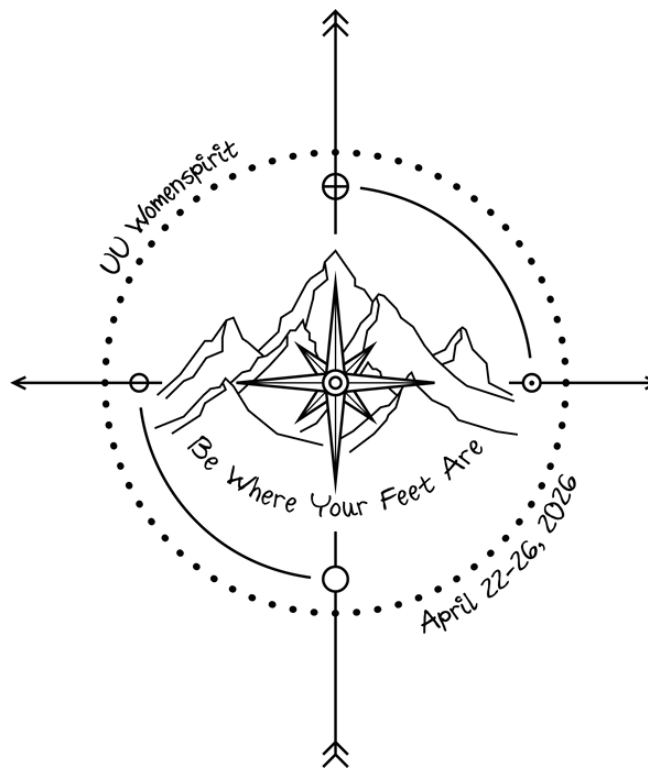

UUWomenspirit Spring 2026

Be Where Your Feet Are

April 22-26, 2026

The Mountain Learning & Retreat Center
Highlands, NC



The Mountain is such a magical place!

We'll connect with the fires that forged these mountains, the gems underground, the stone of the boulders, and the winds that shaped this unique ecosystem. We will appreciate the unique dwarf white oaks, the ancient mosses, the waters of local ponds, creeks, rivers, and waterfalls, and the wildlife that calls The Mountain its home. We will open our hearts to receive love and support from The Mountain, Mother Earth, the Natural World, and One Another.

Perfectly, April 22nd is Earth Day!

With Gratitude and Love, We Welcome You!

If this will be your first or second UUWomenspirit event, this page is especially for YOU.

First, take a deep breath, refresh your cup of tea, and relax into your favorite chair. We know that this brochure has a LOT of content and many pages, but we will help you navigate through it all.

To set the stage, here is some general information you may find helpful:

- UUWomenspirit offers a unique event in the spring and the fall each year. Unique because an ad hoc Planning Committee of volunteers works for 6-9 months to lovingly create each one.
- Each event consists of two “programs”: the Institute runs Wednesday dinner through Friday lunch, and the Gathering runs Friday dinner through Sunday lunch.
- If you can come for both programs, as most participants do, we heartily recommend it for the richest experience--you travel on Wednesday and Sunday, with three full days to soak in all the beauty, peace, and sisterhood.
- Attendance is typically 65-75 women, all adults, all ages.
- UUWomenspirit and The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center have Unitarian Universalist origins, but everyone is welcome--UU affiliation is not required or expected.
- UUWomenspirit was created in 1987 to explore and celebrate the Feminine Divine. A given event's theme will lend to more or less study of specific Goddesses and archetypes.
- Our event has three main components: (1) Worship, (2) Tracks & Workshops, and (3) All the Goodness in Between.
 - Worship is a time to gather in sacred space for reflection and celebration. Each worship service is uniquely crafted by members of the Planning Committee, aligning to the theme and with threads connecting one to the next. There is one per day for each day of each program. See page 3 to learn about what you can expect in our worship.
 - Institute Tracks and Gathering Workshops are times of learning, exploration, and experience. For the Institute, you select one track that runs for eight hours: all day Thursday plus Friday morning. For the Gathering, you can select one six-hour all-day workshop, or two 3-hour half-day workshops. You can also intentionally select Free Time for one or more of these time periods. Your track and workshop options are described on pages 4-17.
 - All the Goodness in Between includes meal times, social hours, and a breadth of activities in which you may wish to partake. In this brochure we highlight those that benefit from advance planning. See pages 18-19 for information about these.

On page 22 you'll find a checklist to assist you with registration. If you have any questions, please reach out to Nancy Hagman, our Spring 2026 Event Coordinator, at nancyshagman@gmail.com.

Most importantly, know that UUWomenspirit is a warm, caring space of Love, Light, Peace, Joy, and Gratitude. We're glad you're here!

About Our Worship

When you arrive at the entrance to the gathering space, you will be greeted at the door and, if you wish, you may receive a gentle cleansing or anointing in order to prepare your body, mind, and spirit to transition into this sacred time and space. As you enter the room, you will find soft music playing and women circle dancing in the center of the room. You may choose whether to dance, and then choose your seat in the large circle of chairs.

We begin our time together with the creation of sacred space. Honoring earth-based traditions, we “call the directions.” This means we envision a protective sphere being created in all directions around us, bringing us into a safe and focused time together in which we may commune with ourselves, with one another, and with what is of deepest value to us.

Each 45-60 minute session we spend together will follow the theme of our event, “Be Where Your Feet Are” – connecting with this mountain ecosystem itself, connecting with our bodies, being present to here and now, and expanding in our sense of grounding, safety, comfort, healing, strength, and love. This time might include storytelling, singing, chanting, drumming, readings, guided meditation, gentle movement, sharing, or crafting.

We close the session by “releasing the directions,” calling our energy back into ourselves and grounding, preparing to return to the everyday world. Before we leave, there is time for announcements.



What do we mean by “worship”?

In today’s world, we typically hear the word “worship” associated with the worship of a deity. But the original meaning of the word in Old English is simply the act of honoring something we believe to be of great worth.

At UUWomenspirit, when we come together in a sacred circle for the time we call “worship,” we “honor the feminine divine,” and each participant is invited to take that in whatever way fits best within her own beliefs - literally, figuratively, symbolically. We come to this sacred space with our sisters to commune with our highest values, our deepest selves, and our own core truths - what it is that matters most to us. We support each other on our own individual paths, and we feel a sense of shared meaning, purpose, and connection to something greater.

EVERYONE is welcome at UUWomenspirit, whether or not you consider yourself affiliated with Unitarian Universalism. You might find it interesting to know that the UUWomenspirit approach to worship reflects its UU roots. In UU communities, there is no expectation that everyone will share the same beliefs about spiritual topics such as ultimate reality and the divine. Instead, UU community members come together around a shared covenant, a set of shared values. Centered around love, UU values include interdependence, pluralism, justice, transformation, generosity, and equity. Read more here: www.uua.org/beliefs/shared-values.

Institute Track

Finding Your Healing Rhythm Through Sound

Elise Boren

Up to 25 Participants

No Materials Fee

Everything has its own frequency, and when we are in tune with our own rhythm, we become more attuned to the world—and the universe—around us. Rhythm is more than a pattern of beats in music; it is an expression of our inner tempo and a reflection of our connection to ourselves and the world around us. When we align with our own rhythm, we become better able to align with the greater rhythm of the universe as a whole.

In this immersive sound healing experience, guided by a certified sound healer, participants are invited to explore crystal singing bowls and resonant sound as tools for grounding and restoration. Through intentional listening to music, ambient sound, and the subtle cadence of breath and voice, participants are supported in reconnecting with their natural rhythms.

Finding your rhythm through sound is a gentle, transformative journey—one that invites you to engage deeply with music, ambient noises, and even the cadence of your own voice. This experience offers space to release tension, regulate the nervous system, and unlock creativity, focus, health, and well-being.

As sound and vibration bring body and mind into harmony, participants are invited to settle more fully into the present moment, allowing you to embrace life wherever your feet may be.

What to expect: Participants will be comfortably seated or lying down while listening to live sound. No prior experience is needed; all that is required is a willingness to rest, listen, and receive.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 0-1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: Varies by person

Creativity: 3-5 on a scale of 0-5



Elise Boren

After having a life changing accident early in my life, I was introduced to the magnificent power of sound and its healing capabilities, and have managed my own personal chronic pain with sound for 40+ years. This experience led me to become a nationally certified sound healer and life coach. Guided by the belief that holistic healing must encompass the mind, body, and spirit, I believe that we are all one, and that healing needs to be all inclusive to harmonize the mind, body and spirit.

I approach my work with clients by listening attentively, seeking to understand their unique circumstances, and assisting them in overcoming obstacles that may hinder the achievement of their aspirations and goals.

Institute Track

Embodied Presence: *Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement®* Explorations

Karen Dold

Up to 25 Participants

No Materials Fee

This track will consist of a series of verbally-guided 30-45 minute *Awareness Through Movement®* lessons, interspersed with very short lectures, writing/drawing/thinking in response to contemplative questions, and small-group sharing of personal experience of the lessons/contemplations.

Awareness Through Movement® is a type of meditation through movement, a neuromuscular re-training process for helping people release limiting patterns and transform the quality of their lived experience. I'll teach through the lens of the physical body, guiding your attention to your anatomy, movement, breath, sensation, and your perception of pressure, comfort, contact with surface, balance, etc., as you move. This specifically-crafted awareness process of moving the physical body while simultaneously attending to your thoughts, your feelings, and your sensations invites profound changes in self-perception, personal power, and presence to emerge. The explorations will be done in a variety of positions: lying on the floor, sitting in a chair, standing and walking (indoors with occasional forays outdoors). The lessons will be designed to guide participants to more deeply embody their connection to Mother Earth/Gaia, to the environment, and to Self, while honoring each participant's individual process and journey.

What to Expect: Participants should be able to comfortably get up and down from the floor. All movements are guided verbally, non-strenuous, and exploratory rather than goal-oriented. Participants are always encouraged to rest, modify, or pause as needed.

If you have questions or concerns about mobility or participation, please feel free to reach out via email to kd@movewithelan.com before registering. Karen is happy to schedule a phone conversation to discuss individual needs and help determine whether this track is a good fit.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: Varies by person

Creativity: 2 on a scale of 0-5

This 5-minute YouTube
video describes *Awareness
Through Movement®* --->



Karen Dold

As a movement scientist, Karen is a Feldenkrais Method® practitioner, Change Your Age® teacher, and Kinesa® practitioner. She has been teaching classes and workshops since 2000 and has a private practice in Chapel Hill, NC. She brings extensive experience in scientific research, sports, martial arts, and meditation to her work with her clients. She specializes in working with those dealing with chronic injuries, orthopedic challenges and pain, and those wanting to regain their youthful freedom of movement. Her clients celebrate moving from pain and restriction to ease and agility. When not teaching, Karen spends her time hiking, vegetable gardening, cooking with local foods, leading meditation and listening groups, singing in a woman-identified LGBTQIA+ chorus, reading, and studying neuroplasticity, spirituality, food as medicine, and frequency as medicine. Karen is a member of the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Durham, NC.

Institute Track

Grounding Stories: Presence, Choice, and the Path Ahead

Claire Helton

Up to 20 Participants

\$10 Materials Fee

This track invites participants into a contemplative exploration of the stories we carry--about who we are, where we have come from, and how we find our way forward. Rooted in an experiential practice of being where our feet are, these sessions offer space to slow down, notice where you are standing in your life right now, and listen more deeply to what is present, and will guide us wherever our feet take us next.

Across four connected sessions, we will engage guiding questions such as: *Where are your feet right now? Whose footsteps have you followed thus far? Where might the path be leading next? What is it within you that guides your steps?* Through shared story, reflective dialogue, and hands-on response, we will explore how attending to our stories--past, present, and those still unfolding--can ground us and clarify what guides us when choices arise along our way.

The primary facilitation tool for this track is *OutoftheBox*, a small-group method that uses shared story, open-ended questions, and structured dialogue to create space for deep listening and reflection. *OutoftheBox* invites participants to engage their own lived experience as a source of wisdom, incorporating visual, communal meaning-making through objects placed in the sand. No prior experience with storytelling or creative practice is required, only a willingness to be present, and to stay open and curious.

What to Expect: Each session will include time for quiet reflection, guided questions, small-group sharing, and hands-on engagement with simple materials.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 0 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 1-3 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 2 on a scale of 0-5



Claire Helton

Claire Helton is a small-group facilitator and spiritual formation practitioner with a deep commitment to storytelling, presence, and communal meaning-making. She has been working with *OutoftheBox* (www.outofthebox.org) for several years and currently serves as a Mentor on their leadership team. Claire finds life in creating spaces for deep reflection, community-building, and personal transformation. She has weaved those passions into her past work as a congregational minister and chaplain, as well as her current role as a hospice bereavement coordinator. She also loves running *OutoftheBox* sessions at her UU congregation and is excited to be attending UUWomenspirit for the first time.

Institute Track

Exploring the Elements

Kallie LeFever

Up to 12 Participants

\$5 Materials Fee

In this experiential track, we will explore the energies of the elements—Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit—to support our connections to Mother Earth, to one another, and to our own higher selves. Rooted in the living landscape of The Mountain, we will open ourselves to the wisdom and presence of the elements as they exist all around us.

Through music, movement, meditation, ceremony, chanting, creative expression, and intuitive card work, participants will be invited to engage with each element in embodied and meaningful ways: grounding with Earth, breathing and listening with Air, igniting clarity and courage with Fire, flowing with emotion and intuition through Water, and integrating presence and connection through Spirit.

Together, we will commune with the elements that are present on The Mountain and call on them to embody and embolden us as we step into our future with tools and treasures that will help us feel safe and at home in our bodies, our minds, and this world.

What to Expect: Participants will engage in gentle movement, guided meditation, music, ceremony, creative activities, and quiet reflection. All practices are invitational, adaptable, and require no prior experience.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 2 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 3 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 2 on a scale of 0-5



Kallie LeFever

Kallie has been attending UUWomenspirit since 2016, when she first fell in love with the mountains of western North Carolina. In 2021, she moved to Franklin, North Carolina, where she finds that the healing properties of the mountains, trees, and forest beings are a healing balm for any imbalance. Kallie is a Wellness Educator who facilitates mindfulness and neuroplasticity offerings and leads workshops within her local Unitarian Universalist fellowship.

Gathering All-Day Workshop

Hand Crafted Altar Cloths

Melissa Christopher

Up to 16 Participants

No Materials Fee

Come sew and craft in a circle of women! Women have a long tradition of coming together to sew and create by hand. Crafting can be a form of spiritual practice, either in a group or alone.

Together we will explore slow stitching, fabric collage, and other simple hand-sewing techniques to create our own personal altar cloths. We'll use fabric and other soft materials, charms, beads, and more to piece together a beautiful foundation for your altar. No previous sewing experience is necessary, as we'll be learning several techniques in the workshop. All materials and supplies will be provided, but you may bring anything personal that you'd like to incorporate into your piece.

As we mindfully and intentionally create, we will explore ways in which crafting can be a meaningful part of your spiritual practice.

What to expect: A relaxed, supportive atmosphere with guided instruction, time for quiet stitching and conversation, and plenty of space to work at your own pace.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 2 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 4 on a scale of 0-5



Melissa has been attending UUWomenspirit for over 30 years. She's led workshops in crafting, henna, and body work. Her lineage includes women skilled in the fabric and yarn arts: quilting, crochet, sewing and knitting. Within this historical backdrop, Melissa applies the principles of upcycling and sustainability to her arts and crafts.

Melissa Christopher

Gathering All-Day Workshop

Energy Clearing

Oreon Millard

Up to 12 Participants

No Materials Fee

This workshop invites participants into a shared, experiential exploration of energy clearing using hands-on techniques developed by Oreon. Together, we will create a safe, supportive, and trauma-informed space where participants can explore energetic awareness, release what no longer nourishes them, and gently renew their energy centers through intentional touch, presence, and clear consent.

For those who experienced Oreon's Clearing at Fall Gathering 2025, this workshop offers guidance to bring the practice into personal use, community settings, and Sacred Circles. For those new to the work, it provides an accessible entry point into a guided communal experience of release, re-centering, and renewal.

Energy clearing and connection are ancient human practices found across many spiritual traditions. Rather than claiming expertise in a specific lineage, this workshop approaches the work with curiosity and respect, grounding it in familiar gestures of care—comforting touch, holding hands, and shared presence—that support emotional release, nervous system regulation, and a sense of balance.

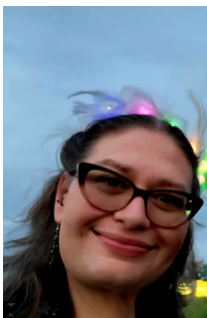
Participation is always invitational, and personal boundaries and choice are honored throughout. This workshop affirms that we are humans having an energetic experience every moment of every day—and that, with care and intention, we can support one another in restoring balance and connection.

What to Expect: Participants will engage in guided hands-on practices in pairs or small groups, with clear instruction around consent and communication. You may give, receive, observe, or opt out of touch at any time. No prior experience is needed—just a willingness to be present and curious.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 3 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 1 on a scale of 0-5



Oreon has been facilitating workshops, classes, retreats, and Circles for over 34 years within the Southern Appalachian Witchcraft Community and is excited to offer her Craft and Art to the UUWomenspirit community at The Mountain. For the past 12 years, she has been developing and sharing this form of hands-on energy clearing, drawing on the widely recognized practice of the “laying on of hands.” Through this work, participants are invited to connect more deeply with themselves and one another, discovering the potential that exists both within the individual and within community.

Oreon Millard

Gathering Half-Day Morning Workshop

Awakening with Intention: Practices for Clarity and Calm

Donna Carson

Up to 18 Participants

No Materials Fee

Awakening with Intention invites participants to root themselves fully in the present moment while cultivating small, intentional practices that support a grounded and purposeful life. Centered in the theme of being where your feet are, this workshop creates a calm, supportive space where participants can slow down, reconnect, and discover what they need most.

Drawing on the framework of The Miracle Morning by Hal Elrod, this workshop explores how silence, mindful movement, visualization, personalized affirmations, reading, and reflective writing can help us align with where our feet are—right here, in the sacred landscape of The Mountain. These tools are offered in an accessible and flexible way, allowing each person to adapt the practices to their own rhythms, needs, and daily realities.

The workshop also introduces simple, evidence-informed practices that support vagus nerve regulation, including grounding techniques, breath-based meditation, and bilateral stimulation. These tools help calm the nervous system, build emotional resilience, and strengthen our ability to remain present, centered, and responsive rather than reactive. Participants will experience both the traditional one-hour routine and an accessible 30-minute version, leaving with a practical, personalized morning practice that supports clarity, presence, and steady movement toward the life they choose—while truly being where their feet are.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 2 on a scale of 0-5 but adaptable to individual needs

Emotional Intensity: 3-4 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 2-3 on a scale of 0-5



Donna is a Licensed Professional Counselor with over 20 years of experience meeting people where they are and creating safe, supportive spaces for growth. She brings an evidence-informed, compassionate approach to this workshop, blending professional insight with lived experience. Donna has developed a morning practice grounded in research and personal need that supports clarity, calm, and connection. She looks forward to sharing practical tools participants can use during their time at The Mountain and carry home to support presence, intention, and well-being.

Donna Carson

Gathering Half-Day Morning Workshop

Page as Portal

Catherine Quiring

Up to 25 Participants

No Materials Fee

The page is a portal. The place where inner world meets outer world, where the veil thins, where soul transmits what it knows into words that can exist in the world. In this workshop, we'll begin with extended guided meditation—settling into our bodies, letting our feet meet the earth, and descending into our own depths. There, we'll open to the feminine divine in whatever form she chooses to appear.

Then, still in that porous, thin-veil space, we'll turn to the page—not to perform, not to perfect, not to think *about* what to write. Instead, we'll allow what has stirred in our inner worlds to move through the hand and onto paper, creating the experience as we write it. This is writing as prayer. As communion. As a threshold between what's invisible and felt and what can finally be seen.

We'll close in circle, reading aloud what came through (for those who choose to do so) and witnessing one another. There is medicine in being seen and witnessed. There is magic in hearing your own voice speak the words your soul wrote. There is collective effervescence to doing this sacred witnessing in community.

Come write what's waiting to be written. The page is your portal.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 5 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 5 on a scale of 0-5



Catherine is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, reformed people-pleaser, and neurodivergent exvangelical. She helps people who feel and care deeply to reconnect to their inner wisdom, heal from the pressures and traumas they have experienced, reclaim their playfulness, and become whole. Outside of work, Catherine is an avid book-lover, parent to two amazing kids who invite her into the adventure of every-day life, and partner to a very tall husband who makes her laugh and helps her rest.

Catherine Quiring

Gathering Half-Day Morning Workshop

Entering into Oneness with the Living World

Carolyn Wallace

Up to 12 Participants

\$5 Materials Fee

In this workshop, we will truly be where our feet are as we step outside and immerse ourselves in the woodland environment surrounding The Mountain. Through intentional presence, we will be reminded that we are part of the interdependent web of life, as we look, listen and breathe alongside the plants, birds, and animals that share this landscape. This time outdoors is designed to help us unwind, slow down, and deepen our awareness of the living world around us.

We will begin with a grounding meditation to settle our bodies and senses, followed by a silent, mindful walk through the forest. Along the way, participants will be invited to observe birdsong, notice trees and textures, and witness the first wildflowers of spring, while also learning about the ecology of the mountain and its seasonal rhythms.

As we return from the walk, we will turn toward creative expression as a way of integrating what we have experienced. Participants may choose from drawing or sketching, reflective writing, photography, or simple crafting, allowing personal insights to emerge through creative response. We will close with a brief ceremony to honor our time in relationship with the living world and the life that surrounds and sustains us.

What to Expect: Participants should be comfortable walking on natural trails and standing or sitting outside. No prior experience with nature study or creative practices is required.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 2 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 3 on a scale of 0-5



Carolyn is a member of both the Unitarian Universalist of Coastal Georgia, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Statesboro, GA. She has been a UU since 1995. Carolyn holds two biology degrees and one in education. She was a professor of science education for many years. She is a lifelong naturalist, an avid birder, and a tree hugger. She loves tapping into nature as a spiritual guide.

Carolyn Wallace

Gathering Half-Day Morning Workshop

Guided Walking Tour of Many Hands Peace Farm

Shelley Hall

No Participant Limit

No Materials Fee

The Many Hands Peace Farm is an educational farm dedicated to teaching our community and The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center's guests about the concepts and techniques of regenerative agriculture.

This guided walking tour offers participants a chance to slow down, connect with the land, and experience the rhythms of this working landscape. We will walk throughout the farm, learning about its spaces, cycles, and relationship to the surrounding environment. This is an opportunity to be present to the land beneath your feet and to deepen your connection to this place through observation, movement, and shared experience.

What to Expect: Participants should be comfortable walking outdoors, dressed for the weather.

Note: The guided farm tour will last approximately one hour with the remaining time unstructured. Participants are invited to explore the gardens independently, linger in nature, rest, or consider one of the Free Time options described on page 17.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 2 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 1 on a scale of 0-5



The Many Hands Peace Farm contributes to The Mountain's overall environmental sustainability, producing food, mushrooms, flowers, and herbs for use in our kitchen and dining hall. The Farm sells produce at Highlands Farmers' Market and Cashiers Farmers' Market. This generates modest revenue, raises visibility for the Farm and The Mountain, and provides our staff direct marketing and sales experience in addition to their farm training. Farm staff regularly host farm tours, foraging and wild edibles tours, workshops, and other educational programs.

We use no synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc. Most of the work on the farm is done with hand tools, though we occasionally use a walk-behind tiller or tractor. We compost food waste from the kitchen and dining hall to reduce our waste stream and utilize nutrients and organic matter that would otherwise go to the landfill. Many Hands Peace Farm aspires to make a lasting impact on The Mountain, its overall sustainability, and our guests through educational programming, improving the soil and infrastructure of cultivated areas, and planting perennial food crops.

Gathering Half-Day Afternoon Workshop

Hearth and Haven: Nurturing and Bonding with the Spirit of Your Home

Mina Edgerton

Up to 16 Participants

\$10 Materials Fee

The Mountain offers so much to us while we are present—spirit, safety, and a sense of groundedness within ourselves and our community. This workshop invites participants to explore how to carry that supportive energy home, creating a tangible reminder of connection that can continue to nourish and steady us in daily life.

We will begin with a brief exploration of household and home spirits in folklore, along with reflection on the idea of home as a place we are spiritually bonded with over time. Through guided meditation, participants will deepen their awareness of their relationship with the land of The Mountain and with the spaces they call home, considering how care, intention, and presence shape both inner and outer environments.

Participants will then create their own witch's ladder—a simple, meaningful craft traditionally used as a protective or grounding object. Using sticks, string, and personal items, each participant will craft and dedicate her ladder during a closing meditation, with the intention of taking this sense of safety, connection, and belonging back home. The finished ladder can be hung in one's home as a reminder of grounding, protection, and the bond formed with the land and community during this time.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 3 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 4 on a scale of 0-5



Mina Edgerton

Mina was inspired to create this workshop through her own experience of turning a new house into a home. A self-described chaotic crafter, Mina believes that aesthetic and traditionally feminine pursuits can hold deeper spiritual significance. For her, making things by hand is a way of forming connection—to place, to self, and to community. This workshop is an invitation to explore creativity as a grounding and meaningful spiritual practice.

Gathering Half-Day Afternoon Workshop

Honoring Our Feet and Where They Have Been

Iris Padgett

Up to 12 Participants

\$10 Materials Fee

This workshop is a luxurious and nurturing experience designed to honor your hardworking, much-loved feet. We will create a spa-like environment where participants begin with soothing herbal foot soaks, settling into a gentle talking circle that invites reflection on the many paths our feet have carried us along our lives.

From there, we will move into simple, accessible foot care practices, including gentle stretches, an exfoliating treatment, and guided self-massage with elements of reflexology. These practices are offered as acts of gratitude and care, supporting relaxation, circulation, and embodied presence.

We will close by celebrating our feet through creative adornment. Participants may choose to craft ankle bracelets together and embellish their feet with body paint, nail art, or polish—marking this time of care, reflection, and honoring of where we have been and where our feet may carry us next.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 1 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 2 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 3 on a scale of 0-5



Iris Padgett

Iris is a yoga teacher and therapist in Ukiah, CA. Her practice focuses on women's issues, transpersonal and spiritual psychology, mindfulness, anxiety disorders, trauma, ketamine-assisted therapy, and the connection between physical and emotional wellbeing. She has been a yoga teacher since 2008 and has facilitated groups for the past decade. She has been coming to UUWomenspirit for many years and has served on a number of Planning Committees.

Gathering Half-Day Afternoon Workshop

Trust Yourself Again: Return to the Ground of Your Own Knowing

Catherine Quiring

Up to 50 Participants

No Materials Fee

Before the conditioning—before we learned to override our instincts and leave ourselves to survive—there was a deeper knowing. Like the ancient stone of this Mountain, something solid and true still lives within us. This workshop invites participants to come back into relationship with that inner ground by learning how to be where their feet are—in their bodies, in the present moment, and in their own lived truth.

In this experiential workshop, we will explore how experiences such as people-pleasing, authoritarian or high-control environments, religious harm, narcissistic abuse, and neurodivergent survival strategies taught many of us that it was not safe to trust ourselves. With care and choice, we will slow down and notice where we are standing now—emotionally, physically, and internally—and begin the journey of returning to ourselves.

Drawing on depth psychology, Internal Family Systems–informed perspectives, and somatic practices, participants will be guided into a grounded, embodied exploration—an “inner cave” shaped by presence rather than overwhelm. Supported by the elements that form this Mountain, we will move through five experiential thresholds: remembering what we knew before doubt took hold; releasing what was never ours to carry; reconnecting with the body and the earth beneath our feet; reclaiming instinct, voice, and need; and re-emerging with a stronger sense of inner footing. This is not a journey away from life, but a return to standing firmly within it—rooted, resourced, and able to live from our own solid ground.

Physical Intensity/Activity: 0 on a scale of 0-5

Emotional Intensity: 4 on a scale of 0-5

Creativity: 1 on a scale of 0-5



I am a licensed counselor with a private practice specializing in self-trust, and I have facilitated this work with individuals and groups for many years. I regularly hold trauma-informed, sacred space in both one-to-one and group settings and have seen this approach support meaningful shifts in self-connection, agency, and grounding. I have presented on this topic at Unitarian Universalist congregations in Pensacola and Fairhope and am currently developing this material into a book.

Catherine Quiring

Choosing Free Time at UUWomenspirit Spring 2026

While we encourage participants to explore a Track or Workshop as part of the Spring 2026 experience, you are always welcome to choose Free Time instead—an intentional option designed to honor what you need most during your days on The Mountain.

Free Time is an actual selection on the registration portal, just like Tracks and Workshops, so you may choose it with clarity and ease. This option allows you to rest, wander, reflect, and follow your own rhythm while staying rooted in our shared theme, *Be Where Your Feet Are*.

During these open periods, you might visit Meditation Rock, linger on the Lodge deck, enjoy the quiet beauty from your cabin balcony, take in the view from the top of the firetower, or explore the grounds on a self-guided hike. You may find yourself wandering the gardens, walking the labyrinth, choosing a book from the library, or venturing into the nearby town of Highlands. For those drawn to water and wonder, the surrounding area offers many breathtaking waterfalls to discover.

However you choose to spend your Free Time, it is a valid and valued part of your UUWomenspirit journey—an invitation to listen deeply and be fully present.



Meditation Rock



The Lodge Deck

About Your Track and Workshop Selections

Tracks and workshops are filled on a first-come-first-served basis. Register early for space in your preferred sessions.

Each track and workshop facilitator estimated the levels of Physical Intensity/Activity, Emotional Intensity, and Creativity, as shown on their page above. If a range is shown, the participant determines her level of engagement. These are offered to assist in your selections; your actual experience may vary.

Some tracks and workshops offer emotional growth experiences that may be stressful. If you are in therapy, you may want to consult your therapist before finalizing your selections.

All the Goodness in Between

When we are not in workshops or worship, or eating or sleeping, there will be a variety of activity offerings. Below, we highlight those that invite consideration in advance of arrival at The Mountain.

Cabaret

A highlight of every event is the Saturday night Cabaret when you are invited to share your gifts with our loving, grateful audience. Music, dance, poetry, comedy, etc. From the silly to the serious, from the novice to the professional performer, in group or solo—all are welcome! Sign up when you arrive.

Drumming and Dancing

Another highlight of every event is after Cabaret, when drummers drum and dancers dance. Some women take turns at both, and others do neither but sit in the circle closing their eyes and feeling the rhythms. Bring your drum or other percussion instrument(s), and/or your dancing attire (whatever that is for you--no judgement here).

Community Cookie Jar

The dining hall is open 24/7 with fruit, beverage, PB&J. We augment those offerings with a table full of cookies of all kinds. Bring a package of your favorites from the store or make a batch if you'd prefer (ingredient labels are helpful).

UUWomenspirit Membership Meeting

Members and non-members are welcome to join for the membership meeting on Friday before dinner. If your travel plans can allow it, join us for the most fun business meeting you could attend. Snacks and door prizes are offered.

Social Hour

Daily before dinner we gather informally in a social hour, when you are welcome to bring your beverage of choice (ice available in the dining hall). The Mountain offers snacks and beverages, with cash donations appreciated. This is also a time when some women will gather for a self-led recovery meeting.

Silent Auction

Bring your gently-used spiritual items and clothing to donate to the silent auction whose proceeds go to the UUWomenspirit Scholarship Fund. Bring cash to purchase others' gently-used spiritual items that call to you.

Healing Circle

Our chaplain will facilitate a healing circle, an opportunity to support ourselves and each other.

All the Goodness in Between

Brigid's Bazaar

One of the goals of UUWomenspirit is to pursue, nurture, and affirm creativity. In that spirit, we provide a space and opportunity for women to show and sell their arts, crafts, and other items. Even if you are not a vendor anywhere else, this is a great venue to offer Sacred Shopping to your sisters. Vendors agree to pay a commission of 10% to UUWomenspirit. To apply, submit the online agreement form found on www.uuwomenspirit.org/spring by April 1st.

Massage Therapy and Reiki

If you are a NC-licensed massage therapist or Reiki/alternative healing practitioner, we would love to include your offering. Anyone offering these services agrees to pay a commission of 10% to UUWomenspirit. To apply, submit the online agreement form found on www.uuwomenspirit.org/spring by April 1st.

Service Project for The Mountain

Join us in giving back to The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center through a hands-on service project that refreshes one of the first things visitors see when they arrive.

On Friday afternoon, we'll gather to lovingly clean the front entrance sign and renew the surrounding landscape. Volunteers will help scrub and freshen the sign, remove tired plantings, and replant the area with hardy, welcoming perennials such as purple coneflower, blazing star, and/or creeping phlox—depending on availability at the time. April is a beautiful season for renewal, making it the perfect moment to help the entrance reflect the care, beauty, and spirit of The Mountain.

All supplies will be provided, including buckets and scrub brushes. The project is scheduled from 1:30–3:30 pm, though the work itself should take approximately 1–2 hrs, allowing flexibility to participate as you're able. Wear clothing appropriate to the activity.

This is a simple, meaningful way to be where your feet are—rooted in service, community, and gratitude for the land that holds us.



And So Much More!

The full schedule of activities will be provided when you arrive. You are encouraged to mindfully participate in any and all of the offerings to fill your heart and your cup. You are also encouraged to choose self-care as needed so as to ensure your experience is exactly what is right for you in this time on The Mountain. No stress, no pressure. Just be where your feet are.

Remember to dress for the weather, with layers, hat, gloves, warm jacket, rain jacket. Even if an activity is not outdoors, you will be in the weather to walk between activities. Check the forecast for Little Scaly Mountain before finalizing your packing.

UUWomenspirit Spring 2026 Keepsakes

Hardbound Sketchbook

\$10

Order deadline: March 22

This gorgeous, pocket-sized hardcover sketchbook features our logo appliquéd and sealed onto the cover, acid-free 80# paper, a pencil loop, a ribbon page marker, and an elastic band closure. Perfect for notes, mementos, sketches, journaling, and creative exploration with pencil, ink, watercolor, markers, or crayon, this notebook is designed to travel with you and hold your creative moments as they unfold. 4"x6" - 80 pages



The Mountain GPS Coordinates Bracelet

\$20

Order deadline: March 15



This custom, made-to-order bracelet features the hand-stamped coordinates of The Mountain on a bronze washer. Each bracelet is made to our specifications by an Etsy artisan and finished with a 2 mm brown suede cord and an adjustable sliding knot for sizing. The bronze washer measures 3/8" thick with a 0.39" inner diameter and a 7/8" outer diameter. All washers are hand stamped, so slight variations in spacing, alignment, and depth will occur. These natural variations make each bracelet unique and one of a kind.

T-Shirts

\$25

Order deadline: April 01

Choose from two shirt colors, black or purple, and two collar styles, v-neck or crew neck.

The v-neck is 4.2 oz super soft 100% combed ringspun cotton. This shirt is available in sizes S-XXL womens, with a semi-fitted, closer fit that skims body, chest, and arms. It has slightly longer length.

The crew neck is 6.0 oz 100% U.S. cotton. The shirt has classic width, rib collar, with taped neck and shoulders for comfort and durability. This shirt is available in sizes XS-4XL unisex, with a standard straight fit on body, chest, and arms. (The crew neck in the photos appears to be fitted but will have a straight cut.)



About Pricing and Lodging

The event costs are in the table below. Your total cost depends on:

- Are you a UUWomenspirit member? (Dues are \$45 for the calendar year; join at uuwomenspirit.org.)
- Are you submitting registration and payment during the Early Bird period, or after March 11th?
- Are you interested in staying in a multi-person bunkhouse, which provides a discount?
- Are you attending Institute or Gathering or Both?

The Mountain accommodations are rustic, all with indoor plumbing, electricity and heat. Single occupancy is available on a very limited basis in the Lodge and Duplexes, if you attend both Institute and Gathering, for an additional \$240. Details about housing options are here: www.themountainrlc.org/lodging-spaces.

	Early Bird Rates (until March 11)	Regular Rates (March 12 - April 1)
UUWomenspirit Member	<p>Housing in Bunkhouse (2+ women, one bathroom)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$260 • Gathering Only: \$260 • Institute & Gathering: \$520 <p>Housing in Lodge, Duplex, or Family Cabin (double occupancy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$300 • Gathering Only: \$300 • Institute & Gathering: \$600 	<p>Housing in Bunkhouse (2+ women, one bathroom)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$280 • Gathering Only: \$280 • Institute & Gathering: \$560 <p>Housing in Lodge, Duplex, or Family Cabin (double occupancy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$320 • Gathering Only: \$320 • Institute & Gathering: \$640
Non-Member	<p>Housing in Bunkhouse (2+ women, one bathroom)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$285 • Gathering Only: \$285 • Institute & Gathering: \$570 <p>Housing in Lodge, Duplex, or Family Cabin (double occupancy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$325 • Gathering Only: \$325 • Institute & Gathering: \$650 	<p>Housing in Bunkhouse (2+ women, one bathroom)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$305 • Gathering Only: \$305 • Institute & Gathering: \$610 <p>Housing in Lodge, Duplex, or Family Cabin (double occupancy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Only: \$345 • Gathering Only: \$345 • Institute & Gathering: \$690

UUWomenspirit maintains two scholarship funds:

- Partial Scholarship, available to any UUWomenspirit member in need, covers up to half of the double occupancy rate for Institute or Gathering or Both. Members may apply for a scholarship once per calendar year.
- Young Women's Scholarship Fund pays the full cost of attendance for first-time attendees under 40 for Institute or Gathering or Both, not including membership fee, workshop material fees, and merchandise. You must join UUWomenspirit before receiving a scholarship.

Submit a scholarship request during the registration process by **March 4**.

Ready to Register?

Checklist for Registration

- Would you like to become a member, supporting our organization and getting an event discount? Do that first, at www.uuwomenspirit.org/join.
- Institute or Gathering or Both?
- Which track and/or workshops do you prefer?
- Do you have a roommate you are naming (and they're naming you)?
- What is your preferred housing option?
- What are your dietary needs/ preferences?
- Do any of the keepsakes call to you?

Registration is only online: **www.uuwomenspirit.org**.

Important Dates

March 4	Scholarship request deadline
March 11	Early Bird deadline
March 15	Last day to order a bracelet keepsake
March 22	Last day to order a notebook keepsake
April 1	Deadline to register, and last day to order a t-shirt
April 1	Vendor and Massage/Reiki application deadline
April 22-24	UUWomenspirit Spring 2026 Institute
April 24-26	UUWomenspirit Spring 2026 Gathering

Spring 2026 is brought to you by the letters U U W S and...

Our Planning Committee

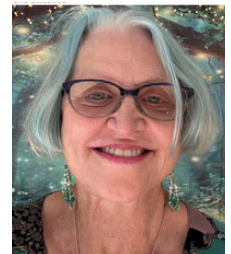


Left to Right:

- Penny Featherstone, Worship
- Em Stecker, Scribe
- Beth Butterfield, Worship
- Nancy Hagman, Event Coordinator
- Carolyn Miller, Tracks & Workshops
- Christina Kulak, Sales & Activities

Our Chaplain

Rev. Dr. Jane Page is a native of Statesboro, GA. She retired in 2005 from Georgia Southern University as Professor and Department Chair Emerita in the College of Education, and she completed her seminary training as a UU minister the following year in 2006. She has now been a called minister for 20 years, serving UU congregations in both Statesboro and Brunswick, GA. Rev. Jane has had the good fortune of being a frequent visitor to The Mountain for all these many years, and she has previously attended UUWomenspirit.



Rev. Dr. Jane Page

Our Logo Artist



Kaylee Miller

With great pride, we share that the Spring 2026 logo was designed by Kaylee Miller, a 15-year-old artist whose creativity and spirit are already deeply rooted in The Mountain. Kaylee has been creating images and visual designs for middle school and high school courses, developing an artistic voice that blends imagination with meaning. A longtime attendee of MountainCamp, she holds a deep connection to this sacred place and looks forward to one day attending UUWomenspirit herself when she is of age.

Her logo centers on a compass, symbolizing the journey of finding one's way while remaining grounded in the present moment. The mountain imagery reflects both the physical presence of The Mountain and its role as teacher and guide, while the surrounding circles represent the sacred directions—holding us in balance, intention, and connection. Through this design, Kaylee beautifully captures the essence of Be Where Your Feet Are and the path that unfolds when we listen, orient, and trust our way forward.

Our UUWomenspirit Coordinating Council

We are grateful to these volunteers who work tirelessly to keep our organization strong:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Christine Grewcock, Registrar and Web Weaver | • Gail Stephenson, Treasurer |
| • Rev. Maggie Lovins, Program Resource Liaison | • Shauna Ireland, Volunteer Coordinator |
| • Victoria Fredrick, Marketing | • Raven Stephenson, Scribe |

Plus, Iris Padgett, Editor of our newsletter, *She Speaks*

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 sacred circle gatherings 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 2026 Spring 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.



Photos and Video at UUWomenspirit Events

If you bring a camera, be sensitive and request permission before taking any type of photographs or video that may include attendees. No photos, videos or clips should be posted on the Internet without specific permission of those pictured. Worship times are Sacred so we request no photos be taken during the actual services.