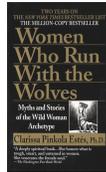


Member Contributions

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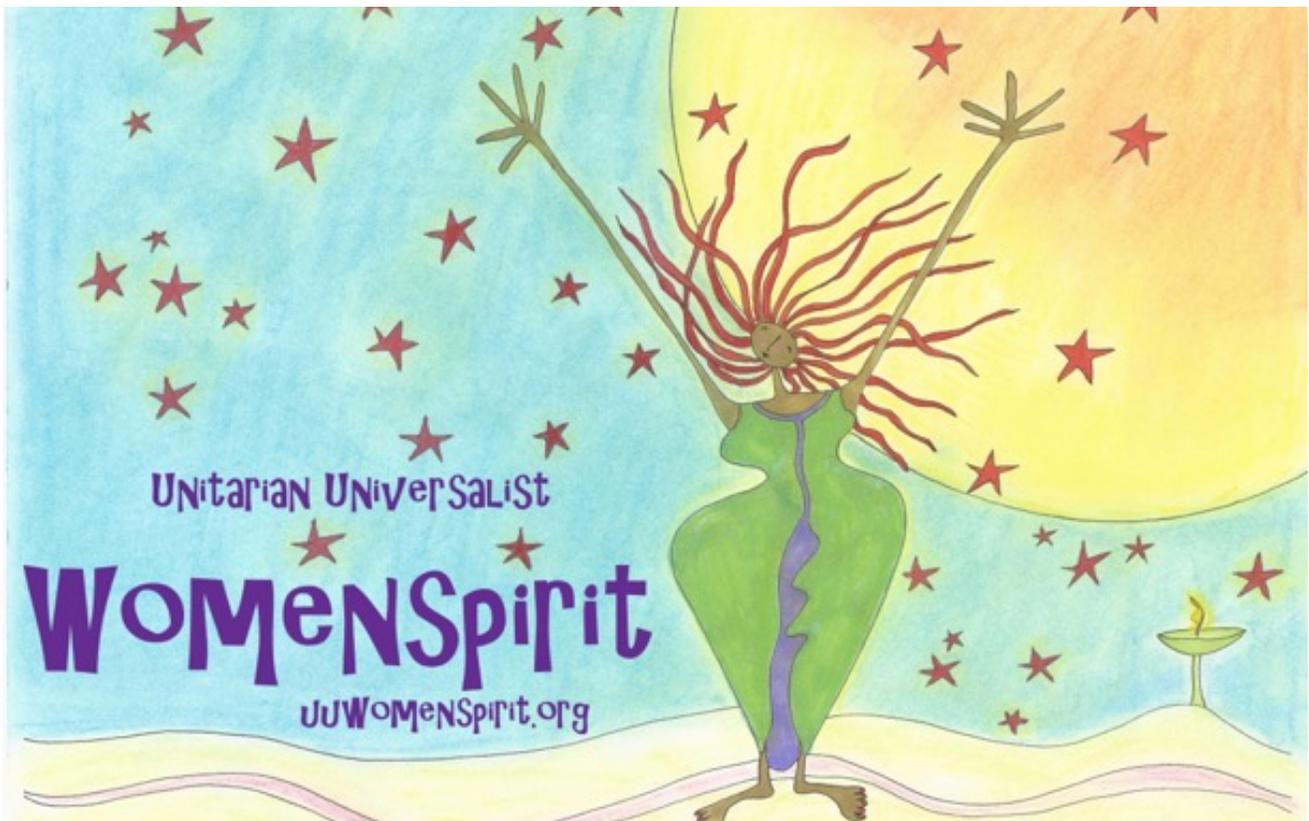


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SHE SPEAKS



Dear Sisters,

Lately, I’ve pondered the weightedness we seem to gain with the years. I don’t mean physical weight, although that is its own issue. I mean the weight of responsibility, knowledge,

experience, and grief. It is the weight of accumulated emotion. I have been pondering the idea of collective grief. Not in the way we generally think of it, as the grief experienced by a collective society or community. Instead, I have been thinking about the collective grief of a person’s life, of the accumulation of disappointments, betrayals, and losses we carry with us as we move through the world.

The last few years have felt heavy. I am honestly not sure how we come back from it. You can never unknow something. You can never forget how we reacted and divided as a society. How do we bring back the hope when it feels like we are not hoping for the same things?

I don’t know, but I know I don’t feel the same limitless possibility I felt before. Things feel heavy, like we are moving through our lives carrying emotional baggage along with the family heirlooms, memories, and pants we’re hoping to fit back into one day.

I usually try to end bring these letters back around to a message of hope, but I don’t have one today. Let’s just be gentle with ourselves, supportive of our sisters, and ready for whatever comes next.

Be well,
Shannon Browning-Mullis, editor

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Review of Rick Riordan's Work by Nina Brewer-Davis

Goddesses, gods, a wisecracking satyr, magical mortals and oh yes, a quest that's really more like a sprint to stop the end of the world. I've been reading *The Lost Hero*, book 1 of "The Heroes of Olympus" series by Rick Riordan. Sometimes delightful, occasionally infuriating, always entertaining, I recommend this book series for ages 10 and up!

As someone who works with young teens, as well as being the parent of a 10 and 14 year old, I read (and watch) a lot of YA fantasy media, and Riordan is a leader in the field. Riordan specializes in retelling the old stories of Greek mythology in a contemporary way and at a breakneck pace.

Heroes of Olympus is a good place to start in the wide catalogue of Riordan's books. Riordan's most famous series is about Percy Jackson—son of Poseidon—which retells the *Odyssey*, but I find Percy's character too annoying to be invested in him. *The Lost Hero*, first book of this series, follows Jason, Piper and Leo as they discover their origins, their strengths, and learn to trust each other. The characters and plot are more interesting than Percy Jackson, as Riordan incorporates some of the less well-known figures in Greek mythology. Leo is a son of Hephestus; the trio encounters the deity Aeolus (keeper of the winds), as well as the magical but mortal figures of Medea and King Midas.

Riordan's books incorporate elements of an ancient Greek worldview and religious practice while also drawing on contemporary norms. In his world, teenagers make offerings to the gods as a matter of course, while also navigating complex relationships with their godly parents,

who are both largely absent, in human form, and simultaneously everywhere, as deities. Major events follow the solar calendar, with climaxes often occurring on or around the solstices and equinoxes. The characters know themselves to be subject to the fates, while also simultaneously keeping stubborn hold of modern notions of free will. A problematic aspect is the contrast of good vs evil.

Riordan's representations of women and goddesses can be irritating. Girls are perpetually supporting characters (never leads) and while they are invariably tough and independent, they tend to follow a rather limited range. I find his representations of Aphrodite, Medea and Gaia provocative and challenging. Aphrodite, in particular, is initially associated with the worst kind of manipulative and superficial traits, but this is soon made more complicated. I'm still pondering his representation of Gaia and can't decide whether I love it or hate it (see: good and evil, above).

Overall, I'm finding *The Lost Hero* to be just the thing for winter reading: comfortable, thought-provoking, and fun. You may also like to check out other books in Riordan's wide range, such as his series on Egyptian mythology, *The Kane Chronicles*. This could be an entertaining way to brush up on your knowledge of the Egyptian pantheon ahead of our Spring event with its theme of Egypt.

News from the CoCo

Notes from the CoCo Imbolc 2022

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 (Membership Coordinator and Registrar), Judy Padgett (Treasurer), Krista Meinersmann (Program Resource Liaison), and Melissa Christopher (Scribe and Keeper of the Sacred Text).

Save these dates for our next in-person events!

May 18-22, 2022
October 5 - 9, 2022
May 17 - 21, 2023

Greetings, Dear Ones, from the CoCo. In this slumbering season, the CoCo hums along quietly doing the work of maintaining our organization. We have a new insurance policy and we are using a new service for collecting dues and donations (more on this below!). We are in good financial shape going forward, after the financials were sorted out from the event last fall. The CoCo has transitioned its files and work to Google Workspace, which allows for greater ease of collaboration and sharing documents. Results from the in-depth canvassing surveys that were done during the event are being compiled. The CoCo had planned to meet in person this February for a longer meeting, but has decided to postpone this until March due to the recent pandemic surge. For now, we weather these storms in our own safe spaces, and hope that you are safe and well.

UUWomenspirit continues to meet monthly online, both in the book clubs and the social hours. If you haven't joined us for one of those, please consider it! The book club meets second Tuesday evenings to discuss chapters from *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. We gather for social hour on fourth Fridays. To reduce technology stress, we now use the same zoom link for all online events! Check your email for reminders and the zoom link for these events. Social media also provides many ways to stay connected. Check out the new videos that have been added to our Youtube channel! Worship services from our online rituals are now posted, so you can visit them anytime.

Don't Forget! Membership Dues are for the Calendar Year. January means it's time to renew your membership with UUWomenspirit!

Dear UUWomenspirit Sisters,

Another unprecedented year has drawn to a close, and while some of us may leave behind unexpected loss, we hopefully also experienced blessings in unforeseen ways. One of those blessings was that, even during these difficult times, we were able to have a successful and much needed event at The Mountain. Sixty-three women gathered, and we are so grateful for everyone's extra efforts in making our time together safe, fun, and renewing. Special thanks to the Planning Committee for all their hard work. UUWomenspirit continues full speed ahead, with the planning for the next two events actively under way.

We're excitedly anticipating "Journey to the Soul of Ancient Egypt", May 18-22, and "The Magic Within the Cauldron", October 5-9. Also, the important behind the scenes work of our organization continues uninterrupted, in order to keep UUWomenspirit healthy and strong.

As you know, UUWomenspirit is a membership-based organization, with annual dues of \$45.00 going to support our activities and the cost of technological needs, insurance, meetings, supplies, etc. Dues are for the calendar year and include the benefit of discounted rates for our events, our wonderful newsletter "She Speaks" and the satisfaction of knowing you are supporting this special organization, even if you are unable to attend every event. Membership dues are payable in January and are paid independent of event registration. We ask that you pay your dues now and assure your ability to participate in the "business" of UUWomenspirit.

Please renew your membership today. You can do this by going to the website, UUWomenspirit.org and clicking on "Join". Follow the prompts there, making sure to complete the membership form. You can also send a check or money order (include your email address), made out to UUWomenspirit, to:

Judy Padgett, Treasurer
241 Pheasant Creek Road
Casar, NC 28020

Imbolc

Imbolc is a time of potential, a moment pregnant with possibility. Historically, the day is associated with the first lambs of the season and the pregnancy of other animals. The days begin to lengthen and lighten. The sun's rebirth is often honored with bonfires or other fire rituals. It is also associated with Brigid, the Irish Goddess turned saint. It is a moment of hope and renewal. What could we need more?



Imbolc Ritual

This Imbolc, we could all use a bit of comfort and hope. For your ritual, build a fire in a safe place: a fireplace, a fire pit, or even a candle. Settle in. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. Put on your cozy clothes, get a warm blanket, and grab your favorite comforting beverage. Stare into the fire. Relax. Remember the generations of ancestors that came before us and did the same. In the dead of winter, in the dead of night, they sat comfortably by the fire. They stared in to watch their dreams unfold. Do the same. Take a few minutes to focus on ten things that bring you joy. It can be anything: a memory, a person, a song, a place. Dwell on them each in turn. Let the thoughts fill you with emotions. Let them swell inside. Once you're full of that joy and thankfulness, turn to hopes. Not pie in the sky hopes like the lottery, just wishes of joy and wellness. Think of the five people you care most about and the hopes you have for their future. Send that love and warmth through space to them and know that the winter always turns to spring.

Menopause Mind by Sherri Philpott

There was a word there
I reach to pluck it from the air
It fizzes and flits away

What is an association?
Sounds like...
Nope. Damn it!

The Magic Within the Cauldron
October 5 th through the 9 th , 2022

Planning Committee members:
Event Coordinator Gail Stephenson
Scribe Toni Stephenson
Worship Chair Amanda Richards
Tracks and Workshops Wendy Lineberger,
Sales and Activities Andrea Johnson
Chaplain Alice Carnes
Logo created by Andrea Johnson

Next by Sarah Muller

What's next for me?
Do I want to know?
Now has been good
This pandemic time
The pandemic was
hard for the doers
hard for the goers
hard for the active
The pandemic was
what I have been
training for
Just my room
Just my words
Just my books
Just me

Welcome Sisters to The Magic Within the Cauldron. It is a place and time of exploration, healing and transformation. There will be worship services, activities, workshops, tracks and unconditional love. The Welsh Goddesses will lead our way and Cerridwen will inspire us with Her Awen (spark of Divine Inspiration). This is a space and time where one is only limited by self on the exploration of what the cauldron has to offer. We can't wait for you to join us at the fall 2022 event.

Mature Woman: Reflections by Linda Ankara-Dove

1. Especially first thing in the morning she concedes the image in the mirror reflects a person no longer young. She sees her face sleep-wrinkled, hair frizzy, even as her youthful zest rises with the sun. Shower, coffee, clean jeans later, she steps out, head up, spine straight. But as she goes about her day she sees herself reflected as a women of a certain age in the mirrors of the street. Ready for a new smart phone she is the customer for whom the techie dumbs down his sales pitch. At the library she is why the new girl at the desk, anxious to be helpful, waves her to the large-print shelves. In for her annual checkup, she is the patient for whom the doctor has prepackaged his diagnosis: After all, at your age Lunch in the deli where she's a regular. But the youth at the movie matinee issues her a senior ticket, no question asked. And people chatting in the popcorn line to pass the time, not to leave her out, ask her, but very nicely, how many grandchildren. For them—for all of them—she feels she's a walking stick grabbed tight or stepped aside for, for fear she stumbles.
2. These encounters have a way with them. Sometimes she turns into a sepia photo, yellowed, faded, peeling at the edges, or a discarded thermal vest and long johns slumped on the floor, or a well-used airbed with a slow leak, deflating. Dead of night she feels the girl inside her dream rap on her ribs. A high-pitched screech cuts through her chest. Her heart protests as if scraped by razor blades mislaid inside her thinning skin and rusting. By dawn she's at her outer limit—adrift under slack sails on a foggy ocean, or on an uphill trail petering out ahead.
3. A strong mug of coffee and she recalls how, once the kids were grown and gone, she'd hit the road; So she'd taught poor Calcutta women business skills and, even now, she serves soup in the women's shelter and shares poems in the jail. In the morning she asks the mirror on the wall, Am I really so decrepit, worthless, wasted? Too old to live the life I feel inside? The mirror clears its throat and tells its truth. Stand tall. A queen among women you are, the first among bright blossoms of the spring, And more. You are an unfinished manuscript who has a story yet to tell and a voice to tell it well.

Plant Profile

Turmeric *Curcuma longa*

Humans' relationship with turmeric began in India over 4,000 years ago. This powerful golden spice is unsurprisingly part of the ginger family and is both a culinary and medicinal plant. Although there are numerous benefits to the consumption of turmeric, it is best known as an anti-inflammatory. Why not give a cup of golden turmeric milk a try? Just search for "golden milk" or "turmeric milk" for a variety of simple recipes.



Prayer to Brigid by Molly Remer

Brigid,
 may I know bright flares
 of inspiration,
 the generous embrace
 of love,
 the delicate strands
 of devotion and discovery,
 the gentle nudge of guidance,
 the seeds of possibility,

the nurturing of new forms
 into being,
 the nourishment of healing
 and connection.
 Brigid,
 may I know
 deep wells
 Of peace

Womenspirit Book Club Review

Calling all book suggestions

As the book group winds down with the final chapters of *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, we are looking for suggestions for our next book. Here are some we've received so far:

The Queen's Cloak by Joan Chamberlain Engelsman

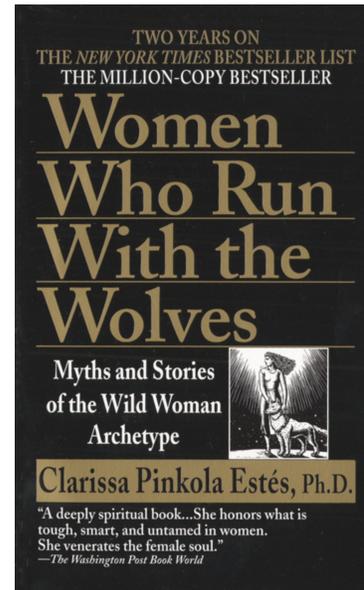
The Gift of Story: A Wise Story About What is Enough or *The Faithful Gardner* both by Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Warrior Goddess Training by HeatherAsh Amara

Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest by Suzanne Simard

We meet again on February 2022 at 7:30pm via Zoom. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Sherri Philpott at sherripsc@gmail.com with a vote for one of the books mentioned above or a suggestion of your own.

Bright Imbolc blessings to all!



Health by Sarah Muller
People that I have only recently met say
when I tell them of the years of illness
You look so healthy
Invisible to them are -
the days spent in my room
the weakness in my legs when I walk
the headaches
the cramping in my calves
the pain when I raise my arms
the frustration of no longer
sitting cross-legged in yoga class
the pain that makes me put aside knitting
All they see is me
when the day is good

Ever wondered about ancient Egyptian Goddesses other than just Isis? Come along with your Spring 2022 Planning Committee as we present to you our recreation of Ancient Egyptian Goddess worship on the Nile! We will dive into the way in which worship was viewed, how it was incorporated into daily life and how it could be as much fun as it was Sacred. Combining elements of decor, Sacred words and activities, we hope to make Worship into Magic! We will get to know the Goddesses Ma'at, Hathor, Bast, Sekhmet and of course Isis.

Come Sisters...Ancient Egypt is calling!

This Sacred Event is intentionally and lovingly imagined and manifested by your Spring 2022 Planning Committee:

Maggie Lovins, Worship Lead
 Kim Sitton, Worship Assistant
 Carolyn Pilgrim, Scribe
 Shauna Ireland, Sales and Activities
 Linda Myers, Event Coordinator and
 Tracks and Workshops

The Spring PC is still looking for proposals for tracks and workshops! Please consider sharing your gifts. Contact Linda Myers for details or just fill out the form on the website: uuwomenspirit.org/volunteer.

Murder of Crows By Sarah Muller

The crows were gone for years
 West Nile Virus they said
 They are back again
 I see them now and again
 harrying a nest full of eggs
 First I noticed the sound
 A cacophony of caws as I walk up the
 block
 Filling a tree with their bodies and
 their sound
 I stop to admire them
 to try to catch them with my camera
 Instead - they rise from the branches
 the street silent for a moment
 Then
 I could hear the man
 a faint cry
 Help
 The crows led me to his door
 to find him collapsed on its threshold
 The murder saved a life



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[Www.wingshuck.etsy.com](http://www.wingshuck.etsy.com)

Facebook: Anne Freels and Wingshuck

I make colorful corn shuck dolls representing the seasons, the holidays on the Wheel of the Year, traditional Appalachian, altar dolls, kitchen witches and Halloween and Samhain witches.



Annie Egypt Herbals

Anne Freels

Anneofriel@gmail.com

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Facebook: Annie Egypt Herbals

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Rain's Obsessive Stitchery

Rain Pope

<http://rainsews.com>

rain@rainsews.com

615-238-7760

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



Snake and Snake Productions

<http://snakeandsnake.com>

919-627-3138

Susan Baylies makes her lunar phase card and related products, t-shirts, goddess jewelry, and astrology charts.

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Nancy S Hagman M Ed, LMHC

Wellness Activist, dōTERRA Essential Oils

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Two Witches in a Kitchen

Maggie Lovins

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

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