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Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada



Vol. 5 | #3

Imbolc  Equinox

Feb 1 – Mar 21 2022

HAMILTON ★ TORONTO ★ WINDSOR

The Wiccan Church of Canada

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. classes and rituals are open to one and all, regardless of one's level of experience in the Craft. We offer an open, and accepting place to worship as an experienced practitioner or someone who's vaguely curious, all are welcome. We encourage you to check out the F.A.Q section on our website or contact us if you have questions.

We hope our publication will reflect the diversity of our membership in offering a local pagan magazine written by the community for the community. Our articles are the voices of our community, those with knowledge and resources to share. Herbs and seasonal recipes we've tried and keep bringing back to our feast tables. We'll keep you abreast of pagan events, vendors and local artisans, as well as WCC classes & rituals.

DUE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH COVID-19, the WCC is pleased to offer free online weekly classes alternate Saturday & Sunday.

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

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



The Wheel Of The Year

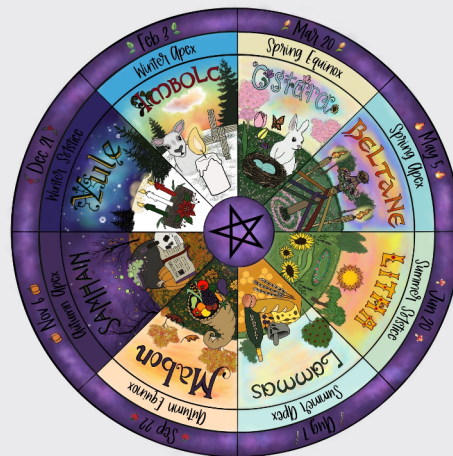
with Xylia

And so the wheel turns again, this time towards Imbolc, February 2. Let's take a look at where we are on the Wheel. Imbolc is between Yule, the Winter Solstice, and the Spring Equinox. It is a festival of the hearth and home, celebrating the lightening of days and preparation for the coming spring. There are several theories about the origins of the word "Imbolc". In old Irish, one meaning is "in the belly" and refers to the pregnancy of Ewes at this time of year. Another Old Irish meaning, "to wash/cleanse oneself" refers to a ritual cleansing. Comac's Glossary (10th century folk etymology) says it comes from the word Oimelc or ewe milk and a proto-Indo-European claims a root meaning both "milk" and "cleansing". There seems to be a common thread throughout these meanings: new beginnings, cleansings, and purity (white).

In the Celtic Traditions, we see two main figures, Brighid (Brede, Brigit) and the Cailleach. It is the celebration of the beginning of Spring, with fire and purification being important aspects of Brighid's festival. She was thought to visit households on Imbolc Eve and bless them. Brighid had the power to bring people from the dark season of winter into the season of greater light, new beginnings and the warmth of spring. A special meal was often prepared (using white food like Colcannon) where Brighid was the honoured guest, and a small bed laid for her by the fire.

the ash of the fire would be raked
disturbance of the ash would be a
there. Often a white strip of fabric
the Goddess walked the land she
with healing properties. In the
and kept someplace safe for use

The Cailleach is the Old Woman of
out to collect wood for her hearthfire
wants the winter to last a good
weather on Imbolc is bright and
firewood. However, if the weather
Cailleach has slept in and winter is



Custom has it that before retiring
smooth so that in the morning a
sure sign that the Goddess was
was hung outside on Imbolc eve. As
would touch the cloth and bless it
morning, the cloth was collected
when needed.

Winter and at Imbolc she ventures
for the coming cold months. If she
while longer she will make sure the
sunny, so she can gather plenty of
on Imbolc is bad, it means that the
almost over.

The story of the Cailleach sounds a lot like a custom we have here in Canada – Groundhog Day!

In Canada, we are not so close to spring as they are in the Celtic lands. It is still too early for us to see the crocuses or snowdrops popping up. But we do have uniquely Canadian signs at Imbolc. There is a visibly noticeable change to the amount of sunlight we are seeing on a daily basis and it is a time that the maple syrup sap flows.

We celebrate Imbolc with family and friends in our homes with joy at the return of warmth and the increasing power of the sun. We bring the purification aspect into play by cleansing our homes... a getting ready for spring. It is a great time to look towards the future with divination with all our hopes and dreams in mind and Imbolc gives us a season to watch nature soften, sharing omens of what is to come.

So, this Imbolc, celebrate and open yourself up to all possibilities. Cleanse away the old and look to what you will plant in the spring. And don't forget to add a little of our good Canadian maple syrup into the feast food you prepare.

Happy Imbolc!

~Xylia

MAGICAL HERBCRAFT

WITH GLENYS

Herbed Candles for Imbolc

As the wheel turns to another Sabbat, we find ourselves enjoying the lengthening daylight and there is anticipation of the end of the cold weather. Of course, the official beginning of Spring is still some six weeks away, and the warmer weather is a few weeks further than that. However, I notice the shift in light around Imbolc, Candlemas or (St.) Brigid's Day

Spring is around the corner. With it, the sense of relief in having survived the winter and renewed hope for life and the future. Candles have played an essential part of the season leading to Imbolc. It is a time to discard the old candles and bring in fresh new ones to celebrate the lengthening days. It is also quite common to melt the old candles to recover leftover wax to make new lights and new household magic.

It is relatively easy to make herbed candles for Imbolc or any sabbat. There are three main ways to create your herbed candles.

My preferred method is to make candles using melted wax (paraffin, soy, beeswax) poured into molds. This method takes a little more skill and material. With this method, you could utilize the wax from leftover candles. Make sure you melt candles with like shades/colours together to avoid a muddy colour. Molds are as simple as a wax milk carton, or a trip to your local craft store. Simply stir your herbs into your melted wax either just before you pour the wax into your molds or once they are filled you can sprinkle herbs on the top of the hot wax.

The second method is to apply the herbs to the outside of an existing candle. Have your herbs ready to apply, crushed or whole. You can use either pillar or taper candles for this. There are several methods for doing this.

1. One way is to warm the outside of the candle gently. You want the candle slightly warm to the touch and sticky. However, you do not want the wax runny. Roll the candle in the herbs.
2. Another method is to apply a thin layer of crafters glue to the outside of the candle. Once again, roll the candle in the selected herbs. You can either coat the whole candle or create patterns with the glue and coat them.
3. Finally, you can dip a pillar or taper in melted wax in which you have stirred in your selected herbs.



The third method is the easiest and requires the least amount of materials. For this, you need a beeswax sheet, your wick and your herbs. You can create two candles using the beeswax sheet. Cut the sheet diagonally in half. The wick should be

slightly longer than the long side of the sheet. Lay the wick about half a centimetre from the side and sprinkle the herbs on the sheet. Roll the beeswax sheet away from you, starting at the long edge towards the short.

There are many herbs associated with Imbolc that you can use either alone or in combination for your candles. One of them is Heather; you can see Imbolc 2021 issue for its properties.

Other herbs you can consider from local providers, or with Spring around the corner - grow our own magical herb garden. The possibilities!

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Jaye Marsh, flute



Supporting pagan arts, music and knowledge

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DREAMING THE GODDESS

An Anthology

Edited by Karen Dales

The Realm of the Goddess is vast. From
mythology to legend to modern
retellings, between these pages, you
will experience Her Mysteries in original
stories destined to become new
mythology.

Experience the Goddess in Her many
guises, from Egypt to Nigeria, from
Europe to the UK, from the Middle East
to North America.

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HAMILTON TEMPLE LEGACY LIBRARY



*Learning through
lending and legacies.*

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

Bellas' Book Nook



The Wheel, A Witch's Path Back to the Ancient Self

by Jennifer Lane.

ISBN: 978-1912836925

When I read a review of this book, I thought it was worth a second look. Well, ... got to the book store late, but found the book right away. Got side tracked by two people looking for something good on spell craft that wasn't, as they put it, "childish." The bookstore flashed the lights (no, not a power outage — they were ready to close!) so I rushed and ended up buying 'The Wheel, A Witch's Path Back to the Ancient Self' by Jennifer Lane.

My first stab at it, I was skimming and read passages on the significance of the moon within Paganism and Witchcraft and took it at face value. Once I actually sat down and started to read the book (with a nice cuppa tea...) to my horror, I discovered it was more about her personal experiences throughout England and Manchester, rather than an historical 101 on how to celebrate the various Sabbats. UGH! I bought a Clunker, I thought!

Undaunted, I kept reading. Then it hit me, I realized that she, like many of us, put the mundane world of work, and errands, the deadlines, and people who drain us, and what society expects of us, ahead of what is important. She explained that we have lost our connection with the beautiful world of Gaia, of Mother Earth, of the Gods. It's funny but sad, how the craziness and turmoil of world around us, of not being able to turn off the devices, and gadgets, has blinded us to the peace and the calm that Nature has to offer us.

The chapter on Imbolc contains a history of Imbolc/Candlemas and her personal opinions of the Pendle Hill Witch trials and the horrific outcome. Laced with glimpses of the author's childhood experiences traveling through the area while bird-watching, and later on, journeys with her sister, she adds a sympathetic human element to a dire event. Yet, it is the story of an Imbolc tea light, and how the author connected with Brigid, that sticks in my mind.

"...This little flame holds the renewed hope of spring. It's barely anything at all, a minute firefly reflected off the cutlery and plates, but when in darkness, we always look to the light. She is my small spark of Imbolc fire."

The rest of the book focuses on the remaining Sabbats, with Jennifer's anecdotes connecting the dots between what's going on in nature, especially with birds, and how we can connect with that time of year. Each chapter also links the Sabbat with the various Gods and Goddess, that hold a special place in the author's heart.

I actually enjoyed reading about Jennifer's personal experiences within the world of paganism and witchcraft. What surprised me? The suggestions for further reading, and yes, I've read and enjoyed all of the books recommended, especially Glennie Kindred's 'Walking with Trees.'

In the meantime, stay safe, and stay healthy.
Happy Reading,

Bella



STONES WITH SORCHA

Legend has it that Bacchus once pursued a nymph named Amethyst, who wished to escape his advances. Amethyst asked Diana for help, who then transformed her into a clear crystal. When Bacchus saw what she had done, in anger he threw wine upon the crystal, giving it its purple colour. Greeks and Romans used it for protection against overindulgence in food and drink, particularly intoxicification.

AMETHYST

Although found throughout the world; Ontario, Canada has one of its own amethyst mines. If you want to harvest your own you can enjoy guided and self-guided tours collecting your own stones or explore the onsite store. The Amethyst Mine Panorama is one of the must-see destinations in Northwestern Ontario.

- **Element:** Water
- **Energy:** Receptive
- **Planet:** Jupiter & Neptune
- **Chakra:** Third Eye & Crown
- **Sabbat:** Imbolc
- **Zodiac:** Aquarius, Capricorn, Pisces, Sagittarius, Virgo
- **Tarot:** Temperance, Wheel of Fortune



Magical Properties: Dream Work, Overcoming Addictions, Healing, Peace, Love, Courage, Protection, Connection to the Divine, Balancing Mind/Body/Spirit

Magical Uses: Placed under a pillow for peaceful sleep, healing, and prophetic dreams. Hold it in non-dominant hand for soothing and de-stressing effect. It aids in travel as a protection amulet. Used during all psychic work and divination. It's a wonderful talisman for raising hopes and lifting the spirit. Amethyst is a good stone for cleansing your chakras.

Healing Uses: Strengthens the immune system and supports oxygenation in the blood. To relieve a headache, rub an amethyst crystal on your forehead in a slow circular motion. Help cure your insomnia and bring pleasant dreams by placing an amethyst under your pillow. Amethyst can be incorporated into treatments for drug and alcohol addictions.

Why use Amethyst with Imbolc?

Using or wearing amethyst at this time helps us in our transition into Spring; purging our household during cleaning, helps us create new goals, removing old or obsolete ideas and items that no longer serve us. Amethyst cleanses and purifies you and your home. It bestows calmness, and supports us in decision making, bringing common sense and focus. to new beginnings. It helps prepare us for the upcoming change of the season, by allowing us to put our best self forward.



LOCAL RESOURCES

Looking for ritual or metaphysical supplies for your Craft? Check out our local favourites and support the stores in our communities.

HAMILTON

Obskurah Bazaar

Candles, Tarot & Oracle decks, magical curios, ritual supplies, spiritual self-care items, herbs, books, incense and occult inspired accessories are available online or at our retail shop in Hamilton, Ontario. Our goal is to provide ethically sourced, sustainably made, fair trade and ecofriendly products that support fair wages and working conditions for the makers and honor their traditions.

Treasures for the Soul

We offer a variety of New Age, Self Help and Metaphysical Products and Services to aid in your journey of Spiritual Development. You can find many products ranging from spell kits and ritual supplies to herbs, oils, candles, divination tools, magical items, home decor, books and much more

TORONTO

The Occult Shop

Your one stop shop for quality occult, Pagan, Santeria and Wiccan spiritual supplies & gifts.

Specializing in custom incense sticks and cones, herbal blends, bath salts and over 2,000 magical oil blends. All made in house. We also carry a variety of books, candles, herbs & roots, jewellery and much more.

Madame Phoenix Esoterica

Madame Phoenix produces hand made, top quality spiritual and occult supplies using only the highest quality, all natural ingredients from beginning to end.

WINDSOR

The Hag Shack

Hag - a woman considered to be knowledgeable in matters such as herbal healing, magic charms, or other traditional lore.

The Hag Shack provides an inclusive and accepting environment for those of alternate faiths looking for gifts, tools, personal adornment, education, or community.

Too far to visit the brick and mortar? Shop online!





To our beloved community,

This is a period of great upheaval for The Occult Shop, with an unexpected move and many delays, such as moving delays putting us a month behind schedule and flooding just prior to our move, our elaborate plans for our transition got greatly disrupted.

We are still excited to re-open as quickly as we can and to continue business as usual, however, due to unforeseen difficulties during the moving process, we now have chosen to call on the kind hearts of our community.

The shop is now under new ownership, but since 1979, The Occult Shop has been a pillar in Toronto's Pagan community. Built and founded by Tamarra & Richard James, The Occult Shop is a traditional one-stop shop for many different individuals, religions and practices. We here at the shop take great pride in providing specialized services, quality custom products, tarot readings and facilitating magical and educational experiences. Those are just some of the everyday things we have been grateful to be able to offer to our community for over 42 years.

Whether you're one of our beloved regulars, part of the community, or simply stopping in because your curiosity was piqued at the window, we have loved being here to welcome you, our diverse body of clients from all walks of life. We hear your stories, hopes, and aspirations while providing a comforting and sacred space to share and work together on how to reach those goals through decades of traditional wisdom. We hope to be here for many more generations to come in order to grow and educate the public, and right now, we could use help from those in our community who support our store.

Unforeseen circumstances have left the shop with depleted stock, necessary revitalizations, and other delays that have prevented us from reopening thus far. Your help and donations will provide much-needed support for our family of staff and our little business. Donations will be put toward providing stock due to flood damage and replacing the aged and damaged countertops that were unsalvageable. In addition, uplifting our relationships with other small businesses by being able to purchase locally would truly be instrumental in keeping our doors open and our products high-quality.

We thank you for your continued support over the years, and we hope to be able to welcome you all back at our grand reopening with warm hearts and full shelves. Please consider donating in order to help a small local business continue thriving through various adversities. Your help will not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

Many blessings,

The Occult Shop & Staff



Community Support

Here at Sword & Chalice we want to support those trusted sources who bring us the best herbs, candles, books and other supplies. The Occult Shop in Toronto has had a long history of supporting the Wiccan Church of Canada and its guests, and we would like to give a shout out to the efforts of its new owner to keep the tradition alive while creating a new chapter to support the pagan community of Toronto

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

Community Happenings

WCC Meet & Greet

Meet the Wiccan Church of Canada community every Wednesday evening @ 7 pm via Zoom. Open to the public across Canada, as our members across the country sign on for our online Community Get Together. A time to meet new friends, see the faces you have been missing. Whether the conversation is around sharing how you honour your Gods, your magics, or just to soak up the support of community during a tough time, it is a great get together. Come on out and join in the fun!

Email LPH.WCC@GMAIL.COM FOR THE LINK

Toronto Pagan Pub Moot

"It is an open and friendly social event that meets in person every Third Calendar Monday of every month and virtually every Fourth Calendar Monday of every month. It is open to Pagans, Wiccans, Witches, Druids, Asatru, etc of ALL ages and those who are new and would like to learn more, to those who have been walking the path for decades."

TPPM dates 2022



The past year has been hard on public gatherings of any kind, but coming together for ritual has been especially hard. This year's Winter Solstice found Hamilton Temple celebrating outdoors, welcoming, and blessing a traditional (potted) Yule Tree. Our priestess, Jill brought us together for an evening of snow blanketed ritual, one of meaning and the magic of community - a promise of blessings and bounty under the grace of Sunna. We called and sang, offered our gifts, and raised our glasses – together, celebrating the Sun on a cold dark night.

When we gather, magic happens. The kind that matters and affects us deeply and significantly as a community. This is the case with Hamilton Temple, as year after

year they gather resources and supports for those in need. Celebrating 11 years of community Outreach, 2021 was no different as the community supported their Brown Bag Project through financial contributions as well as non-perishable foods that could be shared with our homeless population. Through donations the Temple was able to purchase 50 hat, glove, and sock kits, scarves, a bag of toiletries, along with enough food to provide 2 meals per bag. Delivery went out on Dec 24 through-out downtown Hamilton, and offered 50 of our men and women of our greater community the knowledge that someone out here wishes them well.



For more details and photos of Hamilton's outreach history, visit the Temple FB group and check out their media section.



WOLFS' SABBAT TABLE

To ensure abundance in the coming spring, candles were lit to strengthen the growing season, and bread, cakes, custard pies, cheeses and drink made with magical ingredients associated with the sun (such as egg yolk, butter, cream and honey) were served for a spring feast.

This simple recipe is easy to tweak with a sprinkling of sacred herbs of the season.

BUTTER CAKE

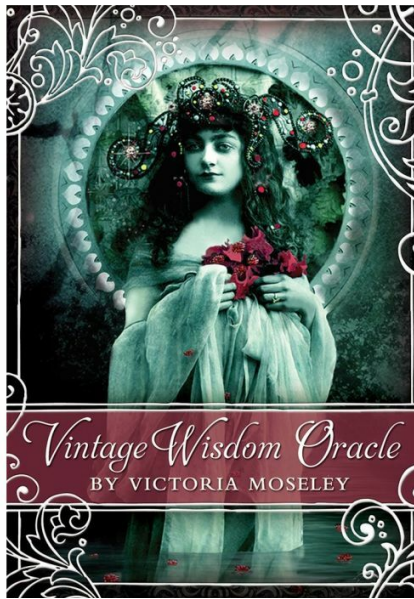
INGREDIENTS

- 1 box poundcake mix
- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 eggs
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 16 ounces powdered sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons vanilla

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350.
- Combine cake mix, melted butter and 2 eggs with a fork till moist.
- Pat the mixture in the bottom of a 9x13-inch pan and slightly up the sides for crust.
- In a separate bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar together for 3 minutes with an electric mixer on high.
- Turn to low and add remaining eggs and vanilla.
- Mix well.
- Pour over crust and bake 35 to 40 minutes.
- Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

ON DECK with Trelew



When I opened the **Vintage Wisdom Oracle** box, the first thing I noticed was how feminine and mysterious these cards appeared. A deck full of Goddesses, divas and bygone muses.

The box these cards come in is sturdy and quite attractive. The set is a deck consisting of 52 cards and an 80-page guidebook. Victoria Mosley created this deck based on several vintage postcards and art from historic painters like John Waterhouse and Vincent van Gogh. Moseley added exotic butterfly wings, flowers and other symbolic adornments. This creates imagery that is rich in detail with an ethereal feel, which adds a distinct Victorian feel to the deck. The only downside I saw was borders. I'm not a fan of borders on decks, so that comes down to personal tastes.

As always, when I do a review, I have been using the deck for a couple weeks and the thing that really strikes me is how down to earth and user friendly it is. Now I have a lot of decks that are "spiritual" and a bit too new age – meaning that they are nice to look at, but not much substance. However, with this deck the cards are easy to understand, and they make sense with everyday life. So far, I haven't had that annoying feeling where you ask a question, pull a card and think "well, *what the hell is that supposed to mean?!*" This deck just makes sense. A novice reader can grow intuitively with this deck...even without the guidebook to help you. When reading with this deck, I find that the images are very accessible – always inviting you to tap into, and explore your intuition. This deck inspires many "breakthrough" readings, where I suddenly figure something out or see something in a new way.

This deck is very feminine, in a way that may encourage personal work when connecting to the Goddess. The text and deck are beautiful, straightforward and clear. Unfortunately, I consider it a small drawback that it uses existing images instead of working from an idea and then creating art. It fortunately does not happen a lot with his deck, but there are a few cards where I am lost in translation. For instance, both the Adventure and Nature cards make you want to stretch a bit to get to its intended meaning.

If you want a deck that helps you develop or gives your intuition a work out, then this is one to consider. A novice reader will find this deck easy to use and admire. Aside from readings, I can see this deck being a good tool for meditative Goddess work.

I picked this deck up from a local Hamilton vendor, Soul Synergy (www.soulsynergy.ca). Check them out and support a local Craft business.



DAGAN PUZZLER



Click on the puzzles to play our online challenges

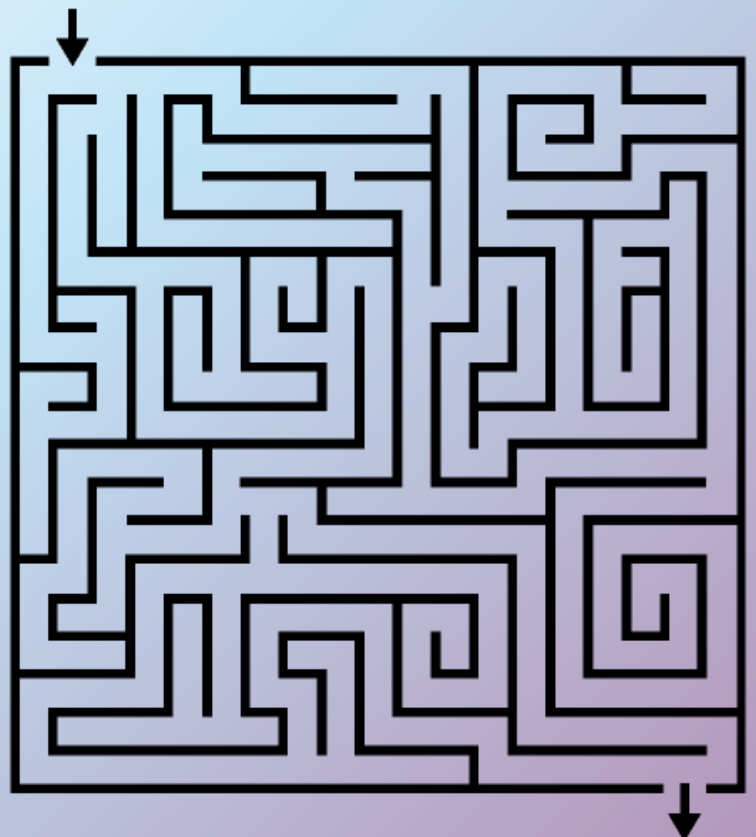


I am an 8 Letter Word.
I am kept Secret from Everyone.
My 2nd, 3rd, 4th Letter Spell an Animal.
My 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th Letter is a
Weapon.
My 1st, 2nd, 8th Letter is used for
writing an Exam.
My 3rd, 4th Letters are the Same.

Who am I?

Which famous Witch had a
pet crow named Mr.
Hotfoot Jackson?

- A. Sybil Leek
- B. Rosaleen Norton
- C. Doreen Valiente
- D. Rae Bone



FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Looking to find out whats going on in your local temple? Perhaps you have questions regarding classes and rituals. Maybe you're a new seeker, or a solitaire looking for company or to share favourite seasonal fare; all are welcome. Our online communities are rich with diverse experience, skills and pagan knowledge. WCC Facebook groups strive to be safe spaces to discuss the Wiccan Craft and explore ideas of paganism in general without politics or proselytizing. Come see what we get up to between the sabbats!



Wiccan Church
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Hamilton



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Windsor

