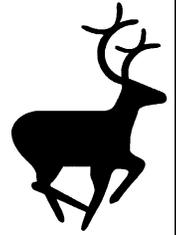




# The Journey...



Official Newsletter of Church of the Spiral Tree - an Ecumenical Pagan church

## President's Point

The annual CST membership drive will begin August 2 (Lammas/Lughasna) and will extend through the CST celebration of Mabon at Earthdance September 18. I would like to encourage those who are already members to renew your membership and those who have not done so yet to join CST. Unity as a community makes an important statement for pagans. CST is an ecumenical pagan church which means that as a church we do not promote or follow any specific pagan path. Those of us in CST find comfort in our common interests and fascinating interest in our differences. Sharing our different paths and ideas with each other provides an opportunity for mental and spiritual growth. Celebrating our differences as well as our like mindedness is a demonstration of tolerance and acceptance that provides lessons not only for pagans but also for the mundane world.

CST is an organization but for all general purposes, CST is composed of rugged individualists who bring so much of their individuality to the group that the concept of "organized religion" does not apply. The success of CST is based on the unity of differences that bring us together for the purpose of celebrating the freedom to practice whatever religious path an individual chooses as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and, even more importantly, our inherent right as human beings connected in spirit to the Goddesses and Gods. Your support through your membership is important in building a strong pagan community that can uphold

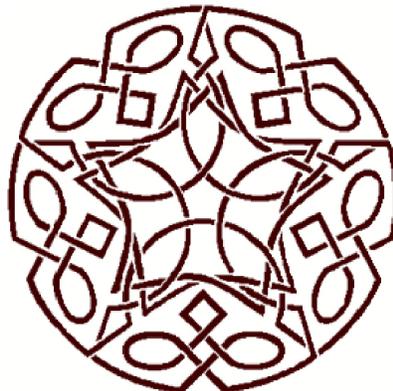
our shared values of tolerance and freedom of religion.

(The Chinese characters below mean Summer Solstice, by the way; pronunciation: sia jyr.)

Love and Light,  
- Rev. Cathy Rankin, President, CST



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## Litha 2011, #43

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### CST Directors:

President	Cathy Rankin
Vice President	Linda Kerr
Secretary/Treasurer	Stephen Bradford
Member-at-Large	Joy Brown-Newsome
Member-at-Large	Cynthia Jurkovic (pro-tem)

### CST Staff:

CST Admin Assistant	Linda Kerr
Sacred Grove Academy Director	Patricia Greer-Middleton
Sacred Grove Educational Consultant	David Michael M.Ed.
Pagan Prisoner Ministry	Linda Kerr
Military Affairs	Marcus P. Rice
Newsletter Editor	Linda Kerr
Webmaster, CST & Sacred Grove	Linda Kerr
CST Founder/Advisor	Linda Kerr

# Circle of Life

☞ Cathy Rankin's beloved Aunt Barbara crossed over on May 18th. Aunt Barbara bore two children but was mother to many. She was the true embodiment of the Earth Mother who adopted all strays especially the human ones. Every life she touched was better for it.

☞ CST was honored to participate in a memorial service for Lord Senthor at Moondance by providing the berry vegetable juice (Senthor was an avid vegetarian) for a toast to the celebration of a life dedicated to teaching not only in words but by a life well lived. Hail and farewell, Lord Senthor, until we meet again.

☞ Jonathan Medley, who was a Church of the Spiral Tree member and was also an elected Member-at-Large on our Board of Directors, passed away on Tuesday, June 7, 2011. He was a dedicated member of CST, and helped get the Pagan Prisoner Ministry re-started and was a great help with networking.

GGG had a very moving memorial ritual celebrating Jon's life & spirituality before their Litha ritual on June 18 (see pg 6).

*Rev. Kerr,*

*My condolences to the Medley family and Jonathan's faith community. The ministry that Mr. Medley helped to start in the prisons is greatly appreciated by those of us who serve as pastors to this community behind bars. The Church of the Spiral Tree as well as the Medley family are in my thoughts and prayers.*

*Peace be with you,  
Karen Powell, Chaplain  
Virginia Correctional Center  
for Women  
2841 River Road West  
Goochland, VA 23063*

# Circle of Life (continued)

☞ **Birthdays for July-August-September! Happy Birthday to the following special people:**  
Richard Peebles (July 15)  
Rob Von Allmen/skippy (July 16)  
Jayson Schertz (July 16)  
Joshua Rice (July 18)  
Malia Farris (July 20)  
Faron Brewer (July 23)  
Alicia Ginn (July 25)  
Patrick Arocha (July 27)  
Rowan Kerr (August 2)  
Luke Arabzadegan (August 3)  
Kim Rice (August 6)  
Elizabeth Riley (August 7)  
Matthew Padgett (August 9)  
Randy Floyd (August 31)  
Angela Sellers (August 15)  
Cynthia Jurkovic (August 26)  
Jan Humphreys (September 12)  
Raivyn Ivy (September 18)  
Tyler Rice (September 21)  
Ethan Farris (September 23)  
Timothy Alroth (September 25)  
Liam Farmer-Alroth (Sept. 27)  
Daniel Vargas (September 29)

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## Newsletter Deadlines

Our newsletter, "The Journey," is an important outreach tool to our members; as such, CST is committed to publishing this newsletter on a regular quarterly basis. Publication dates and deadlines are as follows:

March 21 (deadline: March 1)  
June 21 deadline: June 1)  
September 21 (deadline: Sep 1)  
December 21 (deadline: Dec 1)

Please note that these deadlines are **firm!** Any submissions received after these dates will be published in the following newsletter.

Our Board of Directors meetings are held around the cross-quarter days (Imbolc, Beltane, Lammass, Samhain), to allow updates and news from these meetings to be published in the next newsletter.

## Info About Our Services:

**Ministers:** CST, being a church, may ordain any member age 18 and over as a minister. The fee for this is \$50.00, and you must be a current paid member and must have been a paid member for at least one year prior to applying for ordination. This ordination is for life; you do not have to maintain your membership to continue to be a CST minister, but we would really appreciate it. Each year we have to renew our "Registered" status in various states in order for our ministers to be legal, and your continued membership fees help pay for this. Ministers are entitled to perform legal weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Ordination as a minister does not automatically confer "Elder" or "High Priest/ess" status upon anyone.

### **Subordinate Organizations:**

The main form of a local CST group is a Grove. This can be formed by at least three paid church members, who apply to CST for a charter. If you are interested in forming a Grove, simply find two other like-minded friends, and encourage them to send in their membership to CST, then apply to us for a Grove charter. The application and first year's fee is \$35.00. Note that whomever forms a Grove and runs it, including writing and performing rituals and teaching mysteries, does not automatically become a "High Priest/ess."

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***If you have important news that you would like to share in Happenings or Circle of Life in the Fall Equinox edition of "The Journey," please email your info to Linda Kerr at [info@spiraltree.org](mailto:info@spiraltree.org), or mail to CST, P.O. Box 8396, Columbus, GA, 31908, no later than September 1, 2011.***

# Church of the Spiral Tree News

## "Slave Auction" for Community Relief Fund

At Moondance, held at Dragon Hills on Memorial Day weekend, CST hosted a "Slave Auction," in which attendees volunteered to be auctioned off to the highest bidder in exchange for two hours of work (usually helping the buyer break camp or helping fetch water or wash dishes). We managed to raise \$230 which will go into our Community Relief Fund. Thank you SO much to our volunteer slaves: And to the buyers: And of course to our wonderful emcees, Kass & Kevin, and to Don for helping recruit volunteers. Everyone did a great job!

**Update:** The funds raised at Moondance, plus donations from Green Gate Grove and from several CST/GGG members, equaled a total of \$420 that CST was able to give to Jonathan Medley's mother to help with cremation expenses. This was badly needed as she lost her job from having to be off so much to take care of Jon during the illness which led to his death.

### Military Affairs Ministry

CST held a Memorial Day service at Moondance on Sunday, May 29 at Noon to honor those men and women who lost their lives in service to protecting our freedom and security. Since it was held at Noon in triple-digit temperatures on a hill with no shade, there were only a few in attendance. However, the program was very moving for those of us that were able to withstand the heat. The National Anthem was played. The poem "No, Freedom Isn't Free" by CMDR Kelly Strong, USCG (Ret) was read followed by a moment of silence. The program was closed with by the playing of Taps. Next year, CST will host the Memorial Day service again but from lessons learned this year, it will be held at a cooler, more convenient time and place at Moondance so that more people can attend.

Every year for Veterans Day, the children at the elementary

school where David Michael teaches, make cards thanking our servicemen/women for the job they are doing. David brings the cards to me and I see that they are mailed to the Wounded Warriors Battalion at Fort Benning, GA. If anyone else has cards made by the children and/or adults from schools, groves, etc, please let me know. I will see that they are mailed or provide the mailing address if you prefer to mail them yourselves.

Our Facebook page and website have become excellent tools for our military pagans to contact us. I have been contacted by one of the chaplains at the boot camp in reference to finding books that are acceptable for pagan soldiers in boot camp who are not allowed to have any literature containing nudity during that particular training.

## Raffle Results

Mama Rita Middleton (one of the site managers of Dragon Hills and secretary of the Dragon Hills Grove) won the raffle for the beautiful hand-made Zen table. Congratulations, Mama Rita!

## Pagan Prisoner Ministry

Many undying thanks to Cris Iskiwitch and the North Georgia Solitaries (NGS) for their avid support of the CST Pagan Prisoner Ministry (PPM). NGS hosted the PPM at the Atlanta Pagan Marketplace where they collected monetary donations and donations of stamps, paper, and other mailing supplies to help with the PPM expenses. NGS is also actively collecting books of any kind to exchange for pagan books that can be mailed to the prison chaplains for the prison libraries. They provided a special donation of the book The Spiral Dance by Starhawk with a handwritten dedication inside by the author that will be sold separately. There was one generous vendor who provided several copies of A Book of Pagan Prayer, which is one of the books on the list to be sent to the prison libraries. We cannot express in

words the wonderful experience of spending time with Cris and the NGS that day. They are a remarkable group and the PPM is so blessed to have them working so hard to make a difference in the lives of pagan inmates. A list of books for the libraries and more information on collecting books for exchange will be posted on the CST Facebook page and on the website very soon.

## Pagan Assistance Fund

The Pagan Assistance Fund is collecting for two worthy programs at the moment:

1) We are collecting new, unwrapped toys for our Toys for Yule program. Groups, businesses, covens and even individuals can collect toys and we will make arrangements to get them from you. If you have a good drop-off location that others can bring toys to, we have some nice barrel type boxes we can provide. Email [ladycharissa@ngsolitaries.com](mailto:ladycharissa@ngsolitaries.com) to make arrangements. We plan on opening up a request list on the Pagan Assistance Fund website at [www.paganassistancefund.com](http://www.paganassistancefund.com) beginning around Mabon for families in need to sign up for toy distribution. The more toys we have, the more families we can assist.

2) The Pagan Assistance Fund is also working in conjunction with the CST Pagan Prisoner Ministry to help get the news-letters and Pagan and Wiccan books into the prisons. We are looking for donations of stamps, copy paper and envelopes to help with the newsletter. We are also holding an ongoing book drive. You can donate any kind of book; textbooks, novels, cookbooks, childrens' books, etc. We will trade them on swap sites for books that CST approves to put in the libraries. We can only do this with help from the community. You can email [ladycharissa@ngsolitaries.com](mailto:ladycharissa@ngsolitaries.com) for details on how to get your donations in the right hands.

## Date Correction for Earthdance

We just noticed that in the last issue of The Journey, the dates for Earthdance were incorrectly listed as September 6-11. The dates should actually be September 16-18. We apologize for the error and for any confusion it may have caused.

## Who Are We?

Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical Pagan/Wiccan church, designed to foster and celebrate a sense of community and family among Pagans, both locally and in other regions of the country/world. CST celebrates the unique Pagan family: parents, children, elders, and extended family. It is an ecumenical church in that it encompasses all traditions, and is non-exclusive. It welcomes all who revere the Earth Mother and who respect themselves and others, regardless of which tradition one is affiliated with.

CST was incorporated in August 1997 to provide a legal, tax-exempt status to the Pagan community. This status enables us to offer to the community a variety of open rituals that anyone may attend, to ordain ministers, and to extend our tax-exempt status to sub-groups of CST. One of our projects has been the forming of a Pagan cover school program for homeschooling families in Alabama: (Sacred Grove Academy). CST also has a Community Relief Fund, so we can collectively do-nate money in the name of an established Pagan church to individuals in need and to disaster relief efforts, including the American Red Cross. CST is also pleased to offer a Pagan Prisoner Ministry, which provides outreach to incarcerated members (on hold temporarily until funding improves), and a Military Affairs Committee, which offers support to deployed Pagan military personnel.

## Contacts:

*You get a free contact listing with your membership. You may also submit your listing at any later time. As an additional service, you can send letters to CST, and we will forward them to your intended recipient.*

*P.S.: If you do not see your listing here, it is because we never heard back from you regarding whether you wanted your listing to remain or be removed (emails were sent to all with listings in December, April, and again in May). So just to be safe (rather than sorry), we have removed everyone's listing who did not respond. If you would like your contact listing to appear in the future, simply email us at <info@spiraltree.org>.*

**Angela S.:** wyanetmagenta24@aol.com.

**D.J. Menn:** #1529921, Robertson Unit, 12071 FM 3522, Abilene, TX 79601. Also on MySpace.com/DeathofDesota.

**Malon McCaslin:** I can be contacted by writing to me at my prison address: Malon McCaslin #671223, Estelle Unit, 264 FM 3478, Huntsville, TX 77320-3322.

**Matt Farley:** TDCJ is not geared towards rehabilitation anymore. To anyone who cares, please send information on correspondence courses to Matt Farley #1446657, Smith Unit, 1313 County Rd. 19, Lamesa, TX 79331. Blessed Be!

**Randy Floyd:** True seeker of the Old Paths within the Craft, will correspond with any true seeker. Randy Floyd #124991, STSRFC, 1045 Horsehead Rd., Pikeville, TN 37362.

**Richard Peebles:** I will correspond with Wiccan, gay or straight males and females alike. I only ask to write and make friends. Richard Peebles, #GDC523160, Wheeler Correctional Facility, Unit 100-M, P.O. Box 466, Alamo, GA 30411.

**Stephen Bradford, aka Tyernan WaterOak:** An intuitive medium and natural healer. Within my Eclectic Witch and Yoruba Path, I do Tarot readings, rootwork, chakra balancing, crystal healing, energy work, and Reiki. I own Bio-Buzz Botanica, a metaphysical supply and service oriented business in Albany, GA. As an ordained minister, I offer legal communions, handfastings, handpartings, Wiccanings, and requiems (passing on rites). At the store and across the US, I offer ongoing classes, workshops and various teachings. Bio-Buzz is also the home of Albany Pagans and the Magickal Mystery Tour, which is an ongoing discussion of anything metaphysical and spiritual related topics. I offer these services and classes with help from the community at my other store in Auburn, AL called DreamScapes, our second location of metaphysics and spiritual supplies galore. Look for me in the Panhandle of Florida and North Georgia quite often too! Stephen A. Bradford, 612 N. Slappey Blvd., Albany GA 31701, (229) 438-5878 or (229) 395-0963. Email: tyernan2003@yahoo.com. 

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**FESTIVAL: Old Earth Gather Samhain** will be held Oct 27-30, 2011 at Cherokee Farms in LaFayette GA (245 acres). We moved the event in order to be more centralized for Atlanta, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Knoxville. Our Goal is to bring back old traditions. Musical entertainment includes "Telling Point" and "Savage Blackwolf". Classes, workshops, round table discussions, drum circle, Bardic circles. Main Ritual to honor the god Saturnus. Anyone is welcome to provide an altar for their own diety. Family friendly, lots of kids arts and crafts led by "The Witchy Chicks" and kids rituals, drum and Bardic circles led by "Mother Elf". Trick or Treat on Merchants Row. Clothing optional, but that time of year it is minimal. Showers and porto-potties. Pets allowed for a fee of \$20 each, but must be kept on a leash. Merchants - \$15. Kids 12 and under are free. We need more people to conduct rituals and workshops!

[www.oldearthgather.com](http://www.oldearthgather.com) Jan - 423 605-6664

# Memorial Day 2011

## by Clifford Bowling

*Wiccan and Christian,  
Muslim and Jew,  
Know that our prayers  
Are always with you.*

*May the Lord and the Lady,  
Allah and Christ,  
Shamesh and Buddha,  
Bring you home in a trice.*

*For us you stand tall,  
We are all in your debt,  
Always remember,  
We WILL NEVER FORGET!*

The poem above was read during a Memorial Day ceremony at Zephyrhills Correctional Institution by Ray McMahan, President of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 195.

Primarily, I wrote that poem as a tribute to our troops deployed overseas who have honorably served our country. Secondly, it was written to honor those who returned with broken bodies and minds, are listed as POW/MIA, or came home in a box. Thirdly, it was written to drive home an all-too-often overlooked fact of war. Improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades, bullets, nukes, etc., do not see crosses, the Magen David, a pentagram, crescent moon and star, etc. They are simply equal opportunity killers that discriminate against no one. This being such a simple and obvious fact, one can only wonder why the White House and Veterans Administration fought a decade-long battle to keep from adding "the pentacle to its list of emblems of belief authorized to be included on the grave markers it issues to honor deceased veterans of U.S. military service." (See The Pagan Pentacle Quest: 1997-2007 in "Witches & Pagans" magazine, #22, Winter 2011) Are Wiccans and Pagans good enough to fight and die in service to the U.S. military, but not good enough to be honored the same as those of other faiths?

In the spirit of interfaith understanding, I have

attended Taleem and Juma with Muslims. I have a course completion certificate from Yeshiva University, attend weekly bible study and Shabbat with Jews. I have attended services with Jehovah's Witnesses. I teach a class in, but am not permitted to practice, Eclectic Wicca. Every prisoner in these groups knows I am Wiccan, have no desire to convert anyone or be converted, and we totally disagree regarding religious beliefs. Like military personnel, we care about each other as human beings, not as a religion. Personally, I am Eclectic Wiccan because my life experiences have taught me there are many paths to the top of the mountain. Which path we take to get there doesn't matter, so long as we get there.

Earlier, I mentioned Ray McMahan, but neglected to mention he is Jewish, acts as a quasi-rabbi, and is my friend.

Keep in mind we are all still stranded on this rock until further notice. Why the hate simply because we disagree?

Let us always remember our Wiccan and Pagan brothers and sisters, both living and dead, who have honorably served our country, not only on Memorial Day, but every day. Let us also remember and pray for Navajo code talkers, Christians, Jews, atheists, agnostics, and all vets who served honorably with our brothers and sisters. We will not forget. 

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**FESTIVAL: FallFling will be held October 6-9, 2011** at Cherokee Farms in LaFayette, GA. Join us at FallFling, our annual celebration of the fall season. We'll have classes, dancing, drumming, and live music; and an open ritual to celebrate the season. NEW SITE! Cherokee Farms is a primitive camping site of 200 acres, with lovely rolling hills, a pond for swimming with two docks, a covered stage, good roads on-site, hot showers, plenty of camping space in both open fields and in trees, and lots and lots of parking space for both cars and RVs/campers. It's also very private: pets allowed (wth fee), clothing optional. **Prices per person (12 & older):** \$30 till July 11; \$40 till Aug 1; \$50 till Sep 23; \$60 after and at gate. Children 11-17, or 2<sup>nd</sup> or more child, ½ price. Vending space is extra. Register on-line at: [www.faeriefaitn.net/FFregister.html](http://www.faeriefaitn.net/FFregister.html).

**FESTIVAL: Pagan Family Reunion (PFR) will be held November 17-20, 2011** at the S.T.A.R. Retreat, Camilla, GA (south of Albany). PFR is an intimate, family-friendly Pagan gathering, with classes, live music, a ritual, and a potluck dinner Saturday evening. Clothing optional. No dogs; other animals may be allowed after consideration, and no illegal substances whatsoever. The site onists of several (flat) acres with a cabin and a 7-acre lake, with tons of camping, parking, and RV room. The lake is open for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. The site also has outdoor showers and indoor flushing toilets. Admission for adults ages 15 and over (under 15 is free) - Tier 1 - \$30/person, by October 1; Tier 2 - \$40/person until November 1; Tier 3 - \$50/person after November 1 and at the gate. Vending space: \$15. Basic electricity (for fans and lights only, bring your own power cords): \$10. Electricity for RVs and campers: \$25. For more info or to register, visit our website, <<http://www.bio-buzz.com/pfr>>.

# CST/GGG Litha Ritual 2011

**Intention: Memorial for Jonathan Medley, Litha celebration.** (NOTE: This is the ritual outline. Much of the language of the ritual was totally spontaneous and so is not conveyed in this format.)

Two altars (card table size) set up side by side and appropriately decorated in the Northern quarter – one for memorial, the other for Litha. Large cauldron half filled with water, set up in the Western quarter.

## **Purifications: Ritual space; Priesthood, Participants**

Welcome and admit participants into circle after smudging with sage and anointing with oil. We trace the invoking pentagram of spirit in oil, on the third eye, saying, "In spirit we are born. In spirit we are blessed. In spirit we return."

## **Cast circle (circle casting song); Call quarters/elements - volunteers (Singing bowls)**

### **JON'S MEMORIAL**

Priestess/Priest: Intro - Jon's memorial  
*(Pass out tealight candles, light ancient providence candle)*  
*Invocation of ancient providence (song)*  
*Priest lights tea light candles from ancient providence candle*

## **Priestess: Ancient Jewish prayer for the dead (by Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi)**

"Compassionate One, remember now the precious soul of Jonathan Medley, who returned to the realm from which he had originally come to spend time with us in this life. May this soul be intertwined with your great spirit, the source of all life, and in the warmth and serenity of your wings. May this spirit be joined with the spirits of his ancestors, and with the spirits of other great women and men who now dwell in the bliss of paradise."

"Source of all Blessing are you, Ancient Providence, breath of all life, who created Jonathan Medley, and graced us with the gift of his presence in our lives. You chose to bring him into being on our plane, and you chose to call him back to your realm, in your own mysterious way. We thank you, Creator of life and death for the time we had with our beloved, and ask you to comfort us now for our sense of loss in our lives and for our somber encounter with our own mortality in this moment."

"Renew in us the faith that -- in your unending love -- death is but a journey of the spirit from the finite realm of physical being to the infinite realm of your eternal embrace. For the soul of the human is a spark of the divine. Wellspring of blessing are you, Ancient Providence, breath of all life, who is with us in life and in death."

*Sharing of individual expression by participants (Participants float candles in cauldron when done expressing)*

## **Priest: Reading of "On Death" excerpted from The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran:**

"You would know the secret of death.  
But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?  
If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life.  
For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.  
In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;  
And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow, your heart dreams of spring.  
Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.  
For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?  
And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek the Gods unencumbered.  
Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.  
And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.  
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance."

## **Priestess/Priest: Closing prayer or words (ad lib) (Singing bowls)**

### **LITHA RITUAL BEGINS**

*(Spontaneous speech re: God/dess myth cycle (sun into Cancer/water sign at apex of summer)..eclipse cycle/sun & moon, polarities of light/dark, life/death, Father's day...etc..)*

"And so the dance everlasting propels us forward with this turning of the wheel...the spiral of the great cycle moves in two directions...breathing in -- and out, simultaneously. Let us connect with each other and dance as the sun and moon....."

*(Slow instrumental music: Daemonia Nymph -Dance of the Satyrs)*

*Priest leads men to inside moving sunwise (deosil)  
Priestess leads women to outside moving moonwise (widdershins)  
(We circumambulated in both directions, holding hands, until pr joined the circles and we wound around in a spiral.)  
Priestess offered more spontaneous speech! Segue into deity invocations.*

*Priest: Invoking pentagram with wand stands in front of Priestess who has her back toward main altar)*

**Drawing Down the Moon - Priest:**

"I invoke thee and call upon thee, Mighty Mother of us all, Bringer of all fruitfulness; by seed and root, by bud and stem, by leaf and flower and fruit, by life and love do I invoke thee to descend upon the body of this, thy servant and priestess."

"Hail Aradia! From the Amalthean Horn...pour forth thy store of love; I lowly bend before thee, I adore thee to the end, with loving sacrifice thy shrine adore. Thy foot is to my lip my prayer up borne; upon the rising incense smoke; then spend Thine ancient love, O Mighty One, descend to aid me, who without Thee am forlorn."

**Priestess:**

"Of the Mother darksome and divine, mine the scourge and mine the kiss, the five point star of love and bliss. Here I charge ye in this sign"....

*(Priestess and Priest change places - deosil)*

**Priest takes Osiris position; Priestess gives 5 fold kiss:**

"Blessed be thy feet that have brought thee in these ways"

*(Kisses right/left feet)*

"Blessed be thy knees that shall kneel at the sacred altar"

*(Kisses right/left knees)*

"Blessed by thy phallus, without which we would not be"

*(Kissing above lingham :-p)*

*(Priest opens arms)*

"Blessed be thy breasts formed in strength"

*(Kisses right/left breasts)*

"Blessed be thy lips that shall utter the sacred names"

*(Priestess and Priest embrace, feet touching, kiss each other)*

**Priestess steps back --- invokes --**

"Deep calls on height, the Goddess on the God,  
On him who is the flame that quickens her;  
That he and she may seize the silver reins  
And ride as one the twin-horsed chariot.  
Let the hammer strike the anvil,  
Let the lightning touch the earth,  
Let the lance ensoul the grail,  
Let the magic come to birth."

*(Priestess makes invoking pentagram of fire) right finger touching Priest's throat, left hip, right breast, left breast, right hip, and throat again... Palms outward)*

"In her name do I invoke thee,  
Mighty father of us all --  
Lugh, Pan, Belinus, Herne, Cernunnos -  
Come in answer to my call!  
Descend, I pray thee, in thy servant and priest."

*(Priestess steps back again -- Priest makes invoking pentagram of fire with wand, gives spontaneous Oracle.)*

- After Oracle -

**Blessing of wine and cakes:**

**Wine:** "As the athame is to the male

So the chalice is to the female

And so conjoined, they bring blessings.

**Cakes:** "Goddess of the verdant plain

God of corn and grain

Bless this food we now share

Nourish us with love

Goddess of the cooling rain

God of fruit and cane

Bless this food we now share

With both of you above

*(Libation is distributed to all and poured on ground on Jon's behalf; cakes are distributed to all.)*

When all have finished, conclude Rite:

**Priestess:** "Release all sorrows!"

**Priest:** "Rise above all strife!"

**Priestess:** "This day is for living!"

**Priest:** "For living this life."

**Priestess:**

"We give thanks to the mighty ones for the richness and goodness of life. As there must be rain with the sun, to make all things good, so must we suffer pain with our joy, to know all things. Our love is ever with the gods, for though we know not their thoughts, yet do we know their hearts -- that all is for our good."

**Priest:**

"Mighty ones, bless us now. Keep us faithful in thy service. We thank you for the crops; for life; for love; for joy. We thank you for that spark that brings us together -- and to you. Help us to live with love and with trust between us. Help us to feel the joy of loving you and of loving one another. So be it!"

*Thank Gods; thank Goddess; thank Quarters; open circle.*

*(Song)*

Fini! Feast!



# Summer Solstice: Litha

by Cynthia Jurkovic, FOI Prs-H

Summer Solstice, also called Mid-Summer, or Litha, is the peak of summer; the longest day and shortest night of the year. Many individuals mistakenly call it the 'beginning' of summer, when in fact, Litha marks the mid way point of the summer season that begins on May Day/Beltane (May 1) and ends on Lammas/Lughnasadh (Aug 1). Summer Solstice is the apex of the Sun's power because it is the point in Earth's axis movement where the northern latitudes are tilted closest to the Sun. The southern half of Earth is at it's farthest point from the Sun, and so the inhabitants that dwell there are now experiencing their peak of Winter! The exact point of the Summer Solstice is calculated by the exact time that the Sun moves into the water sign of Cancer (the Crab). The dates float between June 19th and 23rd. The old traditional fixed date for this sabbat is June 24th. In this year (2011), the Solstice occurred on June 21st, at 12:16pm central time.

The eight standard sabbats observed by most modern Pagans are divided into two groupings corresponding with quarter and cross quarter dates. The four 'lesser' sabbats that correspond with the cardinal directions are: East - Vernal Equinox, South - Summer Solstice, West - Autumnal Equinox, and North - Winter Sostice. Cross quarter, 'greater' sabbats fall half way in between the equinoxes and solstices: North East - Imbolc (Feb 1), South East - Beltane (May 1), South West - Lammas/Lughnasadh (Aug 1), and North West - Samhain (Nov 1). With Summer Solstice being South on the Wheel, Yule is opposite from it in the North. From Summer Solstice until Winter Solstice, the sun wanes in strength and length of day as the Earth's axis makes it's journey to the furthest most point from the sun until we once again experience the shortest day and longest night at Yule. The modern usage of the word "Litha" for this sabbat most likely comes from a Saxon word meaning the opposite of Yule.

Incidentally, when the Christians assimilated the Pagan festival days, the Summer Solstice became a celebration of the birth of John the Baptist called, The Feast of John the Baptist - aka - St. John's Day; while Winter Sostice became the date associated with the birth of Jesus -aka- Christmas, celebrated on Dec 25th. John the Baptist was even called "The Oak King" and was depicted as a horned figure with Satyr like legs and cloven feet! (Info courtesy of my friend, Mike Nichols, author of The Witches' Sabbats.)

There is much more lore associated with Summer Solstice than I can possibly convey at this time and in this space. The Oak King/Holly King cycle is but one of the peices of lore connecting Summer and Winter Solstice. There are some variations in this lore, but generally it is presented that on Winter Solstice, the Oak King is either born then, or fights the Holly King (sometimes considered the Oak King's brother) for supremacy and power. The Oak King wins, and then reigns until Summer Solstice, when the Holly King is either born or fights and wins over the Oak King again. The Holly King reigns from Summer Solstice until Winter Solstice. This lore is of Celtic origin and is given from the perspective of the year being divided into two halves - the light (Oak) and the dark (Holly). The Solstices are times when the contrast of polarities seem to be felt most strongly. It is the height of the season of growth, the dog days of summer are upon us. It's time for summer vacations, family reunions, trips to the bodies of water (ocean, gulf, lake, river, pool) that cool and refresh

us. Some view Litha as a "resting" sabbat, in between planting and harvest and so a time of much revelry and celebration, and indeed it is when school age children are given time to play and enjoy time away from the classroom and when people are most actively engaged in out of doors activities and sports. June has, for a long time been a favored time for weddings and the beloved's honey moon.

Litha is also deeply connected to stories, traditions, and superstitions about the Faery Folk. They are famous for wreaking havoc on unsuspecting humans and there are a great deal of stories about human-faery couplings, changeling babies, malevolent tricksters, and directions for creating various means of protection and charms against the dangers they may bring. One of the most well known faery stories is Sir William Shakespeare's, A Midsummer Night's Dream that is full of faery fun and mischief. Harvesting and decorating with herbs is a traditional activity for Midsummer. There are several herbs that are closely associated with Summer Solstice and are thought to contain magickal power on this night: St. John's Wort, rue (to protect from the Fae), roses, vervain (verbena), and trefoil. It is said that if you gather fern seeds at midnight and rub them on your eyelids you will gain Faery sight.

In the cycle of the Goddess and the God, the Sun God is at his peak of power. The Goddess is about three months pregnant with the Child of Promise who will be born at Yule. There are several viewpoints on the cycle of the God through the Wheel of the Year. Individuals must decide for themselves what seems right. Some go with the Oak/Holly King mythology or some variation that asserts that the God is killed at his peak of power even as there is another to take his place - either his brother or his own child or some challenger. In that aspect, the God is the Sacrificial King.

In our physical world, life flourishes, the season of growth is in full swing and the whole of our existence is literally buzzing with energy. Be as active as you can be. Markets abound with produce of all kinds even though the first harvest celebration, Lammas or Lughnasadh, is still six weeks away on Aug 1st. Try growing flowers or veggies or herbs or whatever your heart desires. Go to farmer's markets or road side fruit and veggie stands. Visit pick-it-yourself farms. Go to flea markets or garage sales to find treasures for your house projects.

Just as the season of winter is a time to take stock and begin planning in the mental realms, summer is a good time to make an assessment of what is and what is not working within your life on all levels of Being. Look at your strengths and challenges and think of what you may do to improve or evolve in some way or in many ways. To use the growth analogy, sometimes weeds pop up that need to be pulled and discarded. Fertilizer of some kind is needed to feed what you are growing. Projects worthy of your time and energy may need adjusting or revamping so that they can be finished in a timely and productive fashion. It's time to get out and explore or wander...gather with friends, get your hands dirty and laugh and play and do things that bring you happiness and nurture your inner child. Do something good for yourself and for others.

Have FUN!



# Earthdance

September 16-18, 2011, Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Blakely, GA  
<http://www.spiraltree.org/Earthdance/earthdance.shtml>

## Announcing CST's new official festival!

Earthdance is a revival of a Pagan festival formerly held by Stormy. It will be held every year on the third weekend of September, beginning this year, and will be CST's official festival, where our annual membership meeting and elections are held. Earthdance will be held at the group camp at Kolomoki Mounds State Park in Blakely, Georgia. This is a great site, with dormitory-style cabins, a dining hall, and \*lots\* of shade. We will have workshops Friday night and all day Saturday, live music, a pot-luck dinner Saturday night, and a ritual to celebrate the season. Join us for our inaugural festival!

Earthdance has a long history; it was first started by Shadowcat at FDR State Park in Pine Mountain, GA, and was then taken over by Stormy & Sandy. They ran it for a couple of years together, and then it became Stormy's responsibility. Under her guidance, Earthdance moved to Hard Labor Creek State Park east of Atlanta, GA, and then finally to Kolomoki Mounds State Park. After her passing in 2004, her daughter Carol Lynne took over. Earthdance was last held in 2005, and after this 6-year hiatus, Carol Lynne has graciously given CST permission to revive Earthdance and hold it in Stormy's honor.

**About the site:** Earthdance is held at Kolomoki Mounds State Park, at Camp Hicita. This group camp consists of a dining hall, a covered pavilion, and four dormitory-style cabins with bunk beds that sleep a total of 135 people. Georgia state parks do not allow tents or RVs in the group camps, so all attendees must sleep in one of the cabins (bring your own linens). If you prefer to camp, there is a campground about a mile away from the group camp (campsites cost \$25-\$35/night), but you must reserve your campsite on your own through the reservations web site. Also, you will need to purchase a parking pass (\$5/day/vehicle) when you arrive at Earthdance. We will have these for sale at registration.

**Prices:** Adults 18+: \$50 by August 1; and \$65 thereafter and at the gate. Children ages 11-17 are 1/2 of whatever the current price is when you pay; children ages 10 and under are free. Family special: Only pay for one child age 11-17, at 1/2 price! All other kids are free! (Must be in immediate family, same address as registering adult). CST members get \$5 off above prices! Vendor fees are \$10-\$50, depending on size of space. <http://www.spiraltree.org/Earthdance/registration.shtml>

### Earthdance Registration Form

**You may fill out one form for your entire family, all related, living at one address, but please fill out separate forms for roommates or friends.**

Name (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (2): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (home) (cell)

#### **Names and ages of any of YOUR minor children that are attending:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Any allergies or medical problems we should know about (and for whom)?**

#### GENERAL WAIVER AND INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

(1) I \_\_\_\_\_ (Legal Name) and (2) I \_\_\_\_\_ (Legal Name), having read and understood the rules and standards of conduct expected while at Earthdance, freely consent to these. Being a voluntary participant at Earthdance 2011, at Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Blakely, Georgia, September 16-18, 2011, I agree to abide by the above rules and regulations. I also understand that if I do not abide by these, I may be escorted from the site without refund. I also agree to hold harmless the owners of the site (State of Georgia), the organizers and staff of Earthdance and Church of the Spiral Tree and all its representatives, from all claims, actions, expenses and demands in respect to injury, loss or damage to my person or property, however caused, arising in connection with my participation even if the same may have been contributed to or occasioned by the negligence of the owners, the said body, or of any of its representatives.

(1) Signature (parent sign for minor under 18 years of age) \_\_\_\_\_ Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Signature (parent sign for minor under 18 years of age) \_\_\_\_\_ Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**You may also register on-line at: <http://www.spiraltree.org/Earthdance/registration.shtml>,  
or mail check to Earthdance c/o CST, P.O. Box 8396, Columbus, GA 31908.**

# CST Calendar:

CST and its affiliate Groves welcome church and community members, beginners, newcomers, solitaires, and anyone else interested in participating in rituals honoring the Sabbats and new & full moons. You need no experience or knowledge to participate, but we do request you come with an open mind and heart, and show respect for your fellow participants. We usually share a potluck dinner after each ritual, so those who come are asked to bring some type of food to share. Please wear something comfortable and appropriate for outdoors. Ritual robes are welcome but not necessary. Children of all ages are welcome. You do not have to be a member of CST to participate! Donations to the Church are entirely optional but appreciated.

Note: the schedule below is subject to change! Firmer times and locations of all rituals will be available closer to the date of the ritual. Please visit <<http://www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml>> for up-to-date information, directions, and links to RSVP for each ritual.

<b>EVENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>	<b>LOCATION (HOST)</b>
Full Moon Lodge	June 25	TBA	PSE	Salem, AL
Full Moon Ritual	July 15	7:00 pm EDT	DH	Dragon Hills, GA
Full Moon Lodge	July 16	TBA	PSE	Salem, AL
Lammas Ritual	July 30	TBA	GGG	TBA
Full Moon Ritual	August 13	7:00 pm EDT	DH	Dragon Hills, GA
Full Moon Lodge	August 13	TBA	PSE	Salem, AL
Full Moon Lodge	September 12	TBA	PSE	Salem, AL
Full Moon Ritual	September 12	7:00 pm EDT	DH	Dragon Hills, GA
EARTHDANCE	Sept. 16-18	---	CST	Kolomoki Mounds S.P.
Lammas Ritual	September 24	TBA	GGG	TBA

*DH = Dragon Hills Grove (Carrollton, GA); GGG = Green Gate Grove (Columbus, GA); PSE = People of the Sacred Earth (Salem, AL); STAR = Sacred Tribe of Ancient Roots (Albany, GA); TBA = to be announced*

**Board of Directors' Meetings:** The next BoD meeting will be June 26, 2011, 1:00 pm Central Time, Linda's house, Auburn, AL.. BoD meetings are held four times a year; check website at <<http://www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml>> for date of next meeting.

**Festival:** Earthdance, September 16-18, Kolomoki Mounds, Blakely, GA. Official CST festival.

## Upcoming Festivals (Not CST events):

**FallFling** - October 6-9, Cherokee Farms, Lafayette, GA, <http://www.fairiefaith.net/FallFling.html>

**Old Earth Gather Samhain** - October 27-30, Cherokee Farms, Lafayette, GA, <http://www.oldearthgather.com/>

**PFR** - November 17-20, S.T.A.R. Retreat, Camilla, GA, <http://www.bio-buzz.com/PFR>

For a full listing of Pagan festivals, please visit: <<http://www.fairiefaith.net/festival.list.html>>

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Church of the Spiral Tree  
P.O. Box 8396  
Columbus, GA 31908

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED