



FEMINIST CHURCH

*A Radical Experiment Of Gathering And
Practices Of Liberation*

Come, Siblings, We Have Bread and Shackles to Break

Welcome to Feminist Church, a home for bodies and minds intent on getting free.

A communion of resistance and care, bound together by rituals that return us to our ancestral liberatory dreams. Here, we steady one another on the path to joy and sovereignty, uniting again in our shared struggle for a life that is joyful, sovereign, and free.

Here, we gather in the spirit of radical feminist faith: faith in community, in justice, in our collective power to undo systems of oppression and build something more whole in their place. Like the traditional church, we come together in ritual, through word, silence, and shared truth, but our gospel is one of intersectionality, solidarity, joy, and refusal.

At Feminist Church, we pray not to a deity of patriarchy, but to the sacredness of our bodies, our desires, our grief, and our dreams. We make space for lament and rage, for witnessing each other's truths, and for the collective rebirth of feminist imagination.

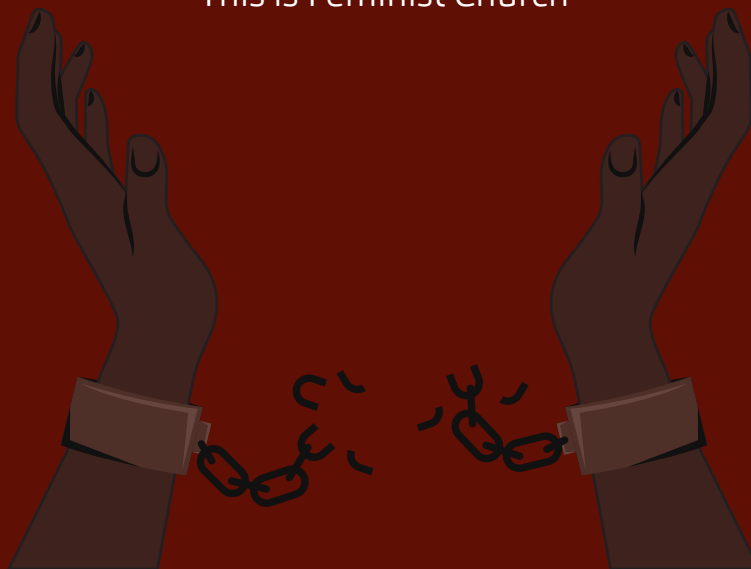
This is a place for radical honesty, for affirming that rest is resistance, that love is political, and that the personal is deeply, unapologetically political.

Whether you're here to testify, weep, shout, or just sit in the back and feel held, you are welcome.

This is our altar.

This is our congregation.

This is Feminist Church

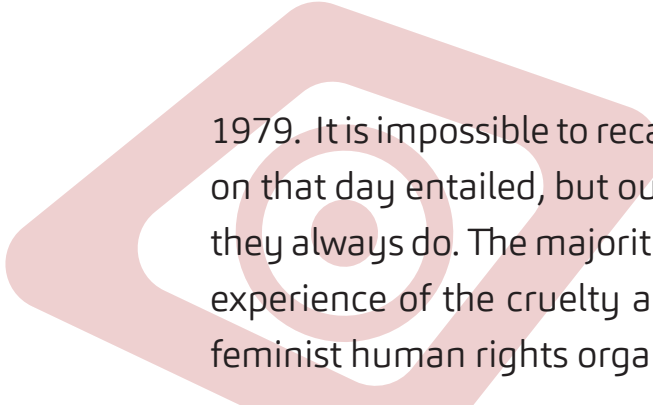




About Feminist Church

This text is a collective labour, held and shaped by many hearts and hands. It draws on the writings, reflections and stories of comrades in Feminist Church, including Amelia, Edna, Evelyn, Gloria, Helen, Joey, Lornah, Mugasha, Mubeezi, Olivia, Ophelia, Sunshine, Tricia, Vivienne, and others whose words live between the lines. While some of us are named as authors of specific themes, this document belongs to the collective. It is made possible by everyone who has shown up, shared food, offered care, asked hard questions, held tension with love, and trusted this experiment enough to keep coming back.

Since March 2023, a group of Ugandan Feminists has gathered together to break bread, read and analyse feminist texts, and be in community with each other in what has fondly been referred to as Feminist Church. The first church gathering was held on Sunday, March 26, 2023, with 11 people seated on the couch and floor of an office reception area that had generously lent us their space for the afternoon. Our first reading was “Cinderella’s Stepsisters”- Toni Morrison’s commencement speech to the Barnard College class of



1979. It is impossible to recall from memory what our conversation(s) on that day entailed, but our first gathering went on for many hours; they always do. The majority, if not all of us in the room, related to the experience of the cruelty and harm working with feminist and non-feminist human rights organisations.

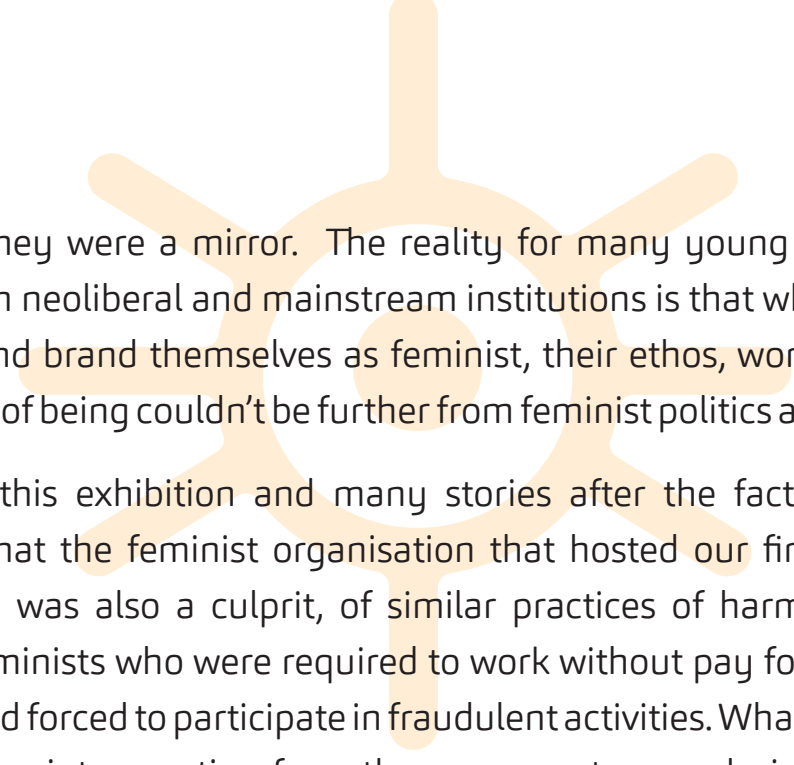


"I am alarmed by the violence that women do to one another: professional violence, competitive violence, emotional violence".
"I am alarmed by the willingness of women to enslave other women. I am alarmed by a growing absence of decency on the killing floor of professional women's worlds"

- Toni Morrison, Cinderella's step sisters

In the months that followed in June 2023, a social media movement dubbed #UgandaExhibition, Ugandan activists took to the social media platform Twitter in an exhibition series to expose the failing state of Uganda's social infrastructure: from the gaping potholes that form majority of Kampala city's roads, to the deplorable state of the public health care system, the violence of the security forces and finally what seemed like the most popular or controversial, an exposure of the corruption, and toxic work environment within the civil society organisations in what was named the #NGOExhibition.

Feminist organisations were not spared from this #NGOExhibition as many young feminists came forward or anonymously shared their stories and experiences of being bullied, silenced, underpaid and abused within specific feminist organisations in Uganda. For many feminists who have worked within feminist institutions and joined with the naivety of all young activists, there was no shock about these



stories. They were a mirror. The reality for many young feminists working in neoliberal and mainstream institutions is that while NGOs market and brand themselves as feminist, their ethos, work culture, and ways of being couldn't be further from feminist politics and praxis.

Through this exhibition and many stories after the fact, we also learned that the feminist organisation that hosted our first church gathering was also a culprit, of similar practices of harm towards young feminists who were required to work without pay for months, bullied and forced to participate in fraudulent activities. What followed was neither introspection from the movement nor a desire for one, and some of us who came from the world of feminist NGO organising in Uganda had to contend with the absence of accountability from the places we worked and contributed to building. We also had to examine our own culpability in creating, participating and building cultures and institutions of harm in the name of the revolution. We carry relationships that we formed, lessons we learned and some of the tools for organising. And we also carry sorrow and hurt from those experiences of work with acknowledgement that the structure was never designed to accommodate all of our humanity.

Globally, we are also reckoning with the politics of funding and growing fascism, reminding us that we can only rely on each other. The forces of technology and their double-edged abilities to both gather us and scatter us reaffirm that the tools for organising that we have been given do not belong to us, and were not designed for our survival. As the world collapses, beginning with the empires and the organisations we once naively hoped would be our political homes, and as we continue to navigate the polycrisis, gathering has become the way we sustain each other and reclaim our agency from the master's tools and their foolery.

Why church, you may wonder?

The idea was to reclaim some aspects of organising and community-building strategies from the Christian church, including: “reading the word”, carrying/sharing meals, and creating a collective pool of resources for mutual aid. What started as a few friends meeting in whatever free venue was available to us became a regular monthly gathering from which we have not only created a community outside of formal civil society institutions, but also cultivated a space for our thoughts, analysis, and safety, especially as our space for organising gets increasingly difficult.

Our journey of documenting Feminist Church began early in 2025 with a set of gatherings where we slowed down to reflect on who we are, how we hold each other, and what sustains our community. Those conversations helped us name our ethos and clarify what we wanted to preserve as we grew. Later, through the Sawaba Fellowship in May 2025, we took this work further, committing to a more intentional process of documenting our gathering practice, a collective dream we had held for some time. What began as a reflection soon became an act of remembering, a way of honouring how far we have come and imagining what might come next.

These pages carry our joys and pains; our feminist theories and practices; our questions and answers; and our visions for liberation and the sustenance of our feminist organising. Herein, you will find the documentation of our gathering practices and experiments.



Edna Ninsima,
Hilda and Tricia Abwooli

Hellen,

Community is our political home.

Maternal feminist philanthropy: We Take Care of Us:

Gloria Mugasha,

Ophelia Kemigisha

Joanita Najjuko

Sunday
The Gathering Practice of Feminist Church.



Woman

Make your
own spices

W
Transform

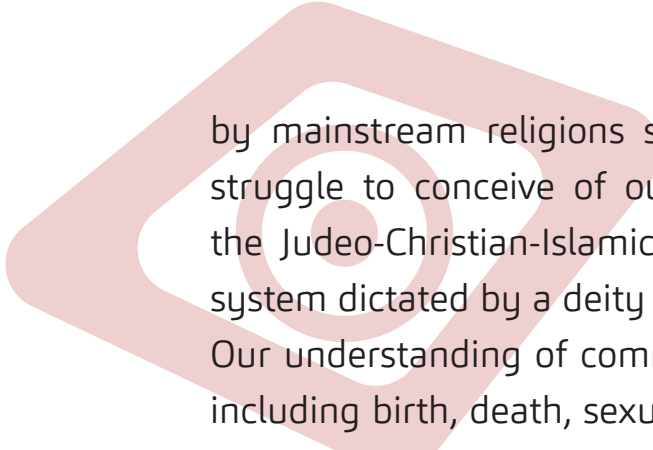
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What Is in a Name?

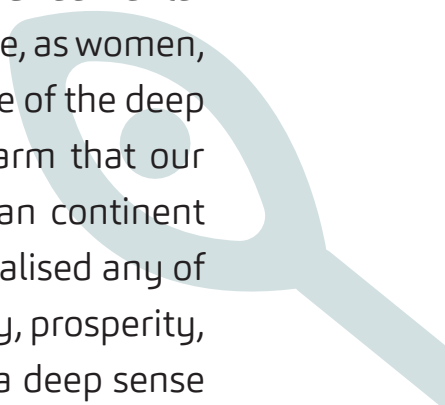
For an African Decolonial Feminist Collective, the name Feminist Church may evoke confusion or even discomfort, given the historical entanglement of religion with colonial oppression and patriarchal control. For this collective, it embodies an intent to enter and reclaim a space, an act of defiance against one of the first structures that marginalised us as people of African descent. Throughout our journey within the Ugandan feminist movement, where most people subscribe to the Christian faith, we have examined how religion, brought to the continent through colonial rule, remains one of the most effective tools of control for the white hetero-patriarchal-capitalist empire. It continues to shape our bodies, communities, and consciousness in insidious ways. Its influence has left many of us navigating traditions and values that feel foreign to our experiences as Africans, as women, and as queer people.

There has been a profound capture of our imaginations through religion. Many of us cannot think about vital parts of our lives outside the framework of colonial belief systems. Our imaginations, thoughts, desires, disdains, and actions have been shaped so deeply

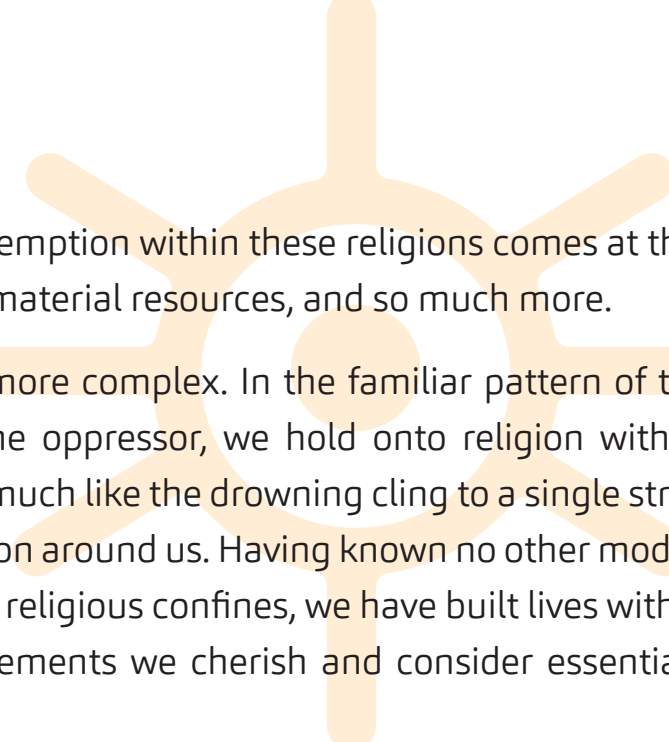


by mainstream religions such as Christianity and Islam that we struggle to conceive of ourselves, or our belief systems, outside the Judeo-Christian-Islamic worldview. We have absorbed a value system dictated by a deity imagined in the Middle East and Europe. Our understanding of community and fundamental aspects of life, including birth, death, sexuality, and morality, is now tied to rituals and ceremonies rooted in European and Middle Eastern cultural constructs

What is tragic is that this colonial spiritual imposition that has led to our enmeshment with these religions has not resulted in any fundamental transformation of our lives for the better, as African people, as women, as queer humans. Within us and all around us is evidence of the deep psychological, socio-cultural, political and economic harm that our participation in religions has caused. Despite the African continent being home to a deeply religious people, we have not realised any of the promises that religion makes to its adherents, namely, prosperity, humanistic values and ethics, serenity, protection, and a deep sense of community. In truth, a deeply religious Africa continues to be the poster child of destitution, human rights abuses, endless turmoil, and deep fragmentation from the household to the continental level.



For all our religiosity, our compatibility within religious frameworks is akin to that of a Nile Perch in the sky. We remain, lost, psychological fugitives, severed from ourselves and communities, exploited, oppressed and repressed within these religions. It is clear that we do not belong there and never will. We stand out like sore thumbs beside its saints and deities, who are depicted in bodies unlike our own. Our ways of life clash with the traditions and ideals of these religions; in fact, our ways are the antithesis of their spiritual belief systems. Many of us are regarded as fallen people, condemned to the various hells described in these teachings. And the price of the



promised redemption within these religions comes at the cost of self, community, material resources, and so much more.

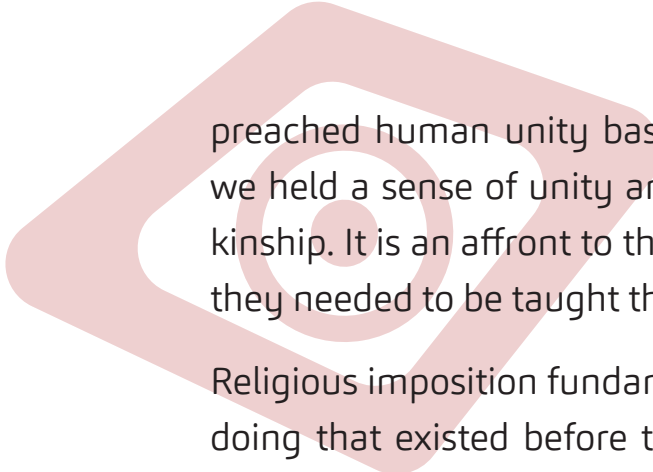
It gets even more complex. In the familiar pattern of the oppressed clinging to the oppressor, we hold onto religion with a desperate, sweaty grip, much like the drowning cling to a single straw, amidst all the dysfunction around us. Having known no other mode of existence outside these religious confines, we have built lives within them, lives containing elements we cherish and consider essential to our very being.



"Any God I ever felt in church, I brought in with me. And I think all the other folks did too. They come to church to share God, not find God."

- Alice Walker, in *The Color Purple*

In alignment with Alice Walker's statement, it is true that any divinity we imagine, including the qualities we assign to gods such as abundance, protection, providence, mercy, and peace, are qualities we first found within ourselves and shared with one another. This is to say that the admirable aspects of humanness we often attribute to religiosity are inherent to human life, not necessarily to religion. Our histories show that long before the religion hawkers who arrived with economic and political agendas from Europe and the Arab world set foot on the continent to instruct our ancestors on giving to the poor, we were already sharing resources equitably. There was no permanent class of people considered poor. And long before they

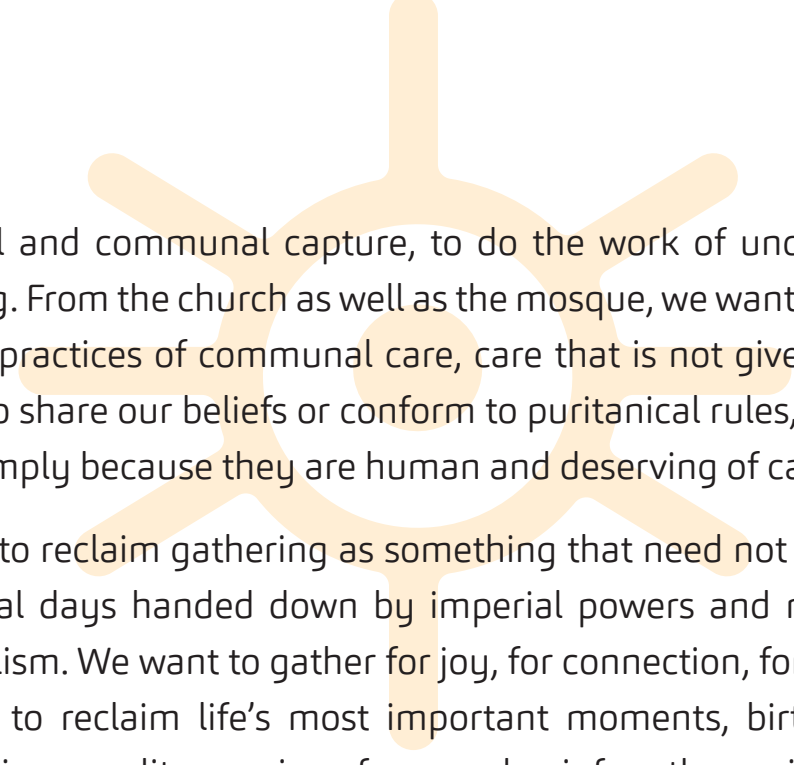


preached human unity based on adherence to a common religion, we held a sense of unity and community that extended far beyond kinship. It is an affront to the names of our ancestors to suggest that they needed to be taught these things.

Religious imposition fundamentally disrupted the ways of being and doing that existed before the arrival of religion. It replaced natural and culturally cultivated human bonds and a sense of belonging with connections based on shared religious belief, accompanied by shunning and hostility towards those who do not conform. Traditional intra- and inter-communal care systems were supplanted by religion-based charity systems tied to shared beliefs or the intention to convert, supported by promises of divine rewards or punishments.

The operation of religion through this cultural and spiritual hijacking has restricted our experiences of valuable human qualities like belonging, care, and mutual aid to a narrow lens of religion. As a result, for those of us who choose to leave religion, it seems that we are also choosing to abandon everything that comes with it, including the community we have within it; creating and sustaining siblinghood that surpasses familial ties; reading and studying the written word together; collective construction of communal value systems; delighting in mysticism or alchemy that is authentic to our identity, and many other facets of life that have been co-opted by religion.

On our journey toward humanist, feminist, and Afrocentric values, many of us, both within and outside the church, have begun to interrogate its role. It is obvious to us the way that it has upheld systems of oppression, and time and again. We find religion complicit in historic violence against African people, Indigenous communities, women, queer individuals, and other minority identities. So choosing to call ourselves “the church” is an act of invasion, rebellion and subversion. It is a deliberate use of the name as a gateway into spaces



of mental and communal capture, to do the work of undoing and rebuilding. From the church as well as the mosque, we want to snatch back our practices of communal care, care that is not given only to those who share our beliefs or conform to puritanical rules, but to all people simply because they are human and deserving of care.


We hope to reclaim gathering as something that need not be tied to ceremonial days handed down by imperial powers and reinforced by capitalism. We want to gather for joy, for connection, for comfort. We want to reclaim life's most important moments, birth, death, partnership, sexuality, coming of age, and re-infuse them with African traditions both from our past and from the ones we are shaping today. Because we, too, are the architects of what we call African traditions.

One of the challenges with using the word “church,” even in a subversive way, is that it requires constant explanation. We know that, for many people, the word evokes deep religious trauma. We also acknowledge that the name can be alienating to those from other religious traditions, such as Islam or Indigenous beliefs. As a result, “church” is not always the most effective term for mobilisation. Yet for now, we see it as a revolutionary strategy. In a context where Christianity remains a stronghold of imperialism, to take on its language and disrupt its turf is powerful. As spaces for organising become increasingly restricted, using a name like “church” is also a form of protection. It draws less scrutiny from imperial powers and state institutions suspicious of alternative ways of gathering. Under this name, many of us, regardless of our identities or ideologies, can convene freely without raising alarm.

So, what is in a name? For us, this name stands for reclamation, rebellion and subversion, strategies that we believe are efficient in our cause for getting free.



on

The image features a vibrant red background with several horizontal, hand-drawn wavy lines in a dark, charcoal-like color. These lines create a rhythmic, textured pattern that frames the central text. The word "Community" is written in a simple, rounded, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and partially enclosed by the wavy lines. The overall aesthetic is that of a hand-drawn or folk-art style illustration.

Community



Community as Our Political Home

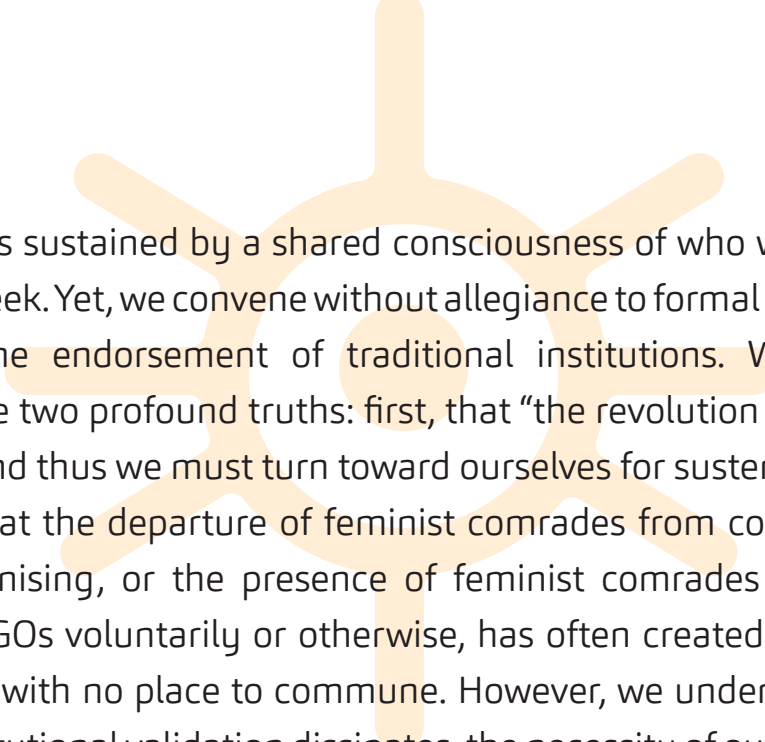


"Real resistance has real consequences,
and no salary".

~ Arundhati Roy


As inheritors and architects of the feminist movement in Uganda, we do not fashion our struggle in a void, nor do we build from nothing. We carry the weight and wisdom of history, its triumphs and its fractures, collected through the years as feminists, activists, workers, daughters, lovers, and through the many identities we embody. To acknowledge this inheritance is to situate ourselves within the distinct socio-political landscape that both constrains and compels us, and to recognise why the need for this community emerges.

Our practice of gathering as a community of self-proclaimed African



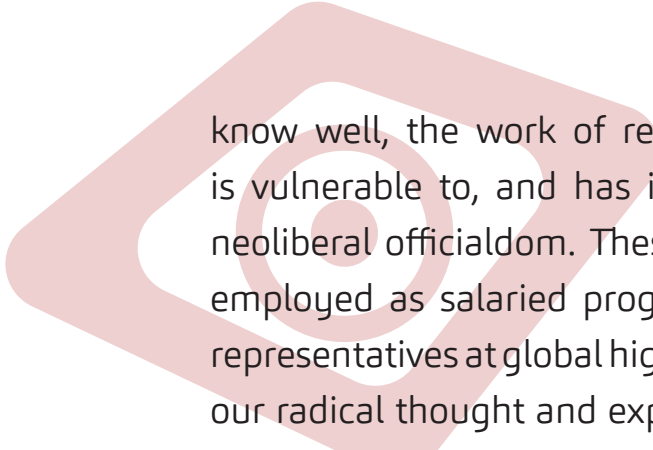
feminists is sustained by a shared consciousness of who we are and what we seek. Yet, we convene without allegiance to formal structures, without the endorsement of traditional institutions. Within this absence lie two profound truths: first, that “the revolution will not be funded” and thus we must turn toward ourselves for sustenance; and second, that the departure of feminist comrades from conventional NGO organising, or the presence of feminist comrades who exist outside NGOs voluntarily or otherwise, has often created undesired loneliness with no place to commune. However, we understand that when institutional validation dissipates, the necessity of our existence and way of life endures.

It is with this understanding that we draw to this fire of feminist sisterhood, choosing to organise beyond the limits of capitalist-institutional frames. This gathering is not mere companionship, but a social contract with one another; an act of political and personal fidelity rooted firmly in the declarations of the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists.



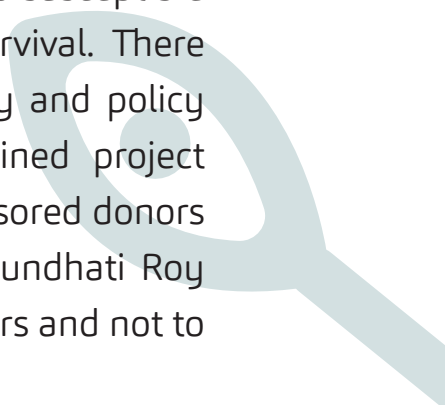
Community as our political home is a call to take feminism out of institutions and to imagine what organising can become when we insist that our liberation cannot be co-opted by neoliberal civil society organisations. Are we able, or willing, to see that consciousness building and community building are how we save ourselves? Making it out alive cannot happen through the same individualising neoliberal civil society organisations that act at the beck and call of oppressive systems, the ones with enough money to philanthropise and enough money to send fragments back to the “marginalised.” Our revolutionary goals cannot be materialised at the feet of Key Performance Indicators, nor under the pressure of reports, deadlines, and indicators.

In the institutionalised resistance and activist spaces most of us



know well, the work of resistance or political feminist organising is vulnerable to, and has indeed been tainted by, the dangers of neoliberal officialdom. These are spaces where many of us remain employed as salaried program managers, consultants and African representatives at global high-level meetings. These roles often curtail our radical thought and expression, sometimes making us complicit in the neoliberal agenda.

Hierarchical structures inevitably breed dizzying power dynamics that have long perpetuated abuse and oppression. The activist-for-pay trope draws us into the rat race and makes us susceptible to betraying the collective in pursuit of individual survival. There is also the mechanical regurgitation of political theory and policy instruments, used as a substitute for praxis. Deadlined project accountability reports to neocolonial government-sponsored donors further entrench this, as writer and critical theorist Arundhati Roy reminds us: such systems keep us accountable to funders and not to the people among whom we work.



"We are the ones we've been waiting for."

~ Alice Walker

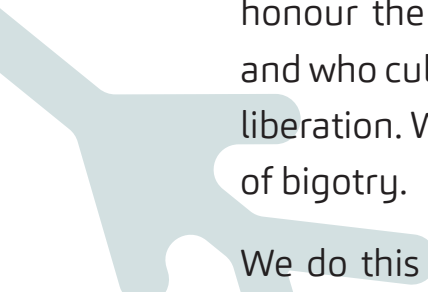
In the Feminist Church, as we watch systems of oppression grow bolder and gain ground around the world, we are reminded that there will be no imaginary shelters and no saviours within these systems. Our collective liberation will not be secured through our individual properties, savings accounts, nuclear families, jobs, academic qualifications or our positions on the desirability index. It will certainly not come from organising that relies entirely on the goodwill of



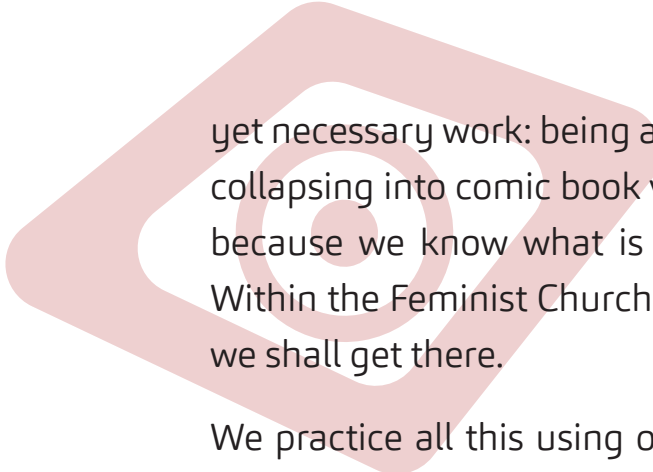
Western governments.

Feminist Church is our attempt to reclaim our time and use it to organise with each other for our freedom and joy.

We are co-creating this space and community based on trust. We trust each other to keep one another safe. We trust each other enough to know that we will not cause harm. This means we are collectively responsible for maintaining a safe space and community for every sibling in all their diversity. We must maintain this safety in our thoughts, our words and in the people we choose to bring into the space. Feminist Church is therefore an invite-only event. If a member invites someone, they are accountable for that person's behaviour and politics. We expect all who commune with us to be committed to learning and practising decolonial African feminist politics. While there will always be room to err and to grow, there are values on which we cannot compromise. We only gather with those who honour the dignity of all people, who affirm queer and trans lives, and who cultivate a politics rooted in solidarity, respect, and collective liberation. We will not abide homophobia, transphobia or any flavour of bigotry.




We do this work remembering that those of us who have endured humiliating visa rituals for UN gender equality meetings are no more qualified than those who face misogynists in digital spaces or address sexual harassment in institutions. We know that while some of us are well-known for our feminist contributions, our lesser-known comrades hold equal value in our community. We understand that qualifications and categorisations in what bell hooks called the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy are often nothing more than a different set of shackles. Remembering our own shackles reminds us that while we are oppressed, we can also be complicit. This truth grants us the grace to do what Toni Morrison describes as difficult



yet necessary work: being and remaining human. It prevents us from collapsing into comic book versions of ourselves or medieval rhetoric because we know what is right, what is true and what is needed. Within the Feminist Church community, we hold on to the hope that we shall get there.

We practice all this using our energy, time and knowledge, without the buffers that professional organising provides. We do so while navigating the challenges of our individual lives, including chronic illness, mental fatigue, mothering, school demands, family dynamics, work pressures and financial struggles. These realities take a toll, yet we show up. We arrive with our joys and pains, our style and our brilliant minds. We hold onto each other as soul nourishment, and as the most reliable form of political sustainability we will ever have. And we do it while holding space for our contradictions and imperfections. We step into the collective stripped of the exceptionalism that comes with career organising.



**"I am not free while any woman is unfree,
even when her shackles are very different
from my own."**

~ Audre Lorde

We organise across differences, recognising our comrades in the informal sector and reaching out to organise with them and not at them. We are aware that the University student, still in the beautiful discovery stage of their feminist politic, is a valuable comrade. We hold space for their rage, their learning and their missteps in political language.

Radical Love

LIBRA
22.50

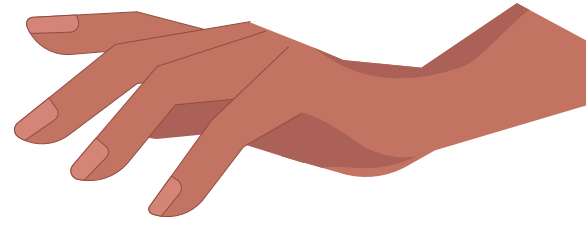
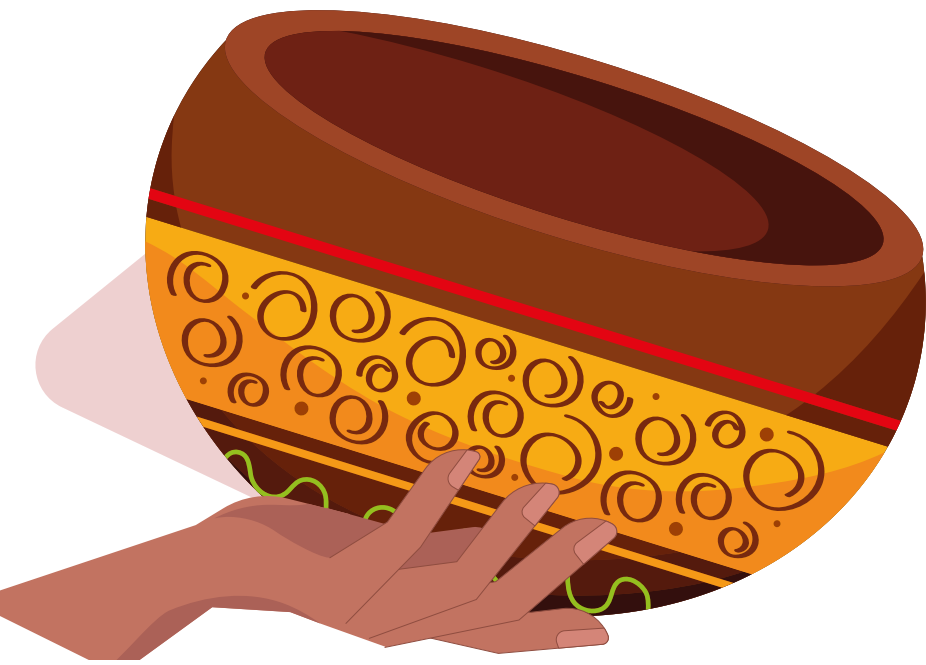
Liberation ✨

The

Tapestry

*of our
being!*

faith in community,

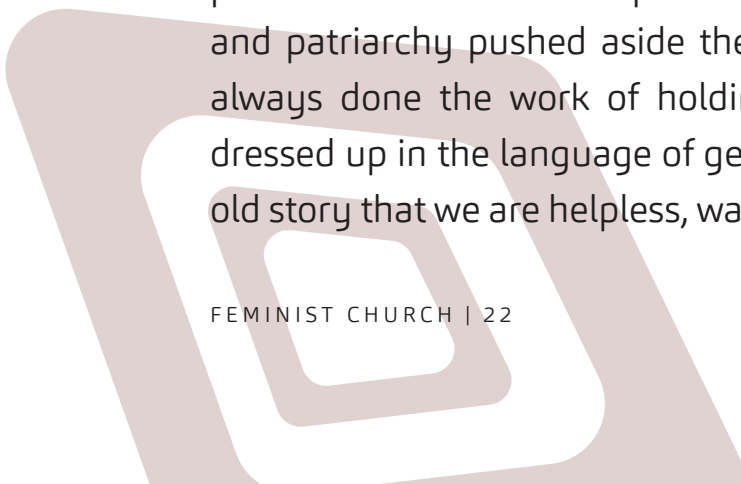


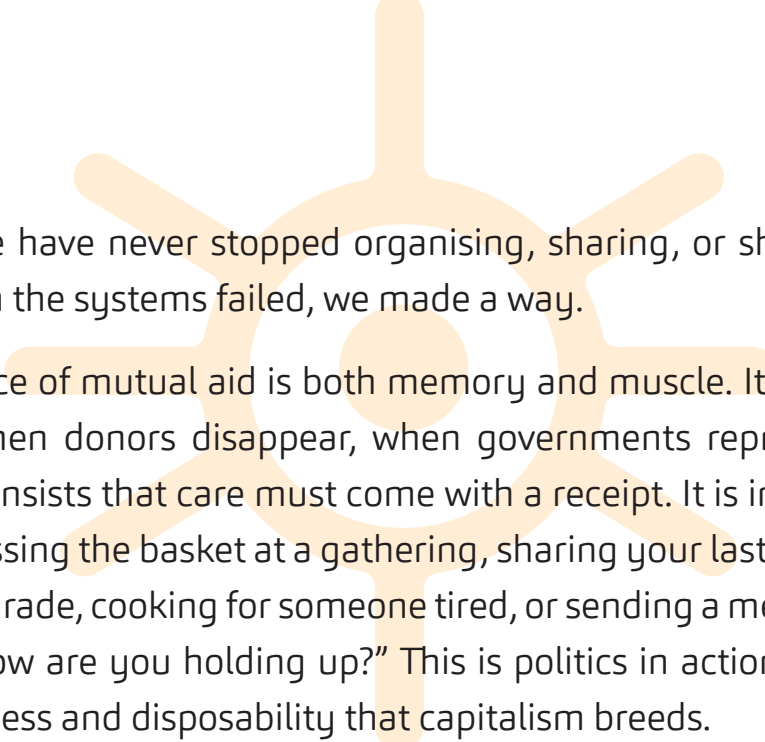
We Take Care of Us: Decolonial Feminist Resourcing



When we say we take care of us, we mean it quite literally. For as long as we can remember, our communities have found ways to hold one another, to feed, heal, and carry each other through life's many turns. This is not new; it is who we have always been. Long before anyone called it "philanthropy" or "development," we already had our own ways of sharing. We called it Ubuntu, Kibiina, Harambee, Ilima, Mukando, different names, one spirit: we rise together or not at all.

Over time, the world around us has tried to make us forget that. Colonialism told us we were poor, that our ways of giving were primitive or inefficient. Capitalism told us that care must be earned, and patriarchy pushed aside the women and queer folk who have always done the work of holding community together. Even aid, dressed up in the language of generosity, often came with the same old story that we are helpless, waiting to be saved. But we have never



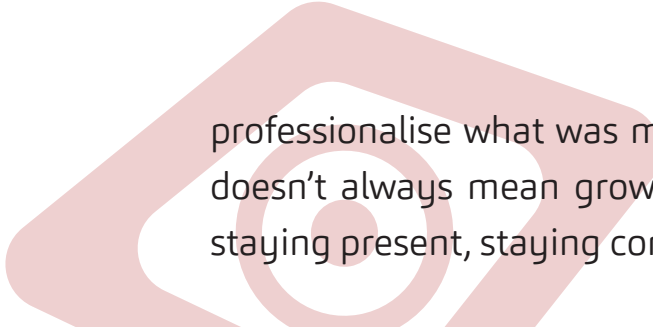


waited, we have never stopped organising, sharing, or showing up. Even when the systems failed, we made a way.

Our practice of mutual aid is both memory and muscle. It is how we survive when donors disappear, when governments repress, when the world insists that care must come with a receipt. It is in the small things: passing the basket at a gathering, sharing your last ka money with a comrade, cooking for someone tired, or sending a message just to ask, “How are you holding up?” This is politics in action, resisting the loneliness and disposability that capitalism breeds.

We invest in one another because we know that our well-being is collective. In Feminist Church, a worthy investment might look like paying for therapy so a comrade can keep going, helping someone cover rent or school fees, funding art that heals us, or keeping a shelter open when violence spikes. Sometimes it looks like laughter, a dance floor, a shared meal, a moment of rest that reminds us joy is also resistance. And sometimes, it is the simplest gestures: checking in when someone goes quiet, sending flowers, offering your couch, sitting in a circle and saying, let’s figure it out together. Those who have more give more, and those in need are held without shame. We joke about “feminist sugar mummies,” but really, it is our way of honouring abundance as something we create together, not one person having a lot, but everyone having enough.

This is how we understand decolonial feminist resourcing. It is about remembering what was stolen from us: trust, reciprocity, the sacredness of the commons, and choosing to rebuild it with our own hands. It is both practice and theory, practice, because we gather, give, and grow together in real, everyday ways; theory, because we insist that care is work, and that love itself is political. We are careful, too, not to let the world turn this into another project. Capitalism loves to absorb radical practice, to scale what was meant to be intimate, to



professionalise what was meant to be human. For us, sustainability doesn't always mean growth; sometimes, it just means continuity, staying present, staying connected, staying kind.

And so, we keep asking ourselves the same simple questions:



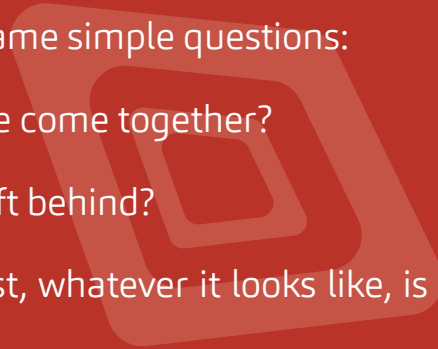
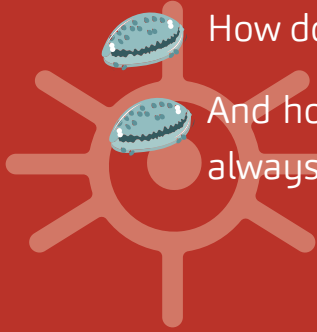
What do we already have when we come together?



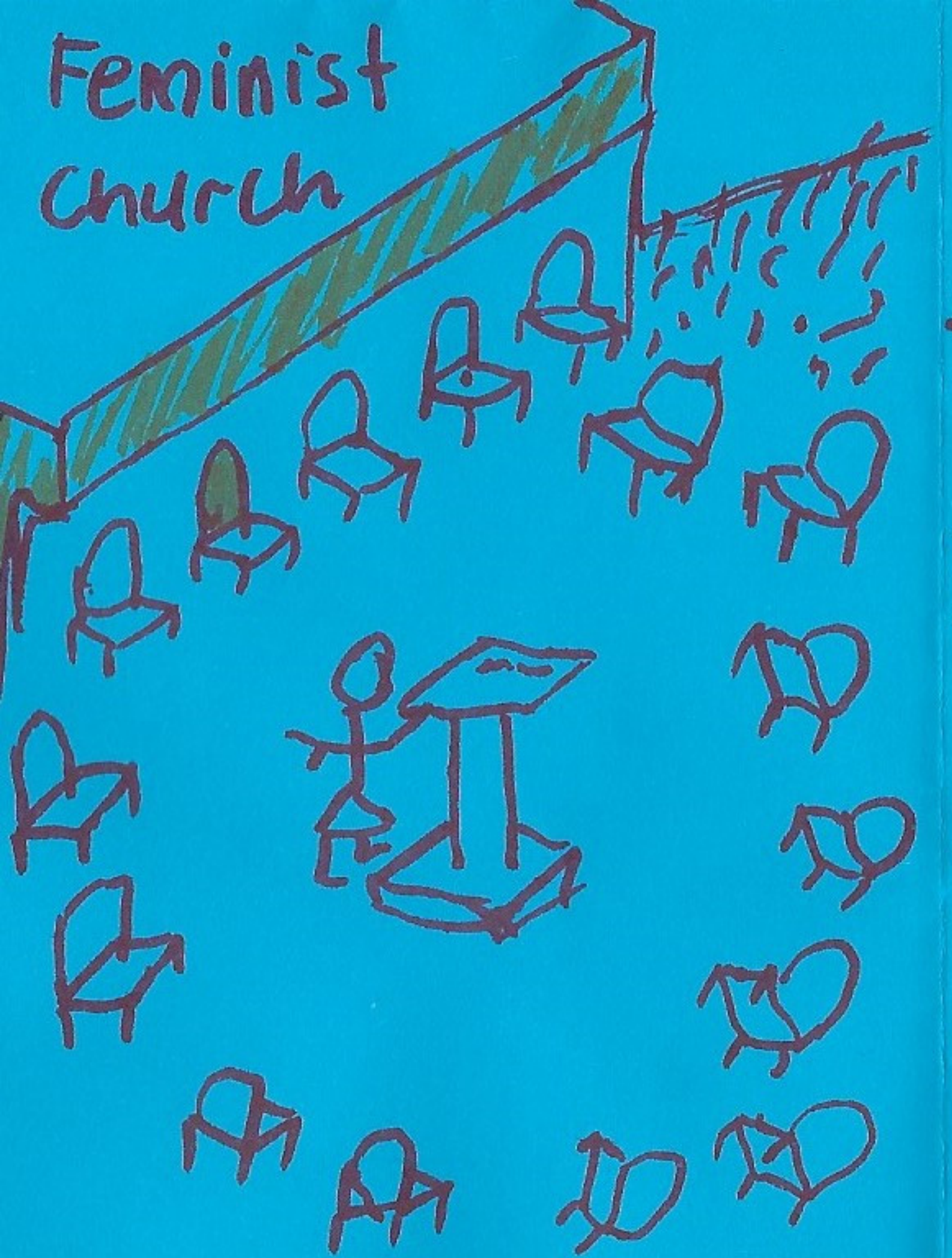
How do we make sure no one is left behind?



And how do we ensure the harvest, whatever it looks like, is always mutual?



Feminist Church



A sacred gathering
of radical love
and liberation

"Altar, congregation
Church"

The Gathering Practice of Feminist Church

Our gathering practice is ever evolving to accommodate individual and collective growth of the community and the individual. During our writing retreat, where we sought to give form to this document, a comrade offered a luminous suggestion: let it be written in pencil. With this, we embraced that what we are creating is not a final inscription but a living text, breathing, shifting, and receptive to transformation. We recognise ourselves as a community committed to nurturing growth, holding space for both divergence and convergence.

Our theoretical grounding, though rooted in decolonial and African feminist traditions, remains open to renewal. Our practice rests on solidarity, radical love and honesty, Ubuntu, and healing justice. We are guided by an intersectional consciousness that recognises class, gender, sexuality, and ability as interlocking systems shaping our lives. We move with Pan-African imagination, seeking connection across geographies and struggles. Non-hierarchical but not leaderless, we trust collective discernment as our compass, knowing that leadership can emerge from anyone, and that every voice matters in the rhythm of our becoming.

In practice, these principles find their rhythm in our gatherings. We meet once a month, sometimes in living rooms, sometimes in borrowed offices, always with intention. Each meeting begins with check-ins: “How’s your heart? What’s holding you?” Some share through words, others through song or silence. We share food and drink brought according to each person’s capacity. Those unable to bring anything are always welcome, because we always have enough for all. At every gathering, we make small offerings into our collective coffers; those contributions sustain logistics, transport, mutual aid,



and the quiet solidarities that keep us afloat.

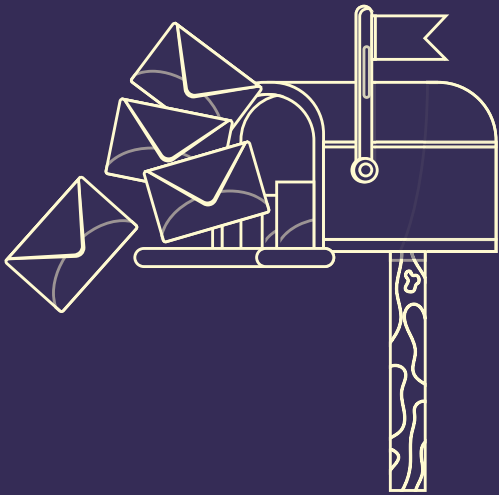
Our meetings are guided by the teachings of our ancestors, siblings, and great mothers who have left in our care. We study them not as scripture, but as conversation texts, songs, essays, and lived experiences that help us reimagine liberation. Through these exchanges, we practise what we often call mutual labour for mutual harvest: everyone contributes something, and everyone receives something back, whether that is insight, laughter, or rest.

In reimagining possibilities, we hold close the belief that liberation begins within and radiates outward. We practise mutual aid as a way of transforming ourselves to transform the world. We commit to showing up consistently for one another, even when it is inconvenient, choosing depth over expansion, what Adrienne Maree Brown calls critical connections rather than critical mass. We hold ourselves accountable when conversations go wrong, finding atonement instead of avoidance. We make room for heavy dialogues about grief, sex, desire, and conflict, knowing that they are part of our collective wholeness.

Our feminism is not static. It calls us to name our oppressions, our privileges, and our contradictions, to resist putting misogyny above other forms of violence, and to hold all struggles as interconnected. We practise loving correction instead of cancellation, radical care instead of disposability, presence instead of performativity. Timekeeping, self-initiative, and consent become small but sacred acts of respect.

And as we hold all this complexity, we remember that we exist inside the very systems we are trying to dismantle. So our work is also about grace, the grace to try again, to learn, to stay in relationship even when it is hard. In every sense, Feminist Church is an experiment in living otherwise: building a world that feels more human, one gathering at a time.





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Our hope for this experiment of our gathering practice is that it will spill over and that feminists who interact with it will desire to create a similar community. Our

FAQs are therefore our offering to those who may want to commune like us,

1. How Many People Should I Have? How Many People Make Up A Church? How Many Are Ideal?

First, one must understand that a small number is best to start with. Even with the knowledge and wish that all the women, non-binary and queer people in our lives find community such as this, starting any form of community is a bit of work. Starting with a small number of like-minded individuals will help to create a strong foundation for the group. After this is set, welcoming new members will be a much smoother process. Welcoming new members is usually done through recommendations from already existing members of the group.




2. Who Should I Invite? / Who Is Welcome?


The main purpose of Feminist Church is to create a community of


peace and companionship in a world where this is hard to come by, especially for women, non-binary and queer people whose beliefs challenge the status quo and are considered “radical”. When inviting people to join the community, what matters most is a shared commitment to feminist values. The goal isn’t perfect agreement but shared intention to learn, to unlearn, and to build together. Choose intentionally; community thrives on alignment of spirit as much as ideas. Do not be afraid to be picky!

3. How Can I Maintain Safety?

It is an unfortunate truth that gatherings of women, non-binary and queer people as feminists are seen as ‘dangerous’, and because of this, safety and security must be a priority for the group. Many a feminist organisation has been raided and our comrades arrested for meetings such as these, and this has increased due to the recently passed Anti-Homosexuality Act, with arrests being made under the guise of lesbianism and immoral acts. Security can be maintained in various ways, such as;

-  Creating groups on highly encrypted messaging apps like Signal. Conversations here will be protected and free from the constant watch by our government.
-  Ensuring that meeting places are only shared with members of the group and no one else. A gathering cannot be stopped if it cannot be found.
-  Vetting any new additions to the group to make sure they are not spies for the government or even that they have the same beliefs and values, and will not be persuaded to put you or the rest of the group in harm’s way.

 Attaching responsibility for new members to the person who has introduced them to this group. In Feminist Church, we have a collective and individual responsibility to the collective, and as such, it is on anyone who introduces a new member to vet them and their politics before bringing them into the fold.

 Being intentional about who we share the story of Feminist Church with.

4. Where Should I Hold Meetings?

Meetings should ideally be held at safe spaces that are accessible and free of charge. These could be homes of group members, workplaces over the weekend or any other private locations. The main idea here is privacy and security so that the gathering can be held in comfort and peace, and that everyone can speak their thoughts freely.

5. How To Choose Topics Of Discussion At Gatherings?

Our gatherings don't always have to revolve around text or theory. Feminist Church values learning in all its forms through conversation, storytelling, art, music, rest, and play. Sometimes our most transformative moments happen not while analysing a reading, but while sharing a meal, dancing, or simply sitting in silence together. When we do choose discussion topics, they come from members themselves. Anyone can suggest something, whether a feminist text, a film, a podcast, an online conversation, or a question that has been tugging at their heart. What matters is that the theme helps us grow in our feminist practice and deepen our collective reflection. Topics are shared early enough for everyone to engage with them beforehand,

but we also leave room for spontaneity, for what's alive among us that day. Our gatherings are, above all, about connection. Whether we are reading, resting, laughing, or eating together, each form of coming together carries equal weight in our feminist work.

6. How Do We Run The Church?

The church is a non-hierarchical community in which every member is expected to pull their weight. Noting this, no one particular person or group runs it. Topics of discussion can come from anyone with something to share. Organising is done by volunteers or, in some cases, for efficiency's sake, a rotating system in which roles are passed around the whole group. These roles are not binding, however, and the church should be a space where our strengths are celebrated and areas of weakness improved.

7. How Are Church Activities Resourced?

Because this group is meant to be a refuge from NGO politics, it is also not funded by donors, Ugandan or otherwise. Gatherings and other church activities, however, still need some funds. For meetings, members can carry snacks for sharing depending on their individual financial capabilities. Our church has also added a collection fund, or 'offertory basket,' in which resources are collected and then used to fund future activities. Members can also choose to give money to the group fund if they find themselves in a prosperous enough position to put wealth in the group treasury. The church is therefore a fully self-funded group.



Tensions: Community is not utopia.

