



# The Journey...

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



## Church of the Spiral Tree Summary of Annual Membership Meeting & Elections Results September 28, 2013

The meeting was held at Pagan Pride Day, at the Davis Arboretum on the Auburn University campus, Auburn, AL at 1:00 pm on September 28, 2013. Attending: Stephen B., Linda K., Siryn D., Sarah M., Robert V., Megan S., Madeline W., Ricarda M., Shuree M., Angela F., Tim A., Anita O., Scott S., and Rodney H.

All officers listed on the ballot were voted in, by both mail-in and in-person votes. Linda Kerr - president; Siryn Dolphinson - vice-president; Stephen Bradford - secretary/treasurer; Sarah McClain - member-at-large. In addition, Angela Farmer was elected as a second member-at-large.

There was discussion about our ordination program. It was decided to scale back a bit on previous plans and simplify things for those wanting to become ordained. The cost will be \$50. More details will be ironed out by the first of the year.

Linda wants CST as a church to offer sabbat rituals locally again, rather than relying on only the groves to offer rituals. Skippy, Ricarda, and Shuree volunteered to handle the first year of rituals.

It was decided to make it a requirement of new groves to hold regular public sabbat and/or moon rituals. Groves are one of the

public faces of CST, and as such, should offer rituals to members of the community who may not be close enough to Auburn to attend rituals held by the main church. Existing groves will be grandfathered in, and will not be required to hold these rituals, although it is encouraged.

After some discussion about the Pagan Prisoner Ministry, Shuree and Ricarda volunteered to help out and to answer the backlog of letters from inmates.

Our next BoD meeting is tentatively set for Sunday, February 2, in Auburn, at 1:00 pm Central time. All CST members are invited to attend in a non-voting capacity. Input is always welcome.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

### Mabon/Yule 2013, #52

#### In This Issue:

Annual Membership Meeting & Elections	1
Grove News	2
Auburn Pagan Pride Day Review	2
Yule	3
Circle of Life	4
Simple Yule Ritual for Beginners	5
How To Honor Brigid at Imbolc: Group Ritual	6
Contacts	7
CST Calendar	8

#### CST Directors:

President	Linda Kerr
Vice President	Siryn Dolphinson
Secretary/Treasurer	Stephen Bradford
Member-at-Large	Sarah McClain
Member-at-Large	Angela Farmer

#### CST Staff:

Sacred Grove Academy Director	Linda Kerr
Newsletter Editor	Linda Kerr
Webmaster	Linda Kerr

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# Grove News

At the general membership meeting (see Summary, page 1), we decided to make it a requirement of new groves to hold regular public sabbat and/or moon rituals. Groves are one of the public faces of CST, and as such, should offer rituals to members of the community who may not be close enough to Auburn to attend rituals held by the main church. Existing groves will be grandfathered in, and will not be required to hold these rituals, although it is encouraged.

On December 7, 2013, Nine Worlds Kindred sponsored a Wand Making Workshop featuring Gypsy Teague, held at Karma & Medusa's Lair in Auburn, Alabama. The workshop was very well-attended and well-received, and Gypsy will definitely be invited back this upcoming year.



## Auburn Pagan Pride Day Review

The 2013 Auburn Pagan Pride Day (PPD) was a great success! PPD was held Saturday, September 28, 2013, at the Davis Arboretum on the Auburn University campus. We had classes all day long, followed by a wonderful ritual by skippy &

Ricarda, and we collected 150 lbs of food for the East Alabama Food Bank. The event was extremely well attended, with probably 200 people visiting throughout the course of the day.

The Plainsman, our local campus newspaper, published a very positive article about PPD, which you can read here: [http://www.theplainsman.com/view/full\\_story/23688291/article-Students-demo-nstrate-religious-tolerance-with-Pagan-Pride-Day](http://www.theplainsman.com/view/full_story/23688291/article-Students-demo-nstrate-religious-tolerance-with-Pagan-Pride-Day).



## About CST

Church of the Spiral Tree (CST) is a non-profit, volunteer-staffed, ecumenical Pagan 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 ministries is Sacred Grove Academy, a Pagan church cover school program for homeschooling families in Alabama. CST also has a Community Relief Fund, so we can collectively donate money in the name of an established Pagan church to individuals in need and to disaster relief efforts, including the American Red Cross.

*Church of the Spiral Tree is classified as a 509(a)(1) & 170(b)(1)(A)(i) organization. We are tax-exempt under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3).*

# Yule - by April McLeod

*In the Northern Hemisphere, Yule occurs on the Winter Solstice – usually on December 21<sup>st</sup>.*

**The information below is the culmination of years of experience, but is written simply so a beginner may easily follow it. I hope you enjoy it and it brings joy to your life and your family. Blessed Be ♥**

“Celebrations of Light,” are common in many countries and cultures. They are often called “Winter Festivals.” There is Christmas, Hanukkah, and others. The Pagan “Celebration of Light” is known as Yule. Many cultures have winter festivals that are in fact celebrations of light. Two well-known winter holidays are Christmas and Kwanzaa. There are many other Winter holidays, but we will focus on the Pagan celebration known as Yule (*yool*). The Pagan holiday called Yule takes place on the day of the winter solstice, around December 21. It is one of the “minor” sabbats. On or near that day, the axis of the Earth tilts away from the sun in the northern hemisphere, causing the sun to reach its greatest distance from the Earth.

This is a festival of light and lights play a big part in this sabbat. Depending on where you live, these lights can be any combination of a fire in a fireplace or a fire pit, candles, a bonfire, small white lights strung through trees outside or even around house plants (if you live in the city and have no green space outside.)

## **Associated Symbols, Colors, Gems, & Decorations**

Mistletoe, pine, reindeer, holly, and foxes are all associated with Yule. Associated colors are gold for the God and silver for the Goddess. Other color associations are red and green. Usually the only deities invited to a Yule circle are a god and goddess; but, you may

welcome whomever you wish to your circle “or celebration,” choosing those that best suit the purposes of the gathering. Decorate your altar with red stones like rubies and garnets; you can also add green stones, like emeralds, green turquoise, tourmaline, and jade, and silver and gold charms or decorations. Poinsettias (remember, poinsettias are poisonous) are a perfect flower for the altar and for decoration the home or an outdoor space. Other items of decoration can be symbols of the sun or a stag and a bowl or basket of pine cones.

## **Associated Food & Drink**

Chocolate Yule Log, Hot Buttered Rum, Sun King Tomato Soup, Baked Spaghetti Squash and Fudge with Peppermint.

## **Yule Is A Great Time To:**

As many Pagan families replace Christmas with Yule, if you want this to be the gift-giving holiday, it is a perfect choice. Each year, my family tries to be more “green” with our gift-giving. Two years ago, we placed our gifts (by family) in reusable shopping bags and asked that they keep the bag in their cars and use it as often as possible. Last year, I used everything but wrapping paper to wrap my gifts! Some good, fun choices are: the pages of books that have been damaged (that you would have thrown away otherwise), maps, the newspaper (of course,) magazines, and fabric! Decorations /ribbons can be anything from torn strips of fabric to Japanese making tape (or painter’s tape, decorated with markers), and origami shapes instead of a bow.



This time of year is perfect for families to get together, drink hot chocolate or grog, and tell stories about Yule’s past. If you have a local convalescent home, call them and tell them you would like to make cards for their residents (or candy, but check on dietary issues first). Many of their residents will not have a visitor for the holidays and this is a wonderful way to cheer them up! When we have done this in the past, we find the plainest recycled paper we can find, fold it in fourths, Cut out a picture from an old greeting card or a magazine, write “Happy Holidays” on the front (because you don’t know their spiritual path, and write “With Love, the Family” on the inside. Many homes will not be able to give you the names of the residents, but if they do, you can personalize each card.

## **Yule Ritual**

I normally save my rituals for the other Sabbats and full and new moons and on Yule, I smudge my house, cars, and yard (and my family and cats,) as sort of a “new beginning” ;-)



# Circle of Life

**Birthdays for October-March!  
Happy Birthday to the following  
CST members:**



Amanda R. (October 11)  
Cheryl R. (October 24)  
Crystal B. (November 3)  
Linda K. (November 10)  
Nicholaus L. (November 12)  
Don M. (November 17)  
Kiersten N. (November 24)  
Sandy N. (November 27)  
Jceia W. (November 30)  
Stephen B. (December 1)  
Madeline S. (December 2)  
Angela F. (December 11)  
Marcus R. (December 13)  
Jennifer C. (December 27)  
Shuree M. (December 27)  
Shyra W. (January 1)  
Michael H. (January 11)  
Joshua H. (January 31)  
Jacob C. (February 2)  
Amanda T. (February 5)  
Danielle C. (February 8)  
Deonte R. (February 8)  
Arsh D. (February 9)  
DC W. (February 9)  
Nathaniel T. (February 13)  
Sarah M (February 18)  
Catherine R. (February 25)  
Joanie T. (March 3)  
Cliff L. (March 11)  
Siry D. (March 22)  
Jacob P. (March 25)

# Ministers

CST, being a church, may ordain any member age 18 and over as a minister, as long as they have been a paid member for at least one year. We are currently re-vamping our program to better serve our membership and community.

It is now our the policy that any CST member who is made an ordained minister, must maintain their paid CST membership in order for their ordination status to remain valid. All ordinations will be good for a period of three years (we no longer ordain for life), during which the membership must be maintained. After this three-year period, you may apply to renew your ordination. There will be a small fee for renewal (still to be determined).

If the paid membership is not maintained during this three-year period or at any time thereafter, the ordination will lapse 30 days after the membership lapses.

This policy has been put in place to ensure that CST and our ordained ministers remain committed and connected to each other, and is effective for all ministers ordained in the year 2012 and on.

# Local Groups

The local CST group is called a Grove. We feel the church will have a better chance of successfully meeting members' needs if it is easily and locally accessible to them; therefore, we encourage CST members of legal age, **after having been paid members for at least one year**, to begin their own local chapter of CST. In addition, as part of the public face and outreach of CST, all Groves are required to hold regular sabbat and/or lunar rituals that are open to the community. The application and first year's fee is \$35.00.

# 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.

# Board of Directors' Meetings

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

***If you have important news that you would like to share in Happenings or Circle of Life in the Ostara 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 3165, Auburn, AL 36831-3165, no later than March 1, 2014.***

# Simple Yule Ritual for Beginners

By ÓMorag of the Shadows, 2001

From: <<http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/witchcraftstudies/yuleritual.html>>

## Materials Needed:

Dirt from the land you live on (to represent the Earth)

A candle (bright yellow to represent fire, and the sun)

Water (to represent, of course water—from your tap is fine)

Incense (to represent air—any scent you feel is appropriate will do)

An evergreen branch (small or large will do)

A small offering to the Reborn God (incense, something handmade by you, a string of beads, etc.)

And most important, a quiet ritual space where you will not be disturbed.

Additional materials, such as pine cones, antlers, flowers, ect can be added to the ritual space as desired. I usually have many things around me, that have special meaning to me, but this is meant to be a very simple ritual for the newcomer, so I will forgo adding more than needed.

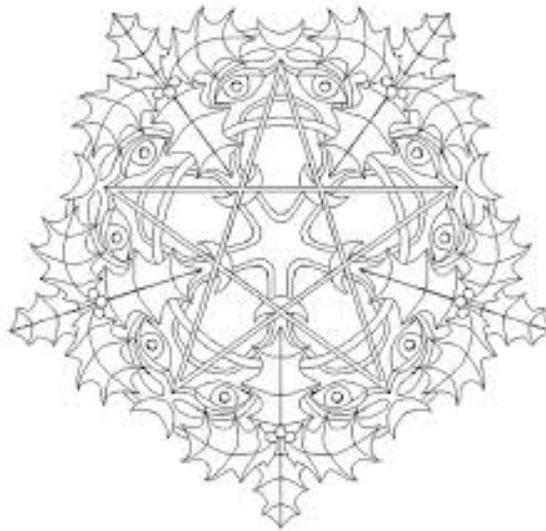
Place the Earth element in the North, the Air in the East, the Fire in the South, and the Water in the East. Try to place them so that you can reach each of them easily from one position. This can be on a small table, a tree stump, or the ground. If you wish, cover the area with a cloth that you will only use for ritual to help put you in the right frame of mind for it. Light the Fire candle, and meditate on what Yule means to you. If you are still learning, and are not quite sure of what it does mean to you, read this:

<<http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/witchcraftstudies/yule.html>>

This was written by Mike Nichols, and should help you understand the day even more.

After meditating, pick up the bowl of Dirt, and say (or think), "I am of this Earth, forever linked to the Gods." Draw a pentacle in the dirt. Replace.

Next pick up the Incense,



drawing a pentacle in front of your with it say, "This is the breath of the Gods, which gives me life." Replace.

Picking up the candle, say, "This is the Flame that warms our heart, just as the love of the Goddess and the God warms our souls." Replace.

Last, pick the bowl of Water up, and say, "And this the ever-changing waters and nourishes life, without which we would not be." Replace.

Think on the God's rebirth, and the lengthening days that follow the Winter Solstice. Say what is in your heart at this time to the Goddess and the God. If you are in a situation that you are not comfortable to speak aloud, then think those words.

Next, take the offering you are

giving to the Gods up in your hands, hold it to the sky and say, "This is my gift to you, for you have given many gifts to me. This symbolizes my pledge to you." Replace. Add why to this why you chose this offering.

Now for the closing of your ritual. Take up the Earth again, saying, "Thank you for watching over my rite." Pour the dirt back onto the ground if outside, if not, wait till you are completely finished then do it. Say the thank you for each of the elements. Pour the water out onto the ground as well. Take your offering to a favorite tree or plant of yours, and either place it on the branches where it won't be disturbed, or bury it near the roots. Place the incense under/over the offering, and leave it to burn itself out. Take the candle inside, and place in a window. Let it burn all the way out. (Make sure there aren't any curtains or other flammable materials nearby that could catch fire. Be safe.) Spend the rest of the day aware of the significance of the day.

If you have any changes that you would like to make for yourself in this ritual, go ahead. Paganism is a living religion, always growing and expanding. To the new person, I would suggest keeping it as simple as possible. This is why you will not see the usual tools, such as the knife or a circle used here. It is not needed. They have their purposes.

Go with the Gods, Blessed Be.



# How To Honor Brighid at Imbolc: Group Ritual

By Patti Wigington

From <[http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/imbolcfebruary2/ht/ImbolcRit\\_Group.htm](http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/imbolcfebruary2/ht/ImbolcRit_Group.htm)>

Imbolc is a time to honor Brighid, the Irish goddess of fire, hearth and home.

This ritual is designed for a group of individuals, but could easily be adapted for a solitary practitioner. Imbolc is the time between Yule and the Spring Equinox, the halfway point in the dark months of the year. It's the time when the days suddenly seem to be getting longer, and the snow is beginning to melt, showing us small patches of earth and green. At this time of returning spring, our ancestors lit bonfires and candles to celebrate the rebirth of the land.



## What You Need:

- A candle for each member of the group
- A Brighid candle
- A bowl or plate of oatcakes or oats
- A cup of milk

## Here's How:

In many areas of the Celtic world, this was the fire feast of Brighid, the Irish goddess of hearth and home. She is the keeper of the flame, the protector of the home, and a goddess of holy wells and springs. At Imbolc, we acknowledge her many aspects, especially that of her role as a

deity of transformation. As the world awakes from the dark slumber of winter, it is time to cast off the chill of the past and welcome the warmth of spring.

Set up your altar with the symbols of Brighid and the coming spring -- a Brighid's cross or dolly, potted daffodils or crocuses, white and red yarn or ribbon, young fresh twigs, and lots of candles. Also, you'll need an unlit candle for each participant, a candle to represent Brighid herself, a plate or bowl of oats or oatcakes, and a cup of milk.

If you normally cast a circle in your tradition, do so now. Each member of the group should hold their unlit candle before them.

## The HPs says:

*Today is Imbolc, the day of midwinter.  
The cold has begun to fade away, and the days grow longer.  
This is a time in which the earth is quickening,  
like the womb of Brighid,  
birthing the fire after the darkness.*

## The HPS lights the Brighid candle, and says:

*Bright blessings at midwinter to all!  
Brighid has returned with the sacred flame,  
watching over home and hearth.  
This is a time of rebirth and fertility,  
and as the earth grows full of life,  
may you find abundance on your own path.  
Imbolc is the season of lambing, of new life,  
and a time to celebrate the nurturing and warmth of Brighid.*

At this time, the HPs takes the cup of milk, and offers a sip to Brighid. You can do this either by pouring it into a bowl on the altar, or by simply raising the cup to the

sky. The HPs then passes the cup around the circle. As each person takes a sip, they pass it to the next, saying:

*May Brighid give her blessings to you this season.*

When the cup has returned to the HPs, she passes the oats or oatcakes around in the same manner, first making an offering to Brighid. Each person takes a bit of the oats or cakes and passes the plate to the next, saying:

*May Brighid's love and light nurture your path.*

The HPS then invites each member of the group to approach the altar, and light their candle from the Brighid candle.

Say:

*Come, and allow the warmth of Brighid's hearth to embrace you.  
Allow the light of her flame to guide you.  
Allow the love of her blessing to protect you.*

When everyone has lit their candle, take a few moments to meditate on the warmth and nurturing nature of the goddess Brighid. As you bask in her warmth, and she protects your home and hearth, think about how you will make changes in the coming weeks. Brighid is a goddess of abundance and fertility, and she may help you guide your goals to fruition.

When you are ready, end the ceremony, or move on to other rituals, such as Cakes and Ale, or healing rites.



# 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.

**Amanda T.:** (770) 559-0878.

**Ehsa Apple:** I am an ordained minister, specializing in non-traditional Handfastings (i.e. mixed tradition, family joining, poly, and LGBTIQ) and Body Easing (aka "Crossing"). As har-gydia of Nine Worlds American Kindred in Auburn, AL, I offer a variety of learning experiences including workshops, initiatory training, and formal pagan education through Open Path Pagan Seminary (OpenPathSeminary.org). I am owner of The Wyrd Sister (thewyrdsistershop.com), an online metaphysical specializing in handmade artisan goods geared toward a magical life, and regularly hand-craft talismans, traditional hoodoo oils, healing salves, and ointments with the Nine Worlds tribe and my apprentices. Nine Worlds American Kindred, a syncretic heathen kindred, offers regular celebrations, workshops and socials. Information about Nine Worlds can be found at [distrtoth.org](http://distrtoth.org) and on Facebook.

**Dr. Katharyn Privett-Duren:**  
[dr\\_privett@yahoo.com](mailto:dr_privett@yahoo.com).

**Madeline W.S.:**  
[makalinakittenmother@yahoo.com](mailto:makalinakittenmother@yahoo.com)

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

**Michael Lee Harris #221321:** Wiccan pagan, My path is Celtic. Interest in reading Wiccan pagan books, Circle magazine, Pagans and the Law by Dana D Eilers. Fox Lake Corr. Inst., Box 200 HU One, Fox Lake, WI 53933-0200.

**Ricarda Munch:**  
256-590-8502.

**Richard Peebles #523160:** I will correspond with Wiccan gay or straight males and females alike; I only ask to write and make friends, and an opportunity to learn something new in Wicca..  
Richard Edward Peebles #523160, Riverbend C.F., ED115, 198 Laying Farm Rd., Milledgeville, GA 31061.

**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: "Skippy" Rob Von Allmen, 425 Webster Road #934, Auburn, AL 36832, <[skippy\\_the\\_witch@yahoo.com](mailto:skippy_the_witch@yahoo.com)>, 334-826-3953.

**Shuree Munden-Wagstaff:**  
[shureezinleather@yahoo.com](mailto:shureezinleather@yahoo.com).

**Siryndolphinsong-Bradford:**  
<[la.siryndolphinsong@yahoo.com](mailto:la.siryndolphinsong@yahoo.com)>

**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, a metaphysical supply and service oriented business in Albany, GA. As an ordained minister, I offer legal communions, handfastings, hand-partings, 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. Slapppy Blvd., Albany GA 31701, (229) 438-5878 or (229) 395-0963. Email: [tyernan2003@yahoo.com](mailto:tyernan2003@yahoo.com).



# 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 <[www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml](http://www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml)> for up-to-date information, directions, and links to RSVP for each ritual. Rituals without at least five attending will be cancelled.

<b>EVENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION/HOST</b>
Yule Celebration / Return of the Oak King Drama	12-21-13	Auburn, AL/9 Worlds Kindred
Imbolc Ritual & Potluck	2-1-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Ostara Ritual & Potluck	3-22-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Beltane Ritual & Potluck	5-3-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Litha Ritual & Potluck	6-21-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Lammas Ritual & Potluck	7-26-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Mabon Ritual & Potluck	9-20-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Samhain Ritual & Potluck	11-1-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Yule Ritual & Potluck	12-20-14	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST

**Board of Directors' Meetings:** The next BoD meeting will be held February 2, 2014. BoD meetings are held four times a year; check website at <[www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml](http://www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml)> for date and location of the next meeting.

## Upcoming Festivals (Not CST events):

**Moondance:** May 22-26, 2014, Roxanna, Alabama

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**Church of the Spiral Tree**  
**P.O. Box 3165**  
**Auburn, AL 36831-3165**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

