

Iowa Sisterhood Remembrance

May 2023

This morning we celebrate women who fly. As Midwestern Unitarian Universalists, we owe a debt of gratitude to the pioneering women ministers in the latter decades of the 19th Century. We know them today as the Iowa Sisterhood. We invoke the spirit of their life-giving ministries, their care for weary souls on the prairies of the western frontier, and their resistance to patriarchal domination. We reclaim their legacies, and we write their stories on our hearts, for they are our own stories.

We speak their names so that we may remember:

Florence Buck

Mary Edith Collson

Caroline Julia Bartlett Crane

Adele Fuchs

Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon

Mary Hoffendahl Jenney Howe

Ida C. Hultin

Mary L. Leggett

Rowena Morse Mann

Mila Tupper Maynard

Marion E. Murdock

Anna Jane Norris

Margaret Titus Olmstead

Estella Elizabeth Padgham

Gertrude Von Petzhold

Helen Grace Putnam

Mary Augusta Safford

Eliza Tupper Wilkes

Helen Wilson

Amelia Murdock Wing

Celia Parker Woolley

Let us give thanks for all the ways they inspired future generations of spiritual leaders of all genders, both ordained and lay. Let us together remember, in the deep down of our bones, the time when women were birds. If you look, you may find that your wings are still there. Feathered again and ready to fly, may we sing and soar without constraint.

