



SUMMER 2025

## Summer 2025 Retreat

Ronora Lodge and Retreat Center near Watervliet Michigan

August 15-17, 2025



Our Summer event is extra-relaxed with plenty of free time. The lovely 400+ acres of woodland surrounding the lodges at Ronora are filled with spirit and natural wonders.

Join us for 2 nights or get a Day Pass for Saturday! We'll enjoy our usual Rituals \* A Workshop (or two) \* Games and crafts \* Free time in Nature \* Drumming \* Giveaway Blanket \* and Bonfire.

Connection Council members are the planning team! Gretchen Ohmann is our Lead, Nyx is Registrar, and meal planners Kathy, Diana and Karen will keep us well fed. Jenn Johnson will be leading a Saturday morning workshop on self-defense.

**SHARE!!** [Connection Retreats 2025 Summer poster](#)

**REGISTER NOW !**

## 2025 Spring Retreat Wrap-Up

*by Sage Hagy*

Every year as spring begins I look forward to going to Pilgrim Park in Princeton, Illinois for the Women's Connection Spring Conference. I love seeing old friends and meeting new ones. In 2025, this started on the drive to Princeton, where I met Sydney VandenBusch for the first time and an old friend, Karen Kortsch, drove the car. Sydney had played a game of Buses, Trains, Planes, and Automobiles, substituting walking for the airplane component to be with us.

Thursday evening was a relaxing time of saying hello to old and new friends. I set up the sale of items for the benefit of our scholarship fund. Deb Czarnopys-White was working on downsizing, and she donated some lovely things to Women's Connection for us to sell. I myself turned in early getting a good night's sleep.

On Friday, we all enjoyed a leisurely day in our beautiful surroundings. Some women joined Gretchen Ohmann in learning songs from the Raging Grannies. This is an organization that has been around since the 1980s. As quoted from their website, "We are out in the streets promoting peace, justice, social and economic equality through song and humor." Even those that stayed in the lobby enjoyed hearing the singing and laughter.



Women also spent the day working on puzzles (thank you, Angela C.), coloring with colored pencils (thank you, Kathy Miller), and walking the grounds (thank you, Gaia). This is the second year that we began with this extra day to gather together and enjoy each other's company. It is something that we will continue next year. After dinner, we had our opening ritual. Pat Hyams wrote inspirational words for us even though she was not able to attend this weekend.

Saturday started my favorite way, with a walk with Tori. We did not tackle the hill this year, but stayed on more flat ground while enjoying the nature and bird songs of the campground. After breakfast, we had our keynote led by Peighton Carter. Pey and her daughter, Abigail Bailey, both have Ehlers-Danlos and have written a book, "Bendy Bones and Stretchy Skin." Pey led a lively discussion of living with one's individual personal challenges.

I did not attend Pey's workshop after lunch, but I heard very positive talk about it. I did go to Tayuh Underhill's workshop. Tayuh took the spoon theory of chronic pain developed by Christine Miserandino and personalized it. She gave us a baggie with a certain number of spoons and a colorful die. She had written a script that encompassed a normal day and we saw how many spoons it took. It was very informative and illuminating for everyone in the group, those that have lived with chronic pain and those that have experienced the ups and downs of everyday life.

Saturday night we had a campfire, where we gathered to sing and make s'mores.

I had not had a s'more in years, what fun. For me, gathering around the campfire brings back many memories. It is a time to remember those that are no longer with us and the joy of being with friends.

Sunday morning again for me started with a walk with Tori. We found the camp's vegetable garden. After breakfast, we opened the circle. It is always hard to end the weekend, but we are also reenergized by our time together. This year, I hope this weekend made us all aware that we can be differently abled in ways that are not always visible and we should treat everyone with care and consideration.

## Raging Grannies? What?

Groups calling themselves Raging Grannies are not a new thing but they've been in the news more often lately, singing their original songs at protests and marches around the world. They sing about issues we all face: climate change, housing, healthcare, violence against women, and of course, politics. Gaggles of Grannies began in Canada, and now have chapters across the U.S., including Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin!

During our Spring Retreat, we sang some of their songs and got fired up! Songs are often new words to public domain tunes, and occasionally some contemporary melodies. Then we found out our own Pat Hyams still had her Raging Grannies hat!

Here are the lyrics to one of our favorites:

### Women's Song -- Tune of Nick Nack, Paddy Wack

Join us now, as we sing

Women can do anything (pause)

CHORUS (sing after each verse):

We can sing together, Facing an-y fear

Raise our voices loud and clear

No more violence, no more terror

No more feeling we're in error (pause)

We want safety, we want honor

We will not wait any longer (pause)

We need health care, we need choice

We have a vote, we have a voice

Pay us heed, listen to us

Womenpower is tre-mend-ous (pause) ...





## Fall Retreat

October 17-19, 2025

We loved our time last year at Cedar Valley Retreat Center, near West Bend, Wisconsin. The food is fabulous and it definitely was a cozy and comfortable space that we're happy to return to.

## Winter Retreat

February 27-March 1, 2026

This year we're moving on to the spacious Toddhall Retreat Center near Columbia, IL and very close to St. Louis, Missouri! We'll make it another spa weekend, with meals prepared by the retreat center.

Kathy is our Connection Council lead.



## Spring Retreat

May 28-31, 2026

Three nights! Make plans to join us at Pilgrim Park near Princeton, Illinois.

*Photo by Dawn Weller*



## Tea & Talk and Book Club dates

September 20, 2025 Host: Sage H

January 17, 2026 Host: to be announced

Book Club: We are open to book recommendations!

All our events are listed on our [NEW CALENDAR](#)

# Meet the Connection Council

## Janet Adams, Treasurer (-2025)



[treasurer@uuwomensconnection.org](mailto:treasurer@uuwomensconnection.org)

Janet Adams found the Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet about 17 years ago when she was asked to teach a yoga class there. Currently retired from Joliet Junior College where she was a career counselor, she likes to spend her time gardening, reading, singing in choir, and playing the piano. As a retiree, she has plenty of time to spend working on the Women's Connection council.

## Nyx Firebourn, At Large (-2027)



Nyx Ember Firebourn, Chicago, IL, is a multi-talented entrepreneur and artist who believes in living her joy! Women's retreats are important in her life. She loves traveling, learning new ways of seeing, and experiencing the energy that UU women gathered in one place can bring.

Nyx has been Registrar for our events this year!

Karen Kortsch, President (-2026)

[info@uuwomensconnection.org](mailto:info@uuwomensconnection.org)

Gretchen Ohmann, Vice-President/Newsletter (-2026)

Patricia Hyams, Secretary/Newsletter (-2025)

Janet Adams, Treasurer (-2025)

[treasurer@uuwomensconnection.org](mailto:treasurer@uuwomensconnection.org)

Nyx Firebourn, At Large (-2027)

Sage Hagy, At-Large (-2024)

Kathy Miller, At-Large (-2026)

Tori Kilhoffer, At-Large (2027)

Jenn Johnson, At-Large (-2027)

***What are women doing in YOUR congregation?***

UU Women's Connection Newsletter "Voices of Women" returns in the fall.  
Deadline for submissions is October 1st! [newsletter@uuwomensconnection.org](mailto:newsletter@uuwomensconnection.org)

## **UU Women's News**

Visit our siblings' websites for more information.

### **UU Women and Religion**

[uuwr.org](http://uuwr.org)

- [UU Women's Groups - Brief Herstory](#)
- [RARE FIND: Olympia Brown the Battle for Equality](#)
- [NEW! Whistling Girls and Crowing Hens Book Series](#)

### **International Convocation of UU Women**

[icuuw.org](http://icuuw.org)

- [UUs in Kenya Women's Project](#)
- [Update on Rev Rebecca Sienes](#)

### **SisterSoUUrce**

[sistersoUUrce.org](http://sistersoUUrce.org)

- [Sister Source Facebook page](#)
- [The Penniman Sisters](#)

### **UU Women's Federation**

[uuwf.org](http://uuwf.org)

- [Force Multiplying](#)
- [The Trouble With Money](#)
- [Getting Ready](#)



***Did you know?***

UU Women's Connection was originally a UU Women's Federation Chapter for Central MidWest District. UUWF decided in the early 2000s to do foundation-type work and to no longer support chapters, so in 2005, Connection reorganized as our own 501c3 organization

## **Unitarian Universalist Women's Connection**

Connecting people who identify as women and gender-expansive folks  
in the MidAmerica Region UUA



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