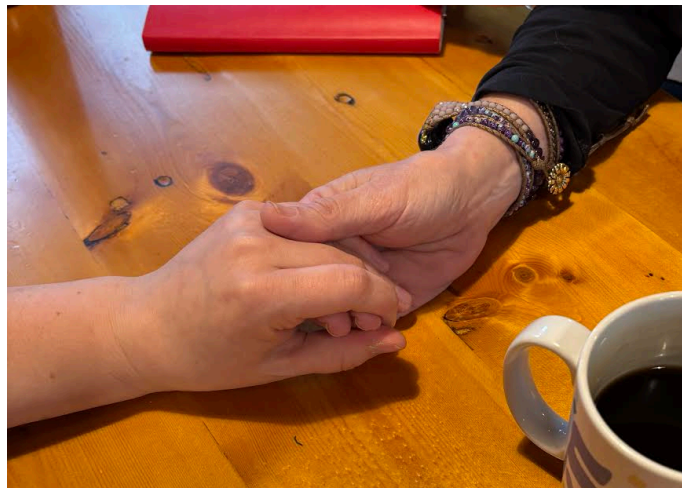
Photos by Carolyn Miller. UUWomenspirit members initiated a service project this event for The Mountain. The women pictured to the left cleaned the entrance sign and beautified it by planting fresh flowers. Thank you to those who participated! We hope to make these service projects a more regular part of events. Pictured from top left: Linda Good, Laura King, Em Stecker, Thea Hagepanos, Sherri Philpott, Carol Murray, Carolyn Miller, Claire Helton, and Nancy Hagman.



BE WHERE YOUR FEET ARE



Above: Photo by Iris Padgett. Honoring Our Feet workshop at the spring event. Left and below: Photos by Sherri Philpott. Sunrise on The Mountain and a meeting of hands and minds in the dining hall at the spring event.

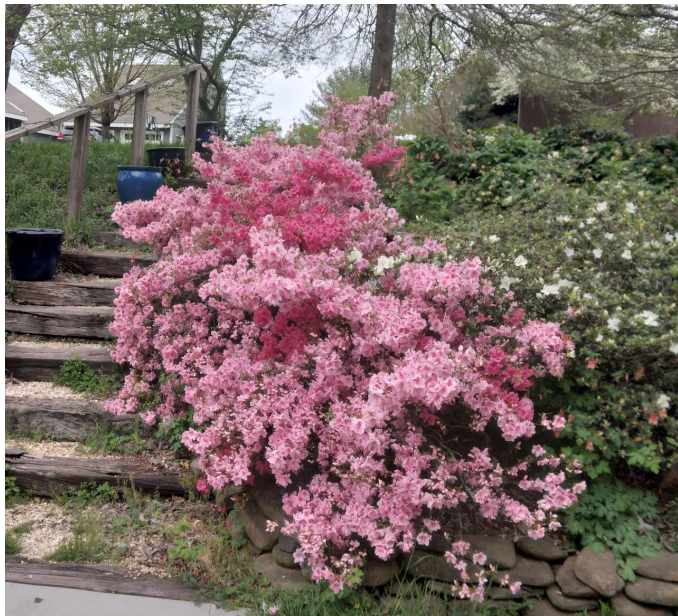




Left: *Photo by Shauna Ireland.* New member Clare Helton offered a track called *Grounding Stories* at the spring event. Participants responded to simple, profound, universally resonant stories by building a landscape together in the sand.

Right and below left: *Photos by Shauna Ireland.* Christina Kulak, Carolyn Miller, Iris Padgett, Mina Edgerton, Oreon Millard, and Shauna Ireland enjoy a last laugh and hug before departing The Mountain after the spring event. Cabaret fun with tissue boxes! Below right: *Photo by Toni Stephenson.* An altar to The Goddess in Cabin 4.





Top: Photo by Toni Stephenson. Bottom: Photo by Elaine Crutchley. Arianna Bars, Claire Lending, Toni Stephenson, and Elaine Crutchley at the 2025 fall event.



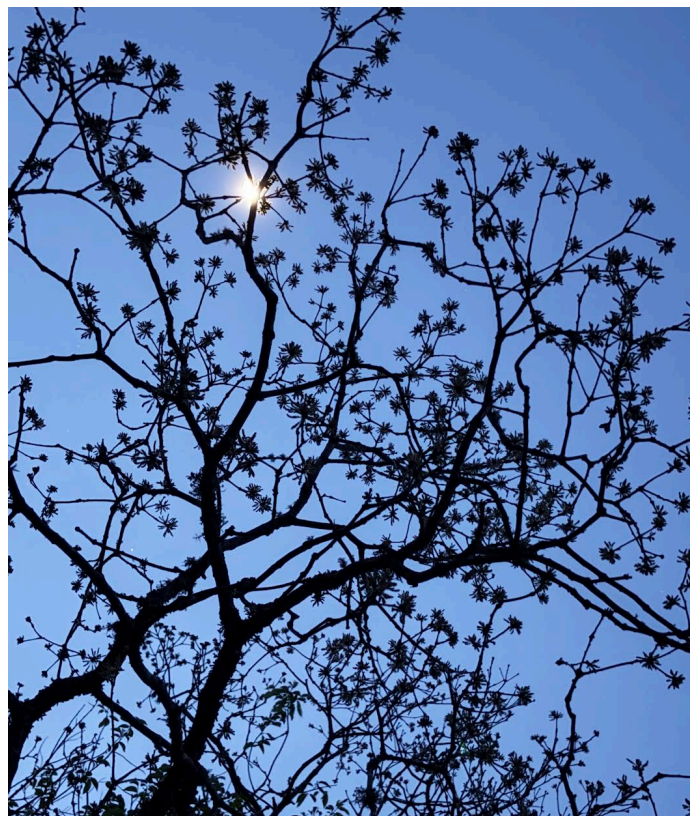
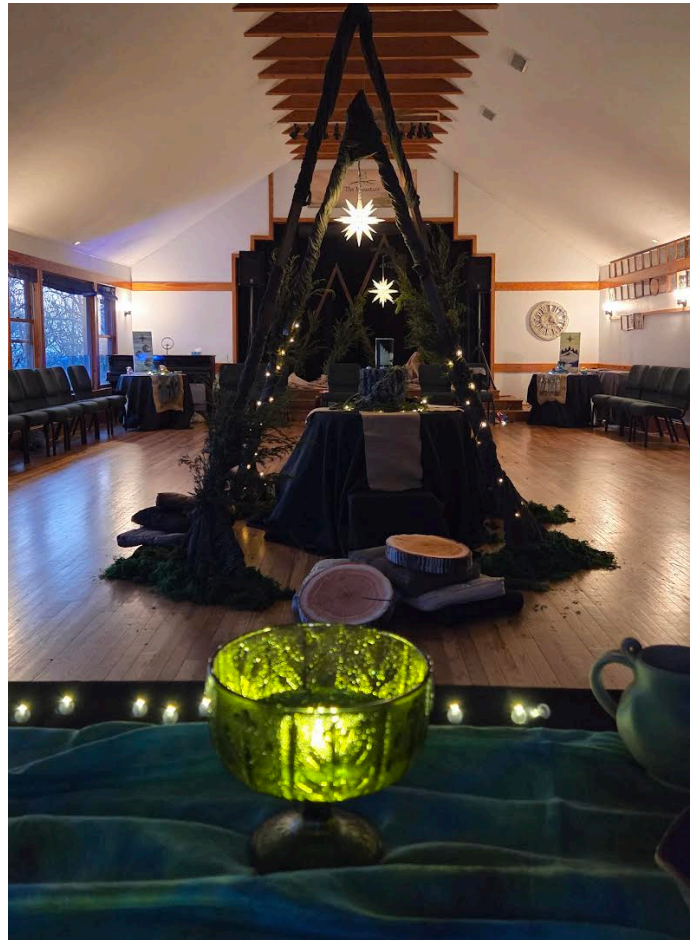
A Solitary Rite of May *by Molly Remer*

It is Beltane
and I do not find
any morning dew drops.
The first irises are in bloom,
one rusty pink
and two yellow.
I sit on the deck
listening to wild turkeys,
my thoughts feeling
wound up like ribbons
around a maypole.
Instead of dew,
I step between the pollinators
clustered on the wild blackberry flowers
and pluck one single bloom.
Today's anointing
one of petal
instead of drop.
I lift it gently to my nose
and inhale the delicate floral scent.
I press it lightly to my forehead.
May I be blessed with clarity.
I hold it to my lips.
May I speak with kindness.
I touch it to my throat.
May I be free to express myself.
I lay it against my heart.
May I choose with love.
I rest it against my belly.
May I return to my own knowing.
I lean forward and tap it to each foot.
May I walk my own true path
with courage and trust.
Here I am,
the blue May sky above me,
the cradling earth beneath me.
I give thanks.

Beltane Moon

By Molly Remer

Tonight we will lift
 our brave and wild prayers up
 beneath the Beltane moon.
 We will breathe in the smells
 of honeysuckle and hawthorne.
 We will feel a resilient and responsive earth
 beneath our feet.
 We will sense the bright and persistent flame
 of the sacred
 that lights our hearts
 and fuels our purpose.
 We will hear the chord of the sacred chime
 and feel the irresistible
 pulse and flow of the holy
 within our own skin.
 We will extend our hands
 to one another in connection,
 in trust,
 in love.
 We will call down our blessings
 and send up our prayers.
 We will celebrate the wonder we have found
 and the magic that we live.
 We will bless what we can,
 we will heal what we can,
 we will offer what we have.
 We are here.
 We are whole.
 We are held.
 We are heard.
 We are awake to enchantment
 and alive with awe.



Top: *Photo by Carolyn Miller.* Center altar at the spring event depicting the beloved local mountains, including Little Scaly Mountain where our events are held. Bottom: *Photo by Sherri Philpott.* Gazing up from Meditation Rock at The Mountain.

News from the CoCo

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

In the spirit of Presence, we greet you in this Beltane season, as the world warms and our spirits brighten.

I'm holding deep gratitude for everything offered to our community during the spring event. We were gifted a stretch of crystalline spring days – neither too hot nor too cold – followed by some much-needed rain (shout out to our Chaplain for leading us in song and dance to call it forth!). It felt like a blessing and a reminder that our future together is bright.

During the membership meeting, we offered those of you on Discord (and those who promised to sign up) extra entries for the door prizes. And... at least two, maybe three, people had their names drawn twice, which I'm fairly certain defies some sort of mathematical law!

Many of you have joined Discord since the event – welcome to that shared space. We're excited to begin offering a few new ways to connect. Sneak peek: craft circles, a channel for sexual health and wellness, and yes... a PEN PAL channel for snail mail!

We'd love for you to come check it out. Because Discord is private (unlike Facebook), you will need an invitation to join. We aren't going to include that here, but to request one please reach out to marketing@uuwomenspirit.org or webweaver@uuwomenspirit.org and we will get you taken care of! If you run into any issues getting set up, we are able to help with that as well.

Victoria Fredrick, on behalf of the CoCo

Treasurer/Membership/Mountain Liaison Report

Bright Blessings from the world of finance. As I am fairly new at this position, I am still learning quite a lot as I go. There are some brilliant shoes to fill in this position.

So here are some numbers for those of you who were not able to attend the membership meeting:

We did make a profit from the Fall 2025 event. It was a small profit. But that is commendable considering that event had to be rescheduled due to Hurricane Helene. The PC did an amazing job keeping on budget and trimming where they could. Keep in mind that the object is not to profit from an event, but to break even.



At the spring 2026 event we awarded six scholarships. There were four general scholarships and two young women scholarships totaling \$1,245.00. We collected over \$1,100.00 at the silent auction to go towards the scholarship fund. That’s incredible. We currently have 71 members and nine of those members are new.

Thank you to all of you who are supporting U UWomenspirit with your time, treasurers, and talent. You are greatly appreciated.

Gail Stephenson

Volunteer Coordinator Update

Thank you to the spring Planning Committee for the amazing event! We appreciate the group’s willingness to work on a shortened timeline, the lore about The Mountain and the surrounding area, and how much joy and play was brought into Sacred Circle time.

We have some excellent possibilities to fill both our Volunteer Coordinator and Registrar positions – stay tuned to hear more! Our Marketing and Outreach Coordinator will be rotating off after her third year in the role at the end of 2026, so if this is something that calls to you, please reach out to Shauna Ireland (volunteer@uuwomenspirit.org) to discuss the role; Victoria Fredrick is also happy to answer any questions.

Thanks to all of you for all that you do.

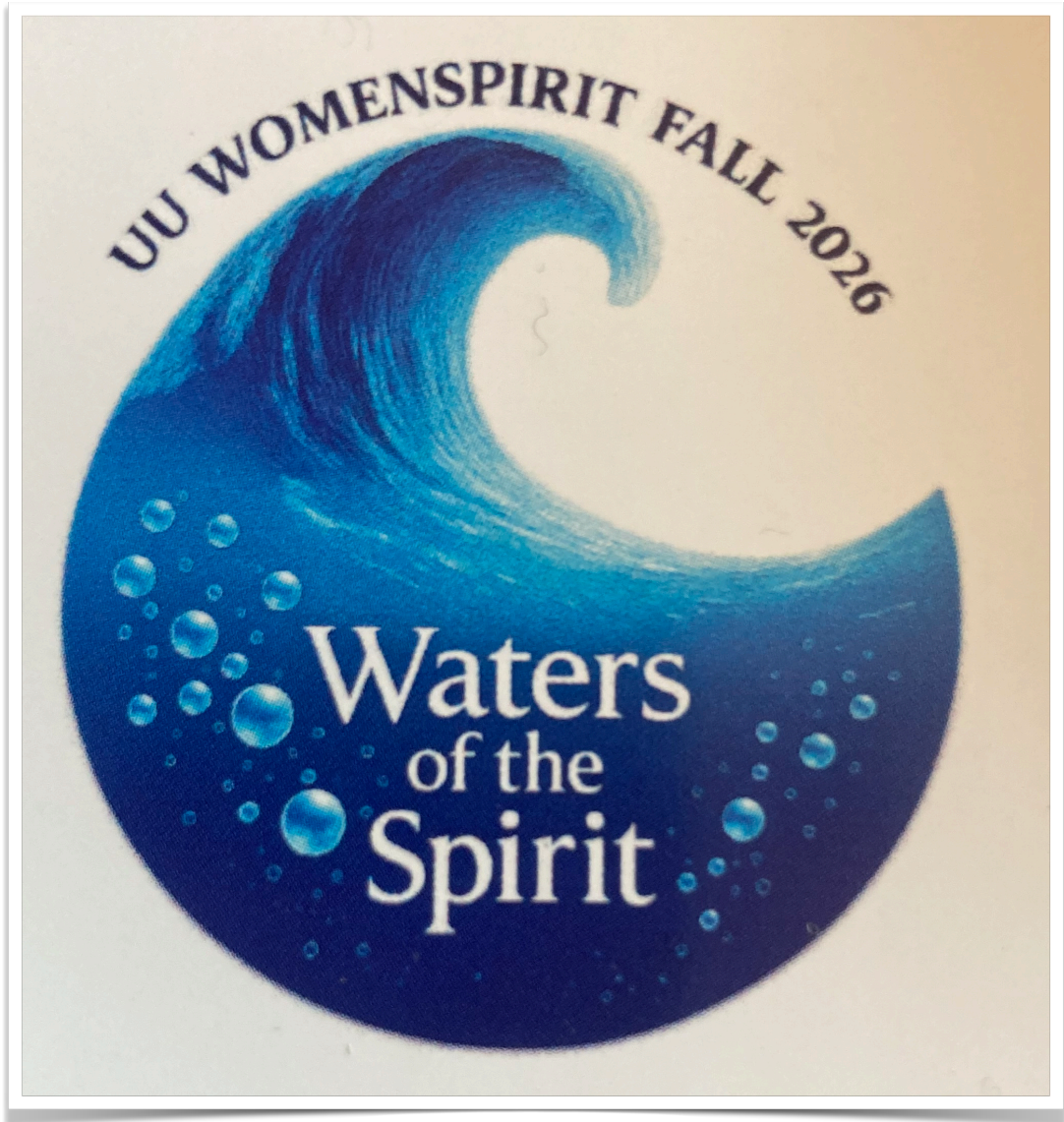
Shauna Ireland



Photos by Penny Featherstone. Meet Margaret. Friends meet to lunch under her branches and revere her majestic presence. Her ferns are dry in drought and become lush and green in rain. For that reason, some call these resurrection ferns. She provides shade on warm spring and summer days. Beyond count are the number of living beings - plant, animal, and microscopic - that live in symbiosis with her. Her nature is to give and receive and give even more. With gratitude, we adore her.



2026 FALL Event!



September 30 - October 4, 2026

At The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC

Come and be refreshed!

Melissa Christopher – *Event Coordinator*
Carole Eagleheart – *Worship*
Linda Sanders– *Scribe*
Margaret Schmidt– *Tracks & Workshops*
Krista Meinersmann – *Sales and Activities*
Nancy Hagman – *Chaplain*

UUWomenspirit Celebrates 40 Years!

We Stand on the Shoulders of Goddesses

Part 1 – Spring Event May 12-16, 2027

STILL, SHE CALLS

Reunite, Remember, Repower.

Celebrate our paths to the Goddess –
She loves and needs you as you love and need
Her.

Part 2 – Fall Event Oct. 6-10, 2027

WOMEN OF STORY AND LORE

Once, there were six sisters who gathered at the
foot of a mountain, tall and ancient and full of
magic. They joined hands and spoke: “Here is
where they will come to tell the stories.”



You're Invited to the 2027
40th Anniversary Events!

Meditation on Pachamama

By Catherine Quiring

wisdom is a mountain
sure and steady
always in our sights
as we journey through
this life of joy and grief.

grief is a river
flowing wild and free
nourishing all in her path
with her liquid love.

love is a fire
blazing warm and bright
to take away the chill
and light our way.

light is the glow
illuminating our
darkest corners

so we may embrace our
shadows
and find that they are friends.

friends are a treasure
supplying support and
solidarity,
so we may know we are
wanted,
we are known, and we belong.

belonging is our birthright
bestowed by Pachamama,
who lives and breathes with
us,
holding us in her everloving
embrace.

The Wild and
Sacred Feminine Deck



PACHAMAMA ♦ RECIPROCITY

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.*

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Coming to this Fall's event
- our UUWS sister
Margaret Schmidt has
started a new
business creating
Goddess clothing!

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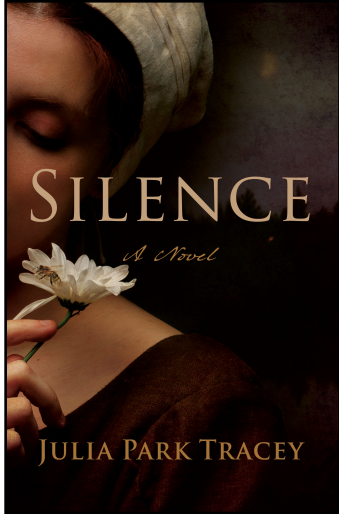
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 by
Julia Park Tracey

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Tarot

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