

TRUE
NORTH
ARTS

PILGRIM GUIDE



YOUR COMPANION FOR A
SOULFUL & CREATIVE JOURNEY



REFLECT • CREATE • CONNECT



A RESOURCE FROM
THE CREATIVE PILGRIMAGE

Welcome Pilgrim!



I'M KATHRYN...

ARTIST, AUTHOR, ASTROLOGER, &
INSTIGATOR OF SOULFUL AND
CREATIVE LIVING

Welcome

Come. Sit down. I'm glad you're here.

Your pilgrimage has already begun. The moment you opened this guide, you stepped onto a path of creativity, reflection, and gentle discovery.

This journey celebrates the tenth anniversary of ***The Mandala Guidebook*** and the thousands of lives it has quietly touched. Along the way, mandalas have become companions through grief, healing, new beginnings, and moments of unexpected joy. They remind us that a simple circle can become a place to listen, reflect, remember, and begin again.

In the pages ahead, you'll discover stories, creative practices, and gentle invitations to slow down and pay attention. Along the way, you'll collect Pilgrim Stamps, record reflections in your Field Journal, and create mandalas that mark your own journey.

There is no right way to walk this pilgrimage. Follow the path that calls to you. Read what resonates. Create when inspiration strikes. Return whenever you need a quiet place to begin again.

Thank you for saying yes to this adventure.

Kathryn Costa

www.truenortharts.com

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The Journey Ahead

TRUST YOUR CURIOSITY
FOLLOW WHAT CALLS TO YOU
THE PATH WILL MEET YOU EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE.

The Creative Pilgrimage unfolds through a series of invitations. Each one offers a new way to listen, create, reflect, and move with intention toward the year ahead.

VENUS STAR POINT

Name the Desire

The journey opens at the Venus Star Point at 0° Scorpio, a powerful moment for listening to the heart. Through the Venus Rose mandala, you are invited to name a desire or intention that will travel with you throughout the Pilgrimage.

THE CREATIVE PILGRIMAGE

Explore the Path

Through stories, mandala making, eight Pilgrim Pauses, and Field Journal reflections, we will explore what is calling us forward. There is no need to know where the path will lead. Begin where you are and follow your curiosity.

SAMHAIN & THE 13 WISHES

Listen Within

As we cross the seasonal threshold of Samhain, we turn inward and begin reflecting upon our wishes for the coming year. Let your thirteen wishes emerge gradually as you create, journal, and notice what continually asks for your attention.

WINTER SOLSTICE

Release and Trust

At the darkest point of the year, we gather to honor the return of the light and begin the 13 Wishes Ritual. For twelve nights, one wish is released into the fire, an act of surrendering the outcome and trusting the mystery.

THE NEW YEAR

Tend What Remains

The final wish is not burned. This is the wish that becomes yours to nurture in the year ahead. It may become a commitment, a guiding intention, or a seed that asks for your participation.

KRIPALU

Embody the Intention

At Creating Mandalas for an Inspired New Year, January 1–3, 2027, we bring the journey into an immersive weekend of creativity, reflection, and community. Through mandala making and soulful practices, we begin giving form to what we want to carry forward.

The path will unfold one invitation at a time.
You do not need to see the entire journey before you begin.

You can start the Creative Pilgrimage at any time you
discover it. Enjoy the journey!

Chart your own course.

TRUST YOUR CURIOSITY
FOLLOW WHAT CALLS TO YOU
THE PATH WILL MEET YOU EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE.

There is no right way to walk this pilgrimage.

You might begin with the very first Pilgrim Pause and follow along as each new story and video is released.

Or perhaps you've discovered this pilgrimage months or even years from now. If so, welcome. You can begin wherever your curiosity leads you.

You may choose to experience every part of the journey, reading the Mandala Stories, watching the how-to videos, keeping a Field Journal, collecting Pilgrim Stamps, and joining the Winter Solstice Gathering.

Or you may simply enjoy a story over a cup of tea.

You don't have to draw every mandala.
You don't have to keep a Field Journal.
You don't have to complete every Pilgrim Pause.

