

Member Contributions

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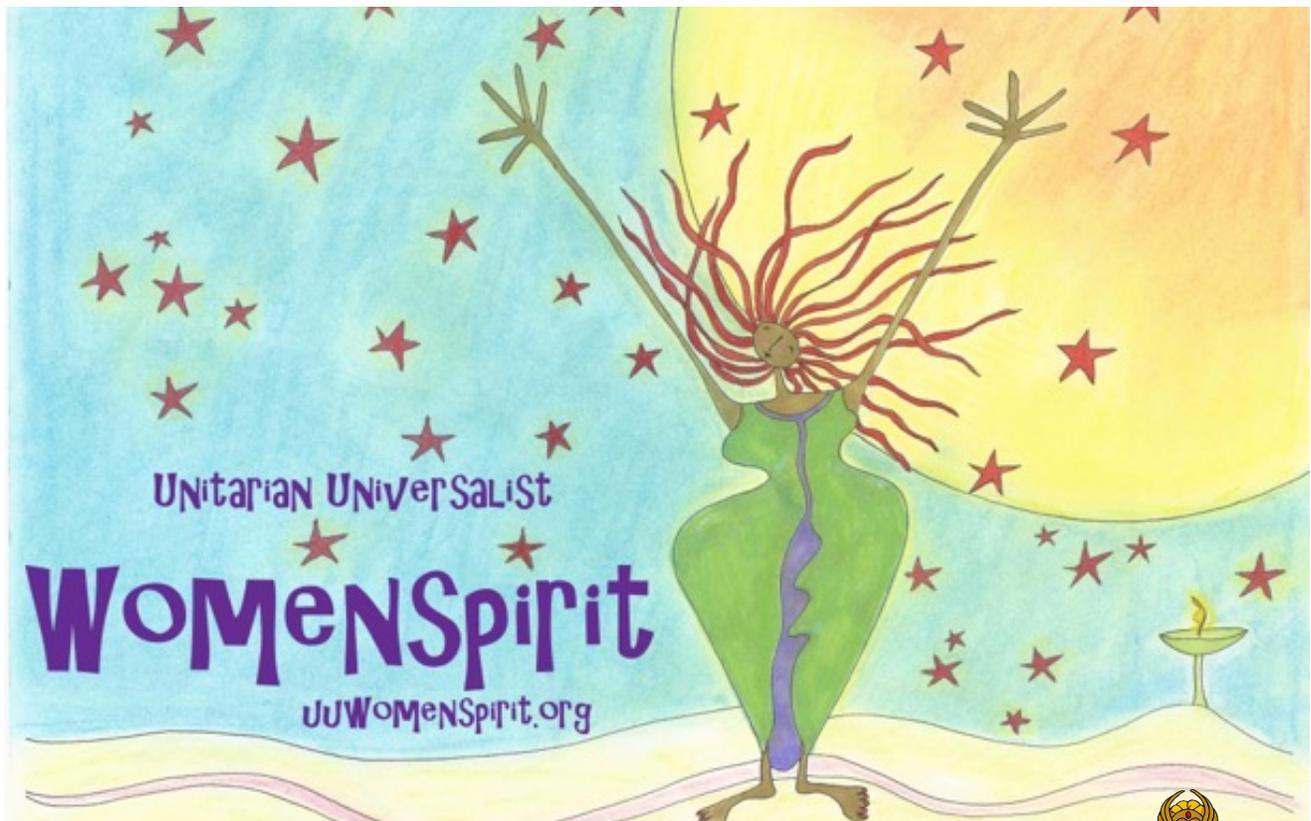
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHAUNA IRELAND THROUGHOUT

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE AND RACISM PAGE 8



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# SHE SPEAKS



Dear Sisters

I've been thinking a lot about good and evil lately. There are plenty of examples of both in the world today. My generation was inundated with stories about heroes fighting against the forces of evil. My favorite television show as a young girl was *She Ra*. Every afternoon at 4:00,



directly after the *Smurfs* but before *He Man*, She Ra fought alongside the Great Rebellion against the forces of the Evil Hoard to defend the people of Etheria.

As a teenager, I learned about Frodo and Company’s epic journey to destroy the ring created by the evil Sauron. By the time I was in my early twenties, Harry, Ron, and Hermione were battling Lord Voldemort for the fate of the magical world. During my own daughter's life, *The Hunger Games*, *Maze Runner*, and *Divergent* have added to the list of fictional battles of good and evil.

In many ways, I’m grateful for the lessons we learned from these tales. They taught us to stand up for what we believe in. They taught us to speak truth to power. They taught us that we have the ability to change the world.

On the other hand, they also taught us that the world was black and white (we’ll leave the problematics of even using black and white in this way for another day) and that people were good or evil. Their villains lacked nuance or context. They weren’t people making right or wrong choices; they were good or evil by their nature.

In reality, though actions can be good or evil, people rarely are. Most people are trying to survive, to nurture their families, and to make life as easy as possible. To be fair, they also tend to be selfish in their pursuit of these things, tripping over other people and other species in the process, but it’s usually out of blind self-interest rather than hatred. Unfortunately, people are also operating with different levels and accuracies of information and education.

I worry that our conviction about our own good and other people’s evil are so definite. I worry that we aren’t trying to solve problems anymore, we’re just trying to win. Don’t get me wrong. I know I am right when I fight for the safety, rights, and freedoms of all people. I won’t stand down in that fight. But I am going to try to remember that people are rarely truly evil. They are often being manipulated and their fears are being fed with lies and exaggerations.

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I don't have all the answers, but I know that it's harder to hate another individual person you know, even if you disagree with them, than it is to hate an anonymous evil other. So, I'm going to try to treat people doing evil things as though they are good people who are just wrong about the issue. I'm going to try to educate, reason, and love people into my way of thinking.

I may be wrong and it may not work, but frankly, I think I'm better off choosing to see the world that way.

Be well,  
Shannon Browning-Mullis, editor

## Photographs by Shauna Ireland

I recently had an opportunity to take a night sky photography workshop at the Outer Banks in North Carolina. This was my first time experimenting with astrophotography and I loved it. It certainly was challenging staying up for three nights in a row, fighting the mosquitos in the hot marshland but totally worth it. Pictures from the trip are throughout the newsletter.



Save these dates for our next in-person events!

October 5 - 9, 2022

May 17 - 21, 2023

Je suis fatigué

By Sarah Muller

Here are the signs and symptoms:

Load the baby into the car seat  
nestle him in carefully and kiss him  
Now slide into the passenger seat and  
fall asleep on the fifteen-minute ride to work

Talk to your co-worker  
Gathering the energy to speak  
Say your piece. Pause for them to speak  
while immediately falling asleep

Walk through a building passing  
from the train to the office, only to  
find yourself unable to muster  
the energy to push the revolving door

Walk down the street finding  
your legs too heavy to lift  
so you stop for a moment to rest  
before carrying on





## Lammas

Lammas is the season of deep summer, when the sun beats down and the air seems to weight you down. In many cultures, this is a time of intense activity, as communities harvest all the things that have been planted. In my home, it is a time of rest. Whether you lay by a pool, by the ocean, or on the couch watching a good movie in the air conditioning, it's just too hot to be terribly productive. For me, this is the season of daydreams, of watching the clouds make figures in the sky, of reading books while sipping lemonade. In other cultures, it is the time to honor the grain harvest and to bake the bread. In my family, there was always a stigma against baking in the summer. I mean, who in their right mind turns on the oven when it's 100 degrees outside. Eat a salad or a sandwich. Better yet, fire up the grill. So, this year, as we honor the sun and the long summer days, let's do it as best fits each of us, whether it's the sacred grain harvest and bread baking, or the sacred beer and watermelon by the ocean. The days will shrink soon enough.



## Lammas Ritual

Find a quiet, relaxing place. Bring your favorite cooling beverage. Create sacred space in the way that feels most comfortable to you. Allow your mind to drift. Imagine the harvest, the grain, the bread, the bounty. Now, think about the bounty in your own life. What have you harvested? What will sustain you in the year to come? With each thing or person you think of, focus on that one individual. Allow yourself to feel the joy they bring you. Let it expand inside you until it feels like it the sun shining inside. Repeat it again and again with all your harvests. Lay quietly in the glow your appreciation has created. When you're ready, release your sacred space.

If you' like, write down the things that came to you and how they made you feel. You can refer back to them when you need encouragement throughout the year.

## The Magic Within the Cauldron

October 5th through the 9th, 2022

Planning Committee members:

Event Coordinator Gail Stephenson

Scribe Toni Stephenson

Worship Ann Hess and Penny Featherstone

Tracks and Workshops Wendy Lineberger

Sales and Activities Andrea Johnson

Chaplain Alice Carnes

Logo created by Andrea Johnson

Raven Stephenson Brochure and Tech Support

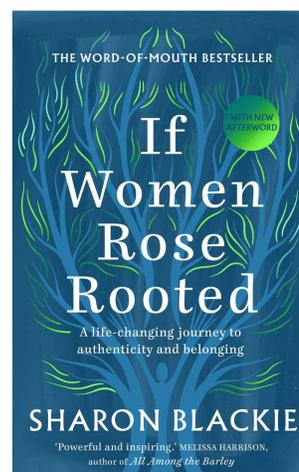


The time is drawing near. Although it feels like Summer is just getting started, the Planning Committee is hard at work getting things ready for the Fall 2022 UUWomenspirit event. Workshops and tracks have fallen into place, worship is being finalized, sales and activities are being organized and the brochure is

almost ready for you to have in your hands. So, join us as we celebrate the Welsh Goddesses Cerridwen, Rhiannon, Branwen, Arianrhod, and Bludewedd. Explore them and the Awen (Divine Spark of Inspiration) within our cauldrons. We look forward to seeing you then.

## Womenspirit Book Club

**The book club  
meets the second  
Tuesday of each  
month at 7:30.  
We're currently  
reading *If Women  
Rose Rooted*.**



## Reflections on Resilience and Racism

By Katie Bloedau

At the Spring Event, I facilitated a circle of women exploring tools of resilience to face the personal and collective challenges of our time. Since the event, I realized that I tried to do way too much in 6 hours! Also, I didn't get consent from the whole group before diving into Resmaa Menakem's work on racial trauma, and forgot that some women in the circle hadn't even read my workshop description, or his book! My deepest regret is that I didn't hold space for the experience, perspective and contribution of women of color, which placed the burden on them to articulate their very existence. Through much discussion, and the grace of those present, we were able to recover somewhat, and I'm deeply grateful for all the contributions and the teachings that were shared.

While I planned the workshop, I knew that I was continuing a conversation that many of us had already been having, at Womenspirit and elsewhere. A focused reflection on racism triggers emotion for almost all Americans. With such big topics, there would be a lot left unsaid, and closure was not a realistic goal in this conversation. I wish that I had acknowledged that more clearly. I also wish that I had been more clear that like climate grief, racial trauma diminishes our energy whether we are aware of it or not, ready to talk about it or not. I want to clear the stream and redirect the energy that is currently being siphoned off by racialized trauma (especially invisible trauma, especially ignored trauma, especially the harms to our collective selves that some assume are only for other people or only in the past) toward work that moves all of us toward collaborative loving liberation. I want to recognize and change my behaviors that perpetuate racial trauma and racism and oppression and I want to be in community with others doing that work.

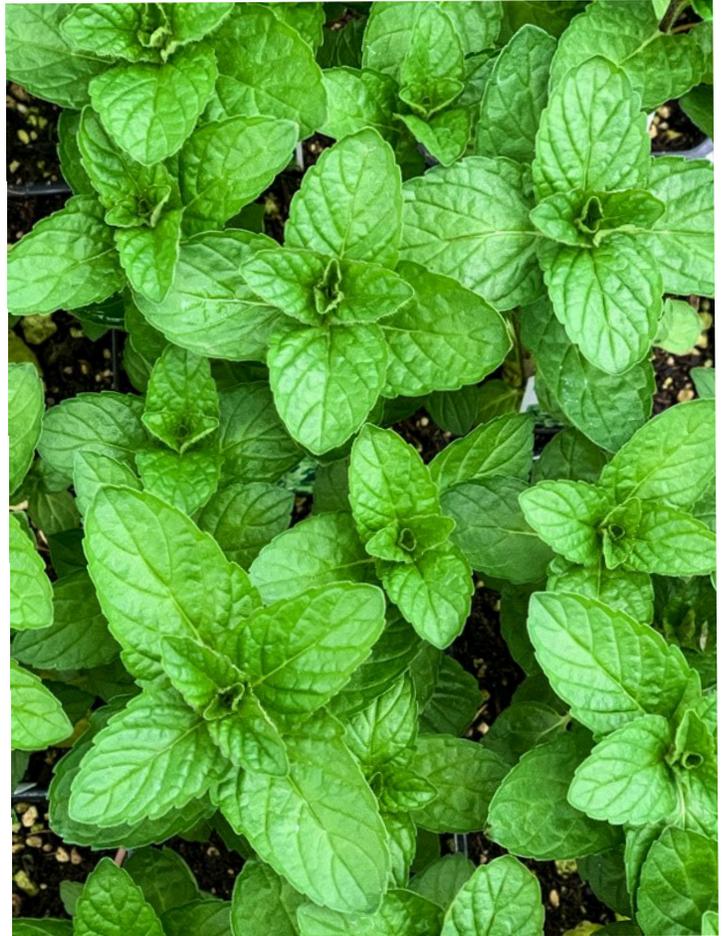
On my drive home from the event, I listened to Emergent Strategies by adrienne marie brown, an amazing author. I found myself reflecting on how systems built on individualism and greed will collapse, and how we can use those fragments to build culture that nurtures and sustains collectively. Within the centered space of our workshop, we made a strong container, capable of holding grief, joy, confusion, love, wonder, anxiety, all swirled together. We practiced flexible thinking, by questioning our attachments and beliefs, and we inquired into our stressful thoughts. In my practices, confusion, angst, discombobulation, and disorganization are like beautiful cracks in my habitual thinking and patterns of interaction; reminders to release the ego, to soften and deepen, to allow growth and drop into deep connection to true nature, to Love. At the end of a Feldenkrais session, my teacher Betty Wolfe cautions us kindly to pause before we adjust our clothes or hair. She says "Wait, wait, don't straighten your self up yet, be disheveled for just a bit longer. Take your new self for a walk and see how it feels in this moment."

I'd like to share this link to Kathleen Hannan's song blog (with her permission), because it relates directly to the workshop and my hopes for our future, and I was singing with the Bodies Voices Spirit Chorus when it was recorded: <https://www.kathleenhannan.com/song-blog/songs-for-our-journey-222567497>

## Plant Profile

Mint (Peppermint *Mentha piperita*,  
Spearmint *Mentha spicata*)

There are many types of mint with various properties, but during the hottest months of the year, cooling is their most vital contribution. Mint is both culinary and medicinal and is can be safely enjoyed by anyone. It makes a lovely tea that aids in digestion and its essential oil is a quick relief for tension headaches. Best of all, it practically grows itself! Just stick it in the ground and try to keep it from taking over!



## Welcoming Women with Disabilities to U UWomenspirit Events

By Amber Grey

As we continue to do outreach to expand our membership, U UWomenspirit sisters should become aware of the best ways to make women with disabilities feel comfortable and welcome as members of our organization.

A little bit of background: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed on July 26, 1990, is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Properly implemented, the ADA guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life—to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in state and local government programs and services. It does not mandate inclusion but it does address potential barriers to access.

## What are the ADA protections?

The ADA requires that all new construction fully comply with the ADA Standards. It also requires existing buildings be made as accessible as possible so long as making the accommodations does not cause a significant difficulty or expense (undue burden) if carried out. Similarly, private businesses and nonprofit organizations must make their services as accessible as possible. However, they do not have to provide a modification if providing it would cause a significant administrative or financial difficulty. If they determine that the requested modification would be an undue burden, they still must look for an effective alternative.

## How does the ADA apply to UUWomenspirit?

As with other civil rights legislation, the ADA's application to an individual or situation must be determined on a case-by-case basis. In some instances the solution is pretty obvious and all parties will agree to the resolution. In others, it might be necessary to consult an outside source. The ADA National Network is a group of 10 regional centers that provide free and accurate training, resources and technical assistance for individual questions and situations. Your regional ADA National Network can be reached by calling 1-800-949-4232.

In general, however, UUWomenspirit Events can be made more accessible to women with disabilities by asking them to identify specific accommodation needs when registering for an Event. We do have a section set aside for this but current registration forms only specifically address needs for housing, not specific accommodations over and above the need for an accessible cabin.

One note: some of the accommodations that could be provided for women with disabilities may take some time to prepare or implement. In no place or situation, should we ask women to identify their specific disability. However, our registration form should be amended to ask women to identify specific accommodation needs at least two weeks prior to the Event. [Note: the CoCo has taken these recommendations and applied them to the new registration system.]

What is needed can vary widely from woman to woman. For instance, I request an accessible cabin near the top of the mountain. However, I do not actually require a fully accessible room. What is essential for me is to have a commode chair available so that I do not spend the entire Event trapped in a bathroom.

Someone identifying her need for a sign language interpreter will need to be contacted. Given our budget, paying for two ASL interpreters for an Institute or even for an all day or half day workshop would be an undue financial burden. We simply cannot afford this expense. However, we should welcome women who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing by asking Worship Leaders to provide copies of their scripts. In addition, if power points or

videos are part of Worship or a workshop, captioning should be provided if at all possible— or a script made available to cover the specific content. In any workshop, someone who is deaf or hard-of-hearing should be able to sit directly in front of the workshop leader, so that she can draw from reading lips to enhance her ability to understand what is being said. UUWomenspirit is not able to provide a personal assistant for women with physical disabilities. Again, this would create an undue burden. However, the Mountain has made itself fully accessible in terms of accessible cabins and restrooms and creating accessible pathways and entrances to all its buildings.

Therefore, a woman with a physical disability who is able to take care of her own personal needs will be able to move competently around the top of the mountain. On this note, I've made it my business at every Event to check out all of the electric door openers – and have always found at least one and maybe two that are not working. Although this is not a direct violation of the ADA, which requires only that exterior doors are “as light as possible to make opening them easier, I do point this out to the Mountain staff since, without these electronic door openers, the doors into the hallway of the Dining Hall are not easy to open, especially if they must be opened by a clenched fist. There is also an ADA requirement that accessibility features be kept in repair and working condition so this could apply here even though these door openers are not required.

Women who are Blind or who have low vision might also need someone to help them navigate around the buildings and between workshops. Again, Womenspirit should explain that they cannot provide a personal attendant nor will they designate specific women to help them. It's entirely probable that other women will help someone who is Blind go from one workshop to the next and other women will offer to fill their plates during meals. However this is not a guarantee, and we should make sure that women who are sharing cabins with women with disabilities are not shunted into a de facto “personal attendant” role. This has happened occasionally in the past. Therefore Planning Committee and CoCo members should be alert to this possibility and quietly ask that several other women step up to help.

In summary, UUWomenspirit will only be enhanced by the welcome addition of sisters with disabilities to our membership. In addition to being particularly welcoming to women coming for the first time, we should also be aware of the ways in which each of us can quietly assist sisters with disabilities so that they too can benefit from all of the powerful and wonderful workshops and Worship that we offer twice a year. See you in October!

*As Sally Weiss, Amber Grey worked for the Southeast ADA Center since the ADA Information and Training Grant was funded beginning in 1992 until she retired 5 years ago.*

## News from the CoCo

*The Coordinating Council, or CoCo, is the governing body of UUWomenspirit. The current members are Nina Brewer-Davis (Marketing and Outreach Coordinator), Tammy Sadler (Volunteer Coordinator), Linda Sterner (Registrar), Judy Padgett (Membership Coordinator and Treasurer), Maggie Lovins (Program Resource Liaison), and Susie Sherman-Hall (Scribe and Keeper of the Sacred Text).*

Greetings from the CoCo!

We welcome to the CoCo this month Maggie Lovins, who joins us as Program Resource Liaison (or PRL), and Susie Sherman-Hall, who is filling the role of Scribe. They have started their terms at the start of August and have already been significant contributors to discussions and work of the CoCo. We thank Krista Meinersmann, who is rotating off the position of PRL, and Melissa Christopher, who is rotating off as Scribe. You capably led UUWomenspirit through difficult, unprecedented times, and we thank you! Melissa will take on a new, temporary position as Sacred Text Reviewer to update aspects of the Sacred Text.

We are excited to announce the creation of She Meets, our brand-new registration system, created by the efforts of Christine Grewcock, our Web Goddess. We think you will appreciate how much easier this is to use than our prior system. She Meets is launching for registration for our Fall Event, which means you will be experiencing it very soon!

All UUWomenspirit members and friends should go to our website to create a profile (if you have done this already, thanks!). To create a profile, click on “Log In” in the upper right hand corner of the webpage. Your profile includes your name, a password, and some other basic information. Then when it is time to register, you will do so through the website. We have an instruction sheet with a step by step guide, but I expect most people will not even need the guide. It’s that simple! Of course, as a brand-new system, it may still have some glitches to be worked out. Our Registrar and Web Goddess are here to help you through any difficulties you might have. They can be reached at [registrar@uuwomenspirit.org](mailto:registrar@uuwomenspirit.org) and [webweaver@uuwomenspirit.org](mailto:webweaver@uuwomenspirit.org)

News from our Treasurer:

Which do you want to hear first? Lots of good news or a little bit of bad? I’ll start with the little bit of bad news.....and it's not so bad. The Mountain is going to be raising our fees for food and lodging starting with the Fall 2022 Event. This is necessary due to the increasing financial pressures of inflation, labor costs, food costs, etc. It has been many years since our fees have gone up and for now, it is a small increase. Instead of \$95.00 per night for food

and lodging, our cost will be \$105.00 per night. So if you attend both the Institute and Gathering, your cost will increase by \$40.00. Of course, this will affect the event cost to UUWomenspirit, as it will take more to cover credits we give to volunteers. For now, we **are not** raising our program fees and hope that as the pandemic subsides, our attendance numbers, and therefore our income, will increase enough to cover the additional cost.

Now for the good news. We had a wonderful Spring Event which ended up with a small profit, thanks in part to some very generous gifts-in-kind from the Planning Committee members. If you missed the event, at the end of Cabaret on Saturday night, the Planning Committee donated a large group of items which were used for worship decorations in the Treehouse space and on the altars. These items were auctioned and with enthusiastic bidding, the final result was \$600.00 raised for the Scholarship Fund. Thanks so much to the Planning Committee for this lovely addition to the festivities.

We awarded our first Young Women's Scholarship and also three General Scholarships for this event. Donations made during registration and proceeds from the silent and live auctions, which all go to the General Scholarship Fund, totaled \$1756.00. Our current balances in our scholarship accounts and our general operating account remain steady and healthy.

The role of Membership Coordinator has recently been moved from the Registrar to the Treasurer. So I am now keeping up with the paid memberships. We currently have 82 dues paying members. If you can't remember what your membership status is or you have any questions about money matters, please contact me: [treasurer@uuwomenspirit.org](mailto:treasurer@uuwomenspirit.org) or [membership@uuwomenspirit.org](mailto:membership@uuwomenspirit.org) or [judykpadgett@gmail.com](mailto:judykpadgett@gmail.com). As always, if you are not already a paid member, I encourage you to join and support our wonderful organization. You can do this by going to [uuwomenspirit.org](http://uuwomenspirit.org) and clicking "JOIN". Donations to our other accounts can also be made on the website. Thank You!

Our monthly online events continue. Book club meets on second Tuesdays at 7:30 eastern, and social hour meets fourth Fridays at 6:30 eastern. The book club has been reading "If Women Rose Rooted," by Sharon Blackie. Watch your email for reminders and zoom links.

Our Fall Event is fast approaching! Registration will be open soon! "The Magic Within the Cauldron" will happen October 5-9. What is the magic within the cauldron? How can Cerridwen, the keeper of the cauldron of divine inspiration and Her sister Welsh Goddesses share their wisdom and love with us? Join us as we meet around Her cauldron to find answers to Their secrets.

## Introducing She Meets: UUWomenspirit Event Registration System

by Christine Grewcock

After 10 years using The Mountain’s registration system, Campwise, we are venturing out on our own.

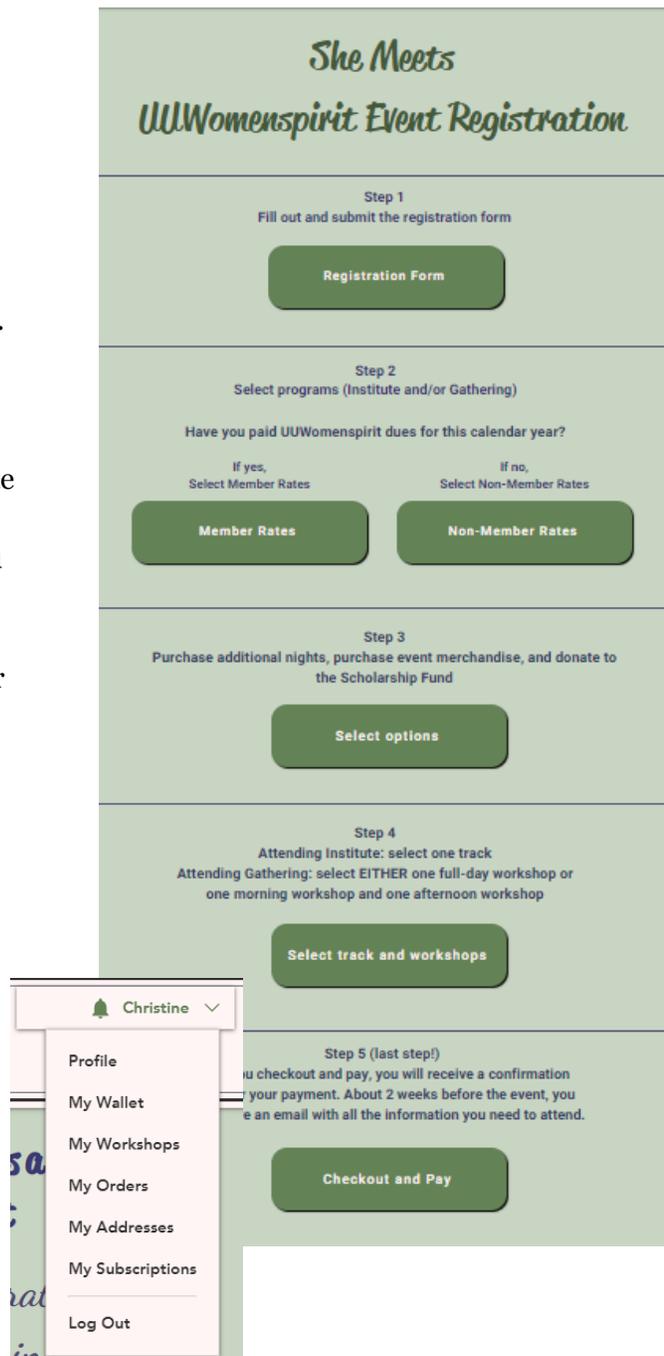
For the Fall 2022 event we will register on the UUWomenspirit website using our new registration system called She Meets.

Right now, you can create an account on the website ([www.uuwomenspirit.org](http://www.uuwomenspirit.org)) by clicking the Sign Up button on the homepage. This is especially important if you have already paid dues for 2022, so that we can mark you paid. This manual step is part of the first-time setup. Next time you pay dues online, the registration system will know that you get the member rate. You will receive a confirmation email a day or two after signing up if your 2022 dues are already paid. The system is a combination of webpages and three apps from Wix (our website hosting service). Some of the language in the apps does not match what we call things so you may encounter different terms. For example, after you pay for registration, what you have purchased will be listed under My Orders. Your membership dues will be under My Subscriptions. You can view these by clicking the arrow to the right of your name after you login. The registration page lists five steps with a button that takes you the page for that step. When you select programs (Institute or Gathering), extra nights, event merchandise, and donations to the Scholarship Fund, the items are placed in a shopping cart. At the end, you checkout and pay just like you would with

an online store. Everything other than event merchandise is a digital product, so you will receive a link to download the product, which will be a document.

Thank you for entrusting me with this important task. I hope you like She Meets and find it easy to use.

You can provide feedback by emailing me at [webweaver@uuwomenspirit.org](mailto:webweaver@uuwomenspirit.org).



**Ancestors: RSVP**

by Lily Diosa Nieves 6/26/2022

Did you know that at some weddings The Ancestors are invited and come strutting in, framed photos, wrist watches, cloth handkerchiefs, and memories? Have you had the honor of assisting a commitment ceremony where the realia and regalia of the past loved ones are respectively placed on the cake table?

In an a-typical and diverse June wedding celebration, I was asked to invoke The Ancestors of the Bride and Bride. A long table donned in a white tablecloth was set up with tall clear windows as its backdrop. To the left was the cake display and to the right The Ancestor's altar. And why not? Who doesn't love cake? Offerings of the Kente clothed-veiled Broom, a white candle, flowers from the garden of the Brides, a goblet of water, a goblet of red wine...Yes, folks, the dearly departed do love to partake, photos, keepsakes, and of course cake embellished the altar.

The Unity Candle was ignited, vows were shared and the Wife and Wife Jumped the Broom! After the DJ cued up the first dance, we all stood to cheer and applaud the newlyweds.

Little Richard's Keep A-Knockin' (1957) song played to the curious and unsuspecting guests. This was my prompt to knock on the wooden lounge bar letting all know that The Ancestors wanted our attention.

Have you ever experienced your Ancestors via:

Chills or Goddess bumps which indicate that they are present and are agreeing with you  
In dreams

Apparitions, ie. A Wooden dowel floated to me when I was a child (but that's another story)

Having the name of a departed repeated 3 x's while it comes up in isolated conversations or 3 facts dealing with the person in a 24 hr. period

Angels appearing

Objects are moved

There's a gentle touch on your body

Use of Mediums or Psychics

There's a temperature shift in the room

Signs in nature, ie. Bird or favorite flower, or scent

Media transmission, ie. A song comes on or a page flashes on your computer screen

Telephone or the doorbell rings and no one is there

Hear your name and no one is there

You mistake a stranger for your departed loved one

Pick up an item of a past relative/friend and receive a memory

And then we have our pets that give us a signal, like Oscar the cat does.

Asking all present in joining me, I welcomed The Ancestors with an Invocation which surprisingly enough, everyone repeated. During the three pourings of water for The Libation, I asked all to invoke their own Ancestors with the word "Ibaye." In giggles and loud rejoicing, both family members, friends, and believe it or not, the wait staff bellowed out the names of their own beloved Ancestors. My closing words of Aché, and So be it! added to the venerated energy of the venue and floated me back to my seat in deep gratitude!

## The Coyotes' Call

2/12/2022

Krista Manning Meinersmann

In the field, alone in the growing darkness.  
A barred owl calls and another answers, Who Cooks for You.  
The song haunting and lovely.

The moon's glow grows stronger as the daylight fades away.  
The field is over lain with a Swiss cheese like pattern of crusty snow, ice, and ground  
I tread cautiously to avoid a fall.

I stop and listen to the sounds of the coming night.  
In the distance, a coyote calls and then a chorus breaks out.  
Eerie, undulating howls fill the night.

How beautiful I think, and then fear begins to rise within.  
Where are these wild creatures calling from?  
How close are they to me while I am far from home?

I turn in terror, my heart pounding and set my sights for home.  
I crash across the thawing, crusty, muddy field,  
As home nears, the howls still and my terror abates,

I am once again able to embrace the beauty of the coming night.  
I appreciate the magic of the emerging stars.  
And cry over the beauty that surrounds me  
And my aloneness in the world.

We Gather  
by Krista Meinersmann

We gather  
We gather to share  
We gather to listen  
We gather to rejoice  
In this our beloved community.

We gather  
We gather to hold and be held  
We gather to heal  
We gather to cry  
in this our beloved community.

We gather  
We gather to dance  
We gather to laugh  
We gather to sing  
in this our beloved community.

We gather  
Yes, we gather  
For in gathering  
we find our hope, our sisters, our sacred  
home.

Blessed be.

I learned patience commuting  
By Sarah Muller

My children in the backseat.  
The traffic slowed to a crawl.

When there were four of us,  
I read out loud to them.

When there were three of us,  
We talked about things.

We talked about our days.  
We talked about the news.  
We talked about life.

Where was Chernobyl?  
How were babies made?  
How were trains made?

I learned that patience  
wasn't just a virtue.

It was an entry into joy.

## The Earth and Us

What if we all disappeared tomorrow –  
    all of us who call ourselves superior human beings,  
    all of us who treat the earth as a mine to be plundered?  
The plants and animals would shrug,  
    would shake it off like a bad dream,  
    would reclaim their stolen lands.  
The winds, sun, rains, gravity, heat and cold  
    would pull down all the artificial monuments –  
        all the skyscrapers, temples, and buildings,  
    would fill up the excavations –  
        all the tunnels, basements, and subways.  
The rivers would burst through the barriers –  
    dams, sea walls, levees, and bulkheads.  
Gaia would mourn the loss of so many of her children –  
    for a time.  
But life would go on, vibrant and exuberant,  
    as her other children flourished,  
        green ones, four-legged one, finned ones,  
    alongside those people who revered their Mother  
        and their brothers and sisters.  
And Gaia smiled.

- Carolyn Pilgrim



*© Shauna C. Ireland*

## **Touch**

By Sarah Muller

I can still feel his hard leathery hand  
holding onto mine.

An engineer and a teacher  
not a laborer,  
they weren't hardened at work  
but in retirement.

He tended the garden  
replaced the worn-out  
cane in chairs.  
Always working.

Idle hands make devil's playthings.

## **Waiting for each other**

By Sarah Muller

We talked about the animals just seen at the zoo.  
Noticing that his little feet are  
practically running trying to keep up  
I slowed my pace.

Now, he races ahead of me  
on foot or rip stick.  
He stops and waits  
for me to catch up.

**It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Everywoman**

By Sarah Muller

I know too many to name.

Each morning, they rise before their husbands  
to get the day started.

This quiet time is likely  
the only time they have  
just to themselves.

They sit at their desks and work on their novels.  
Make breakfast and lunch for their children and  
often their husbands, too.

They throw clothes on themselves  
inside their closets  
to not wake their partners.

Armed only with a suit and heels  
they conquer the world.

At the ten o'clock meeting, they look at their feet  
to discover their shoes don't even match.

During their lunch hour, they order groceries or dinner  
from the phone on their desks.

Leaving work on time so that they aren't charged extra  
at the daycare center.

Pumping breast milk in the ladies  
or if they are lucky and have a door,  
at their desk.

They walk in the back door and  
are immediately besieged with queries  
about homework or playdates or dinner.

After dinner, there are kitchens to be cleaned.  
Work that they brought home to finish.

Exhausted, they fall asleep nearly as soon  
as their head hits the pillow.

Only to dream of to-do lists  
that are impossibly long.

It's Everywoman!



*© Shauna C. Ireland*

## Bikur Cholim

By Sarah Muller

*The commandment to visit the sick*

The slightly bitter taste of my coffee  
on the front of my tongue mingles  
with the lingering sweetness of the  
berry compote at the back.

Our Sunday morning ritual of scones  
and coffee is winding down. I sit  
writing poetry, waiting for her to  
safely finish her shower.

Then we both go about our day.





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Two Witches in a Kitchen

Maggie Lovins

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