

SWORD & CHALICE

Wiccan Church of Canada

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WINTER SOLSTICE - IMBOLC

In our pagan wheel of the year we observe the arrival of Winter Solstice and like many cultures, we celebrate with Light. As the winter solstice sits between an Ending (Samhain) and a Beginning (Imbolc), it is a natural time for us to become reflective and re-focused. We are in the initial stage of change, a natural time for letting go and saying farewell to the old and leaving regrets behind. Samhain gave us closure, while Yule celebrates the returning spark of life and reminds us that the future can be bright, we knowingly put stock in the rebirth that Imbolc brings. Our faith and reverence in bringing the light into our windows, our hearths and ourselves is an age old response to holding the cold dark at bay. We tell our stories of survival, of light triumphing over darkness and we connect with each other through sharing that light and hope.

Many pagans see this time as an opportunity to celebrate the rebirth of a Great God, who is seen as the newborn solstice sun. Winter-born gods are celebrated through-out many cultures, often sharing a re-occurring theme of rebirth and the return of Light. Most of the customs, symbols, and rituals associated with this time of the year mesh joyfully with other spiritual cultures - Christmas, Hanukkah, Yule etc. No matter the myth or miracles' origin, pagans today can themselves bring Light to life by sharing and re-creating new traditions that draw on old ways, through rituals, feasts, and other activities. Do the things that bring you joy and enjoy yourself as much as possible on the Winter Solstice, this will bring back light (and laughter) into the world. Different traditions mention feasting, gambling, giving gifts, visiting, putting on plays and staying up all night, all relevant to knitting the community tighter. During the dark of winter, let's invoke all the forces of pleasure and love which make life worth living.

Before you know it, the slow heating of the earth begins from within, and Imbolc will welcome us from a seat of power, that deep place between the glory of Yule and the joyous madness of Ostara ... The turning of the wheel is upon us; let us reflect and rejoice in the beauty of celebrating our Light.

The Wiccan Church of Canada has offered open Wiccan temples facilitating classes, rituals, and training to the public since 1979. Drawing on resources available in our own communities and temples, we are a diverse, accepting, caring, group of people united by our love of the Gods and our own journeys. W.C.C. rituals are open to one and all, regardless of one's level of knowledge in the Craft. There is something for everyone, an experienced practitioner or someone who's vaguely curious. We hope our newsletter will reflect the diversity of our membership by offering the pagan community articles, resources, local events, links & libraries and the W.C.C. calendar.

DUE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH COVID-19, IN-PERSON CLASSES AND RITUALS CONTINUE TO BE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

However we are pleased to offer free online weekly classes alternate Saturday & Sunday.

As well as a social Meet & Greet Wednesday nights via the ZOOM conferencing app.

If you wish to participate, please email LPH.WCC@gmail.com with your email address.

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FACEBOOK**



The Wiccan Church of Canada



Hamilton



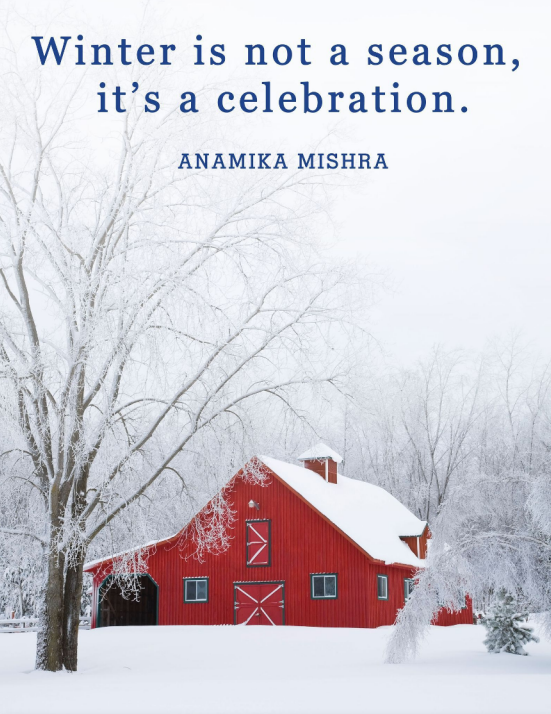
Toronto



Windsor

Winter is not a season,
it's a celebration.

ANAMIKA MISHRA



COMMUNITY NEWS

Seasons Greetings,

This year the WCC participated in community Outreach efforts in both Hamilton and Toronto temples. The goal was to reach out to the homeless in our communities with warm clothes food, and water. The Hamilton Temples community brought back their Brown Bag Project from 2018 with reusable bags packed with brown bag meals, socks & mitts kits, and personal care items with a Solstice delivery to the community. Toronto Temple initiated a winter collection of toiletries, socks & leggings, with a Yule drop off.

We would like to thank everyone that participated in reaching out to the greater community in these difficult and uncertain times. Your generosity in supporting these efforts makes a difference in someones day. Its a simple truth, kindness and compassion matters.

Bright Blessings!



NATURES WORKSHOP WITH GLENYS

Bayberry: The Scent of Yule

Northern Bayberry, bay-rum tree, candleberry, sweet gale, wax myrtle, wax shrub, tallow shrub

Bayberry, a quintessential scent for the Yuletide season. This deciduous shrub is native to northeastern US and Canada. The branches are dense and the leaves are leathery, with a slight shininess to them.

Though the leaves are fragrant and remain so through the summer and fall. It is the waxy berries which last through the winter that are the most important feature of the bush.

The berries are prized for their waxy, fragrant substance which was used to make candles. Because it was a time-consuming process, these candles were reserved for special occasions such as Christmas or New Year's. The berries ripen in October-November and this is the best time to gather them for making candles or soap. In order to extract the wax, you need to simmer the berries (do not boil) and pour off the water.

The wax will float to the top and solidify over time. Once it is solidified it can be removed. You can refine the wax to remove twigs and debris by remelting. Because the wax is brittle and fatty, you will want to mix it with beeswax or paraffin if necessary.

Bayberry is feminine in nature and associated with earth element as well as the planet Jupiter. You can burn bayberry candles to bring luck or



prosperity. The leaves are particularly useful in moneymaking spells. You can also use the leaves to write your dreams or wishes to bring happiness or good fortune. You can also use the leaves, berries, or powdered root for incense making

There is a folk saying: "For a bayberry candle burned to the socket brings joy to the heart and gold to the pocket"

A bayberry leaf or two can be used whole in cooking similar to a bay leaf to impart flavour and should be removed prior to serving.

Bayberry can be used in a decoction for gargling for sore throats and mouth or gum issues and the water used to boil the berries in has been used to treat diarrhea and dysentery. The powdered bark from the root has been used for skin ulcers and rashes

Please note that any medicinal use should be under a health practitioner's care. Large doses can cause vomiting or other effects. It may also have contra-indications with other medication. Always understand what you are working with before using it.



It's a general knowledge book that talks about creating your own sacred space, some ethical questions to ask yourself, if you are using cooking, as part of spell casting; and, a description of the typical hearth, home, and cooking during the Middle Ages. During medieval times, measures of time and ingredients were different, people were more in tune with the seasons. Different classes ate different things, except for the nobles, their kitchens were always well stocked with available produce and meats. Even though potatoes and tomatoes did not appear in Europe until after the 1500's,

The chapters are divided up by Wiccan holidays, their words, not mine. This time of year, they call Winter Solstice, (Yule, Winter Rite, Midwinter, Alban Arthan) and the chapter begins with a list of herbs, spices, and foods, and decorations

that were typically used during this time. Recipes have historical information, which also explains why they chose it to be part of the Sabbat. One chapter is filled tips, and lore on growing, harvesting, and drying your own herbs and flowers. It closes with "One who cultivates a garden walks beside the mother", a beautiful poem by Cheryl Hardin.

I liked the variety, as there were recipes for vegans, vegetarians, and those of us who eat meat. The Yule Turkey recipe has the back story of the Yule Log, a meditative exercise, and stuffing recipe includes black olives, and raisins. Yes, I'm going to try it!

Hugs and Stay well. See you in the New Year, and may 2021 be filled with many Bright Blessing!

Happy Reading !

Bella

Recently, I took a good look at our Hamilton Temple Legacy Library. I found a book in the Community Collection, that I happen to have. With Solstice/Yule around the corner why not review a cookbook that contains tidbits about each of our Sabbats?

**The WICCA COOKBOOK -
Recipes, Ritual, and Lore**

by **Jamie Wood & Tara Seefeldt**

ISBN: 978-1-58761-104-9.



WEE WITCHES WITH XYLIA

Here we are in Winter and everyone celebrates the Winter holiday in different ways. We celebrate the Solstice when the days are getting colder and darker ... and if you are really lucky, there is lots of snow to sled on or build a snowperson.

Solstice, or Yule, happens because the North Pole is tilted away from the Sun making the world a cooler and darker place. In Canada, we live closer to the North Pole (yes...where Santa lives), so we experience winter, but if you lived closer to the South Pole, it would be Summer and very warm. Winter Solstice is the shortest day and the longest night.

Yule happens on December 21st, but the very next day, the Sun will start to become stronger and begin its journey towards Summer. We raise up our Yule Tree and show all the trees outside the promise of things to come with bright lights like little Suns warming the branches.

So what can you do to celebrate the Solstice? Here are some ideas:

- **Create a Winter Nature Table:** Collect things from nature to put on your table to celebrate winter – a pine cone (paint it), some twigs or dry leaves, LED tea lights, ribbons.
- **Make Treats:** Take pieces of bread or cut up apple and put peanut butter on them, then dip them in birdseed. Hang them in trees and bushes for our feathered and furred friends.
- **Create Stars and Suns:** Draw pictures of Stars and Suns to put on your tree or in the window.
- **Make Solstice cards:** Fold a piece of paper in half to make a card and draw a Yuletide picture – it could be a smiling Sun, or a Yule tree, or a candle, and on the inside print the words "Happy Solstice" and give it to your favourite person.





Hilda Doolittle (1886 – 1961)

Her deep love of Classical Greece inspired many of her most famous poems, and her unconventional lifestyle made her an icon when her works were rediscovered in the 1970s

Adonis

Each of us like you
has died once,
has passed through drift of
wood-leaves,
cracked and bent
and tortured and unbent
in the winter-frost,
the burnt into gold points,
lighted afresh,
crisp amber, scales of
gold-leaf,
gold turned and re-welded
in the sun;
each of us like you
has died once,
each of us has crossed an
old wood-path
and found the winter-leaves

so golden in the sun-fire
that even the live
wood-flowers
were dark
Not the gold on the
temple-front
where you stand
is as gold as this,
not the gold that fastens
your sandals,
nor thee gold reft
through your chiselled
locks,
is as gold as this last year's
leaf,
not all the gold hammered
and wrought
and beaten
on your lover's face.
brow and bare breast
is as golden as this:
each of us like you
has died once,
each of us like you
stands apart, like you
fit to be worshipped.

Great Conjunction of Jupiter and
Saturn - DECEMBER 21

Northern winter solstice (at 10:02
GMT) - DECEMBER 21

Ursid meteor shower peaks -
DECEMBER 22

FIRST QUARTER - DECEMBER 21

FULL MOON - DECEMBER 29

LAST QUARTER- JANUARY 5

NEW MOON - JANUARY 13

FIRST QUARTER- JANUARY 20

FULL MOON - JANUARY 28

"I pray this winter
be gentle and kind—
a season of rest
from the wheel
of the mind."

JOHN GEDDES



Hamilton Temple Legacy Library

Learning through lending and legacies.

Membership requests can be sent to WCCHamiltonTemple@gmail.com subject line: HTLL