

# Marjory Bankson, Potter and Author



**Marjory Bankson** is a potter, a seasoned spiritual guide, and the author of six books. Her most recent book, *Stalking the Spirit in a Do-It-Yourself Church*, is the story of Seekers Church as it emerged from Church of the Saviour. Formerly the president of Faith At Work (now called Lumunos) and editor of Faith@Work magazine for over twenty years, Marjory now chairs the Ecumenical Council of Church of the Saviour. She facilitates clergy support groups in the Washington, DC area and travels nationally to offer retreats and workshops.

As a Steward of Seekers Church for more than 40 years, she also offers classes on call, the medieval mystics, and creative aging as well as end-of-life rituals and practice.



Below she reflects on her lifelong love of pottery which has been a spiritual practice for her.

“I learned to throw, trim, glaze and fire porcelain with Louie Mideke in Bellingham, Washington, the year that my husband was in Vietnam (1965). Death was much on my mind then, but making pots always included firing the clay to make the pieces more permanent. When we moved to Washington, D.C. in 1970, I became a full-time potter and was part of the group that scrubbed and painted the old Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, making it a center where artists could work and sell directly.



“Then, in 1980, we moved to Germany where I had no studio and no market for my pots. I began writing, and when my husband retired from the Army, I went to seminary and left pottery for good (I thought). In 1987, a friend of ours died in a car crash and his brother asked me to make a vessel for his ashes. There wasn’t time to make a pot and fire it, and besides, his family wanted to scatter his ashes in Chesapeake Bay by his crab pots, so they really wanted something that would disintegrate with the ashes. So, I made my first unfired urn and discovered that the container was just what they needed!



“The next opportunity came in 1995, when I worked with the children of our church community to make a vessel for ashes of a newborn that the family had been carrying for ten years, waiting for the right community and the right place to deposit them. Creating the raw clay vessel for those ashes was a sacred journey for all of us. In the years since then, I have made unfired urns for special friends...to transport ashes from the crematorium to the place where they will be scattered. These urns are not meant to be permanent or protective over time. Instead, they are meant to accompany the deceased as both return to the earth.

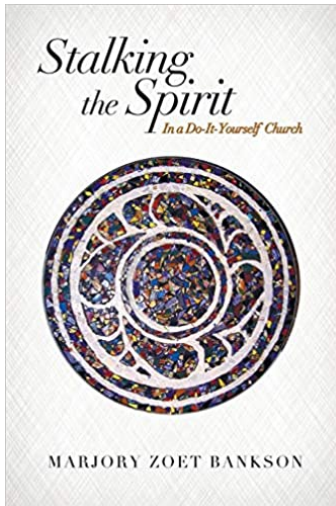
### **Marjory Shares About Writing and Teaching:**

“Books were my best friends in the twenty years that we moved for my husband’s career. I began writing my first book, *Braided Streams: Esther and a Woman’s Way of Growing*, when we lived in Germany and I couldn’t legally work. It was my way to be in conversation with others who wanted to recover women’s stories from the Bible. That led me to seminary in the early 80s.

“In 1985, I became the first woman president of Faith At Work, a relational ministry started in the late 30s by Sam Shoemaker, the pastor who helped “Bill W” start Alcoholics Anonymous. Editing and publishing F@W magazine gave me lots of opportunity to write, to explore relational theology, and to design retreats. *Seasons of Friendship* and *Call to the Soul* came out of those years.

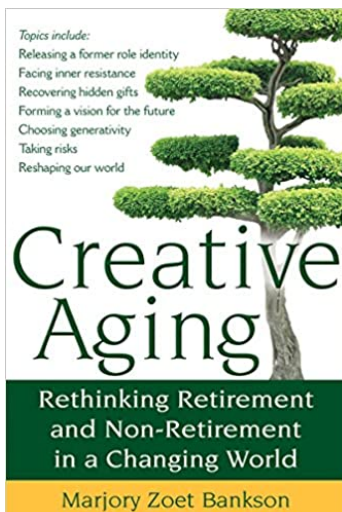
“When I retired from F@W in 2008, I thought I would return to an earlier vocation as a potter. But the book that grew out of my studio time, *The Soulwork of Clay*, raised all kinds of questions among friends and former retreatants about retirement and call. Because I believe that God’s call spirals through our lives, taking different forms in different seasons, I wrote *Creative Aging: Rethinking Retirement and Non-retirement in a Changing World*. That continues to open many conversations about the meaning and purpose of these generative years.

“When Sonya Dyer retired from Seekers, and was preparing to move to North Carolina in 2000, she gave me her notes and records from the early days, and the Stewards of Seekers authorized me to write our story. At the time, we were immersed in finding a new home for Seekers. It took two early drafts, lots of community comment, and some history in our new location on Carroll Street to find a suitable pause for the story, *Stalking the Spirit in a Do-It-Yourself Church*. I have tried to make this an accurate historical record as well as the story of how we have tried to listen for guidance from the Spirit at crucial turning points.”



*Stalking the Spirit in a Do-It-Yourself Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014. [Ordering Information](#)

This book is the story of Seekers Church, known for creative worship, an open pulpit, shared leadership, a strong matrix of mission groups, and generous giving.

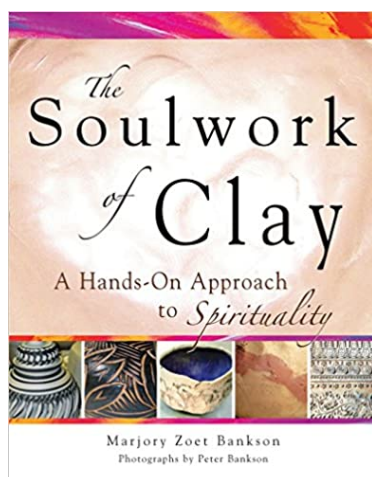


*Creative Aging, Rethinking Retirement and Non-Retirement in a Changing World*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2011. [Ordering Information](#)

Explores the spiritual dimensions of retirement and aging, offering creative ways to to share your gifts and experience, particularly when retirement leaves you questioning who you

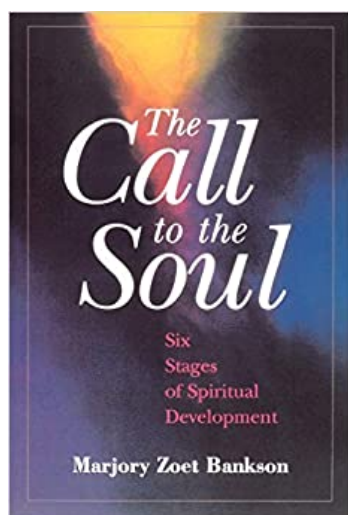


are when you are no longer defined by your career.



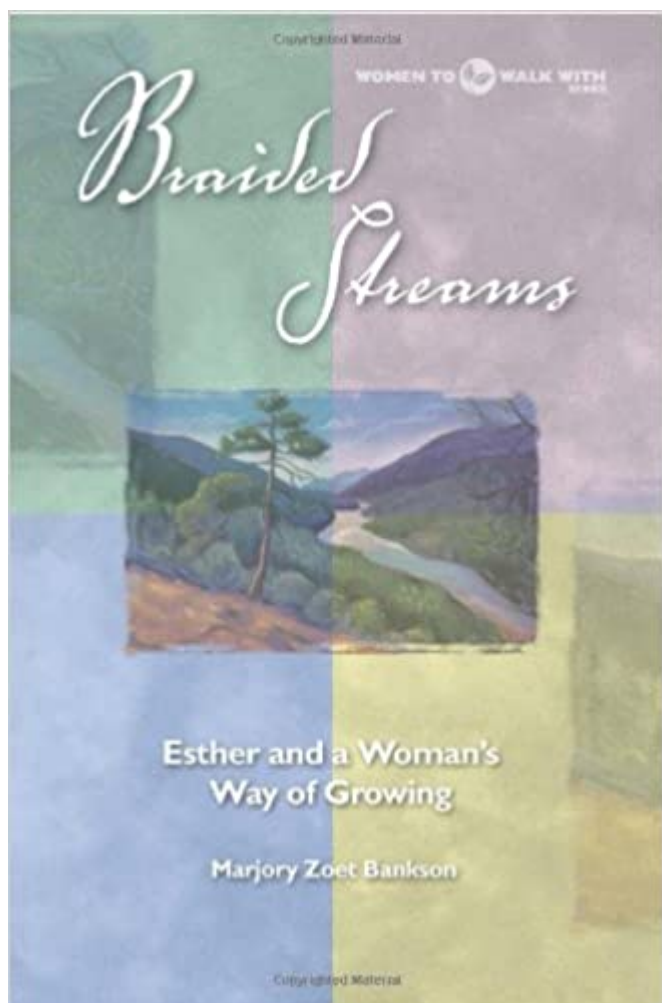
*The Soulwork of Clay: A Hands-On Approach to Spirituality* (Photography by Peter Bankson). Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2008. Ordering Information

Takes the reader through a seven-step process of making clay into a fired vessel, drawing parallels at each stage to the process of spiritual growth.



*Call to the Soul: Six Stages of Spiritual Development.* Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2004. [Ordering Information](#)

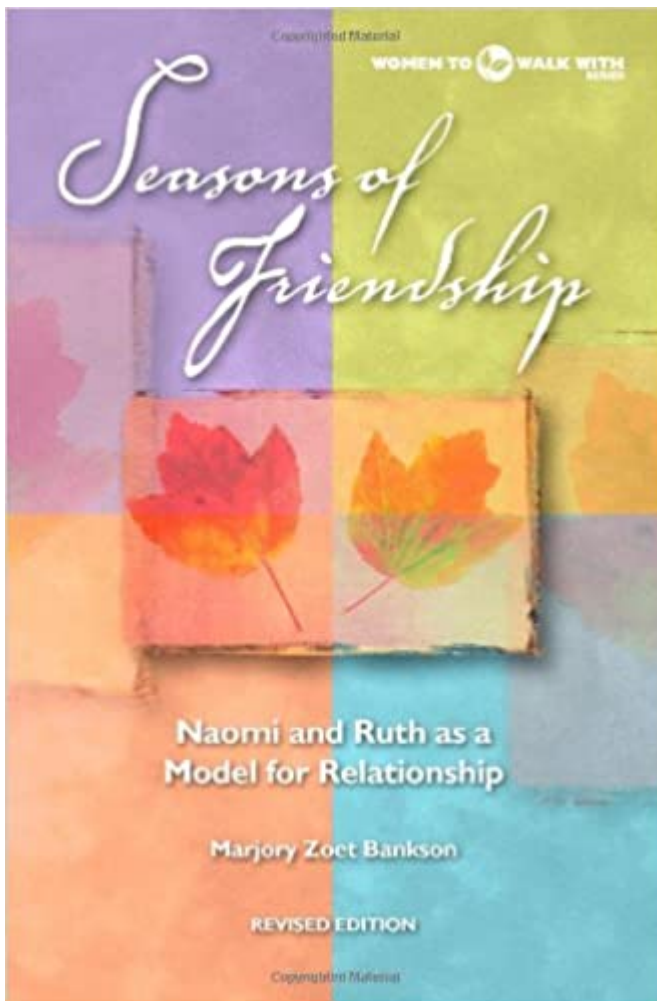
Describes the Cycle of Call (inward & outward dimensions) and the Spiral of Call (identity, work, gift and legacy).



*Braided Streams: Esther and A Woman's Way Of Growing.* Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2005. [Ordering Information](#)

Explores how the spiritual, cultural and physical streams of life intersect for wholeness.





*Seasons of Friendship: Naomi and Ruth as a Pattern.* Revised edition Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2005. [Ordering Information](#)

Draws on the biblical story of Ruth and Naomi, exploring what we can learn from their unique friendship that survived marriages and moves, death and displacement. The book proposes that we need different kinds of friendships in different seasons of our lives.