



The Journey...

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



Samhain Report - by Kat Horton

We were so lucky to have such nice weather and a nice turnout for our Samhain celebration last month! All told, about 14 people showed up at Town Creek Park in Auburn, AL to participate. Everyone brought amazing potluck dishes—some homemade, some not—and we enjoyed a nice picnic under the pavilion. After lunch we shared heirlooms and stories of deceased loved ones, and we had a good laugh doing an apple-peeling divination exercise. There was also a hilarious sack race—if you haven't seen the video on the Facebook CST page, go look! When the merriment was over, we set a place for our dead and invited them to feast as we meditated silently. We broke for an hour for everyone to trade tarot readings, and then assembled on the hill to perform ritual. Our special item, an hourglass, was filled by each with sand and special goals or pledges to the dearly departed. We moseyed home at sunset, our stomachs full of good food, our hearts full of love, and our arms full of fellowship and comfort. Oh, and did we mention we came under budget? The total was \$86.09, \$13.91 shy of our \$100 budget!

A Yuletide Musing - by Kat H.

The time between Samhain and Yule is a strange one. We have mourned the death of the Oak King and all he represents during Mabon and Samhain, wishing fondly for his return. Under the Holly King's rule, his dark power encroaches towards its zenith at the Winter Solstice.

In these death rattles of 2016,

what has been bemoaned as “the worst year ever” by many, we pagans find solace awaiting the return of the Oak King, the Sun God. There may be many things around us that suggest that his light may never come again. Personal troubles, as well as tumultuous political, social, and atmospheric climate can plague us all to the point where we might believe our champion of the Sun may never return.

But Nature, the Goddess, will never allow this. Although time as Man perceives it moves forward, life is cyclical, a spiral that never ends. Without the Holly King's darkness, the Oak King's light would not catch our attention and draw us to it. Like the cave and plain-dwelling ancients struggling to keep warm near flickering fires, we must do the same, drawing ourselves to the light and toward our kindred seeking it, too.

Yule is the Sabbat that captures that feeling. It is the first moment in the Wheel of the Year that we regard the return of the light with the rebirth of the Oak King. We come together, hand in hand, knowing in our hearts that the darkness is not forever. We are reminded that through ourselves and our friends, families, and communities, that love is everlasting and will always turn the tide. We give each other strength as the Oak King, full of wisdom and vitality, would want us to do.

Merry meet, merry part. Don't ever lose hope, light, or heart.

Yule 2016, #64

In This Issue:

CST News	1
History of Yule	3
Imbolc	7
Simple Milk Ritual	8
Contacts	9
CST Calendar	10

CST Directors & Staff:

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CST Ministers

Circle of Life

Birthdays for January-February-March! Happy Birthday to the following CST members:

- Sandra H. (January 5)
- Amara M. (January 14)
- Joshua H. (January 31)
- Jacob C. (February 2)
- Danielle C. (February 8)
- Brian T. (February 9)
- Joanie T. (March 3)
- Cliff L. (March 11)
- April M. (March 26)
- Shaniqua P. (March 26)

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.

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.

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.



History of Yule

The Winter Solstice

by *Lady SpringWolf*

<https://www.paganspath.com/magik/yule-history.htm>

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).

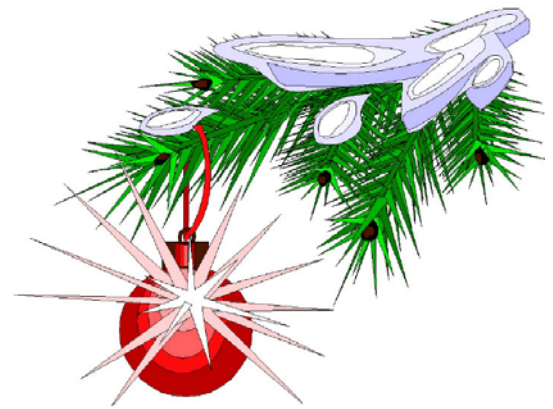
The Winter Solstice

Every year the Sun traces out a circular path in a west-to-east direction relative to the stars (this is in addition to the apparent daily east-to-west rotation of the celestial sphere around the Earth). The two points at which the ecliptic and the equatorial plane intersect, known as the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and the two points of the ecliptic farthest north and south from the equatorial plane, known as the summer and winter solstices, divide the ecliptic into four equal parts. These cycles were familiar to Greek astronomers, but it wasn't until Hipparchus that a method of using the observed dates of two equinoxes and a solstice to calculate the size and direction of the displacement of the Sun's orbit was established. Hipparchus (190BC-120BC) was a Greek Astronomer and Mathematician. His writings on this subject tell us that the Solstice was a known event not just in his time, but before his time as well.

The winter solstice occurs on December 21 and marks the beginning of winter (this is the shortest day of the year). The Winter Solstice has been recognized and celebrated for eons by ancient people around the globe.

The Newgrange burial mound in Ireland's County Meath is surrounded by megalithic stones set in what archeologists believe to be astronomical position to the Winter Solstice. The Stone Age monument dates to around 3200

BC, making it 500 years older than the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt and a thousand years older than England's Stonehenge.



Stonehenge itself has long been associated with the solstice and equinox cycles. Once again, there is evidence of ancient people recognizing these times of the year not just from an astronomical perspective, but in terms of spiritual reverence as well.

No one is really sure when the first festival or ritual celebration for this time of the year occurred. But we do know that it has long been recognized and honored in some of the world's most reverent monuments. It would be silly to think that a point in time so important to ancient people would not have been celebrated or honored until the 7th century AD. But we're jumping ahead in our tale.

Etymology of Yule

You can tell a lot about a word by reviewing its origins and usage at the time it was created

The Journey - 4

and established in language and literature. So we should start the discussion with the history of the word "Yule."

Etymology Online describes Yule as:

Old English, coming from *geol* (Christmas Day) or *geola* (Christmastide).

A heathen feast, later taken over by Christianity and from unknown origin.

The O.E. (Anglian) *cognate giuli* was the Anglo-Saxons' name for a two-month midwinter season corresponding to Roman December and January, a time of important feasts but not itself a festival.

Wikipedia describes the etymology as:

The modern English word Yule likely derives from the word *yoole*, from 1450, which developed from the Old English term *geo-l* and *geo-la* before 899. The term has been linked to and may originate from the Old Norse *Jo*. The etymology of the name of the feast of Yule (Old Norse *jól*, Anglo-Saxon *geohol* and *gehol*) and the winter month (Anglo-Saxon *giuli*, *geóla*, Gothic *fruma jiuileis*, Old Norse *ýlir*) has not yet been completely explained, but the term may have originally meant something similar to "magic" or "feast of entreaty." This word is also the root of the English word "jolly."

But the more significant perspective that seems to hold a stronger connection to the historical evolution of Yule comes from Old Norse. According to [The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology](#), "Yule is derived into modern English from *Jól* deriving from Old Norse *hjól*, wheel, referring to the moment when the wheel of the year is at its low point, ready to rise again (compare to the Slavic *karachun*)."

Connecting the word to earlier language tells us where the words came from, but not where the holidays began. We can find some

clues, such as the connection between Yule to *hjól* in its use as the wheel of life. The wheel or cycle of life was something the early Norse pagans were very big on. So at the very least we can see the concept of Yule is much older than the word itself.

Early Influences Of Yule

For the moment let's put aside the archeological evidence of burial mounds, and 'henge' structures that were built in correspondence to solstice astronomical observances.

The Romans:

Most scholars suggest that the first influence of this winter festival began with Saturnalia in Rome. Saturnalia is the feast with which the Romans commemorated the dedication of the temple of the god Saturn. Saturn was a major Roman God and designated as the God of agriculture and harvest. Another link to the "wheel" concept.

In early astrology, Saturn represents our limitations, our restrictions, yet it is also our inner mentor and teacher. His lessons are manifested only over time, after which we go through inner rebirth and enjoy spiritual growth. Some suggest this is the connection between the idea of the "rebirth" of the God during the winter festival.

Saturnalia was introduced around 217 BC and was originally celebrated for a day, on December 17, its popularity grew and so did its length of celebration from one day to a full week ending on December 23. Caesar Augustus tried to shorten the holiday to three days, and Caligula to five days, but both efforts failed.

Seneca the Younger wrote about Rome during Saturnalia around AD 50 (Sen. epist. 18,1-2): "It is now the month of December, when the greatest part of the city is in a bustle. Loose reins are given to public dissipation; everywhere

you may hear the sound of great preparations, as if there were some real difference between the days devoted to Saturn and those for transacting business....Were you here, I would willingly confer with you as to the plan of our conduct; whether we should eve in our usual way, or, to avoid singularity, both take a better supper and throw off the toga."

Gaius Valerius Catullus (ca. 84 BC-ca. 54 BC) was a Roman poet of the 1st century BC. He describes Saturnalia as: "...the best of days (Cat. 14.15). It was a time of celebration, visits to friends, and gift-giving, particularly of wax candles (*cerei*), and earthenware figurines (*sigillaria*)."

Also around the time of the winter solstice, Romans observed Juvenalia, a feast honoring the children of Rome. In addition, members of the upper classes often celebrated the birthday of Mithra, the god of the unconquerable sun, on December 25. It was believed that Mithra, an infant god, was born of a rock. For some Romans, Mithra's birthday was the most sacred day of the year.

In 354 AD, A Roman scholar wrote: "It was customary for pagans to celebrate the birth of the sun...when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day [December 25th]."

These two early Roman holidays were certainly celebrated by the soldiers of Caesar as they traveled the world to conquer other lands. And it could be from these early origins that the first influences on pagan Europe began. But they're not the only influence.

The Norse:

The pagan Celtic lands also saw invasions of the Norse. Some would say the Norse had much more influence over early Celtic pagans than the Romans did. Or at the very least a longer lasting influence.

Norse literature has many references to Yule or a Winter Solstice celebration. Ynglinga saga, the first book of Heimskringla, first mentions a Yule feast in 840. The Norse Prose Edda book Skáldskaparmál, mentions Yule: "Again we have produced Yule-being's feast [mead of poetry], our rulers' eulogy, like a bridge of masonry."

In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. In recognition of the return of the sun. It is this influence that we can see most in European Paganism. The Wheel of the Year divided into 4 parts was not that far of a leap for early European Pagans. They were already familiar with honoring the solstice periods as evidenced in The Stone Age Newgrange tomb and Stonehenge.

They recognized the Sun's return and knew it meant fields would once again be ready for tilling and planting. Warmth would return to the world and darkness would fade. To the rural folk who worked hard during the year, the end of a lean winter was something to celebrate and the God of the Sun was something to be honored. It bothers me that such significance it put on Germanic celebrations from the 7th century AD, when so much historical evidence points to a much older acknowledgment and reverent connection to the Wheel of the Year in early pagan Europe and Norse history and mythology.

Yule Today

For all its inputs and influences, Yule is still an important time of the year to

pagans around the world. In the most direct terms it is still a festival that honors the cycle of nature and the Wheel of the Year. It is not just about the rebirth of the God figure in pagan lore.

Yule is a 12 day holiday, it begins on "Mothers Night" (December 21) and ends 12 days later on "Yule Night" (January 1st). It's the origin for the Christian "12 Days of Christmas."

For Celtic pagans, Yule is the time when the Sun God Lugh is reborn in human form to rejoin his beloved wife Eriu. She is described as a hag, who transformed into a beautiful Goddess by the marriage and personifies the land of Ireland in her every feature and character. She becomes known in legend as the "Sovereignty of Ireland," Yule is also the celebration of the cycle of life through Eriu and all her incarnations as the Maiden, Mother and Crone Goddess.

In these legends, Lugh takes his bride in the form of the Maiden Goddess, to look out upon their land and in seeing the suffering of their people they grow worried and concerned. The summer High Holy Day Lughnasadh is celebrated by many traditions as the moment when Lugh, as the Sacred King, sacrifices his own life to save his suffering people. In doing so his blood is spread across the fields to ensure the fertility of the fields and a bountiful harvest of crop and herd.

As the harvests are brought in, and winters covers the land, the Great Mother (the Mother Goddess) resurrects Lugh from the ground, rising him up into the dark sky and returns him (as the Sun) to the universe. The effort to raise Lugh into the sky causes Eriu to grow old as she shared her knowledge with the God to teach him all he needed to know to govern over his people once more. Bestowing her Old Crone wisdom upon Lugh brings the cycle back to the beginning of the legend.

To the Welsh pagans, Yule is seen as the time when the young Oak King and the Old Holly King battle for supremacy just as they do at the Midsummer festival. At the Midsummer festival the Holly King battles the Oak King and wins their campaign. The Holly King reigns until the start of Winter (the beginning of Yule) when the Oak King is reborn and prepares to battle the Holly King for rule over the land once more.

Both of these celebrations show how the Ancient pagans had a strong tie with honoring the solstices through out the year. The winter solstice bringing about the return of the sun and longer days and a celebration of the survival of cold winter months.

Over the evolution of paganism, these legends have developed into various rituals and observations. One of the more detailed or organized observations is closely related to the Celtic legend of Lugh, Eriu and the 12 Days of Yule. The festivals are observed from sunset to sunset.

- Dec. 20 to Dec. 23. During the 1st 3 days - The virgin Maiden Goddess is honored as your guide for moving forward into the new year, to set you on the right and positive path.
- Dec. 23 to Dec. 26. The 2nd set of 3 days - The Mother Goddess is honored for fertility and all your coming endeavors.
- Dec. 26 to Dec 29. The 3rd set of 3 days - These 3 days are set aside for the rebirth of the God, and honoring his guidance through the physical world.
- Dec. 29 to Jan. 1 - The last 3 days are set aside for the Old Crone Goddess who is honored for wisdom and as your teacher into the cosmic lessons of life and spirit. In modern times, under

The Journey - 6

the solar calendar, she might also be honored as the waning year giving way to the new year.

Yule Symbology

There is much to the symbology of Yule. Revolving around harvest and livestock, this was a time of honoring the sun and thankfulness for the bounty that is sustaining the family through the cold.

The first direct reference to the Yule log can be found around the 17th century. The Old Norse 'jol' seems to have been borrowed in Old French as 'olif', which gave way to the Modern French 'joli'; "pretty, nice," originally "festive." In Scandinavia, old Norse pagan fathers and sons would bring home large logs, which they would set on fire in the center of their village.

The people would feast until the log burned out, which could take as many as 12 days. Some suggest this is the significance or origination of the 12 days of Yule.

The colors of Yule, red, white and green come from the holly tree and honoring the Old King.

Wassailing is or to "wassail," is a word derived from the Old Norse 'ves heil'. In Old English 'hál' meaning "be in good health" or "be fortunate." "Wassail" first appears in English literature as a salute as early as the eighth-century in the poem Beowulf. It is used in references such as "warriors' wassail and words of power."

Wassail also denoted the drink used for a toast. Rowena's spiced wine resembled the ancient Roman hypocras, which survived into the early Middle Ages as a libation for the wealthy. When fine ales replaced the wine, more people could afford it and recipes varied according to the means of each family. Though usually prepared for immediate consumption, wassail sometimes was bottled and allowed to ferment. By about the 1600s, the practice of taking a wassail bowl

about the streets had taken root. Instead of consuming the punch-like concoction at home, wassailers went house to house offering a warm drink and going Wassailing was born.

In Europe, Pagans did not cut down evergreen trees, bring them into their homes and decorate them. That would have been far too destructive of nature. Instead, they would cut boughs of evergreen trees, mistletoe and holly branches and bring them into their home or temple. These cuttings would be decorated and displayed as symbols of the season. They were also thought to hold great magic as they remained green through the winter months while other plants and trees turned brown and "died."

Other pagans had similar traditions:

- Not having evergreen trees, the ancient Egyptians considered the palm tree to symbolize resurrection. They decorated their homes with its branches during the winter solstice.
- "The first decorating of an evergreen tree began with the heathen Greeks and their worship of their god Adonia, who allegedly was brought back to life by the serpent Aesculapius after having been slain."
- The ancient Pagan Romans decorated their "trees with bits of metal and replicas of their god, Bacchus [a fertility god]. They also placed 12 candles on the tree in honor of their sun god." Their mid-winter festival of Saturnalia started on December 17 and often lasted until a few days after the Solstice.
- In Northern Europe, the ancient Germanic people tied fruit and attached candles to evergreen tree branches, in honor of their god Woden. Trees were viewed as symbolizing eternal life. This is

the deity after which Wednesday was named. The trees joined holly, mistletoe, the wassail bowl and the Yule log as symbols of the season. All predated Christianity.

The Christmas Tree

The Christmas tree tradition for Christians does not come from Pagans as many believe. It comes from the 16th century and western Germany. In Christian Germany these trees were called "Paradeisbaum" (paradise trees) and were brought into homes to celebrate the annual Feast of Adam and Eve on December 24. They were first brought to America by German immigrants around the 1700s. It took nearly 100 years for the Christmas tree to become popular among the general population. In 1850s the first signs of Christmas tree sales and lots began to appear around American towns.

In the mid-1850s President Franklin Pierce (1804-1869) established the first Christmas tree at the White House. President Calvin Coolidge (1885-1933) started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on the White House lawn in 1923.

Additional Reading:

The History of Santa Claus
Encyclopedia Britannica:
Hipparchus (Greek Astronomer)
Religious Tolerance: Christmas Tree
History Channel: History of Christmas
Roman Holidays: Saturnalia



Imbolc (Candlemass, Imblog, Imbole)

February 2

http://www.thewhitegoddess.co.uk/the_wheel_of_the_year/imbolc.asp

Pronounced: EE-Molc

Incense: Rosemary, Frankincense, Myrrh, Cinnamon

Decorations: Corn Dolly, Besom, Spring Flowers

Colours: White, Orange, Red

This holiday is also known as Candlemas, or Brigid's (pronounced BREED) Day. One of the four Celtic "Fire Festivals." Commemorates the changing of the Goddess from the Crone to the Maiden. Celebrates the first signs of Spring. Also called "Imbolc" (the old Celtic name).

This is the seasonal change where the first signs of spring and the return of the sun are noted, i.e. the first sprouting of leaves, the sprouting of the Crocus flowers etc. In other words, it is the festival commemorating the successful passing of winter and the beginning of the agricultural year. This Festival also marks the transition point of the threefold Goddess energies from those of Crone to Maiden.

It is the day that we celebrate the passing of Winter and make way for Spring. It is the day we honour the rebirth of the Sun and we may visualize the baby sun nursing from the Goddess's breast. It is also a day of celebrating the Celtic Goddess Brigid. Brigid is the Goddess of poetry, healing, smithcraft, and midwifery. If you can make it with your hands, Brigid rules it. She is a triple Goddess, so we honour her in all her aspects. This is a time for communing with

her, and tending the lighting of her sacred flame. At this time of year, Wiccans will light multiple candles, white for Brigid, for the god usually yellow or red, to remind us of the passing of winter and the entrance into spring, the time of the Sun. This is a good time for initiations, be they into covens or self-



initiations.

Imbolc (February 2) marks the recovery of the Goddess after giving birth to the God. The lengthening periods of light awaken Her. The God is a young, lusty boy, but His power is felt in the longer days. The warmth fertilizes the Earth (the Goddess), and causes seeds to germinate and sprout. And so the earliest beginnings of Spring occur.

This is a Sabbat of purification after the shut-in life of Winter, through the renewing power of the Sun. It is also a festival of light and of fertility, once marked in Europe with huge blazes, torches and fire

in every form. Fire here represents our own illumination and inspiration as much as light and warmth. Imbolc is also known as Feast of Torches, Oimelc, Lupercalia, Feast of Pan, Snowdrop Festival, Feast of the Waxing Light, Brigid's Day, and probably by many other names. Some female Witches follow the old Scandinavian custom of wearing crowns of lit candles, but many more carry tapers during their invocations.

Imbolc Lore

It is traditional upon Imbolc, at sunset or just after ritual, to light every lamp in the house—if only for a few moments. Or, light candles in each room in honour of the Sun's rebirth. Alternately, light a kerosene lamp with a red chimney and place this in a prominent part of the home or in a window.

If snow lies on the ground outside, walk in it for a moment, recalling the warmth of summer. With your projective hand, trace an image of the Sun on the snow.

Foods appropriate to eat on this day include those from the dairy, since Imbolc marks the festival of calving. Sour cream dishes are fine. Spicy and full-bodied foods in honour of the Sun are equally attuned. Curries and all dishes made with peppers, onions, leeks, shallots, garlic or chives are appropriate. Spiced wines and dishes containing raisins—all foods

The Journey - 8

symbolic of the Sun—are also traditional.

Imbolc - Candlemass Ritual for Imbolc/Candlemas

Supplies: Symbol of the season, such as a white flower, snow in a crystal container, also needed, an orange candle anointed with cinnamon, frankincense or rosemary oil (unlit), red candle to represent the elements, and your ritual supplies.

Arrange the altar, light the candles and censer, and cast the Circle.

Invoke the Goddess and God.

Say such words as the following:
“This is the time of the feast of torches,

*When every lamp blazes and shines
To welcome the rebirth of the God.
I/we celebrate the Goddess,
I/we celebrate the God;
All the Earth celebrates
Beneath its mantle of sleep.”*

Light the orange taper from the red candle on the altar. Slowly walk the circle clockwise, bearing the candle before you. Say these or similar words:

*“All the land is wrapped in winter.
The air is chilled and
Frost envelopes the Earth.
But Lord of the Sun,
Horned One of animals and wild places,
Unseen you have been reborn*

*Of the gracious Mother Goddess,
Lady of all fertility.
Hail Great God!
Hail and welcome!”*

Stop before the altar, holding aloft the candle. Gaze at its flame. Visualize your life blossoming with creativity, with renewed energy and strength.

If you need to look into the future or past, now is an ideal time.

Works of magic, if necessary, may follow.

Celebrate the Simple Feast. Thank the Goddess and God. Release the Circle.



Simple Milk Ritual

by Jenny

<http://owlsandindigo.com/simple-milk-imbolc-ritual/>

Imbolc is a time of year to give thanks for surviving the Winter and prepare for the coming Spring. Some seasons we are rather beckoning the Spring to arrive rather than just preparing for it.

Burning white candles, starting seeds for the coming Spring, and buying a new houseplant are great ways to celebrate Imbolc with your loved ones without having a Pagan Ritual. Preparing myself for Spring gardening has always been special to me at this time of year, preparing our seed list and planning our garden has always been a standing tradition in our family.

You can also celebrate Imbolc by foraging for snow, pine cones, evergreens, while searching for the first sings of Spring. Take these items along with the milk of your choice into the woods or a place sacred to you outside among nature. Milk is the traditional drink of Imbolc, if you are not able to drink milk, you can always take water, which is a perfectly acceptable offering due to it being an important life source for all creatures on our planet.

Arrange the foraged items on the ground in a way that makes you feel connected to the season. Take out your milk and hold your cup in your hands and say:

“Life giving milk / water, contained in this cup, nourish my bones and my soul as I share it with the wildlings and spirits who have arrived and with those who have yet to arrive.

Earth, Air, Fire, Water, & Spirit, help watch over me, protect me, and keep me safe.

As the wheel turns and the Earth begins to stir at the end of her winters sleep. Let the Sun return with its warmth and lift my soul and warm my bones.

Now, as the Mother prepares to give birth, I prepare for the return of the Sun as my power begins to grow, and look to the Mother for continued guidance.”

Sip from your milk as you reflect on the change of season and the blessings of surviving winter, and the blessings that were brought into your life this year. Pour the remaining milk onto the Earth or set your milk with the gathered items.

When you are finished, give thanks, silently, or aloud and leave the milk for the wildlings & spirits of Imbolc.



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.

Gailann Frye: 153 South Kanawha St, Buckhannon, WV 02146, (978) 648-8564.

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

LaTonya Jones of Peoples Care: Auburn, AL; (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, PO 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 Rd, 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 GA and can work in the Southeast USA. Contact: Nion011@aol.com, Leephether@gmail.com, or (470) 399-4928.

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>.

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.



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
Imbolc Ritual	1-28-17	Unitarian Church, Auburn, AL/CST
Ostara Ritual	3-18-17	Roxanna, near Auburn, AL/CST

Board of Directors' Meetings: The next BoD meeting will be held in February 2017, in Camp Hill, 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):

Moondance: May 25-29, 2017, Roxanna, Alabama

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED