



The Journey...

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



Church of the Spiral Tree News

CST Board of Director's Meeting Summary, February 7, 2015

CST currently has 61 members. Sacred Grove Academy has 126 students currently.

Saebriel hasn't been able to work on the Pagan Prisoner Ministry much lately, due to having no internet. However, we plan to continue to keep on top of both the Yahoo group and the Facebook group, and make sure that all members are actually writing to somebody on the inmate list.

As of this meeting, CST has no groves. One grove had their charter suspended, one was revoked, and two groves removed themselves from CST. The future of CST groves was discussed, and for the time being we have removed the link to Grove rules and the application form from the CST website.

Pagan Pride Day 2015 is in the works! The Arboretum on the Auburn University campus has been reserved for September 19. There was discussion of finding some way this year to count attendees: clicker, wrist bands, stamps, raffle tickets, etc. There are some good fund-raising ideas on the PPD web boards that we may want to implement this year. Also we will have a large banner printed, saying "Welcome to Pagan Pride Day."

This year at Pagan Pride Day we will be choosing and asking specific people to do classes, rather than having an open volunteer form on the website. This will help make sure that all class teachers show up, a problem we've encountered in the past. Also, we'd love to have some live music for the event.

For the 2015 sabbat rituals, we will ask for someone to volunteer to write and run each ritual, as we used to do in the past. This gives people in the community a chance to step up and be involved.

We plan to make CST flyers to put in all sorts of places around Auburn, such as the Unitarian Universalist church, yoga studios, and the acupuncture clinic.

Siry and Ted want to start having a monthly drum circle at Roxanna beginning this spring. The first hour can be a class of some sorts, followed by drumming.

We welcome any input by CST members on these and any other topics!

Ostara 2015, #57

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CST Directors:

President	Linda Kerr
Vice President	Siry Dolphinson
Secretary/Treasurer	Stephen Bradford
Member-at-Large	Sarah McClain
Member-at-Large	Saebriel Velvetfire

CST Staff:

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

Church of the Spiral Tree
P.O. Box 3165
Auburn, AL 36831-3165
(706) 489-1017
churchofthespiraltree@gmail.com
www.spiraltree.org

Circle of Life

**Birthdays for April-May-June!
Happy Birthday to the following
CST members:**

Kat P. (April 4)
Colin K. (May 1)
Pete S. (May 7)
Rune (May 8)
Kirsten R. (May 14)
LeePhether M. (June 8)
Craig K. (June 8)
Ricarda M. (June 12)
Todd D. (June 28)

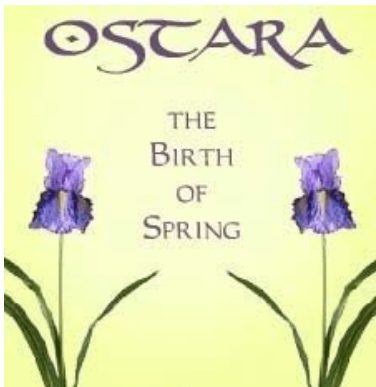


Ostara, Herald of Springtime, cont. from pg 3

maiden—as Ember Cooke writes, "...old enough to bear children, but not a mother." She is wreathed in flowers or new greenery, and often dances. She is often joyous, but can just as easily turn suddenly solemn, like the spring weather that can quickly turn to rain. Like Spring itself, she is capricious, innocent and knowing by turns.

Hail to the Maiden of Spring, the dawning of the year! Bring

freshness into all our lives.



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.

The policies below have 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.

Eligibility Requirements:

You must be a currently paid member of Church of the Spiral Tree, and not incarcerated.

You must have been a paid member of CST for at least one year previous to applying to become a minister.

You must be at 21 years of age.

Your application must include a photocopy or scan (front and back) of official picture ID; e.g. driver's license, student ID, state ID, work ID, etc.

Your application must include your payment of \$50 for the ordination fee.

Important:

Paid members of CST who are currently incarcerated are not eligible to apply for ordination through CST.

The President of CST reserves the right, as Head Chaplain for all ministerial functions, to deny and/or revoke any ordination as determined by vote of the Ministerial Committee and the Board of Directors that said minister has misrepresented him/herself or CST; or has behaved in a manner that is

inconsistent with the policies or bylaws of CST or behaves verbally or physically in a manner that has a negative impact on the reputation or credibility of CST.

It is the responsibility of all ministers to be informed of, and conduct ministerial work in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

Ordination is for Three-Year Period:

Your ordination will be good for a period of three years, during which you must maintain your paid CST membership. After this three-year period, and if you still meet the eligibility requirements and your membership has been maintained continuously, you may apply to renew your ordination (\$25 fee).

Maintaining Paid Membership:

If the paid CST membership is not maintained during this three-year period or at any time thereafter, the ordination will lapse 30 days after the membership lapses. After renewing your membership, you may apply again to become ordained, for a \$50 fee.

How to Become Ordained:

The ordination process begins with your application (found on our website: www.spiraltree.org/ordain.shtml) along with the \$50 fee. Your application will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. If you are not approved, \$40 of your fee will be refunded.

If ordained, you will be entered into our database, and will soon receive your certificate of ordination and a card to carry with you.



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).

Ostara, Herald of Springtime

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From:

<http://www.northernpaganism.org/shrines/ostara/about.html>

Who is Ostara?

What we know from myth, history, and inspiration

Ostara, or Eostre or Eastre, is the Germanic Goddess of spring and dawn. She is only mentioned once in scholarly writings of the period—Bede the monk states that during Eostremonath (the old Anglo-Saxon names for April), the pagan Anglo-Saxons held festivals in her honor. (Two hundred years later in Germany, in his Life of Charlemagne, a monk named Einhard gives the old name for April as Ostaramonath.) She is also mentioned in a number of inscriptions in Germany, and the modern holiday of Easter—originally the name for the spring Equinox, but later subsumed to the Paschal calendar for the Christian resurrection holiday—is named for her. The name "Eostre" (Old Germanic "Ostara"), is related to that of Eos, the Greek goddess of dawn, and both can be traced back to a Proto-Indo-European goddess of dawn.

Her material is so scant that some scholars have speculated that she was not a goddess at all, but simply an invention of Bede, but it is unlikely that someone as heathen-phobic as Bede would have gone about inventing goddesses; he seems to have preferred to keep all things pagan at arm's length. Some scholars have also decided, rather randomly and on scant information, that Ostara is a form of Freya. Others believe that she is actually Iduna, or Walburga. Some modern Heathens and Norse Pagans have experienced personal gnosis of Ostara/Eostre being a Vanic goddess, or at least very close to

the Vanir, which is why we list her in this section ... but again, there is no evidence and Ostara's origins continue to remain a mystery.

Her true mystery, however, is evident every year. She is the first warm spring winds, the birds that return, the trees that bud and curl forth leaves and flowers. She is the awakening earth, rabbits and hares, the eggs that appear after a winter of no light. City folk may not know that chickens who are kept in natural lighting quit laying in the winter, when the days are short, and begin again as the days lengthen. March/April is their peak time of year, and those eggs were a valued and welcome protein source for our winter-starved ancestors. Ostara's legacy is all those colored eggs which many of us still hang on trees every year.

Guinevere MayingJakob Grimm, in his Teutonic Mythology, maintained that "Ostara, Eástre, was goddess of the growing light of spring." Holy water in the form of the dew, or water collected from brooks, was gathered at this time; washing with it was said to restore youth. Beautiful maidens in sheer white were said to be seen frolicking in the country side. Also according to Grimm, the white maiden of Osterode was said to appear with a large batch of keys at her belt, and stride to the brook to collect water on Easter morning.

Ostara is usually experienced as a young

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How to Hold an Ostara Ritual for Solitaries

From: <http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/ostarathespringequinox/ht/OstaraSolRite.htm>

Ostara is a time of balance. It is a time of equal parts light and dark. At Mabon, we have this same balance, but the light is leaving us. Today, six months later, it is returning. Spring has arrived, and with it comes hope and warmth. Deep within the cold earth, seeds are beginning to sprout. In the damp fields, the livestock are preparing to give birth. In the forest, under a canopy of newly sprouted leaves, the animals of the wild ready their dens for the arrival of their young. Spring is here.

For this ritual, you'll want to decorate your altar with symbols of the season. Think about all the colors you see in nature at this time of year—bright daffodils, crocuses, plump tulips, green shoots—and incorporate them into your altar. This is also a time of fertility in the natural world—the egg is the perfect representation of this aspect of the season. Symbols of young animals such as lambs, chicks, and calves are also great altar adornments for Ostara.

Perform this ritual outside if at all possible, in the early morning as the sun rises. It's spring, so it may be a bit chilly, but it's a good time to reconnect with the earth. If your tradition normally requires you to cast a circle, do so now. In addition, you'll need the following:

Three candles: one yellow, one green, and one purple

A bowl of milk

A small bowl of honey or sugar
Begin by taking a moment to focus on the air around you. Inhale deeply, and see if you can smell the change in the seasons. Depending on where you live, the air may have an earthy aroma, or a rainy one, or even smell like green grass. Sense the shift in energy as the Wheel of the Year has turned. Light the green candle, to

symbolize the blossoming earth. As you light it, say:

*The Wheel of the Year turns once more,
and the vernal equinox arrives.
Light and dark are equal,
and the soil begins to change.
The earth awakes from its slumber,
and new life springs forth once more.*

Next, light the yellow candle, representing the sun. As you do so, say:

*The sun draws ever closer to us,
greeting the earth with its
welcoming rays.
Light and dark are equal,
and the sky fills with light and
warmth.
The sun warms the land beneath
our feet,
and gives life to all in its path.*

Finally, light the purple candle. This one represents the Divine in our lives—whether you call it a god or a goddess, whether you identify it by name or simply as a universal life force, this is the candle which stands for all the things we do not know, all those things we cannot understand, but that are the sacred in our daily lives. As you light this candle, focus on the Divine around and within you. Say:

*Spring has come! For this, we are
thankful!
The Divine is present all around,
in the cool fall of a rain storm,
in the tiny buds of a flower,
in the down of a newborn chick,
in the fertile fields waiting to be
planted,
in the sky above us,
and in the earth below us.
We thank the universe* for all it has
to offer us,
and are so blessed to be alive on
this day.
Welcome, life! Welcome, light!*

Welcome, spring!

Take a moment and meditate on the three flames before you and what they symbolize. Consider your own place within these three things—the earth, the sun, and the Divine. How do you fit into the grand scheme of things? How do you find balance between light and dark in your own life?

Finally, blend the milk and honey together, mixing gently. Pour it onto the ground around your altar space as an offering to the earth**. As you do, you may wish to say something like:
*I make this offering to the earth,
As thanks for the many blessings
I have received,
And those I shall some day
receive.*

Once you have made your offering, stand for a minute facing your altar. Feel the cool earth beneath your feet, and the sun on your face. Take in every sensation of this moment, and know that you are in a perfect place of balance between light and dark, winter and summer, warmth and cold—a time of polarity and harmony.

When you are ready, end the ritual.

If you're doing this rite indoors, take your bowl of milk and honey and pour it in your garden, or around your yard.

*Tips:

Instead of "the Universe", feel free to insert the name of your patron deity or the gods of your tradition here.



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.

Rev. James Middleton or Rev. Rita Middleton: You can contact us at Drjmid@aol.com or (706) 291-2385.

Dr. Katharyn Privett-Duren (and family): Minister, Priestess of Gangani Tribe of Alabama.

Madeline W.S.:
makalinakittenmother@yahoo.com

Nion and LeePhether: We are vibrational alchemists who facilitate Reiki sessions/attunements based on Usui, Lightarian, and other non-traditional methods. Ordained as clergy (Nion CST, Lee CST & ULC), we offer handfastings/weddings, baptisms, requiems (passing-on rites), as well as spiritual guidance. We are on the council of The Sweet Potato Clan of The Free Cherokees and are pipe carriers. As certified Angel Therapy Practitioners (ACP) and certified Wholeness Blessing Facilitators we are excellent listeners. We reside in west Georgia and can work in the Southeast USA. Contact info: Nion011@aol.com, Leephether@gmail.com, or (404) 789-4178.

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. 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>, (334) 826-3953.

Sarah McClain aka Super Puff Puff Girl: I do Tarot readings, numerology, crystal healing, and rootwork. I own Crossroads in Columbus, GA, a retail store that sells a variety of things including metaphysical supplies and services. If you have an interest in my services or supplies please give me a call or email me. 3502 Victory Drive, Columbus Ga 31903, (229) 669-5991; inicolebuzz@gmail.com.

Shuree Munden-Wagstaff:
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 DreamScapes & Da' Gallery, metaphysical supply and service oriented businesses in Auburn, AL. As an ordained minister, I offer legal communions, handfastings, hand-partings, Wiccanings, and requiems (passing on rites). At the stores and across the US, I offer ongoing classes, workshops and various teachings. Look for me in the Panhandle of Florida quite often too! Stephen A. Bradford, 1635 S. College St., Auburn, AL 36830, (334) 887-0989 or (229) 395-0963. Email: 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> for up-to-date information, directions, and links to RSVP for each ritual. Rituals without at least five attending will be cancelled.

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION/HOST
Beltane Celebration	5-2-15	Farm <u>or</u> Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Litha Ritual	6-21-15 (Sunday)	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Lammas Ritual	8-2-15 (Sunday)	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Auburn Pagan Pride Day	9-19-15	Davis Arboretum, Auburn, AL/CST
Samhain Ritual	11-7-15	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST
Yule Ritual	12-20-15 (Sunday)	Roxanna, Auburn, AL/CST

Board of Directors' Meetings: The next BoD meeting will be held May 9, 2015. BoD meetings are held four times a year; check website at <www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml> for date and location of the next meeting.

Upcoming Festivals (Not CST events):

Moondance: May 21-25, 2015, Roxanna, Alabama

FallFling: October 15-18, 2015, Roxanna, Alabama

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