Some people will create every week.
Others will return only when life calls them back to the circle.
Both are perfect.

This pilgrimage isn't about keeping pace with anyone else.
It's about slowing down long enough to notice what is unfolding along the way.

Getting Started

YOU DO NOT NEED TO KNOW WHERE THE JOURNEY
WILL LEAD. YOU ONLY NEED TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP.

The Creative Pilgrimage is filled with invitations, but you do not need to do everything at once. These simple steps will help you get oriented and prepare for the journey ahead.

1. EXPLORE THE PILGRIM GUIDE

Begin by reading through the Guide. You do not need to remember everything or make any decisions yet. Simply notice what is here, what interests you, and what you may want to return to later.

2. INITIATE THE JOURNEY

Visit the Venus Star Point practice and listen for the desire or intention you want to carry with you. Print and color the Venus Rose mandala, journal about what is calling you, and place the finished mandala in your Field Journal or on a simple altar.

3. CHOOSE YOUR FIELD JOURNAL

Select a journal that you would enjoy spending time with. It does not need to be new, beautiful, or made especially for art. Use whatever gives you room to write, sketch, collect, experiment, and reflect.

4. MAKE IT YOURS

Create a title page to mark the beginning of your Creative Pilgrimage. Then dedicate a page or spread to collecting words, phrases, questions, and ideas that catch your attention along the way.

5. SAY YES

Print and cut out your YES! Pilgrim Stamp found in this guide. Add it to your Field Journal or place it on your altar as a way of marking your decision to begin.

Words for the Journey

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE CREATIVE PILGRIMAGE

CREATIVE PILGRIMAGE

A journey of discovery guided by creativity, reflection, and meaningful practice. Instead of traveling toward a physical destination, we use art and intention to explore our inner and outer lives.

CREATIVE PRACTICE

Anything you return to that helps you slow down, pay attention, and express what is stirring within you. The value is found in the experience, not in making something perfect.

FIELD JOURNAL

A personal place to gather the journey as it unfolds. It may hold reflections, questions, sketches, colors, photographs, Pilgrim Stamps, and anything else you discover along the way.

FIELD NOTES

Prompts and questions that invite you to pause and notice what the journey is revealing. You may respond with words, images, lists, sketches, or quiet reflection.

MANDALA

A circular design that often grows outward from a central point. Mandalas can be created for beauty, meditation, self-expression, healing, reflection, or simply the pleasure of making something.

MANDALA STORY

A story that explores what creating mandalas can reveal about our lives and creative practice. It may grow from a personal experience, a particular mandala, or a part of the creative process such as resistance, uncertainty, discovery, or flow.

PILGRIM

Someone who chooses to travel with intention, curiosity, and an openness to being changed by the journey. You do not need to go far from home to become a pilgrim.

PILGRIM GUIDE

Your companion for the Creative Pilgrimage. It brings together the map, practices, reflections, stamps, and resources you can return to throughout the journey.

Words for the Journey

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE CREATIVE PILGRIMAGE

PILGRIM MAP

A visual guide to what you will find at each Pilgrim Pause, including a Mandala Story, mandala tutorial, Field Notes for your Field Journal, and a Pilgrim Stamp. It helps you see how the different parts of each pause fit together.

PILGRIM PAUSE

A place along the journey to slow down, explore a theme, make something, reflect, and notice what arises. Each pause offers a collection of invitations. Choose the ones that interest you, spend time with what speaks to you, and leave the rest.

PILGRIM STAMP

A small keepsake created for each Pilgrim Pause. Print it, cut it out, and add it to your Field Journal as a way of saying, "I was here." It marks your experience, not your completion.

PILGRIMAGE

A journey undertaken with meaning and intention. A pilgrimage may carry you across great distances or more deeply into your own life. What matters is the attention you bring to the path.

Visit the Creative Pilgrimage web page for videos that dive deeper on the topics in this guide.

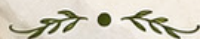


YOUR Pilgrimage MAP



The Creative Pilgrimage unfolds through a series of invitations. Follow along as each new Pilgrim Pause is released or explore them in whatever order feels right to you.

This is your journey.



There is no
right way to walk
this pilgrimage.

Move at your own pace,
follow your curiosity,
and trust that you are
exactly where you
need to be.



● Pilgrim Pauses

Thoughtful blog posts that combine personal stories, creative practices, and gentle invitations for reflection. Each one explores a watchword that marks another step along the pilgrimage.



● Mandala Stories

Discover how creating mandalas has helped people navigate grief, caregiving, creativity, healing, travel, and everyday life. These stories reveal that a mandala practice is about far more than making art.



● How-to Videos

Draw alongside me as I guide you step by step through each featured mandala. New tutorials are released alongside the Mandala Stories so you can immediately begin your own practice.



● Field Journal

Bring a notebook to capture reflections, collect inspiring words, sketch new ideas, and record what you're discovering about yourself and your creative practice.





YOUR Pilgrimage MAP



The Creative Pilgrimage unfolds through a series of invitations. Follow along as each new Pilgrim Pause is released or explore them in whatever order feels right to you.

This is your journey.



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this pilgrimage.

Move at your own pace,
follow your curiosity,
and trust that you are
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need to be.



● Pilgrim Stamps

Celebrate each Pilgrim Pause by downloading a commemorative stamp to add to your Field Journal, marking the milestones of your journey.



● Seasonal Gathering

Join us online for the Winter Solstice as we pause at the turning of the year. Together we'll reflect, create, and celebrate the return of the light.



● Continue the Pilgrimage

If you're longing to go deeper, I invite you to join me at Kripalu for *Creating Mandalas for an Inspired Year*, where we'll continue the pilgrimage together through meditation, creativity, and contemplative practice.



Initiating the Journey

LISTEN TO YOUR HEART AND WHAT
YOU MOST DEEPLY DESIRE.

BEGIN WITH DESIRE AT THE VENUS STAR POINT

The Creative Pilgrimage begins with the Venus Star Point at 0° Scorpio, a powerful moment for listening to the heart and setting an intention around what we most deeply desire.

Rather than asking you to have everything figured out, this practice invites you to begin with a feeling, a longing, or a question.

What is calling you forward?

What would you like to explore, deepen, welcome, or transform?

Let your intention become a thread that travels with you throughout the Pilgrimage. You do not need to know where it will lead. As we journey toward the Winter Solstice and the New Year, you may discover new layers of meaning within it or you may uncover something unexpected. Be open to following where this journey takes you.

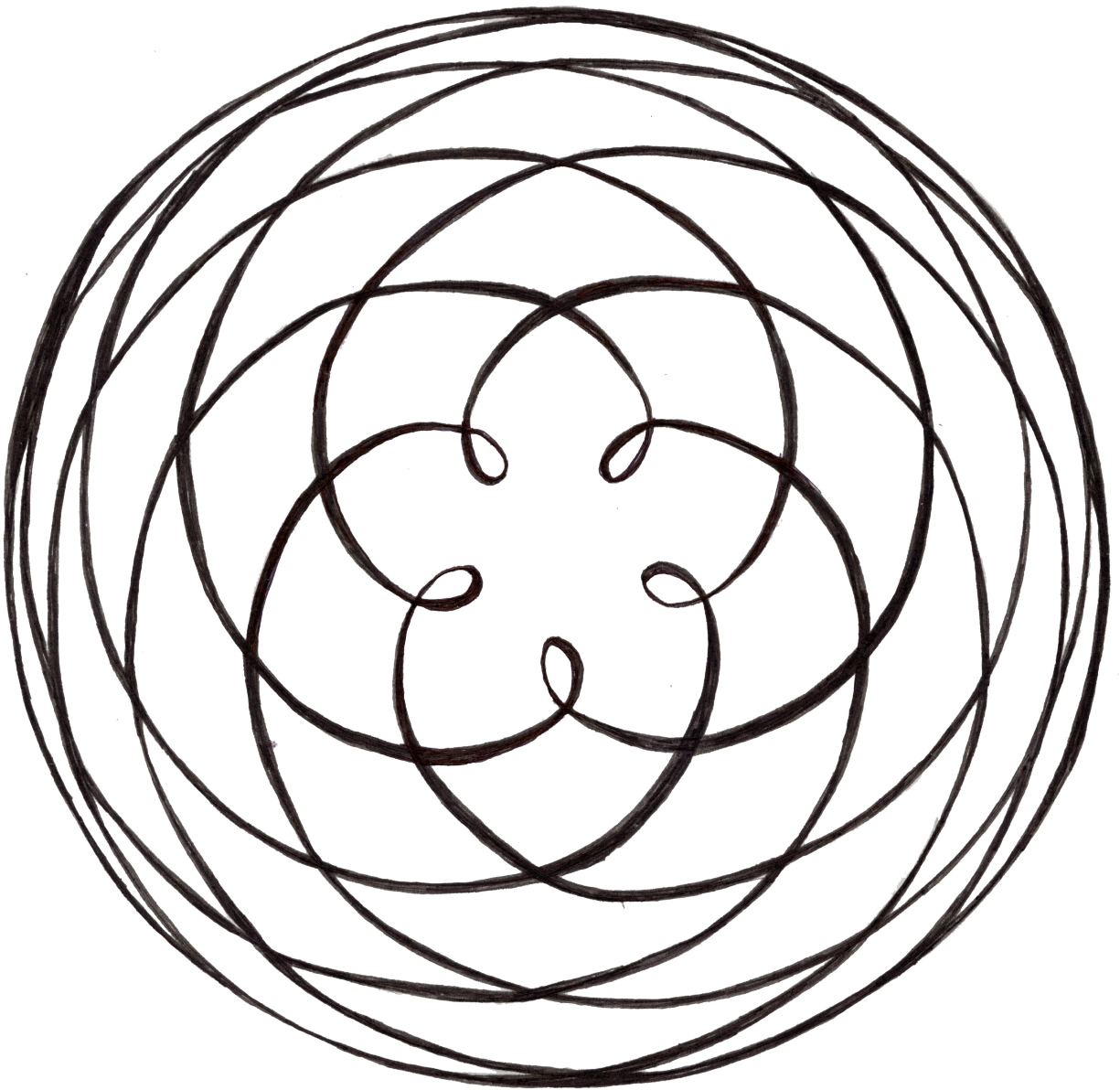
CREATE YOUR VENUS ROSE

1. Print and color the Venus Rose mandala.
2. Spend some time reflecting or journaling about what you most desire at this point in your life.
3. Write your intention on the mandala, around it, on the back of it, or in your Field Journal.
4. Cut out the Venus Rose and add it to your Field Journal or place it on a simple altar with a candle, crystals, or other meaningful objects.
5. Return to your Venus Rose throughout the Pilgrimage and notice how your relationship with your intention changes.

There is no need to force an answer or predict the outcome.
For now, simply honor what your heart is asking you to notice.

The Venus Rose

LISTEN TO YOUR HEART AND WHAT
YOU MOST DEEPLY DESIRE.



13 Wishes Ritual



As the season turns toward Samhain, we enter a time of reflection. This threshold invites us to honor what has been, listen for what is calling us forward, and begin shaping our hopes for the year ahead.

The 13 Wishes Ritual will accompany us from Samhain through the Winter Solstice and into the New Year. During these weeks, you will have time to reflect upon and write thirteen wishes. Beginning at the Winter Solstice, twelve wishes will be released, one by one in a burning ritual. The final wish becomes yours to tend in the coming year.

Your wishes do not need to be written all at once. Let them emerge as you travel through the Creative Pilgrimage. Add a jar or box to your altar for collecting your 13 wishes, each written on an individual slip of paper. Because these wishes are intended to be released, keep them separate from your Field Journal and try not to hold onto them too tightly.

LEARN MORE

Explore the tradition and find guidance for writing your 13 Wishes at:
www.truenortharts.com/13wishes

Mandala Stories

EVERY MANDALA HAS A STORY.
WHAT STORY IS WAITING FOR YOU?

Every mandala has a story.
Sometimes it's found in the artwork.
Sometimes it's found in the person creating it.
And sometimes it's quietly revealed through the creative process itself.

Over the years, I've come to realize that creating mandalas is about so much more than drawing beautiful circles. A mandala practice has a way of meeting us exactly where we are, whether we're celebrating, grieving, caregiving, traveling, healing, or simply searching for a spark of inspiration.

Throughout this pilgrimage, I'll be sharing personal stories from my own journey alongside reflections inspired by the many people who have generously shared their experiences with me over the years. Together, they reveal how creativity can guide us through every season of life.

The stories on the following page are just a few examples from our community. As you travel this pilgrimage, my hope is that you'll begin noticing your own Mandala Story unfolding, one circle at a time.

Mandala Stories

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MANY STORIES
SHARED WITH ME OVER THE YEARS.

A WOMAN IN CRISIS was admitted to a behavioral health unit after a suicide attempt. Journaling had always helped her through difficult times, but this time the words wouldn't come. Remembering my very first mandala lesson, that all you need is something to write with and something to write on, she began drawing five simple mandalas each day. By the end of the week, she had found her way through the crisis.

A DAUGHTER DISCOVERED that while conversations with her mother living with Alzheimer's had become increasingly difficult, something unexpected happened when they opened *The Mandala Guidebook* together. As they slowly turned the colorful pages, her mother's face lit up with joy, creating moments of connection beyond words.

MANY TRAVELERS have written to tell me that *The Mandala Guidebook* always finds its way into their suitcase. Whether they're traveling across the country or around the world, the book has become a trusted companion, offering a familiar place to pause, reflect, and create.

A CAREGIVER FOUND a few quiet moments of peace each day while caring for her grandson with autism, discovering that her mandala practice became a sanctuary amid the demands of caregiving.

A WOMAN LIVING WITH CANCER rediscovered her confidence, self-expression, and sense of agency through a contemplative mandala practice, finding a creative voice she feared she had lost.

ONE OF THE GREATEST GIFTS I've received is hearing from readers who tell me that, even after ten years, *The Mandala Guidebook* still has a place on their desk, bedside table, or art shelf. They return to its pages whenever they need a spark of inspiration.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Your story may inspire another pilgrim.

EMAIL YOUR STORY TO:
kathryn@100mandalas.com

The Field Journal

YEARS FROM NOW, YOUR GREATEST TEACHER
MAY NOT BE A SINGLE MANDALA. IT MAY BE THE
CONVERSATION BETWEEN ALL OF THEM.

Every pilgrimage deserves a Field Journal.

Pilgrims have long carried journals to record the places they've visited, the people they've met, and the discoveries they've made along the way.

This pilgrimage is no different.

The landscapes we'll be exploring are the ones within, the circle on the page, and even the people, places, and things we encounter along the way.

While your mandalas capture moments in color, shape, and symbol, your Field Journal preserves everything the artwork cannot.

The thoughts that surfaced.
The memories that returned.
The questions that lingered.
The unexpected moments of clarity.

It also becomes a place for creative exploration.

Sketch a border pattern you enjoyed.

Record a color combination you'd like to try again.

Collect meaningful words.

Paste in your Pilgrim Stamps.

Capture ideas for future mandalas.

Over time, your journal becomes much more than a notebook.

It becomes the story of your pilgrimage.

As you return to your practice again and again, you'll begin to notice patterns that only time can reveal. Certain colors may appear during seasons of change. Particular symbols may return when life asks for courage, rest, or renewal.

The Field Journal

GET STARTED WITH THESE THREE EASY STEPS.

1 | Find a Journal

Don't worry about finding the perfect journal.

Begin with one that feels inviting to you.

Some people enjoy a journal they can tuck into a bag and carry everywhere. Others prefer a larger notebook with room to spread out. Choose the one that fits the way you naturally move through your life.

For my own Field Journal, I use an inexpensive graph paper notebook because I love the grid for sketching border ideas, experimenting with symmetrical patterns, and jotting down design ideas. You may prefer blank pages, dot grid paper, or a mixed-media journal if you plan to paint.

I'm using a pen, colored pencils, washi tape, scissors, a glue stick, and collage elements gathered from magazines. These are all dry materials that work beautifully on ordinary paper. If you plan to use paints or wet media, you'll probably want a journal with heavier mixed-media paper.

Start with what you have.

You can always add to your collection as your practice grows.

The Field Journal



2 | Make it Yours

The first page of your journal belongs to you.

Write your name.

Add today's date.

Decorate it in whatever way feels joyful.

I created my title page over several days. I began with collage elements from magazines and, each time I returned, added words, colors, doodles, and little discoveries that caught my attention.

I wasn't trying to finish it in one sitting or make it perfect.

I was simply playing.

Now, every time I open my journal, I feel inspired to continue the journey.

If you'd like to include a hand-drawn mandala, the first how-to video will show you exactly how I created mine.

WHAT WOULD FEEL FUN?
DO THAT!

Hospitality
 warmth • welcoming • soft • gentle
 flow • connections • kindness • GENTLENESS • courage • courageous • integrate • cultivate • curate • peace • discovery • curiosity • compassion • love • kindness • ALIGNMENT • explore • belonging • exclamation • PATIENCE • SELF-ACCEPTANCE • the Practice • Play • PLAYFLIES • BE • HAPPY

DISCERNMENT • choose joy • wonder • creativity • awakened • precious • CREATIVE DEVOTION • creativity as a devotional practice • BEFRIENDING • rhythm • listen • sweet vigilance • tending • DREAMS • natural • radiance • QUEST • CALM ABIDING • Sanctuary

AUTHENTIC • EXPRESSION • DISCERNMENT • choose joy • wonder • creativity • awakened • precious • CREATIVE DEVOTION • creativity as a devotional practice • BEFRIENDING • rhythm • listen • sweet vigilance • tending • DREAMS • natural • radiance • QUEST • CALM ABIDING • Sanctuary

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Pilgrim Stamps

EVERY PILGRIMAGE LEAVES US WITH MEMORIES.

The Pilgrim Stamps are a way of marking them.

Each Pilgrim Pause includes a commemorative stamp featuring the watchword for that stop along the journey.

Think of them as passport stamps, celebrating the moments you've paused, reflected, created, and continued on your way.

As you visit each Pilgrim Pause, download the stamp and add it to your Field Journal in whatever way feels right to you.

You might create a dedicated stamp page, place them beside your journal reflections, or tuck them between sketches and collected words.

There is no right way to collect them.

By the end of the pilgrimage, your journal will tell the story of the path you've traveled.

Your first pilgrim stamp.

Every journey begins by answering the call.

Today, your invitation is simple.

Place the YES! Pilgrim Stamp somewhere in your Field Journal.

You don't have to know where this pilgrimage will lead.

You only need to take the first step.

Let's begin.



PILGRIM STAMP MANDALA STORY

EVERY PILGRIM BEGINS WITH A MAP AND A COMPASS.

This compass rose was created in 2017 by members of the True North Arts community. Each participant received a single section of the design along with a color palette. They didn't know what the finished mandala would look like. Their invitation was simple: fill their piece with patterns, symbols, and a word representing the intentions they hoped to carry into the months and year ahead.

Nine years later, it feels like the perfect symbol to begin our Pilgrimage. Just as those artists trusted the process without seeing the whole picture, we begin this journey one step at a time, carrying our own hopes, intentions, and curiosity.

Together, we create something far greater than any one of us could imagine alone.

This tradition continues. During the Winter Solstice Gathering, I'll reveal the 2026 Community Mandala created earlier in the year. Participants in the Winter Solstice Gathering will receive the first invitation to join the 2027 Community Mandala Project.

Because each mandala is handcrafted and every participant receives a 3-inch commemorative vinyl sticker featuring the completed artwork, participation is limited.

Thank you for saying, "Yes!" to the invitation to begin this Pilgrimage. May it guide you ever closer to your own True North.



Gatherings

A JOURNEY IS BEST WHEN SHARED.



Winter Solstice Gathering

Online • Sliding Scale

Sunday, December 20, 2026

3:00–6:00 PM (ET)

Attend all or part • Recording included

The Winter Solstice marks a sacred turning point, a threshold between the year that has been and the one waiting to unfold.

Join us for a soulful and creative afternoon of reflection, creativity, ritual, and community as we honor the journey of 2026, release what we no longer wish to carry, and listen for what we want to nurture in the year ahead.

Around the Circle, we will...

- Reflect on the journey we've made and the seeds we've planted.
- Experience a guided Soul Journey Meditation with an inner fire ceremony for release.
- Enjoy spacious creative time to draw or color a Seed of Life mandala, write your 13 Wishes, journal, or follow your own creative practice.
- Review the beloved 13 Wishes Tradition and prepare to burn the first wish that evening.
- Celebrate the unveiling of the 2026 Community Mandala and receive the first invitation to participate in the 2027 Community Mandala Project.
- Help choose the theme for our 2027 Creative Pilgrimage.

You don't need to have participated in the Creative Pilgrimage to join us. Come for the entire gathering or simply the portion that fits your day.

Learn more and register: www.truenortharts.com/winter-solstice

Gatherings

THIS IS A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME.



Creating Mandalas for an Inspired New Year

January 1 to 3, 2027

Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

As our Pilgrimage comes to a close, you're warmly invited to begin the new year with a weekend of creativity, reflection, and renewal at Kripalu.

Together we'll slow down, unplug from the busyness of everyday life, and immerse ourselves in a retreat designed to nourish both heart and imagination.

Throughout the Weekend...

- Create beautiful mandalas, whether you're a beginner or an experienced artist.
- Experience the Journey of the Four Gates to cultivate self-compassion and inner peace.
- Explore meditation, journaling, and creative reflection.
- Continue working with your Word for the Year and your 13th Wish.
- Enjoy nourishing meals, peaceful walks, and the beauty of the Berkshire Mountains.
- Connect with a welcoming community of fellow pilgrims and creative seekers.

A Retreat to Begin the Year

The new year offers its own threshold, a time to pause, reflect, and imagine what comes next. At Kripalu, we'll gather in a supportive and inspiring setting to create mandalas, explore meaningful intentions, and begin the year with creativity and purpose.

No artistic experience is needed.

Only curiosity.

Learn more and register: www.truenortharts.com/kripalu

Thank you

YOUR PRESENCE BRINGS THE PILGRIMAGE TO LIFE.

If this pilgrimage has inspired you, there are many meaningful ways to continue the journey and support this work.

SHARE YOUR MANDALA STORY

I'd love to hear how your own pilgrimage is unfolding. Email me at kathryn@100mandalas.com with the subject line Mandala Story

SUBSCRIBE TO EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Stay connected and receive email updates.
www.truenortharts.com/subscribe

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON YOUTUBE

Subscribing, liking, commenting, and sharing the videos are simple ways to help this free pilgrimage reach more people. www.youtube.com/c/truenortharts

GATHER WITH US

Whether you join the Winter Solstice Gathering or the Kripalu retreat, your participation helps this creative community continue to grow.

SUPPORT TRUE NORTH ARTS

If you'd like to help sustain future pilgrimages, gatherings, and free creative resources, donations are always appreciated through one of these options.

Venmo: @Kathryn-Costa-2

PayPal: kathryn@100mandalas.com



I'm truly honored to walk beside you on this pilgrimage of building a soulful and creative practice. At True North Arts, we follow the compass of the soul, creating from a place of authenticity, curiosity, and inner wisdom. For me, art is a language of healing and renewal and a way to return home to myself again and again. Sharing how this practice has shaped my heart and mind, in the hope that it offers you the soulful and creative nourishment you've been longing for, means everything to me. I look forward to getting to know you through this meaningful pilgrimage.

Kathryn Costa

"Thank you for bringing your beautiful light to this experience. The pilgrimage wouldn't be complete without you."