

# The Journey...S

Official Newsletter of Church of the Spiral Tree  
an Ecumenical, Faerie Faith church

Vol. 1, No. 1  
Fall/Winter, 1997

**Welcome** to the premiere issue of "The Journey." This first newsletter may be a little small, but the church is still growing, and I expect the newsletter will too, especially with your wonderful contributions!

## CST Calendar:

We tentatively plan on having a ritual and/or a celebration to mark the 8 Sabbats, on the Saturday closest to the date. These will usually (but not always) take place near Auburn, Alabama. Notices will be emailed or snail-mailed to all members with more specific information on each. (PLEASE keep your email address updated with us—very important!)

## Tentative Celebration Dates for 1997-98: (subject to change!)

Yule	December 20, 1997
Imbolc	January 31, 1998
Vernal Equinox	March 21, 1998
Beltane	May 2, 1998
Summer Solstice	June 20, 1998
Lughnassad	August 8, 1998

Autumn Equinox	September 19, 1998
Samhain	November 7, 1998
Yule	December 19, 1998

Note that on a couple of the cross-quarter festivals the dates are a few days after the traditional date. This is because we celebrate the cross-quarter days on the astronomical date. To get this date, count the number of days from the previous Solstice or Equinox to the next Equinox or Solstice—usually about 92 days. Divide this by 2 (usually about 46 days). That day halfway in between the Solstice and Equinox or Equinox and Solstice is the actual cross-quarter day. For 1998, the actual dates would be: Imbolc - February 3-4; Beltane - May 5-6; Lammas - August 6; Samhain - November 6.

## Upcoming Festivals:

Moondance	May 21-25, 1998	Roxanna, AL
Earthdance	September, 1998	FDR State Park, Pine Mtn, GA
FallFling '98	October 15-18, 1998	Roxanna, AL

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## Who Are We?

The Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical pagan/wiccan church, designed to foster a sense of community and family among pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and adhere to the tenets of the Wiccan Rede ("An it harm none, do as you will"), regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with. CST is also a Faerie Faith church, in that it has a goal of spreading the teachings of the Faerie Faith to all who are interested, and giving people better access to this ancient and beautiful Irish belief system. The Faerie Faith itself is a non-exclusive faith; one who is studying the Faerie Faith is always free to study other traditions or join other organizations.

If you would like to help with any of our projects, have any further ideas for the church, or have any resources which would be of benefit, please contact us. CST is also seeking volunteers to help with various parts of the church, such as:

writers and artists for the CST newsletter

**(Continued inside)**

editing and publishing the CST newsletter  
handling networking contacts, including publishing lists in newsletter  
other business and administration associated with the newsletter

## What's Happening in the Church So Far...

We were legally incorporated on August 1, 1997. We automatically have tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) corporation, due to our religious nature, but are filing the paperwork so we'll have something to prove it with. Our By-laws are being finished up as of this writing, and our Board of Directors have had their first meeting. Also, at time of this writing, we have 14 official members. That's not many, but we're hoping for more soon. We're also trying to find out how to start branches in other parts of Alabama and in other states, due to some members expressing interest in starting their own branches. This is what's really going to help our growth, I think.

Since we are a religious organization, i.e., a church, we can legally ordain ministers. This means that our ministers can perform legal weddings, funerals, and baptisms. In order to become a legal minister through the Church of the Spiral Tree, you first of all need to be an active (paid) member. Then simply send us your request, along with your name, address, and email address if you have one, and your check for \$35.00. You will be entered into our database, and will soon receive your certificate of ordination and a card to carry with you. The fee for this service is \$35.00, and will confer ordination for life. Note that becoming a CST minister does not automatically confer "Elder" or "High Priest/ess" status upon anyone! These are earned positions, not lightly given.

Lastly, I'm frantically trying to complete the Faerie Faith Correspondence Course that I've been threatening to do for years. (I finally have a good excuse!) As soon as it's done, the info about it will be published here.

Blessed Be!                      Linda Kerr

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### Newsletter Staff:

Editor/Publisher . . . . . Linda Kerr

### CST Board of Directors:

President . . . . . Linda Kerr

Vice President . . . . . Craig Kerr

Secretary/Treasurer . . . . . Sherry Holmes

### CST Staff:

Hospitality Officer . . . . . Odessa Crenshaw

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**Auburn, AL 36831-0186**

**334-821-4683 (Linda Kerr)**

**spiraltree@mindspring.com**

**<http://www.mindspring.com/~spiraltree>**

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## CONTACTS:

*Remember, you get a free listing with your paid membership. You may also submit your listing at any later time.*

**Mark Morey:** Rt. 1 Box 3060, Musella, GA, 31066, 912-836-3525 (Licensed minister).

**Matt "Kylln" Rhinehart:** I am always happy to talk with other Wiccans about things of a spiritual nature or just to talk. Cartersville, GA, 770-606-8647.

**Stephanie A. Farrow:** Seeking friendship & wisdom from a fellow Celtic Wiccan. Possible coven. Blessed be! 151 Buckingham Cir., Montevallo, AL, 35115, 205-665-2229.

**"Skippy" Rob Von Allmen:** Tired? Bored? Wanting to find true love and happiness? Well, what are you doing talking to me?! I don't have all the questions, much less the answers. But I do have a clue (I found it in a cereal box) and am licensed to share the wisdom of the ages (answered an ad in Rolling Stone). If you also ponder such mysteries as "Is there life after death?," "Was he a man dreaming he was a butterfly...?," and "Where am I parked?," then please drop me a line at: 3512 Clairmont Ave. #501, Birmingham, AL 35222.

# What is the Celtic Tree Calendar?

by **Linda Kerr**

This article originally appeared in *The Hazel Nut*, Issue #14, April/May 1995. Copyright 1995.

**T**he Celtic tree calendar is based on a lunar year as opposed to a solar one, and begins after the Winter Solstice. There are roughly 13 lunar months, which begin and end with the new moon; each month is represented by a tree. In order, these are: Birch, Rowan, Ash, Alder, Willow, Hawthorn, Oak, Holly, Hazel, Vine, Ivy, Reed, and Elder.

In the Druidic alphabet, each tree also represents a letter. The first letter of the Gaelic names of the trees is a consonant. In order again, they are: Beth, Luis, Nion, Fearn, Saille, Huath, Duir, Tinne, Coll, Muir, Gort, Ngetal, and Ruis, to give us B, L, N, F, S, H, D, T, C, M, G, N, and R.

There are also five vowels, as in any proper alphabet: Ailim, Ohn, Ur, Eadha, and Ioho (A, O, U, E, and I). These five vowels are represented by the 'solar' trees, which are, respectively, Silver Fir, Gorse, Heather, Aspen, and Yew. The five solar trees are like 'umbrella' trees; they cover a larger portion of the year than the lunar trees do; usually about 2-3 months each. If you'll refer back to the December issue of *The Hazel Nut*, #12, at the article "A Quick Look at the Lunar Year," you'll see a chart that shows what periods the solar trees cover, and when the lunars are.

This alphabet, when written, is put down in marks called 'ogham.' This is an ancient system of writing, and there are almost as many ogham alphabets as there are rune systems. Again, look in issue #12 at that same article to see the oghams for each lunar and solar tree.

This entire system; the lunar months, the solar seasons, the trees in both their English and Gaelic names, and the ogham, is the Celtic Tree Calendar. There seem to be two major Celtic Tree systems; the one that we, the Faerie Faith, use, is called the Beth-Luis-Nion system. Its calendar begins on the Winter Solstice, the months run from new moon to new moon, and the trees are Birch, Rowan, Ash, etc., as listed above. The other system is called the Beth-Luis-Fearn. Its calendar begins at Samhain, November 1, the months go from full moon to full moon, and the order of its trees is slightly different: Birch, Rowan, Alder, Willow, Ash, Hawthorn, Oak, etc. There is no one correct system; people just use the one that they feel the most comfortable with. We use the Beth-Luis-Nion because that's what works for us.

Okay, that was the easy part; now let's go into the calendar in a little more depth. Each of the 13 lunations has its own mythology and folklore, but most importantly, each has its own special 'energies' that

affect our moods and physical beings. When we understand the energies that are acting upon us, we can deal with them better, and actually learn from them. For instance, ever notice how crabby people get around the 'Dog Days' of summer, July and August? True, you could put it down to the intense heat, but sometimes June is incredibly hot, and people just don't act quite the same then as they do in the latter months of summer. In the Beth-Luis-Nion system, Holly falls around July and August, and brings with it intense energies of hatred, jealousy, suspicion, and general bitchiness. The remedy for this is the holly tree itself; a branch of holly hung in the house can help us feel calmer, more accepting, even loving. We've tried it—it works. Another system that lends credence to our belief is the Bach Flower Remedies: the Holly remedy, made from the holly tree, is the remedy for hatred, jealousy, suspicion, and envy. Coincidence? Maybe. But when something keeps occurring over a period of time, it stops becoming mere coincidence, and becomes almost...magical. That's the point we're at now.

To fully understand the tree calendar, and make it relevant to your life, you should consider yourself a student of the calendar. Study it, research it, learn about it. Most of all, make it an active part of your life. You won't understand the trees by just reading this article, or the article in issue #12 of *The Hazel Nut*, "A Quick Look at the Lunar Year," or by any one thing. Look into the mysteries and myths attached to each tree. Read Robert Graves' *The White Goddess* and Celtic myths and fairy tales. Read all the "Lunar Energies and Esoterica," "Bach Flowers," and "Folklore and Practical Uses" columns in *The Hazel Nut*. Look at the rituals in Pattalee Glass-Koentop's *Year of Moons, Season of Trees*, (see review in issue #14) and write and perform a lunar ritual for yourself based on her rituals and what you've learned from Robert Graves. Make contact with a tree; meet it, talk to it, and especially, listen to it.

Each lunation, each tree, when taken separately, can teach us about ourselves, and help us get more in tune with nature's cycles. Taken as a whole, a study of the tree system can help us integrate our personalities, broaden our intellectual horizons, and open ourselves spiritually to the cosmos, going beyond the physical world. That is, after all, the point of being on the path in the first place, isn't it?

Blessed be, and happy searching!

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# Calculating the Start of the First Moon

by **Linda Kerr & Epona**

This article originally appeared in *The Hazel Nut*, Issue #6, December 1993, and revised for Issue #24, Lammas 1997. Copyright 1997.

The Celtic Lunar Tree Calendar consists of 13 lunars, but if you do a little math, you'll notice that 13 lunations of 28-29 days each cannot possibly fit into a 364-day solar year, not to mention the fact that the new moon doesn't conveniently occur when the Solstice does. If the lunars kept rotating through without regard to the normal year, we'd eventually wind up with the Birch moon beginning in April, and be no better off than the Romans in 63 B.C. To keep from accumulating such an error, the 13th lunar (Elder) ends at the Winter Solstice, and the 1st lunar (Birch) begins after the Winter Solstice. Simple enough, right? Sort of. Read on...

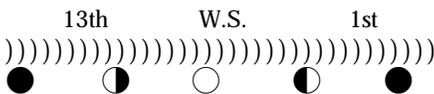
## Possibilities (some of many):

Note that "lunar" means a month in the Celtic Tree Calendar, and a "lunation" is the physical lunar cycle, from new moon to new moon.

A) In the 13<sup>th</sup> lunar, the moon begins waxing, then the Winter Solstice ends the year. This day is now the Day Apart. What starts next is the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar, with the moon continuing to wax, then becoming full, then waning.

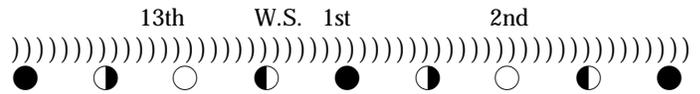


B) The moon waxes in the 13<sup>th</sup> lunar, then the full moon on Winter Solstice ends the year, and is also the Day Apart. Then the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar begins with the moon waning. So the 13<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> lunars each get approximately 1/2 a cycle, or 2 weeks.

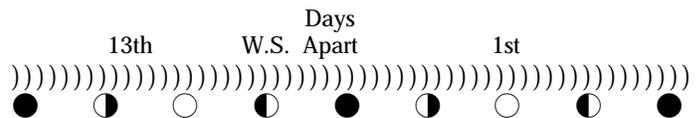


Things get tricky when the Winter Solstice intercepts the 13<sup>th</sup> lunar between the last quarter and the new moon. The last few days of the lunation after the Winter Solstice may be part of the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar, or 'days apart' (left over days). If the Birch moon (1<sup>st</sup> lunar) starts at the proper time, the new year's Imbolc should be in Rowan (Luis), the autumnal equinox should land in Vine (Muin), and the 13<sup>th</sup> lunar should begin before the Winter Solstice. So now, two more possibilities:

C) Without extra Days Apart (where the Winter Solstice is the Day Apart):



D) or With extra Days Apart:



## Things to remember:

- The lunar year ends with the Winter Solstice.
- The 13<sup>th</sup> lunar precedes the Winter Solstice, and the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar follows it. The 13<sup>th</sup> lunar will NEVER run past the Winter Solstice!
- The 13<sup>th</sup> lunar and/or the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar may or may not have the full number of days in a lunation, and one of them may miss having a full moon.
- The Winter Solstice is not counted as part of either moon, but is a day by itself, and sometimes the Day Apart.
- The variables which determine the start of the new lunar year (first lunar) depend on how many days are 'left over' from the thirteenth lunar after the Winter Solstice intercepts it.
- If one of the moons (either the 13<sup>th</sup> or the 1<sup>st</sup>) doesn't have a full moon in it, you may celebrate the lunar on the day closest to the Winter Solstice.
- If all else fails, remember that Imbolc, February 2, always falls in the Rowan moon (the 2<sup>nd</sup> moon). You can look backwards from that date to see exactly when the Birch moon should have started, or at least which moon you're in this time.

By the way, this year we have Possibility (D): Elder has a full moon on December 13, then the lunation is ended by the Winter Solstice, on December 21, when the moon is in its 3rd quarter, and then we have 7 Days Apart. The first moon of next year, Birch, begins on December 29, the next new moon, and goes through a full cycle. Therefore, we have a full moon for both Elder and Birch this time, plus several Days Apart. s

# The Church of the Spiral Tree

## Membership Application

Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be listed in the **Contacts** section of the newsletter? If so, please use the space below to write your listing exactly the way you want it published. Be sure to include a way for people to contact you. **WRITE LEGIBLY!** We are not responsible to errors due to "chicken scratch."

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**We have several different types of memberships available to suit your needs. All include full membership benefits, and run for one year, with a renewal notice sent to remind you next year.**

_____	Individual	\$20.00	
_____	Student/Poor Person:	\$15.00	(please attach a short note demonstrating financial need)
_____	Family (includes kids):	\$35.00	(must be in immediate family only, same address)
_____	Sustaining Member:	\$50.00	(receives all benefits plus our undying thanks)
_____	Contributing Member:	\$100.00	(receives all benefits, our eternal thanks, and a listing in the newsletter once a year)
_____	Patron(ess) Member:	\$200.00	(receives all benefits, our everlasting gratitude, a yearly listing in the newsletter, and a certificate)

**OTHER:**

_____	Subscription to <u>The Hazel Nut</u> (1 year)	\$10-19.00	(price scale reflects discount for members: you choose what you pay!)
_____	Donation to CSP	\$5 & up	(all donations are tax deductible; you will be sent a receipt for your records, as well as our undying thanks)

Make checks out to: The Church of the Spiral Tree, Inc., and mail to:

**Spiral Tree**  
P.O. Box 186  
Auburn, AL 36831-0186  
334-821-4683  
spiraltree@mindspring.com

Visit us at our web site (will be up soon)! <<http://www.mindspring.com/~spiraltree>>

# CST Calendar:

## **Board of Directors' meetings:**

February 1, 1998, Auburn, Alabama

April 26, 1998, Auburn, Alabama

## **Annual Meeting of the General membership:**

May 24, 1998, Moondance, near Auburn, Alabama

## **Celebration Dates (subject to change!):**

Yule December 20, 1997

Imbolc January 31, 1998

Vernal Equinox March 21, 1998

Beltane May 2, 1998

Summer Solstice June 20, 1998

Lughnassad August 8, 1998

Autumn Equinox September 19, 1998

Samhain November 7, 1998

Yule December 19, 1998

## **Festivals: (not CST events!)**

Moondance May 21-25, 1998 Roxanna, AL

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Church of the Spiral Tree

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED