



The Journey...

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



CST Event Recaps

by Kat Horton

CST's May Day Gathering was held on May 5 at Roxanna. Everyone enjoyed our potluck as usual, but the real fun started when attendees began working on our annual May Pole. As a group ventured off to dig a hole for the pole, another stayed behind to make crowns and decorate the May Pole wreath with beautiful fresh flowers folks brought from their own gardens. Still more people tied ribbons of a wide, vibrant variety of colors to the wreath.

A strong group of men ready to place the pole met with a procession of revelers carrying the wreath, its 30 foot long rainbow of many colors held by many hands. We were greeted by a spritely volunteer, the Green Woman, and crowned our May King and Queen. We had so many people involved that a few minutes were spent untangling all the ribbons. Waves of giggles spread through the crowd.

Finally, at least 20 event-goers, young and old, danced in merriment to weave one of the most beautiful May Pole patterns we've seen in years. To top it all off, donors at the May Day event raised \$45 for Planned Parenthood Birmingham in honor of our celebration of fertility. A special thanks to our volunteers and donors for this one—we couldn't have done it without you!

A couple of weeks later at Moondance 2017, CST held a raffle as a fundraiser. Tickets were sold during the entire weekend, and the raffle was held on Saturday evening after Mama Gina's performance. The raffle raised \$450 for CST! These funds will help pay for the site rental and other expenses for our annual Pagan Pride Day. Thank you all for both donating items and for buying tickets!

Below is a list of the donors and the item (or items, in a couple of cases!) donated:

- Mama Gina - Nine Toes the Bard CD
- Kayli - Cedar shaman walking staff; retired Zeus Roxanna shrine; 14-piece magic candle set with inscriber; Build-your-Own Roxanna shrine kit
- Eileen - Painting
- Kat - Kaiju helm
- Charlotte - Handmade ritual broom with willow handle
- Beth - Set of 4 elements candle holders
- Sage - Dolphin clock & bottle vase
- Linda - Selenite wand
- Bead Dragon - Turquoise & hematite beaded necklace
- Closet Notions (Holly & Tina - Rag doll
- Madeline - Necklace and pentagram; 7-chakra sphere set; labadorite necklace; Jasper & rose quartz necklace; 7-chakra necklace & earrings; moon necklace; small piece of labadorite

Litha 2017, #66

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CST Directors & Staff:

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

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Circle of Life

Birthdays for July-August-September! Happy Birthday to the following CST members:

Rob V. (July 16)
Joshua R. (July 18)
Michael D. (July 25)
Robert K. (August 3)
Kim R. (August 6)
Joshua C. Jr. (August 24)
Matthew P. (August 25)
Aaron M. (August 30)
Jade H. (September 7)
Jeffrey P. (September 12)
Jamie M. (September 16)
Tyler R. (September 21)
Kimberly M. (September 25)



CST News & Upcoming Events

Newsletter Committee

CST has a newsletter committee! Paid CST members, regardless of location, who would like to be involved in the creation of our quarterly newsletter can join this Facebook group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/241385513014611/?ref=br_rs.

Ritual Planning Committee

Kat H. has created a CST Ritual Planning Committee. This group is open to all community members, not just paid CST members, but it does help if you are local to Auburn, Alabama, as most of the actual work will be on-site at the rituals. Join here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/252461188569200/>

Annual Membership Drive August 1 - September 23

CST's annual membership drive is coming up soon! The dates are August 1 through September 23 (Auburn Pagan Pride Day). One-year individual memberships will be just \$12.50, instead of \$20, and one-year family memberships will be \$20, rather than \$35. Please encourage your friends to join CST during this membership drive!

CST's Lammas Auction Carnival

August 26, 2017, 1-5 pm
Come celebrate both CST's 20th birthday, and our Lammas harvest festival! You will find us at the Busch Center, Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Thach Ave., Auburn, AL. Featured activities:
-An auction of one-of-a-kind metaphysical items hosted by the

One-of-a-kind Wizzard of Lee County (as seen in the Plainsman and OA News!)
-Divination readings!
-Snacks!
-Mini-games!
-A real, live pagan ritual put on by CST!
-And more!

Facebook event page:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/312106339245954/>

Auburn Pagan Pride Day Sept. 23, 2017, 12-6 pm

This year's Auburn Pagan Pride Day will again be at the Davis Arboretum on the Auburn University campus, in Auburn, Alabama. Last year we had 200 attendees, and we'd love to beat that number this year! PPD is open to everyone, children included, and is free to attend. There will be vendors and classes. Please bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to the East Alabama Food Bank.

We will have a Members' Meeting and an election this year at Pagan Pride Day.

Montgomery Pagan Meetup

In addition to our monthly Auburn Pagan Meetups, CST now has a Montgomery Pagan Meetup. This meetup is held the first Saturday of each month, 3-5 pm, at the Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park, 6000 Vaughn Rd, Montgomery, AL 36116, and is organized by Arawn & Linda. <https://www.facebook.com/events/287499821712950/>

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).

Notice of Annual Meeting & Call for Nominations

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Church of the Spiral Tree is now accepting nominations for two Member-at-Large positions on the Church of the Spiral Tree Board of Directors. The two current Members-at-Large are automatically considered to be nominated, unless they state their preference not to run again. Nominees must be current paid CST members, and must have been a paid member for at least one year by the time of the election.



The deadline for nominations is Thursday, August 30, 2017.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

CST's Annual Meeting of the General Membership will be held on Saturday, September 23, 2017, at 2:00 pm (Central time) during Pagan Pride Day, at Davis Arboretum, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.

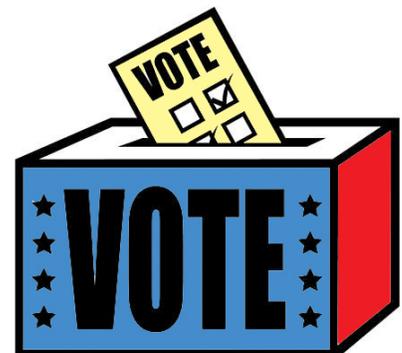
This general meeting of CST is open to all members. At this meeting will be held the election of the two Members-at-Large, and any other business deemed necessary by the Board of

Directors or General Membership.

The Members-at-Large shall be elected by a vote of the Active (Paid) Membership, and must be actives (paid) members in good standing and willing and qualified to perform the duties of their office. Nominations for the Member-at-Large may be made by any active member at the Annual Meeting or any time within a month prior to the Annual Meeting, by sending notice to the current Directors, by mail or by email. After the ballots are printed, nominations may be made at the meeting itself.

If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, you may vote via absentee ballot, either by mail (P.O. Box 3165, Auburn, AL 6831-3165) or by email (info@spiraltree.org). All absentee ballots must be received at the CST office by no later than September 21, 2017. These ballots will then be added to the in-session votes of the General Meeting at Pagan Pride Day.

Results of the elections will be published in either the Mabon or the Yule 2017 issue of the newsletter.



Witchin' in the Kitchen

by Kat Horton

Lavender Cheesecake

Crust:

1½ cup graham cracker
and/or gingersnap crumbs
½ cup melted butter
¼ cup sugar

Filling:

24 oz cream cheese;
softened
1½ cup sugar
6 eggs
2 cups sour cream
2 Tbsp cornstarch
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp crushed dried lavender
flowers
1½ tsp vanilla extract

Topping:

8 oz sour cream
1½ Tbsp sugar
½ cup chopped walnuts
1 tsp whole dried lavender flowers
¼ tsp vanilla extract

Crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine crust ingredients and press firmly into the bottom and up 2" of the sides of a 9" spring form pan; chill.

Filling: With mixer on high speed, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. With mixer on low, add eggs, sour cream, cornstarch, lemon juice, lavender flowers and vanilla. Blend all ingredients on medium speed for 3 minutes. Pour mixture into the chilled crust and bake for 1 hour. Turn off the oven and leave the cake in for 30 minutes longer. Remove and let cool in pan. Chill.

Topping: Mix sour cream with the remaining ingredients and spread over the top of the cheesecake. Cover and refrigerate.

To serve, remove the rim of the pan, loosen the cheesecake from the bottom, and slide it onto a plate.



From:

https://www.ravenandcrone.com/catalog/a4/Litha,-Summer-Solstice-Food-Recipes/article_info.html; by Tom Bergey, "Kitchen Table: Where Herbs and Spices Make a Difference" published in Herb

Companion, Aug/Sep 1994 Vol. 6, No. 6. Pg. 22.

Solstice Fruit Fizz

400g cherries (about 2 cups)
4 nectarines
250g strawberries (about 1 cup)
10 oz lemonade
6 lemon balm leaves
A few cherries and strawberries, to serve
Ice cubes

Cut the nectarines and cherries in half and remove the pits. Cut any leaves and stalks off the strawberries, and wash all fruit thoroughly. Push through a juicer, then top with sparkling water or lemonade, and pour into a jug. Add a few ice cubes, the lemon balm leaves, and extra fresh fruits.

From:

<http://recipesforapagansoul.weebly.com/litha-jun-20-23.html>

Blackberry Pie

Berry Pies are baked at Lammas to honor the sacrifice of the "Green Man", the spirit of all vegetation, whose death ensures a bountiful harvest and prosperity in the coming year.

4 cups blackberries, fresh
½ cup white sugar
½ cup flour
1 9" double pie crust
2 Tbsp milk
¼ cup white sugar

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Combine 3½ cups of the berries with the ½ cup of sugar, and the flour. Pour mixture into the unbaked pie shell. Spread the last of the berries on top of the sugared ones. Cover with pie crust. Crimp the edges and brush the top with milk, and sprinkle the ¼ cup of sugar on top. Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 375°F. Then bake for an additional 20-25 minutes.

From:

<http://druidsegg.reformed-druids.org/newslughnasadh08-14.htm>

Lammas Oatmeal Apple Bread

This quick bread is wonderful for "tea gatherings"!

1 cup wheat flour
½ tsp baking soda
2 tsp salt
1 tsp nutmeg
½ cup brown sugar
1 cup butter
½ cup nuts (if you are not a nut person these are optional)
3 medium apples (chopped)
1 cup raisins
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ginger
1½ cup rolled oats
1 egg
1½ tsp vanilla or orange extract

Mix above ingredients together, then place in a greased 9" cake pan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes, until it begins to move away from the sides of the pan. This bread may be shaped for ritual as well, and the fruits and nuts may be changed for different seasons.

From:

<http://druidsegg.reformed-druids.org/newslughnasadh08-14.htm>



Timid People & Physical Affection

by *Billye Welburn*

One of the things I love about the pagan community is all the hugs. For many of us, a hug is the default greeting, even for new acquaintances! It's common to see many forms of physical affection during our gatherings.

HOWEVER— as the article⁽¹⁾ floating around the interwebs discusses, it is important we remind ourselves that some people are not into physical contact. There are various reasons for aversion to touching; PTSD, prior assault or sexual assault, germ phobia, OCD, shyness, introversion, timidity, or other such causes. Regardless of a person's reason, it behooves us to notice and respect their boundaries, and seek their consent.

The best way to do this? Ask! "Would you like a hug?" Simple, direct; no pressure.

A note on phrasing: "Can I give you a hug?" may sound the same as the question above, but look at the subject. The former focuses on the hug-ee, while the latter focuses on the hug-er. Someone feeling timid may experience pressure to consent under the second phrasing, especially if they have people pleasing tendencies. Good intentions can be misinterpreted quite easily, and people can absolutely read things that you didn't put out or intend.

A point about personal definitions: "Are you a hugger?" could put a timid person in a predicament—maybe they don't want a hug right now, but don't to sign up for the 'don't hug me' club. Or maybe, they are in a good place for a hug right now, but they may have anxiety about being hugged by default in the future. In either case, it can feel like a loaded question, and discomfort can ensue while they try to formulate a response. My advice is make your offer singular; ask only for right now.

I've experienced a similar dilemma related to phrasing: "Would you like a drink/smoke?" versus "Are you a drinker/ smoker?" or "Do you

drink/ smoke?" In the past, I've smoked at bad times because I was attached to defining myself as a smoker, and I got caught up in the phrasing of the person offering. I could easily pass on the singular offers, but the personal definitions sometimes led me to go against my intuition. I've been working on hearing the intent of an offer—which is almost always from a place of generosity—but I am still aware of the sensitivity I have to phrasing.

When interacting with people who are timid, have a confused sense of self, or are susceptible to peer pressure—I've worn all these shoes before—I suggest you be mindful of your phrasing. The offer of hug or substance isn't changed by the phrasing, but the good intentions behind it may be more clearly perceived.

Other examples of affectionate touch are putting your hand on another's shoulder, touching their arm, back, or hands, playing with their hair—it's wise to seek ongoing permission for these, as well as any other entry into someone's personal bubble. Sometimes, verbally asking for permission can feel clunky or undesirable. In those cases, remember that body language preceded spoken language by a long shot! We all display it, and can intuitively read it if we pay attention. Asking for a hug without words is easy: open your arms; invite them to come into a hug.

I suggest you continuously watch the person's non-verbal cues (especially with new people), whether or not you asked verbally, and regardless of the type of touch. If you're being mindful of them, and not asserting yourself overmuch, you will be able to tell if they consent to your affection or not. Gauge their reaction, and proceed or withdraw as appropriate. Try to pay attention to their body language; for example, eye contact is usually a good sign that they're up for it. Tone and speech cadence can reveal a lot too; "Sure!" is a very different response from "...sure....."

Another trick? Check out the feet. If they are pointed away from you, they may want to get away from you! If you sense discomfort, modify your future behavior. If you feel it's appropriate, invite them to have a conversation with you about it (though maybe not right in that moment).

Being mindful of a person's cues can be useful in other instances too—intuiting other's comfort levels on conversation topic or group activity. And it's useful for supporting others as well. If you witness an interaction where someone is uncomfortable, you've got an opportunity. You could try to diffuse the discomfort by getting involved, though that could prove tricky. If someone is uncomfortable about a thing, they may also be uncomfortable about you calling attention to their discomfort. So you could also broach the subject at a later moment with either person involved to prevent future miscommunications.

Nobody is perfect! Sometimes we mess up and act insensitively. So don't beat yourself up if you find yourself in a predicament over this stuff. The thing that will highlight your loving and caring nature is how you learn from your missteps and seek better understanding of people's preferences.

We will survive any awkwardness that comes about from a declined offer or a misread cue, and I think we will be better off for facing it.

If you yourself are a timid person, please know that this article is not directed at you, so please don't take it to discourage physical affection! My aim is to encourage us all to be sensitive to the preferences of others, not to be hyper-sensitive.

Peace and Love to You All!

⁽¹⁾Reference: "Pagans, Hugging, and the Fine Art of Consent: A PSA," by Thorn Mooney, from <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/oathbound/2015/06/pagans-hugging-and-the-fine-art-of-consent-a-psa/>

How to Hold a Lammas Harvest Ritual

by Patti Wigington

From: <https://www.thoughtco.com/hold-a-lammas-harvest-ritual-2562166>

In some Pagan traditions, Lammas is the time of year when the Goddess takes on the aspects of the Harvest Mother. The earth is fruitful and abundant, crops are bountiful, and livestock are fattening up for winter. However, the Harvest Mother knows that the cold months are coming, and so she encourages us to begin gathering up what we can. This is the season for harvesting corn and grain, so that we can bake bread to store and have seeds for next year's planting.

This ritual celebrates the beginning of the harvest season and the cycle of rebirth, and can be done by a solitary practitioner or adapted for a group or coven setting. Decorate your altar with symbols of the season—sickles and scythes, garden goodies like ivy and grapes and corn, poppies, dried grains, and early autumn foods like apples. If you like, light some Lammas Rebirth incense.

Have a candle on your altar to represent the Harvest Mother—choose something in orange, red or yellow. These colors not only represent the blaze of the summer sun, but also the coming changes of autumn. You'll also need a few stalks of wheat and an un-sliced loaf of bread (homemade is best, but if you can't manage, a store-bought loaf will do). A goblet of ritual wine is optional. Also, if you have celiac disease or are otherwise sensitive to gluten, be sure to read [Celebrating Lammas When You Eat Gluten-Free](#).

If your tradition requires you to cast a circle, do so now.

Light the candle, and say:

*The Wheel of the Year has turned once more,
and the harvest will soon be upon us.*

*We have food on our tables, and
the soil is fertile.*

*Nature's bounty, the gift of the earth,
gives us reasons to be thankful.*

*Mother of the Harvest, with your sickle and basket,
bless me with abundance and plenty.*

Hold the stalks of wheat before you, and think about what they symbolize: the power of the earth, the coming winter, the necessity of planning ahead. What do you need help planning right now? Are there sacrifices you should be making in the present that will be reaped in the future?

Rub the stalks between your fingers so a few grains of wheat fall upon the altar. Scatter them on

the ground as a gift to the earth. If you're inside, leave them on the altar for now—you can always take them outside later.

Say:

*The power of the Harvest
is within me.*

*As the seed falls to the
earth and is reborn each
year,*

*I too grow as the seasons
change.*

*As the grain takes root in the fertile soil,
I too will find my roots and develop.*

*As the smallest seed blooms into a mighty stalk,
I too will bloom where I landed.*

*As the wheat is harvested and saved for winter,
I too will set aside that which I can use later.*



Tear off a piece of the bread. If you're performing this ritual as a group, pass the loaf around the circle so that each person present can take off a small chunk of bread. As each person passes the bread, they should say: "I pass to you this gift of the first harvest."

When everyone has a piece of bread, say:

*Months ago, we planted seeds,
and through the summer watched them grow.*

*We have tended the fields in our lives,
and now we are blessed with abundance.*

The harvest has arrived!

Thank you, lord of the harvest,

For the gifts yet to come.

*We eat this bread, grain transformed by fire, in your
name,*

and honor you for your sacrifice.

Everyone eats their bread together. If you have ritual wine, pass it around the circle for people to wash the bread down. Once everyone has finished their bread, take a moment to meditate on the cycle of rebirth and how it applies to your own life—physically, emotionally, spiritually. When you are ready, if you have cast a circle, close it or dismiss the quarters at this time. Otherwise, simply end the

ritual in the manner of your tradition.



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 an 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.

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 welcomes 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 before or 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 CST's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Church-of-the-Spiral-Tree-81596562207> 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
Lammas Ritual	8-26-17	Unitarian Church, Auburn, AL
Auburn Pagan Pride Day	9-23-17	Arboretum, Auburn University, AL

Board of Directors' Meetings: The next BoD meeting will be held in August, near Auburn, 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, but CST members get a discount):

FallFling: October 12-15, 2017, Roxanna, Alabama

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED