



The Journey...

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



Pagan Pride Day in Summary by Beth W.

Anytime there is a group of Pagans together, it's guaranteed to be interesting, and Pagan Pride Day (PPD) was no exception to the rule! Our day began with a walk through the lovely Davis Arboretum, and although rain threatened, the Gods granted us fair weather. Laughter and guitar music floated through the air. With a crowd of 177, it is no surprise that there were reunions of old friends and new bonds made through out the day.

With 12 vendors offering their wares, there were plenty of intriguing items for sale. Ritual items included alters, besoms, crystals, incense, knives, oils, and herbs; an abundance of home made goods could also be found, from candles and salts to original art and dream catchers. Whether or not anything was purchased, everyone was able to take away something they didn't have before—a new wand, a new friend, or new knowledge.

Classes flowed continuously, and on a variety of topics. There was max participation from the group, which included a mix of different paths, ages, and experience. The lessons went as follows: Dowsing by Linda; Introduction to Sigils, Big Magic From a Few Little Squiggles by Eileen; Show and Tell by skippy; Tapping into Tarot by Beth W.; and Ritual Writing 101 by Kat H.

As we move forward in this age, it is important to remember to be welcoming of all faiths. This year, we had several non-pagans

in attendance; we even had one mother who was there to learn more about her daughter's interest. Although she was Christian, she was involved and actively listening during classes. There is surely progress in our community when others begin to open their hearts and minds past previous borders set by society.

Also held was the annual CST meeting. All changes to the bylaws were unanimously voted in by members, and we were able to elect two new members to the Board of Directors (BoD). CST welcomes Kat H. and Nion to the BoD, as we look forward to working with them, and appreciate their service.

The day concluded with an autumn ritual led by Kat H. with help from Trillium, Ashley, Billy, Eileen, and Rodney. Participants focused on walking a balanced path, reflected on something good about themselves, took a seed of gratitude, and embraced both the light and the dark as we change seasons.

And thanks to our annual food drive, we collected 193 pounds of food for the East Alabama Food Bank.

CST would like to thank all of those who made it out to support PPD in person or spirit, as this year was a huge success. Keep your eyes out for future events, the next festival being FallFling. We hope to see you there! Blessed be, until we meet again.

Mabon 2016, #63

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CST Directors:

- Founder *Linda Kerr*
- Treasurer *skippy*
- Solitary Representative *Madeline Wells Smith*
- Member-at-Large *Nion*
- Member-at-Large *Kat H.*

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Circle of Life

Birthdays for October-November-December! Happy Birthday to the following CST members:

- Camille P. (October 4)
- Kaitlin L. (October 12)
- Audrey V. (October 31)
- Travis B. (November 5)
- Jason V. (November 6)
- Jaron T. (November 8)
- Linda K. (November 10)
- Lara C. (November 12)
- Gary F. (November 15)
- Don M. (November 17)
- Jillian S. (November 21)
- Madeline S. (December 2)
- Marcus R. (December 13)
- Samuel C. (December 22)

CST Ministers

CST, being a church, may ordain any member meeting the below eligibility requirements as a minister.

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 least 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.

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.

Important:

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

The Board of Directors of CST reserves the right 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.



Apple Magic

by Kat H.

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. 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).

The time between Mabon and Samhain is a perfect opportunity to discuss apples, their magickal properties, and their association with various pagan lore. Apples have popped up in pagan lore for thousands of years. The union of the exclusively Roman goddess, Pomona, and her lusty husband Vertumnus was thought to explain apple trees' prolific bounty of fruit each year. Eris's golden apple, of which only the fairest Grecian goddess was worthy, indirectly brought war to Troy. Idunn, a Norse goddess, was depicted as keeping apples in her pack for the other deities, keeping them eternally youthful--this is why apples are regarded literally as "food for the gods."

Pagans today have a wide variety of uses for apples. In modern pagan society, apples are associated with the pentacle. When you slice an apple sideways, a five point star is formed by the inner core of the apple and its seeds! You can also use apples for divination purposes. Supposedly, peeling an apple in a complete strand will reveal the first initial of your true love's name. One can also slice an apple at midnight into ninths, eat eight slices, and toss the final slice over one's shoulder--once finished, their true love's face will be revealed in a nearby mirror.

If you're planning on filling in for Idunn this autumn season, consider this recipe to place on your altar as an offering. Give Idunn a break and feed the gods--and your loved ones!



Fresh Apple Pan Cake

CAKE:

1 ½ cups all purpose flour
½ cup whole wheat flour
2 cups sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup chopped pecans
3 cups diced Gala apples
1 cup canola oil
2 teaspoons

vanilla

¼ teaspoon salt

GLAZE:

1 cup light-brown sugar, packed
½ cup butter
¼ cup milk

EQUIPMENT USED:

Electric blender, 2 mixing bowls and spoons, 9x13 pan, saucepan, oven.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9X13 inch pan. Beat eggs, oil, and sugar with an electric mixer. Add salt, baking soda, flour, vanilla, apples, and pecans. Mix by hand until well-blended. Spread mixture into pan. To make the glaze for the cake, combine brown sugar, butter, and milk in a saucepan and bring to a rapid boil. Stir and cook one minute. Pour glaze over warm cake to finish!

Sources:

<http://www.wikipedia.org>
<http://paganwiccan.about.com>
<http://www.uexpress.com/tell-me-a-story/2014/12/7/the-golden-apple-of-discord-a>
Recipe courtesy of Alabama

Power



A Solitary Samhain

Posted on October 12, 2012 by ladyoftheabyss
<https://witchesofthecraft.com/2012/10/12/a-solitary-samhain/>

Many covens and circles celebrate this most sacred of pagan holidays as groups, often opening their circles to non-initiates and others who wish to participate. I find myself preferring a solitary ritual, perhaps with some socializing earlier or later in the evening. For me, much of the meaning of Samhain suggests such a practice, though traditionally it is a communal celebration.

Samhain is pronounced as sow-in (in Ireland), sow-een (in Wales), and sav-en (in Scotland). It marks the end of the harvest, the end of the year, and the death of the god. Self-reflection becomes not simply a custom, but a necessity. One cannot (or at least should not) allow the Wheel of the Year to turn without some kind of examination of what has occurred. How have I spent the last year? Did I grow or remain stagnant? Did I live according to the values I claim to embrace? These are questions which must be addressed in solitude and solemnity.

Just as Samhain ends the old year, it must begin the new, though many witches do not celebrate the New Year until Yule. Reflection should continue during this dark time, but reflection should be accompanied by a growing sense of the changes to be made and the light to be sought. I some-times make many lists during this time—lists of what I have accomplished and what I still want to accomplish, things I have neglected and those I have tended, and other similar lists. Samhain symbolizes both the past and the future, illuminated by the cycle of the seasons, forever linked as steps on the journey we must all make.

The Goddess tells us: “And

you who seek to know Me, know that your seeking and yearning will avail you not, unless you know the Mystery: for if that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without.” We must look inside ourselves for self-knowledge and for the spirit that will sustain us in life’s trials. Silence is one of the keys to seeking truth, for we cannot hear the answers in the midst of this noisy world in which we walk everyday, nor in the noise of holiday celebrations however joyous.

Samhain is also said to be the time when the veil between the living and the dead is thinnest, allowing us some communication with those who have departed. How befitting this is for such a time of endings and beginnings. Reflections on death can be as instructive as the self-examinations just mentioned. When we think of those who have died, it reminds us of time passing by and of things we could have or should have done. These reminders, coupled with our lists of past and future actions, encourages us to take our New Year’s resolutions far more seriously. We know our time is limited, and most of us have much to do in our allotted time. Most of us have to make a living somehow, but death reminds us that we had better spend some of that time in pursuit of our other dreams lest they be lost in the struggle merely to survive.

Samhain Ritual

The Samhain rituals I follow change a little from year to year. I don’t like to have a set of mandatory words or actions that might prevent me from exploring new possibilities in meaning. However, I do include the

traditional Samhain rituals of sharing a feast (even if I am alone) and some form of divination. Since it is best that you write/say your own words in performing rituals, I will only include an outline here.

- *Prepare your house or room:* Use black and orange candles, pumpkins (carved or not) and other traditional “Halloween” items if you wish (most are actually traditional for Samhain).
- *Prepare a table for the Feast of the Dead:*

It should be covered with a black table cloth and set with black dishes (black paper plates will do just fine). Place a chair at the head of the table, draped in black cloth, to represent the spirit. The spirit’s place is set with a plate with a white votive candle on it. Set places for each of the dead that you hope will join you., and place black votive candles on their plates. Plates for the living (in my solitary ritual, just one) are empty, of course, awaiting the feast food to be served.

- *Food preparation:* My feast is usually very simple: bread, fruit, nuts, and juice or wine. If you’ve invited living guests, it is common to make the feast potluck. However, since the actual feast will take place in silence, try not to have too many things that would have to be passed or requested.
- *Light the candles and turn out the lights*
- *Call the quarters (ask the Guardians of the Watchtowers to witness and protect your circle)*
- *Cast a circle (use whatever method you’ve been taught)*
- *Invite the deities:*

There are certain Goddesses that I always invite to my rituals. It seems especially important to invite them on Samhain, as I will want to thank them for their help during the past year, and of course, ask that they continue to help me in the coming year. If the departed loved ones were especially close to any deities, I invite them as well.

- *Feast of the Dead:*

Light the candles on the plates of the dead and the spirit. The feast should take place in silence so that you can think about your departed friends and relatives. Think of their passing and your hopes for their joyous return. If someone is recently departed, try to put aside your sadness and think of that soul as well and happy in the presence of the Goddess. Speak in silence an invitation to these loved ones, asking them to join in your feast. Use your own words for this. You know these individuals and can speak to them in a way to which they are likely to respond.

Sit at your table and eat the food you have brought to it. Feel the presence of those who have joined you and rejoice in their presence. Allow them to speak to you of whatever they want to communicate. Take as long as you wish at the table, listening to those you have invited and speaking to them in silence.

When the feast is over, thank your spirit guests for coming, bid them farewell, extinguish the candles on the plates, and leave the table.

- *Banishings and resolutions:*

Now is the time to bring out one of those lists! Before Samhain, write a list of things from the last year that you want to banish: bad habits and addictions, unkind feelings toward others, unkind feelings toward yourself.... anything you do not want to carry over to the New Year. Light a black candle and burn the list, asking the Goddess and God to help you get rid of these and all negative things in

your life. If you prefer, you can put about 1/4 cup of alcohol in a cauldron, light it, and burn the paper there. Speak to the deities (you can speak aloud now) about your sincere wish to remove these things from your life. Use a banishing chant, if you wish.

Now you should speak to the deities about those things you want to bring into your life in the New Year. I do these things rather informally, but there are many poems and prose pieces in books that you might want to use. Asking the deities for future rewards must be accompanied by resolutions as to how you will accomplish your goals. They will help you if you are sincere in your efforts to help yourself.

- *Divination:*

Because the two worlds are so close at Samhain, it is the perfect time for divination. I prefer to use a cauldron of water for scrying, since the cauldron seems to fit the mood of Samhain (not to mention Halloween tradition). You may prefer Tarot cards, a pendulum, or runes.... whatever method works best for you. Obviously, the goal of this divination is to see what lies ahead in the next year.

- *Meditation:*

All of my rituals include some form of meditation. This is when I ask my personal Goddesses to guide me, advise me, and generally keep me on the right path. I also use this time to thank them in a more personal way than by reciting a poem of thanksgiving. At Samhain, I thank them for all their gifts in the last year and ask them to continue helping me in the New Year.

Sometimes this part of the ritual takes the form of a shamanic journey in which I am taken to a far away place (sometimes familiar, sometimes not) and where I may be given signs that will help me know what I should do (either in general or in specific situations). Take as long with your meditation as you need.

- *Thank the Deities:*

Give thanks to the deities you have invited by offering them food. I usually say something like "all things come from the Earth and to the Earth they must return." Whatever food and drink I offer (usually bread and wine), I eat a little and save the rest to place or pour on the Earth later.

- *Open the circle*

- *Thank and dismiss the Guardians*

- *Blessed Be!*

A Word About Invitations to the Dead

For my solitary Samhain Feast of the Dead, I invite not only departed humans but special animals as well. I doubt that this is customary since the feast is usually for one's ancestors. However, when one of my beloved pets has passed away, his or her passing leaves an empty place in my household and in my life, just as the passing of a person would. I choose to believe that the Goddess takes these creatures and cares for them as She would any human. They are far purer in heart than any human could be, and their love is perfect and unconditional. Surely their spirits deserve whatever rewards await the rest of us. So, at Samhain, I invite these loving creatures to join in my feast where I can once again feel their presence and their uncomplicated devotion to those they love. In their honor, I also invite either Bast, the Egyptian Cat Goddess, or Diana, Goddess of the hunt and mistress of dogs, both wild and tame.



Set Up An Ancestor Shrine - Ancestor Altar Honoring Those Who Came Before Us

by Patti Wigington, Paganism/Wicca Expert

<http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/samhaincrafts/ss/AncestorAltar.htm>

In many Pagan traditions, the ancestors are honored, especially at Samhain. This Sabbat, after all, is the night when the veil between our world and the spirit world is at its most fragile. By setting up an ancestor shrine or altar, you can honor the people of your bloodline—your kinfolk and clansmen who have helped to shape the person you are. This altar or shrine can be set up just for the Samhain season, or you can leave it up all year long for meditation and rituals.

If you've got the room, it's nice to use an entire table for this shrine, but if space is an issue, you can create it in a corner of your dresser top, on a shelf, or on the mantle over your fireplace.

Regardless, put it in a place where it can be left undisturbed, so that the spirits of your ancestors may gather there, and you can take time to meditate and honor them without having to move stuff around every time someone needs to use the table.

Also, bear in mind that you can honor anyone you like in this shrine. If you have a deceased pet or friend, go ahead and include them. Someone doesn't have to be a blood relative to be part of our spiritual ancestry.

First, do a physical cleaning of the space. After all, you wouldn't invite Aunt Gertrude to sit in a dirty chair, would you? Dust the table top or shelf and clear it of any items that are not related to your shrine. If you like, you can consecrate the space as sacred, by saying something like:

"I dedicate this space to those whose blood runs through me. My fathers and mothers,

my guides and guardians, and those whose spirits helped to shape me."

As you do this, smudge the area with sage or sweetgrass, or asperge with consecrated water. If your tradition requires it, you may wish to consecrate the space with all four elements.

Finally, add an altar cloth of some sort to help welcome the ancestors. In some Eastern religions, a red cloth is always used. In some Celtic-based paths, it is believed that a fringe on the altar cloth helps tie your spirit to those of your ancestors. If you have time before Samhain, you might want to make an Ancestor Altar Cloth.

Welcome Your Kin and Clan

There are different types of ancestors, and which ones you choose to include are up to you. There are our blood ancestors, who are the people from whom we directly descend—parents, grandparents, etc. There are also archetypal ancestors, who represent the place that our clan and family came from. Some people also choose to honor the ancestors of the land—the spirits of the place you are now—as a way of thanking them. Finally, there are our spiritual ancestors—those who we may not be tied to by blood or marriage, but who we claim as family nonetheless.

Start by selecting photos of your ancestors. Choose pictures that have meaning for you—and if the photos happen to have the living in them as well as the dead, that's okay. Arrange the photos on your altar so that you can see all of them at once.

If you don't have a photo to represent an ancestor, you can use an item that belonged to him or her. If you're placing someone on your altar who lived prior to the mid-1800s, chances are good there's no photograph existing. Instead, use an item that may have been the person's—a piece of jewelry, a dish that's part of your family heirloom set, a family Bible, etc.

You can also use symbols of your ancestors. If your family is from Scotland, you can use a kilt pin or a length of plaid to represent your clan. If you come from a family of craftsmen, use an item designed or created to symbolize your family's artisanship.

Finally, you can add a genealogy sheet or family tree to the shrine. If you have in your possession the ashes of a departed loved one, add those as well.

Once you have everything in your shrine that represents your ancestors, consider adding a few other items. Some people like to add votive candles, so they can light them while meditating. You may wish to add a cauldron or cup to symbolize the womb of the Earth Mother. You can also add a symbol of your spirituality—a pentagram, ankh, or some other representation of your beliefs.

Some people leave food offerings on their altars as well, so that their ancestors can partake of a meal with the family.

Use the altar when you perform a Samhain ancestor meditation or a ritual to honor the ancestors.



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. April Iris McLeod: P.O. Box 916, Grand Bay, AL 36541.

D. Neil Cole: I am no longer in prison; I was released July 27, 2016. I am a open Wiccan and staying in Washington (King County). Please send a letter or email: theelfneil@icloud.com; Neil Cole, 9724 132nd Ave NE, Kirkland, WA 98033.

Gary Fimple #1204170: I am looking to correspond with any Wiccans. Augusta Correctional Center, 1821 Estaline Valley Rd., Craigsville, VA 24430.

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

LaTonya Jones of Peoples Care: Auburn, Alabama, (334) 524-1364.

Madeline W.S.: makalinakittenmother@yahoo.com.

Michael Anthony Eric Draven #57995-083: Wiccan, wrongfully convicted, devout to our community. Open-minded, only wish for true friends. I value loyalty, love, and trust. I love studying and research, have many plans for our community, am a poet and a photographer. Write to me at: USP Allenwood, P.O. Box 3000, White Deer, PA 17887.

Matthew Thomas Parker #281518: I am new to Wicca and would like to correspond with like-minded people. Easterling, 200 Wallace Dr., Clio, AL 36107.

Neil Ferrell #39921: Eclectic practitioner of witchcraft for the last 10 years, and I will be a free man in April 2016. I would like to establish some like-minded contacts. Lovelock Corr. Center, 1200 Prison Road, Lovelock, NV

89419.

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) 707-9076.

Robert Kaczorowski: <Bobbykacz@silverhands.net>.

Siryndolphinson-Bradford: <la.siryndolphinson@yahoo.com>

Travis Wayne Baczewski

#1656476: I am looking for a pen-pal in the Pagan community to talk about spirituality. I am also the neo-Pagan coordinator for my unit and always looking for contacts in the Pagan community to help. If either of these pique your interest, please write me at Polunsky Unit, 3872 FM 360 South, Livingston, TX 77351.

Zebate bon Manbo (Danielle Bozeman): dunes38@ymail.com.



CST Calendar

CST and its affiliate Groves welcome church and community members, beginners, newcomers, solitaries, 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
Samhain Ritual	11-6-16	Town Creek Park, Auburn, AL/CST

Board of Directors' Meetings: The next BoD meeting will be held October 6, 2016, at FallFling at Roxanna, Alabama. BoD meetings are held four times a year; check website at <www.spiraltree.org/upcoming.shtml> for exact date and location of the next meeting.

Upcoming Alabama Festivals (Not CST events, admission fee charged):

FallFling: October 6-9, 2016, Roxanna, Alabama

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED