



The Journey...

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



Upcoming CST Events

Auburn Pagan Pride Day, Sunday, September 23, 2018, 12-6 pm

This year's Auburn Pagan Pride Day (PPD) will again be at the Davis Arboretum on the Auburn University campus, in Auburn, Alabama. Last year we had 130 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.

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 current Member-at-Large is 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 (September 23, 2018). The deadline for nominations is Friday, August 31, 2018. Please email or mail your nominations.

Notice of Annual Meeting

CST's Annual Meeting of the General Membership will be held at Auburn Pagan Pride Day on Sunday, September 23, 2018, at 2:00 pm (Central time), 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 active (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, 2018. 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 2018 issue of the newsletter.

Litha 2018, #70

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CST Directors & Staff:

- Founder *Linda Kerr*
- Treasurer *skippy*
- Solitary Representative *Madeline Wells Smith*
- Member-at-Large *Billye Welburn*
- IT Coordinator . . . *Cliff Landis*
- Asst. Ritual Coordinator *Kristi Ingle*
- Meetup Coordinator *Callie Pagan Prisoner*
- Correspondent *Callie*

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Circle of Life



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

- Rob V. (July 16)
- Jan N. (July 17)
- Joshua R. (July 18)
- Lindsey P. (July 22)
- Andy P. (July 23)
- Robert K. (August 3)
- Jay S. (August 4)
- Kim R. (August 6)
- Ladeana R. (August 8)
- Heather M. (August 10)
- Brian K. (August 23)
- Joshua C. Jr. (August 24)
- Matthew P. (August 25)
- Aaron M. (August 30)
- James H. (September 5)
- Jamie M. (September 16)
- Tyler R. (September 21)
- Holly C. (September 25)



CST Updates

It's a year of change at CST! We have several new staff and BoD members.

Cliff Landis is our new IT Coordinator; he will be handling the website, domain hosting, and Facebook page and groups.

Kristi Ingle is working as our Assistant Ritual Coordinator (she still needs someone local to help out!). Her first ritual for CST will be Litha on June 23.

After several years as our treasurer, Skippy is stepping down, and will be replaced by Craig Kerr, who was one of the original CST BoD members when we formed back in 1997.

April Iris McLeod has agreed to take over as newsletter editor, beginning with the Mabon issue.

Finally, Ivey Webster will be taking on the Membership Coordinator position this fall.

A big thank-you to everyone who is stepping up to help! CST would quite literally cease to function if all of you did not work to keep it running.

Interested in helping out yourself? Let us know! We still need a local ritual person, and other positions may very well come open at any time. Not ready to take on a staff position, but still want to be involved? Volunteer to write and run a ritual for one of the various sabbats, or come up with the craft activity for the sabbat. You can also contribute items to the newsletter—we always need articles, poetry, artwork, book reviews, and such. And if you'd like to do outreach and make a very real impact in someone's life, write letters to an inmate! You can find the list of inmates here: docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1takT08T__oKUif_MQPZv8KaoQYjm9rNmUPK5vthgoIE/edit#gid=0

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).

Pagan Politics

When Gods and Goddesses Diverge

by Edward Millican

From: <http://paganpolitics.com/2018/04/02/55-when-gods-and-goddesses-diverge/>

If Paganism is true, what are the implications for politics?

The above question is, in a nutshell, the subject of this blog—and yet it contains a pretty obvious error: the implication that “Paganism” is a systematic religion like Islam or Christianity. In fact, it isn’t. It’s a kaleidoscopic mélange of very different pantheons, rituals, mythologies, auguries, and bits of proverbial wisdom, representing a myriad of cultures and traditions from every part of the world. It might seem impossible to glean a coherent theory from this disparate jumble—and, indeed, we’ll find Pagan spirituality to be consistent with a wide range of political positions.

Still, looking beneath the surface, we’ll notice that all the religions denominated as “Pagan” have some important similarities. I’ve been discussing one of those over the last few blog postings: the fact that Pagan traditions are invariably polytheistic – that is, they all recognize a variety of Divinities, whose interactions are recounted in myths and legends. Usually, the Gods and Goddesses come across as mostly good, but They don’t always agree. Sometimes, They quarrel and fight.

The Abrahamic faiths teach that morality is what is pleasing to God. We Pagans, likewise, believe that moral behavior is what gratifies the Deities we venerate. There’s a serious difference, however. Whereas Jews, Christians, and Muslims receive—at least in theory—unequivocal guidance from Heaven, Pagans must contend with some degree of moral uncertainty, due to Divine

discordance. Our sense of right and wrong tends to be more flexible—realistic, some might say.

Pagans are alive to the tragic elements of political life.

A monotheistic morality cannot be ambiguous. If there’s only one true God, and He’s all-powerful and good; and if He cares about human beings and wants them to be good also; then He must have provided them with definitive moral instructions—in His holy scriptures, presumably. Concrete circumstances can be complex, of course. It may not be immediately obvious

how God’s commandments can be applied in the mundane sphere. Yet in the end, there can only be one valid answer. If there’s a disagreement on a moral issue, someone must be making a mistake.

Or, possibly, be an agent of the Devil.

Pagans, however, understand that things good in themselves frequently conflict—especially in the world of politics. Gods and Goddesses—those vast spiritual Powers that pervade the cosmos and give it depth and meaning—can take opposite sides on a political question, leaving Their worshippers anxious and perplexed. Our only desire is to do the right thing, yet all of our options seem to be somehow wrong. To remove one intolerable evil, we must abet another. Of the several

sacred ideals that we’re sworn to protect, one at least must be sacrificed, to save the rest. Any decision will be harrowing—arguably immoral—but to do nothing, may invite the worst.

In previous blog postings, I’ve used the issue of abortion



rights to illustrate the moral quandaries of political decision-making. It seems evident—to me, anyway—that both sides of this controversy are contending for genuine values, crucial to society, and that however the issue is resolved, something important will be lost. But that’s a Pagan perspective. Others will see less nuance here.

The pro-life (anti-abortion) faction will generally be coming from a fairly serious Christian position, which implies a relatively inflexible morality. Convinced as they are that they’re fighting God’s battle, they can’t entertain the thought that their antagonists might also be advocating for a worthy ideal. Hence the calls for a total ban on abortion, with no exceptions for rape or incest—or even the health

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of the woman concerned. The other, pro-abortion rights, faction doesn't ordinarily have a religious reason for rigidity, being mostly secularist, and yet—maybe in reaction to their blinkered foes—they find it hard to perceive the opposition as anything other than misogynistic cretins, who can't be serious about that "life begins at conception" stuff.

The ancient Pagans considered fanatical zeal a social disease. Thucydides told, in his mournfully detached way, of the destructive effects of sectarian strife at the time of the Peloponnesian War. For Aristotle, virtue is found in the Golden Mean between two extremes. It's fair to presume that an authentic Pagan, attentive to the wisdom of olden days, might be relatively favorable to compromise, and unlikely to view politics as a showdown between absolute good and evil. Pagans definitely aren't crusaders or jihadis—a good thing these days, no doubt.

I'd like to think that the Pagan political attitude could be humanity's salvation, but I wouldn't count on it. Some situations are just too hot and heavy for the moderate approach to be feasible, and the abortion debate could be one of those. The real Pagan lesson isn't that splitting the difference is always best—in a given instance, it may well not be—but rather that political perfection isn't possible, no matter what we do. Every gain will come at a cost. Every victory contains the germ of future defeat. All that we do eventually crumbles into dust. The times are always out of joint.

We seek incompatible ideals. To please one Deity, we fatally offend another.

And, as I've said before, none of this is an excuse for apathy or cynicism. I'll be expanding on that thought next time.

Blessed be.

A Simple Lammas Ritual for the Busy Domestic Witch

by Mrs. B.

From: <http://www.themodernpagan.net/?p=406>

For many domestic witches, finding time to celebrate the sabbats can be a challenge, even in the summer months. Between keeping the little witchlets busy and out of trouble, or schlepping them to camps and activities, or just trying to find the time to do all the usual things we have to do between work and home, finding time to fit in a sabbat ritual can be tough!

Many times we forget that honoring the seasons and deity do not have to be a huge celebration, full of casting circles, fancy rituals and huge feasts. Of course the sabbats can be one or all of those things, but do they have to be? Of course not. Honoring the change of season can be as simple as a candle lit, a prayer said, and a toast made. Just 5 minutes out of your day to reconnect with your beliefs, your deity and the earth.

For Lammas, I created a simple ritual that can be done alone or with family or friends, with minimal fuss, and in just a few minutes. Of course, feel free to use and/or change the words for your own private use.

Supplies you'll need:

- Bread (Home baked, store bought, heck, a cookie will do in a pinch)
- Wine (or beer, mead, fruit juice—you know you have a juice box in there somewhere!)
- A candle (A summer color is appropriate: gold or yellow, though white always works. Also appropriate? Anything that smells like baked goods—cinnamon, sugar cookie, etc..)
- Optional: Anything seasonal that you'd like to set out, such as summer flowers, things harvested from your garden, a corn dolly, etc.), an appropriate incense.

Find a quiet place to sit for a moment, or gather around your table if sharing the ritual with others. Have your bread, wine and candle in front of you (don't forget something to light the candle with). Take a quick moment to think about what Lammas means to you, and what it has meant to those who have followed the season through times past. It's the first harvest, time to offer bread in thanks for the prosperity of the crops.

Light your candle (and incense if you are using it). Take a bite of the bread and a sip of the wine.

Say these words (or others, as you like):

"On this first day of August, I light a candle to celebrate the harvest. As the wheel of the year turns and the days start to grow shorter, I honor the Lord and Lady (or the seasons, or your specific deity) and thank them for the blessings & prosperity they have brought to me this year. I honor those who came before me, and all things living on this earth."

Eat more of the bread, drink more of the wine, being sure to save the last bits as a sacrifice to the earth. Later pour them outside, in your garden, under a tree or into a potted plant.

If you have the time, sit for a few minutes and meditate before snuffing the candle. As you go about your day, keep negative thoughts at bay and try to mentally tally all the wonderful things that have come into your life this year.

Have a wonderful Lammas, however you choose to celebrate!



Mabon: History and Customs

by Lady Bridget

From:

www.ladymorgana.com/cauldronclassroom/degree/degree3/third_lesson_03/mabon_history_and_customs.htm

Mabon, or the Autumnal Equinox, occurs when the Sun is at zero degrees Libra, and as the name implies, it is the time when day and night are of equal length. Libra is the sign of the zodiac symbolized by the scales in balance, and it is a perfect symbol also for the day and night in balance. Balance is the theme for many of our Mabon rituals, as this is a good time to restore balance to your life. As we see the winter time approaching, it is a time to get your priorities in order. The night conquers day, as we slide into the dark half of the year.

This was the true Thanksgiving, the Harvest Home, the second of the harvest festivals, and the most important one to the agricultural cultures as this is when the majority of the harvest came in. The Harvest Moon is the brightest of all the Moons, and a good thing, because many farmers had to work long into the night under the light of this Moon to get all their harvesting finished in time. Usually the last bit, or a small corner of the harvest was left in the fields and not taken up. It was bound and left to stand until the Harvest Festival, when it would be symbolically sacrificed to represent the Sacrificed God of Vegetation. It was considered unlucky to cut down the very last of the Harvest, and so was also left to stand in the field by some traditions. If wheat or a grain, it was bound tightly, and also could be dressed in men's clothing, and

was the forerunner of the scarecrow. This "man" was often burned in a sacrifice to the Gods, as well as animals, in a large "wicker man". In many fields today, you may see one small area left unharvested, as many farmers still believe it to be unlucky to harvest the last corner.



Animals are also preparing for the winter, storing food, getting fatter, eating more. And as we are also animals, you will find your body tending toward the same trend. It isn't lack of willpower that puts pounds on you at this time of year, it is centuries of the species survival training that tells your body that fat will keep you from starving through the winter! People also get testy, edgy, and more competitive at this time, because subconsciously we still see this as the beginning of the "lean time". Just as the animals compete, butting heads, so do people, and males will especially be more apt to want to be in control of things. This is not sexist, this is ingrained survival of the species. Men at this time

would take stock of their hunting equipment, to repair or replace whatever they need to, in order to provide for their families in the coming winter months. This is the height of the agricultural harvest, and the beginning of the hunting time of year.

As the Goddess is in the Mother stage, bountiful, full and ripe, so we celebrate this aspect, we celebrate what we have harvested in our lives up to this point. We look to see what has grown and matured from the "seeds" we have sown earlier. We take stock now to see what we still need for our own growth, both mentally and spiritually. And we also give thanks for what we have, this is the true Thanksgiving season. The reasons the American Thanksgiving is so late in November are twofold: firstly, the Pilgrim's were ignorant of the growing season and had the Indians not gone and brought in the harvest, they all would have died during that first bitter winter; secondly, the United States government changed the date of Thanksgiving to always be the fourth Thursday of the month, so that more shopping days could be added for Christmas shopping, thus improving our economy at that time. (But that's another story for another holiday!)

This was also the time for replacing your old broom with a new one. As the broom corn is ripe now, besom making is traditional and magickal this time of year. (Unless you live in an extreme southern sub-tropical climate such as south Florida or southern California, when more

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things are ripe in Feb!)

The Harvest Moon was also referred to as the Wine Moon, because the grapes also ripen now in the wine making countries. The first wine deities were female, and wine is one of the oldest libations known to us; it symbolizes the blood of the Sacrificed God in many religions.

The apple is also a fruit that comes ripe now, and is a staple of Mabon recipes, such as apple pie and apple cider. Traditionally apples were rubbed before eating to remove all demons or evil spirits that were thought to be within them. Apples are thought to restore health, aid longevity, and restore physical strength. Apples have long been associated with health, as "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" will tell you! Apple cider, or hard cider was often a traditional wassailing drink, appropriate as the term "wassailing" means to wish good health.

Beer is also appropriate at this time of year, as at Lammas, and so also is Mead, which is a lightly alcoholic drink made from fermenting honey and water. As honey is mostly gathered in the fall, mead was made at this time of year. Small mead, which only takes about 12 days to mature, is still a favorite of ours at all the harvest festivals. (See also Baron Sir Riekin's Mead Making Recipe at this website.)

Incidentally, the word Sabbat comes from the Babylonian SA-BAT meaning heart's rest and was when the Goddess Ishtar had her period & rested. This was her period of "tabu" which originally meant "set apart" and had no negative connotations, but instead was a time for women to rest from their normal labors. Only woman had the sacred bleeding, therefore, only women could bless the harvest, or the crops. The word blessing comes from the Anglo-Saxon word BLES which means blood. Women were the

greatest mystery, since only women bled, and did not die, and when they did not bleed, they gave birth, and shed milk. Thus the two colors most associated with the Goddess are red and white.

Colors for Mabon are reds, maroons, oranges, golden yellows, deep greens, russets, browns, and other colors reflective of the autumn season. The incenses are woody and musky, such as pine smoke, sage, or animal musk. Your altar decorations could be fall leaves, ears of corn, nuts, acorns, apples, fall colored flowers, or any seasonal thing which is common where you live.

Themes for our Mabon celebration can be the harvest, as an individual and as a community, what have we reaped? What did we sow? Also realizing that we need to share abundance, and that there is abundance for all - one person's good fortune doesn't diminish another's! We are thankful for blessings, especially those we normally take for granted, i.e. good jobs, homes, friends, freedoms, food, etc. There are many who don't have the lifestyle that we enjoy today in this country. This is also a time to reflect on the nature of sacrifice, the God of vegetation, and also the plants and animals who sacrifice themselves so that we may survive. Willing sacrifice must always be honored.

Other themes include the equality of day and night, and also equality among ourselves, sexual equality, racial equality, etc. and what real equality means to us as a community. The ability to draw on one another's strengths and to honor equally all strengths, not just those of one sex, or age related ones. Balance is another



theme, balance in our lives, and in other areas of our culture, as symbolized by the Libran scales, and what we might have to do to achieve that balance.

The legend of Lugh and Goronwy, in some versions, takes place at the Equinox, rather than the Solstice, and can be a theme for Mabon Sabbats. As also can the legend of John Barleycorn, who symbolized the Sacrificed God. You can, if you have outdoor facilities and a fire permit - even make a "wicker man" and fill it with tokens of your harvest, to burn as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Gods! Your imagination is all you need to create as powerful a ritual as you can wish.

Blessed Be!

Bibliography

- "The Magic In Food" by Scott Cunningham (presently out of print)
- "Ancient Ways" by Pauline Campanelli

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.

Holly Cannon: (334) 520-4318,
wannakitkat06@yahoo.com.

Ken Laporte: Former inmate and back in PA. Eclectic/nocturnal/ solitary Witch. I am a gay male and will become a permanent member of CST because I want to help/advocate for Pagan/Wiccan inmates. 301 E. Erie Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19134;
Darkmoonpunk13@gmail.com.

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

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.

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>.



CST Calendar

CST welcomes church and community members, beginners, newcomers, solitaires, and anyone else interested in participating in rituals honoring the Sabbats. 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 always 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

Litha Ritual
Auburn Pagan Pride Day

DATE

June 23, 2018
September 23, 2018

LOCATION

Unitarian Church, Auburn, AL
Arboretum, Auburn University, AL

Board of Directors' Meetings: The next BoD meeting will be held in August, in or 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 11-14, 2018, Roxanna, Alabama

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED