

UU WOMEN SPIRIT FALL 2024 RETREAT

WEEKDAY INSTITUTE: OCTOBER 2-4
WEEKEND GATHERING: OCTOBER 4-6



FIRE AND FEATHER, STONE AND BONE

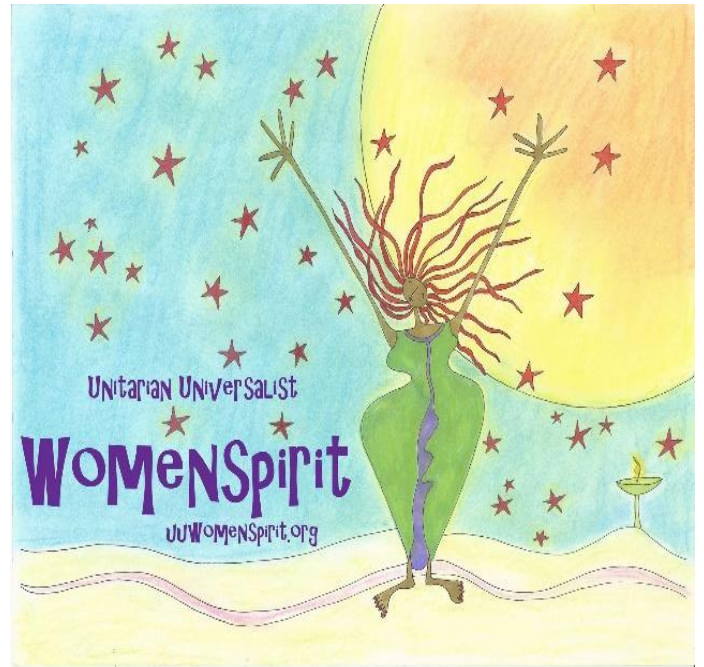
Come, enter the cave, and gather with us around the fire...
Rediscover universal threads running through ancient spiritual practices...
Rekindle the fire of connection ...

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

ABOUT UUWOMENSPIRIT

UUWomenspirit is a semi-annual retreat where women have gathered since 1987 to explore and celebrate the Feminine Divine. Weekday tracks, weekend workshops and daily worship services guide our way as we explore our connection through ancient and transcendent spiritual practices. Additional activities during the event offer opportunities for conversation, connection, laughter, and quiet reflection.

The purpose of UUWomenspirit is to create, conduct, and support activities that encourage and empower women to explore their religious and spiritual origins, experiences, and beliefs. Pursuing, nurturing, and affirming creativity and diversity are major emphases.



All who identify as women, eighteen years of age and older, are invited to attend the 2024 Fall Institute and Gathering at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, North Carolina. Sponsored by UUWomenspirit, events are open to all interested women. We encourage and affirm diversity.

Registration and lodging information is on page 14.

Scan our QR code to be directed
to the UUWomenspirit website:



Important Dates!

Scholarship Application Deadline: 8/14/24

Early Bird Deadline: 8/21/24

Merchandise Deadline: 9/11/24

Last Day to Register: 9/11/24

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

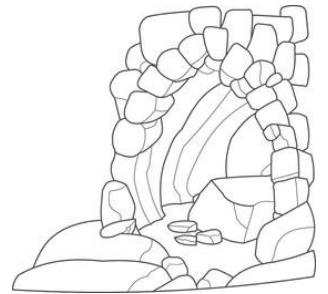
THE EVENT



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 the many offerings described here, in the form of tracks and workshops, worship services, and other activities, as well as in time spent taking in the vistas from our mountaintop or the old growth 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.

WORSHIP

During our 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 with the Great Mystery.



MEET THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Nina Brewer-Davis: Event Coordinator
- Shannon Browning-Mullis: Worship
- Kallie LeFever: Worship
- Iris Padgett: Tracks and Workshops
- Donna Carson: Sales and Activities
- Beth Butterfield: Scribe
- Adrianna Lee: PC Assistant
- Ellen Hitchcock: Chaplain

(Pictured left to right: Shannon, Beth, Donna, Nina, and Iris.)

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE AND THE GATHERING

Two programs are offered: the **Weekday Institute** and the **Weekend Gathering**. The Weekday Institute takes place on Wednesday afternoon through Friday morning, and gives women an intimate and intensive environment in which to explore life's journeys, joys, and experiences. The Weekend Gathering begins Friday afternoon and continues through Sunday morning, and offers opportunities for bonding through workshops and social events. You can attend Institute, Gathering, or both.

Weekday Institute Tracks

Thursday, Oct. 3, through Friday Morning, Oct. 4, 2024

Seven Gates of Transformation	With Michelle Orwick
When the Drummers Were Women	With Farrunnissa Rosa
Crafting in the Cave	With Judy Padgett

Weekend Gathering – Full-Day Workshops

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024

The First Three Days	With Siobhan O'Neal
Traditional Berry Basket-Weaving	With Colleen Finegan
NAKED: Navigating Along Knowing Everything is Divine	With Amy Smith & Cydney Morel

Weekend Gathering – Half-Day Workshops: Morning

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024

Myths from Around the World	With Toni Stephenson
Stars and Planets	With Claire Thornton

Weekend Gathering – Half-Day Workshops: Afternoon

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024

The Missing Link: Eco-Grief and Ancestors	With Raven Stephenson
Earthly Healing and its Herstory	With Tara Lopez

** Please note that some tracks and workshops can involve emotional growth experiences that can be stressful. If you are in therapy, you may want to consult your therapist before making your selection.*

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

WEEKDAY INSTITUTE TRACKS

THURSDAY, OCT. 3, THROUGH FRIDAY MORNING, OCT. 4, 2024

SEVEN GATES OF TRANSFORMATION

WITH MICHELLE ORWICK

No limit on number of participants. No materials fee.

Going into the depths of Inanna's cave, we go through seven gates of release. Through these gates, each gate is represented by a former aspect of self to be left behind on the altars. From the innermost depths of the cave and fire of transformation we rise through the seven initiatory gates, receiving new gifts of self and blessings from the goddess. Like the phoenix from the flame, we rise reborn into our sovereign selves, whole and sacred. Prepared with our new gifts to be the love leaders that this world is calling for today. We will be giving seven feathers of release during the seven downward spiral gates and will receive a crystal as the gift of the upward spiral gates. There will be a burn at the center of the experience. This is a full interactive experience, filled with ritual, ceremony, and guided meditations. You may wish to bring items of comfort such as yoga mat, blankets, and/or pillows for guided meditation. There will be an opportunity to burn personal items or papers (small and eco-friendly only, please) that no longer represent the person you are becoming. The final day, dress as your full goddess self if you desire.



Michelle Orwick is here to be your guide to a life overflowing with enchantment and empowerment! With over two decades as an Initiated Priestess and Spiritual Activator, she helps professionals and healers like you transcend limitations and embrace your inner magic. As a Master ThetaHealing Instructor, Reiki Master, and Divine Channel, she specializes in cognitive restructuring and spiritual activation. Her mission? To awaken you to your divine birthright, empowering you to live a miraculous, abundant life.



To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

WHEN THE DRUMMERS WERE WOMEN

WITH FARRUNNISSA ROSA

Up to 20 participants. Materials fee of \$3.



Together we will explore the Pulse of Life through our bodies, breath, hands, and hearts by connecting with the frame drum and the wisdom tradition of women frame drummers, a lineage unbroken for thousands of years. We'll share an immersion into the breakthrough world-drumming style of Layne Redmond (1952-2013), internationally known performer, recording artist, drum historian, and the author of "When the Drummers Were Women." We'll experience Layne's rhythmic meditation for synchronizing the mind/body complex and cover all of Layne's core introductory material for the Tar (Middle Eastern style frame drum), including how to hold the drum, how to play the basic strokes, how to combine strokes to create rhythmic patterns and musical phrases, and complete instruction in playing the ancient Middle Eastern rhythm, Baladi, with interlocking variations. And have fun making music together! We'll learn about the roots of frame drumming in the Goddess traditions of the ancient Middle East and prepare a short performance piece for the Cabaret on Saturday night. A Tar (Middle Eastern style frame drum with thumb hole or cutout) is required for participation. Loaner drums will be available for up to 13 participants -- first come, first served!

Farrunnissa Rosa has been sharing Layne's material since 2004 when Layne asked her to start teaching frame drumming in the NC Triangle. Since then, she's presented intro classes to over 150 drummers in the Southeast US. In 2006, she became Layne's first student worldwide authorized to teach Layne's landmark six-month frame drumming intensive, Giving Birth To Ourselves. Farrunnissa has shared frame drumming tracks at UUWomenspirit half a dozen times since 2012. She and her students have played at UUWomenspirit worship services and Cabaret a number of times over the years.

CRAFTING IN THE CAVE

WITH JUDY PADGETT

No limit on number of participants. Materials fee of \$20.

Amulets are small ornaments or charms with symbolic meaning that have been carried and worn since the age of the Neanderthal. They have been used for protection, medicine, good fortune, power, adornment and personal expression, spiritual practice and worship, and communication with other worlds. Nuances and variations in the use and meanings of amulets can be found across cultures and eras. In this track, you will use clay to create an amulet or Goddess figurine. Then, you will craft a bag from leather using primitive techniques and tools and embellish it with other natural materials such as bone, stone, feathers, and wood. We will end with a ritual to charge your amulet with personal meaning and power. Bring any other small ritual amulets to include in your bag or the charging ritual.

Judy Padgett is a longtime member of UUWomenspirit and experienced crafter. She currently serves as the Treasurer and Membership Coordinator of the Coordinating Council. She has also served as Program Resource Liaison and on many Planning Committees. Judy has been a jewelry maker for decades, and she owned a gallery for 30 years where she curated and sold a collection of American-made crafts and art.



To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

WEEKEND GATHERING – FULL-DAY WORKSHOPS

SATURDAY, OCT. 5, 2024

THE FIRST THREE DAYS

WITH SIOBHAN O'NEAL

No limit on number of participants. No materials fee.

How do you navigate the first three days alone in the wilderness? Is it a fearful struggle or do you "surthrive:" thrive and radiate love? This workshop covers the things you need to know to make it a harmonious experience - finding food and water, building shelter, and creating a warm friend (fire). It explores how you can use the things you find rather than worrying about what you don't have. And yes, you can do it! The woods are full of useful and fun things like hollow logs, bones, stones, edible plants, medicines, and shelter building materials. Come increase your awareness and see that you can live with joyful laughter and peace in harmony with Nature and all her Beings. You may want to bring gloves, good walking shoes, and a knife.



Siobhan O'Neal has always loved nature and has been exploring wild edible and medicinal plants for over 25 years. Her Raleigh homestead is filled with plants and animals. She has many years of teaching experience in these skills as well and shares her knowledge to build other people's skills so eventually we may all come to a place of universal peace and harmony.

TRADITIONAL BERRY BASKET-WEAVING (WITH A LITTLE PERSONAL CREATIVITY)

WITH COLLEEN FINEGAN

Up to 14 participants. Materials fee of \$20.

The history of Basketmaking has documented the presence of various types of baskets for literally thousands of years. Making a basket is often communal and, with its repetitive movements, may be meditative. During the morning session, you will make a small berry basket to learn the fundamentals. In the afternoon, you will craft a larger basket with more personal design elements. Please bring a bucket or two for soaking reeds (the bigger the better, and there will be extras for people who can't bring them).



Colleen Finegan was born in Michigan and obtained degrees in Education, Special Education, Learning Disabilities, and Curriculum and Instruction as well as teaching licenses in five states. She has also taught acrylic pouring, Gelli printing, mandala painting, and Zentangle. She grew up Catholic but has been a UU member since about 1992. She attends and is very active in the UU Church in Asheville. Her hobbies include art, music, dancing, outdoor activities and working with children.



To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

NAKED: NAVIGATING ALONG KNOWING EVERYTHING IS DIVINE

WITH AMY SMITH & CYDNEY MOREL

Up to 20 participants. No materials fee.

This workshop invites you into a practice of stepping into the darkness of the unknown, into the darkness of the cave, shutting off your senses, and accessing the Divine within. We will be offering modalities for nervous system regulation, freeing you up to express yourself creatively. Through movement, dance, song, and drum, we will be tapping into our raw, primal nature and connection to Mother Earth and the elements. We will conclude the day in a restful pose to soak in healing vibrations from the crystal singing bowls, koshi chimes, and voice. Please bring an open heart and mind, along with water, yoga mat, blankets, and/or pillows. Dress comfortably. Optional items are journal, scarves and dancing accessories, drums, and shakers.

Amy Smith resides in Atlantic Beach, NC. She practices living each moment her mission of being a clear and powerful channel filled with magic, wonderment, and love, overflowing with goodness, sweetness, abundance, and bliss for the benefit of all beings. Healing sounds and vibrations helped her through a difficult time in her life and she now loves sharing that with others.

Cydney Morel is a yoga teacher, kirtan leader, event organizer and drum facilitator, whose journey with music, movement and drumming began in the Fall of 2014 at The Unitarian Universalist women's retreat. From there she fell in love with all things yoga and percussion related and has studied frame drumming with many amazing teachers: Glen Valez, Yousif Sheronick, Miranda Rondeau, River Guerguerian, Marla Leigh Goldstein, Ronnie Pulley, Farrunnissa Rosa, Arianna Bara and Kadambari Maa. In 2016, she founded and facilitated an all-levels group called the Creekside Drummers for 2 years. For the past 8 years she hosted a variety of yoga, music and sound healing events in her studio as well. Teaching others about the ancient and mystical art of frame drumming is her passion.



To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

WEEKEND GATHERING – HALF-DAY WORKSHOPS: MORNING

SATURDAY, OCT. 5, 2024

MYTHS FROM AROUND THE WORLD -- WITH TONI STEPHENSON

Up to 20 participants. No materials fee.

Since the earliest times of our ancestors, long before the written word, people have told stories as they sat together in caves or outside. These stories were for entertainment, to share memories of the past, to teach lessons and explain natural phenomena. Many of them had deep psychological meaning, and similar versions were told in different cultures. In this workshop, Toni will share stories from various cultures and traditions. Participants will be asked to write their personal reflections and then we will share those thoughts and what the story means to each of them. “Myths are stories that are false on the outside, but true on the inside.” Please bring a journal and writing implement.



Toni Stephenson is a long-time member of UUWomenspirit and has shared stories in rituals and workshops at our events. She has also shared them with other groups which she is a part of. Although not a professionally trained storyteller, she has attended many performances of those who are and has learned to love this art form and sharing stories with others.

STARS AND PLANETS -- WITH CLAIRE THORNTON

Up to 15 participants. No materials fee.

Humankind has always observed celestial bodies and used them to trace their movements. Different cultures have different ways of interpreting the placements of the stars, planets, and Earth’s moon. In this half-day workshop, we’ll explore how different groups of people from around the world have gained spiritual meaning and guidance from the skies throughout recorded human history. The objects our ancestors gazed up at thousands of years ago are the same ones we turn to now, through pop astrology. To connect the methods of the past to the present-day, we will also dive into how many Americans use astrology in 2024: the Co-Star smartphone app and astrological birth charts.

Before the event, please research and confirm your precise date, time, and place of birth, which is found on your birth certificate. Bring a pen, paper, and smartphone as well as a copy of your astrological birth chart, which you can generate online for free. A printed copy or screenshot is fine.



Claire Thornton is a journalist who is returning to the Mountain for her second fall UUWS retreat. Claire loves talking to different people and asking them all sorts of personal questions – a useful skill for reporting and getting to know someone’s astrological placements and what they mean. As soon as Claire starts to get to know someone new, there’s a high probability she’ll ask, “What’s your star sign?” and she never forgets. Claire checks her horoscope almost daily on Co-Star and finds astrology to be a therapeutic and self-reflective tool. Now she’s excited to share the insights she’s gained over the years with others! After living in Carrboro, North Carolina, and the Research Triangle’s Brier Creek neighborhood for almost three years, Claire moved to Brooklyn, New York, in February and has attended services at the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn.

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

WEEKEND GATHERING – HALF-DAY WORKSHOPS: AFTERNOON

SATURDAY, OCT. 5, 2024



THE MISSING LINK: ECO-GRIEF AND ANCESTORS

WITH RAVEN STEPHENSON

Up to 25 participants. No materials fee.

For centuries, humanity has relied on the environment and community for survival. It is encoded in our DNA to seek connections through others and to the earth. Knowledge was passed down through the ancestors, and the land long provided for our needs. Modernization has led to a decrease in our direct reliance on nature and our ancestors for survival. While we are so lucky to have so many advantages on our side, many of us are mourning the connection we once had to the world around us. Between the experiences of eco-grief and the inability to connect with the ones before us, we are left feeling alone and disconnected. This workshop is meant to put a face to the feeling of grief, allow time to sit with that feeling, and, where able, put in motion ways to reestablish the missing link between us and the world before us.

Raven Stephenson lives in Roebuck SC with her longtime partner and their feline companion. Living in a conservative small town, Raven has spent much of her life picking which parts of herself to share and which to hide, mainly out of a safety concern. Coming into adulthood, she has decided on a new mission: Be Loud, Be Proud, Be Authentic. She spends most of her time discovering new parts of herself to heal and to love. Much to her partner and their cat's amusement, this includes singing at the top of her lungs (who needs to carry a tune anyway), dancing with the wild (sometimes dragging them into it) and refusing to be anything other than herself.

EARTHLY HEALING AND ITS HERSTORY

WITH TARA LOPEZ

Up to 10 participants. Materials fee of \$5.

Since the beginning of time, women have used earth and wisdom to heal in caves, huts, and hollowed trees. Herbalism is both ancient and modern. Let us gather as a sisterhood to explore the herstory and power of herbs. We will also thank those women before us and the earth for providing by making a spell/herb/honor jar.



Tara Lopez is an eclectic witch whose practice focuses on nature, the moon, and healing. She also enjoys the coastal hippie lifestyle of coastal GA. Tara loves spell jars, herbs, crystals, and tarot. Sitting under trees petting moss is where you'll most likely find her.

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

EVENT ACTIVITIES

INSTITUTE

FIRE CIRCLE: Gather around the fire to share songs and make music together. Bring a favorite song and/or instrument (some will be provided), or just curl up and enjoy. Remember that your body and voice are instruments too. You may wish to bring a glass container to fill with ashes to take some of the magic home. We will gather outside at the firepit or inside at the Bridgid's Bazaar fireplace, weather dependent.

HEALING CIRCLE: Our Chaplain will lead us as we come together to offer care and healing to each other.

MOVIE VIEWING AND SLUMBER PARTY: Bring a blanket and pillow to snuggle up and enjoy the iconic *Practical Magic*, turning 26 years old this year but timeless.

GATHERING

PSYCHEDELICS DISCUSSION: A facilitated discussion of the historical and current uses of psychedelic substances and their influence on human evolution as well as mental and spiritual health. We invite personal storytelling about use that was life-changing, ego-dissolving, or that gave peak experiences.

CABARET: Share your musical, literary, or performing talents! Both group and solo performances are welcome. This is a safe and supportive space to edge out of your comfort zone. Sign up on the poster in the dining hall.

DRUMMING AND DANCING: Immediately following Cabaret, bring drums, other instruments, and your dancing feet.

INSTITUTE AND GATHERING

RECOVERY MEETINGS: Meet each evening in the Chapel, facilitated when possible.

SACRED SOCIAL HOUR: Come join your sisters before dinner each afternoon for snacks and drinks, both alcoholic and not.

SACRED CIRCLE DANCING: This gentle inclusive form of dancing will be offered several times after Worship through both events.

EVENING TEA, TALK, AND OPTIONAL GAMES: Gather late night in the dining hall to chat with friends old and new. BYOG: Bring your own games if you want to play!

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

SACRED SHOPPING

BRIDGID'S BAZAAR: One of the goals of U UWomenspirit is to pursue, nurture, and affirm creativity. We believe one way this goal can be achieved is by providing the space and opportunity for women to show and sell their arts, crafts, and other items. If you are interested in selling your offerings at this event, please complete the online Sales Agreement located on the event page on our website. Vendors pay a commission of 10% to U UWomenspirit. The deadline for submitting the Sales Agreement is September 18, 2024.

MASSAGE THERAPY / REIKI: If you are a licensed massage therapist or Reiki/alternative healing practitioner and would like to offer your services at this event, please contact Donna Carson, Sales and Activities Coordinator, at dcarsonma@gmail.com

SILENT AUCTION: Donate your gently used items to support the U UWomenspirit Scholarship Fund. There will be Silent Auctions at both Institute and Gathering.



** Please note the U UWomenspirit policy regarding PHOTOGRAPHS:
If you take photographs, be sensitive and request permission before taking
any photographs of other women. No photos should be posted on the Internet
without specific permission of those pictured.*

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

EVENT MERCHANDISE

The proceeds from sales are used to defray the cost of the event. If you are unable to attend, but would still like to order merch, please contact Donna Carson before September 11th at dcarsonma@gmail.com. Your merchandise can be shipped to you at an additional cost.



Hand-Poured Soy Candles: \$15

7 oz soy candle with logo and bamboo lid, designed and poured by PC members!

Tote Bag with Event Logo: \$18

Durable webbing reinforced top with zipper, gusseted bottom. Will have event logo.
18" W x 16" H x 4.5" D.



T-Shirt with Event Logo: \$25

Choose V-neck or crew. Both are unisex.
Both will have logo. Soft jersey.
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL.



Temp Tattoos: \$4

3 x 2.68 inches



Stickers: \$3

3 x 3 inches

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

NO REGISTRATIONS ACCEPTED AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2024.

Please note that the Mountain accommodations are rustic.
However, indoor plumbing and electricity are in all buildings.

LODGE, DUPLEX, OR FAMILY CABIN (DOUBLE OCCUPANCY) RATE

RATE FOR UUWOMENSPIRIT MEMBERS	INSTITUTE	GATHERING	INSTITUTE & GATHERING
By Aug. 21 (Early Bird Rate)	\$300	\$300	\$600
By Sept. 11 (Regular Rate)	\$320	\$320	\$640

RATE FOR NON UUWOMENSPIRIT MEMBERS	INSTITUTE	GATHERING	INSTITUTE & GATHERING
By Aug. 21 (Early Bird Rate)	\$320	\$320	\$640
By Sept. 11 (Regular Rate)	\$340	\$340	\$680

BUNKHOUSE RATE (2+ WOMEN, ONE BATHROOM)

RATE FOR UUWOMENSPIRIT MEMBERS	INSTITUTE	GATHERING	INSTITUTE & GATHERING
By Aug. 21 (Early Bird Rate)	\$260	\$260	\$520
By Sept. 11 (Regular Rate)	\$280	\$280	\$560

RATE FOR NON UUWOMENSPIRIT MEMBERS	INSTITUTE	GATHERING	INSTITUTE & GATHERING
By Aug. 21 (Early Bird Rate)	\$280	\$280	\$560
By Sept. 11 (Regular Rate)	\$300	\$300	\$600

SCHOLARSHIPS:

UUWomenspirit maintains two scholarship funds. 1) Partial Scholarship, available to any UUWS member in need, covers half the amount of the double occupancy rate for the event. Members may apply for a scholarship once per calendar year. 2) Young Women's Scholarship Fund pays full cost of attendance for first-time attendees under 40 years old, not including membership fees, any additional workshop fees, and merchandise. You must join UUWS before receiving a scholarship. The deadline to submit a scholarship request is August 14, 2024. For questions, contact registrar@uuwomenspirit.org.

To register, go to uuwomenspirit.org.