



# TUCW Spring 2019 Adult Faith Formation

Six Part Series offered by



## Women, Spirit and Imagination

April 9<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup>

### The Purpose of the Series

To offer women a welcoming place to feel safe to explore their spirituality and imaginations. Most sessions will provide an experience of meditation, inspiration, creativity and connection, where women may absorb the healing power of beauty and a supportive community, and develop a feeling of calm and peace within, an inner haven to return to at any time. Six women will each facilitate a spiritual experience that involves the imagination (no prior expertise needed). We encourage women, if possible, to commit to the whole series in order to create a deeper community.

### When and Where

**Time and Day:** 7:00-9:00 pm. **Tuesday** evenings, except Session # 2

**Place:** The Meeting House, main level, at the Unitarian Church in Westport, 10 Lyons Plains Rd, CT, except for Session # 1 on April 9 – to be held at Janet's house in Norwalk.

### Who and What – Six Experiences, Six Women Leaders

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| <u>Date</u>                      | <u>Experience</u>            | <u>Leader</u>     | <u>Place</u>  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Tuesday, April 9              | “Spirit & the Arts”          | Janet Luongo      | Norwalk home  |
| 2. Wednesday, April 17           | “Spirituality of Mentoring”  | Cheryl Dixon Paul | Meeting House |
| 3. Tuesday, April 23             | “Fragrance Spirituality”     | Denise Page       | Meeting House |
| 4. Tuesday, April 30             | “Deeper Vision”              | Beverly Bailey    | Meeting House |
| 5. Tuesday, May 7 <sup>th</sup>  | “Woman as Spiritual Warrior” | Marti Bishop      | Meeting House |
| 6. Tuesday, May 14 <sup>th</sup> | “The Gift of Co-Imagining”   | Pat Francek       | Meeting House |

We encourage women, if possible, to commit to the whole series.

Limit of 20. Please register by April 5<sup>th</sup>. email [tucwomen@uuwestport.org](mailto:tucwomen@uuwestport.org)

Questions to Janet Luongo [jlungo3@optonline.net](mailto:jlungo3@optonline.net)

or Rev. Shelly [revshelly@uuwestport.org](mailto:revshelly@uuwestport.org)

**1. Tuesday April 9, 7-9 pm: "Spirit & the Arts." Janet Luongo. At 49 Creeping Hemlock Dr., Norwalk.**

The experience will start with a "chakra" meditation to activate our energy, and a warm-up creativity exercise – no experience necessary. We'll reflect on paintings by Janet and other women artists to spark an imaginative response. Each woman may choose a creative activity from free writing, creating a simple poem, drawing, watercolor, writing a journal entry, or remain in contemplation. We close with a circle in which each is invited to share her process or ideas, followed by drumming with guest musician, Terry Hess. Materials & instruments supplied, but bring a journal if you have one.

Janet is an artist/photographer and author of a book, *365 Affirmations on Creativity*, and is seeking publication of a memoir about 1967. She is a certified integrative coach and yoga teacher, and studies with Shanti mission, a multi-faith school of soul. A former art educator in schools, colleges and museums, she uses the inquiry method to stimulate creativity. She founded a non-profit that gave CT women artists visibility. At the UU church, Westport, she taught her son and worked on staff in faith development for children and families. She now serves as leader of the worship associates team, and has designed and delivered sermons. She offers on-going meditation between Sunday services.

**2. Wednesday, April 17, 7-9 pm: "Spirituality of Mentoring." Cheryl Dixon Paul. At UU Meeting House**

Starting with a chant, we will do a mindful meditation on a teacher, mentor, friend who opened your spirit: What was it that they saw in you? How did that change how you see yourself? A suggested creative response is to craft a poem or journal on that person, and share with each other if we like. We'll end by ask ourselves, "Who am I mentoring?" Please bring an object that reminds you of a teacher, a mentor or dear friend for our altar.

In Cheryl's sermon "Aging to Saging," she shared how elders who mentored her and how youth she has mentored made a big difference in her life. For 14 years, she's been reading to children at Beardsley School in Bridgeport, and during numerous visits to our Partner Church, she became so close to a youth that she attended her wedding in Transylvania! A founding member of our Worship Associates, she designed and delivered services, including a #MeToo service. She's facilitated *Our Whole Lives* on sexuality for youth and adults, a woman's brown Bag Lunch and Beloved Conversations on race. She sings with our church choir and Wilton Singers and owns Dixon Interiors.

**3. Tuesday, April 23, 7-9 pm: "Fragrance and Spirituality." Denise Page. At UU Meeting House**

Participants will use scents to reflect on the link to the olfactory sense, and its connection to mind, body and spirit as we engage in a creative activity that involves our senses. We will leave with a luscious custom handmade, organic, fragrant product. The materials fee is \$10.00.

Denise Manning Page, founder of DreamCatcher's LLC, is a relationship development facilitator who has facilitated workshops internationally for corporate, non-profit, academic, civic and religious communities. She is known for her work in diversity, equity and social justice. She's currently focused on guiding women to their core purpose. To give women the tools and environment to reconnect with their essence, she offers retreats. Venues include Barbados, St John, VI; the Cayman Islands; and in Connecticut at The Mercy Center in Madison, Enders Island in Mystic and Martha's Vineyard. Currently she is finalizing her book and curriculum– *FiredUP! Flourish with Grace*. Learn more on her Facebook group – *FiredUP!*  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/111732996039108/>

**4. Tuesday, April 30, 7-9 pm: "Deeper Vision." Beverly Bailey. UU Meeting House**

A wakeful meditation and mindful exercises will connect us to the spirit within us. Utilizing our 5 senses we will mindfully explore our inner souls through the beauty in art and nature. The human condition is challenged by everyday stress and anxiety. When we take time to pause and look through the lens at art or nature we can transcend to a peaceful place. Our stressful thoughts can be replaced with images of beauty and become a healing beacon away from disease, fear, stress, and pain. Please journey with me and ponder treasures unknown. Beautiful images talk in silence. Just listen! Please feel welcome to bring a digital camera or phone for a sunset photo walk. Other supplies will be provided.

Beverly is a new member of TUCW and hopes to utilize her background working with survivors of violence. Her passion is presenting "Healing Imagery" to bring hope and peace to the hearts of those who have suffered. Beverly was awarded a Pioneering Women Award in 2009 on Cape Cod for her work with survivors of violence, and was featured in a 3-part NPR series on *Murder in America*. Her images have been featured in medical clinics, courthouses, auctions, NGO's in NY, *The*

*Violence Transformed Art Exhibit* in Boston, and the Healing Newtown Gallery. One of her images won the Southern Exposures Grand Prize. In her spare time, Beverly and her therapy dog Sadie visit hospitals and reading programs for children.

**5. Tuesday, May 7th, 7-9 pm: “Woman as Spiritual Warrior.” Marti Bishop UU Meeting House**

Through reflection on women’s spirituality of ancient times and far away sacred places, from symbols and objects to the poem, “Calling Down the Goddess, we will be guided to experience within ourselves what it means to be a spiritual warrior in this time. Participants can explore poetry, journaling, art, and even silence as a means of fostering deeply spiritual connection. At the end of the session, we will have the opportunity to share with each other what it means to be a spiritual warrior.

Marti is an ordained interfaith minister and a former corporate marketing manager. She spent seven years as a Hospice Minister and Reiki Master providing spiritual support to dying patients and their families. Her interest in women’s spirituality inspired her to travel the world visiting 23 countries in four and a half continents. She has studied ancient goddess religions and neo-paganism for over 30 years.

**6. Tuesday, May 14th, 7-9 pm “The Gift of Co-Imagining.” Pat Francek UU Meeting House**

We begin the evening with meditation to center and ground us. We follow with the Visual Explorer, a set of images meant to inspire mind, heart and spirit. We are invited to explore what these pictures evoke in us and how they connect to our own stories. Each woman will be invited to intuitively “allow a picture to choose you, a picture that resonates with a significant time in your own spiritual journey.” After some reflection on the image, women are invited to share in small groups of 3 or 4. This is where the magic of “co-imagining” takes place. Each woman in turn speaks to what others’ images mean to her. Often, the gifts in this process are deeper connection, appreciation and meaning. We conclude with sharing, a special poem and a drumming circle. Please bring your journal, a pen or pencil, and a drum or rattle if you have one so we can end the series with a “bang” and some fun!

Pat is, as she reminds us often, an “outrageous” grandmother who enjoys bringing love and creativity to her family. When she’s with her grandchildren, Pat rejoices in the messy act of creating, which always, in her opinion, produces masterpieces. She is also passionate about the healing arts and is a psychotherapist in Norwalk. She has designed and facilitated women’s retreats to include “A Woman’s Walk” and “Inner Whisperings to Outer Creation.” Pat is a career counselor and also an executive coach for The Center for Creative Leadership. A pastoral care chaplain at TUCW, she offers grief support groups, and has written and delivered her own sermon, from Broken to Unbreakable.

**SAMPLE GENERAL OUTLINE of a SESSION**

Opening: Welcome. Chalice lighting and reading.

Check in. Introductions.

1. Inspiration. The facilitator will introduce some aspect of the arts -- a piece of music; or literature (poem, paragraph from a story, or scriptural quote); or visual art (paintings, photographs, sculpture, or sacred objects/symbols)
2. Imagination: Participants would reflect on the inspiration, then respond by choosing a creative activity such as composing a song; journaling, writing a poem or story; or making their own visual art; (coloring mandalas, drawing freely with chalk, painting watercolors, making a collage or vision board of photographs, etc. They may also choose to remain in silence or take a walk.
3. Connection: Participants may share what they created and/or the process of creating – their thoughts and especially their emotions. They may want to share personal stories or not. Depending on the size of the room and the weather, they may want form a whole group circle, or to pair up and talk or go out to walk together in silence.

Closing of whole group in circle. Each shares a sentence on how they feel.

Participants have said they’d like to take away a feeling of calm and peace within, a haven to return to during the week.