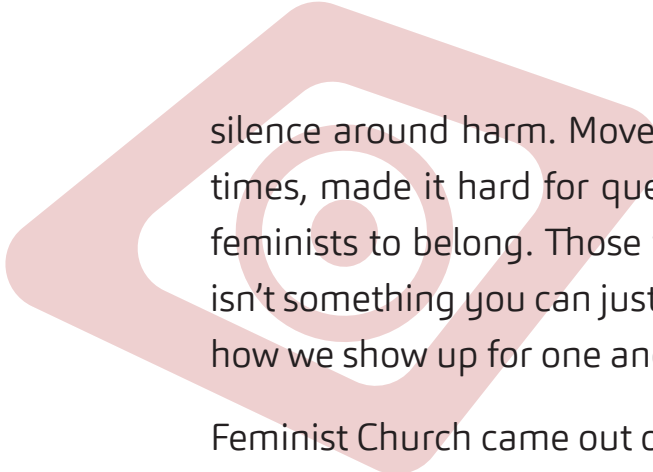


Tensions: Community is Not Utopia

Community is beautiful, but it is also messy; it stretches us, asks for patience, honesty, and care. Feminist Church was never meant to be a perfect space; it is a living, breathing, sometimes messy experiment in being together. We gather knowing that care and conflict live side by side. We are learning what it means to build a home where everyone's humanity is recognised without question.

Feminist Church was born from a kind of exhaustion, with NGO spaces that silenced difference, and with movements that talked of justice but often replicated the same hierarchies they sought to undo. For many of us, those institutions left deep bruises. We wanted something different: a community that makes space for imperfection, disagreement, and repair. We wanted to build relationships that feel more honest, more accountable, more human.

The feminist movement in Uganda, like many around the world, has not been free from tension. Sometimes it has mirrored the same systems we fight: hierarchies, gatekeeping, competition, and



silence around harm. Movements that should be liberatory have, at times, made it hard for queer people, sex workers, or working-class feminists to belong. Those fractures taught us something: solidarity isn't something you can just say, it has to be lived, again and again, in how we show up for one another.

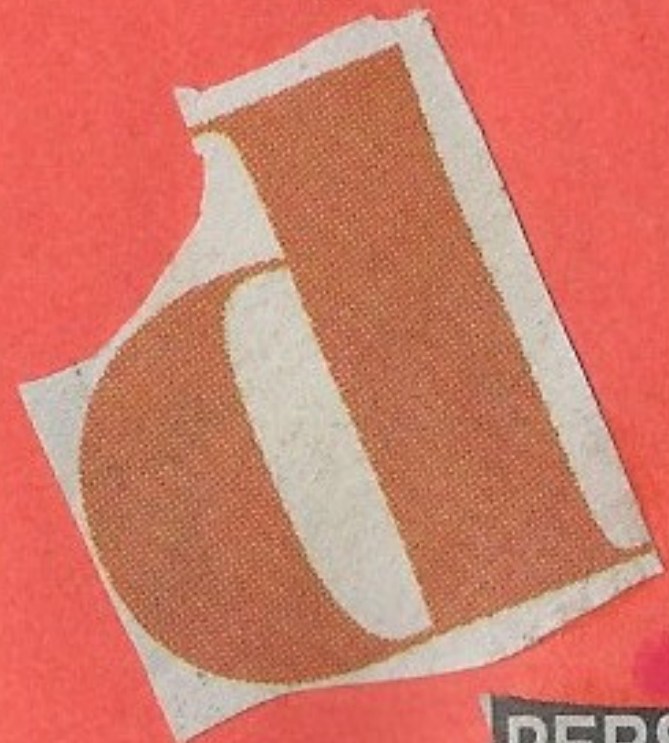
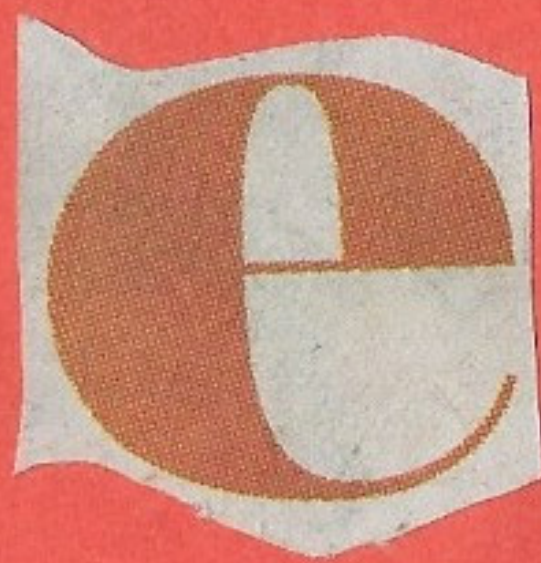
Feminist Church came out of that knowing. We are not an institution, but a collective of people trying to make another way. We draw inspiration from thinkers like Sylvia Wynter, who reminds us that to be “human” has too often meant being white, male, straight, and powerful, and that our task is not just to demand inclusion in that definition, but to imagine humanity differently. And from Akwugo Emejulu, who speaks of fugitive feminism, a way of living and organising that refuses to wait for permission to exist, that makes freedom on its own terms.

In our gatherings, this fugitive spirit shows up in small, tangible ways. We sit in circles, we read, we listen, we argue, we laugh, we forgive. Conflict does not mean failure here; it is part of the work. When hurt happens, and it does, we try not to run from it. Instead, we practise what we call calling in: meeting harm with tenderness, speaking honestly, and choosing to stay in relationship even when it's hard. Accountability, for us, isn't punishment; it is a promise to keep showing up differently.

We understand accountability as a process with four intertwined parts: self-reflection: recognising where we went wrong; apology: naming the harm and taking responsibility; repair: rebuilding trust and connection; and change: ensuring the harm doesn't repeat. None of this is easy. It takes trust, hope, courage, and humility. But if we can't handle the small things between us, how will we ever handle the big ones?

To be in community is to keep trying, to care more about doing right than being right, to practise justice in the small, daily ways that sustain us. Feminist Church is not utopia, but it is a home we are building together, one conversation, one correction, one act of care at a time.





PERSONAL

Closing Thoughts for Now

Zora Neale Hurston's quote, "there are years that ask questions and years that answer," comes to us here. We find ourselves, always, somewhere between the two. These are some of the questions that have stayed with us, the ones we continue to ask each other in conversation, in conflict, in laughter, and in love. They are not questions seeking closure, but doorways into the work ahead for us, and for other feminist world builders like us.

- How do we practise a language of loving correction, one that holds truth and tenderness in equal measure?
- How can we communicate across difference, disagreement, and exhaustion, without losing sight of each other?
- Who and what are we forgetting as we build, whose labour, whose care, whose stories are left at the margins?
- How do we discern what is a valuable use of our energy, our time, our money, and what must be left behind?
- What does shared leadership look like in real life, not as a concept, but as a daily practice of trust and humility?
- Who finds a home here, and who does not? What does safety mean when inclusion and boundaries must coexist?
- How do we hold the contradictions between openness and protection, belonging and accountability?
- What can others learn, and also unlearn, through our ways of organising, gathering, and loving each other?
- Is our feminism still answering the questions of our time, the



urgent, messy, human ones that refuse neat solutions?

And perhaps most importantly: how do we sustain the fire of care, imagination, and solidarity for the long haul?


These questions, like us, are still becoming. They remind us that this work is unfinished, and that is precisely the point.



Our Well Of Knowledge

This is an acknowledgement that while what we are doing is different, revolutionary and necessary, it is by no means new. Those who came before us paved the way, both ideologically and through practice, for this form of organising. This well of knowledge is not only aspirational for African feminists resisting hetero-patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist systems, but also foundational to our survival, solidarity, and resistance.

1. Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists
2. The Power of Feminist Pan-African Intellect
3. A Historical Overview of African Feminist Strands
4. Pan-African feminist popular education

5. Towards a living archive of Pan-African Feminist Popular Education
 6. On Feminist Futures and Movement Imperatives
 7. Feminists Organising — Strategy, Voice, Power
 8. A Legacy Without a Will. Feminist Organising as a Transformative Practice
 9. Organising as intersectional feminists in the Global South
 10. Feminist and women's movement building in Southern Africa
 11. Reflections on Feminist Organising in Angola
 12. Self-organisation, friendship, collaboration, acts of resistance: a genealogy of feminist-led and women-led artist initiatives dedicated to social justice and activism in the island of Ireland
 13. Are we on the Cusp of a Beautiful Rupture? July 2025
A Compendium on Building Community Power in
Philanthropy in West Africa
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**We Depart This Page, But Never The Cause
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