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Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada

Vol. 6 | #1

Samhain



Winter Solstice Oct 31 – Dec 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.

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.



Xylia's Wheel of the Year



As the Earth, our Mother, gives up the last of her bounty, she prepares for her great sleep.

With the turning of the wheel, we can easily see the signs in nature as the changes happen around us. Less daylight - better to rest by; a stronger, cooler wind, making the leaves fall from their branches; and farmers markets have all but closed up telling us that the time of the final harvest is at hand. All that is left of the growing season are the root vegetables and pumpkins that mirror the colour of the dying leaves.

Samhain. They say that the veil is thinnest now between the worlds of the living and the worlds of the dead. A time when those who have gone from this realm may set foot upon the land of the living for one last time. It becomes a space that is outside of time where we mingle with our loved ones and remember. You can feel it thinning - you can feel them walking past you bringing a tingling on the skin or a gentle breeze caressing your cheek. Know they are with you.

We often talk of our Ancestors and remember our parents, grandparents or great- grandparents – those of our blood and bone. But there is more to the word Ancestor. It is those who have made an impact on our lives – our extended family, friends, and Craft Elders who paved a way for us to walk with pride, in the open, sharing our faith. Where would we be without their bravery to come into the light of society? Where would we be without the sharing of their knowledge? Remember to honour those who laid the foundations of our Pagan paths.

It is a time of endings, allowing a look back and reflect. Did you complete the tasks you set for yourself in the spring? Did you accomplish your goals? What have you learned? But with endings, also come new beginnings, and a chance to look forward to what may be, what could be. Potential and hope. Reflection, rest and preparation for what is to come. There is so much that this season gives to us so take advantage of it, revel in it.

- Decorate your home with the colours of the season, bringing the outside in.
- Prepare a meal for you and your loved ones, both the living and the dead, to share. Talk to them while working in the kitchen, listen for their voices as your mind floods with memories. Set a place at the table for them.
- Create a small space to honour your ancestors, both recent and distant. Place pictures or objects that remind you of them. Remember your ancestors over the centuries have made you who you are? They are your blood and your bones. Celebrate them with joy and raise a glass!
- Read a book written by one of the early Craft Elders that has passed who shared their knowledge. Or read aloud a piece of poetry or ritual writing, like The Charge of the Goddess. Think of what life would be like now if they had not shared their awareness of the Gods and raise a glass to them in thanks.
- Meditate on where you have come from, what you have done. Follow it up with divination to gain insight on where you are going. Ask your ancestors to help you see what the future holds in store for you.
- And take time to give thanks to the Gods. for giving you your loved ones, for the bounty of the earth and for the time to rest and reflect.

And remember we have so much to be thankful for...have fun in your celebrations - eat the treats!

Sorcha's Smokey Quartz

Smoky quartz is a brownish gray, translucent variety of quartz that ranges in clarity from almost complete transparency to an almost-opaque brownish-gray or black crystal.

Known as the 'Stone of Power', smoky quartz is the national stone of Scotland. There it is called 'Cairngorm', which was named after the Cairngorm Mountains. A crystal sphere of smoky quartz tops the Scepter of Power in the Honours of Scotland. The largest smoky quartz specimen is found in Braemar Castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, the stone weighing in at an impressive 52 lbs. (23.6 kgs). Smoky quartz was popular during the Victorian era in Britain, and in the 19th century, was very popular to be fashioned into 'mourning' jewelry. The pieces would be worn by those who had suffered a loss, often worn for a period of 1-2 years. Queen Victoria began this trend of wearing mourning jewelry after the death of her husband Prince Albert.

Element: Earth and Fire

Energy: Receptive

Planet: Saturn

Chakra: Crown and Root

Zodiac: Capricorn and Libra

Tarot: The Magician

Sabbat: Samhain

Magical Properties

Abundance, Balance, Calm, Consciousness, Creativity, Divination, Dream Work, Emotions, Energy, Grounding, Mood Improvement, Negativity, Obstacles, Protection, Psychic Ability, Stimulation, Transformation, Truth, Unity, Vitality, Wisdom

Magical Uses

Worn to ground prior to magical workings, it's what sends energy back into the physical plane where results can manifest. Wearing or carrying during times of important decisions, it aids in helping one appropriately discriminate 'the good, the bad & the ugly', helping one cut away the 'dead wood' and see what is useful to them at that point in time.

It's very efficient and useful for cleansing people and spaces, thus it needs to be cleansed very often to keep it in good working order. In magic, use it in spell-work associated with nature, animals, stability, security, important decisions, invisibility, divination, uncovering secrets, binding, banishing and rebirth.

Healing Uses

When worn or carried, it is excellent after illness, or depression, for gentle restoration of energy and optimism. It will melt energy blocks in limbs, the adrenals, pancreas, and kidneys. It reduces anxiety, relieves psychological sexual blocks and can help with insomnia.

We can use smoky quartz at this time of year to aid us in preparing for the long winter months to come, helping us focus our energies on aiming for our dreams, energetically preparing ourselves for the dark of winter, and how we want to emerge after the cold months. It helps us let go and release just as Mother Earth herself is letting go all around us. It helps us seek out and enjoy comfort and balance, and aids us in embracing the inner knowledge that can only be found in the darkness.



Bellas' Book Nook



The air is crisp, and the leaves are showing off their brilliant colours. Time to close things up and prepare for winter's return. The veil is thinning, and the ancestors may be restless. Some Goddess are slowly waking, and others are preparing for a peaceful rest. As Persephone returns to the Underworld to become Queen, her mother, Demeter, transforms in her own way.

Demeter, is a new book by Robin Corak, which is part of the Pagan Portals series by Moon Books, 102 pages, , with a US price of \$12.95.

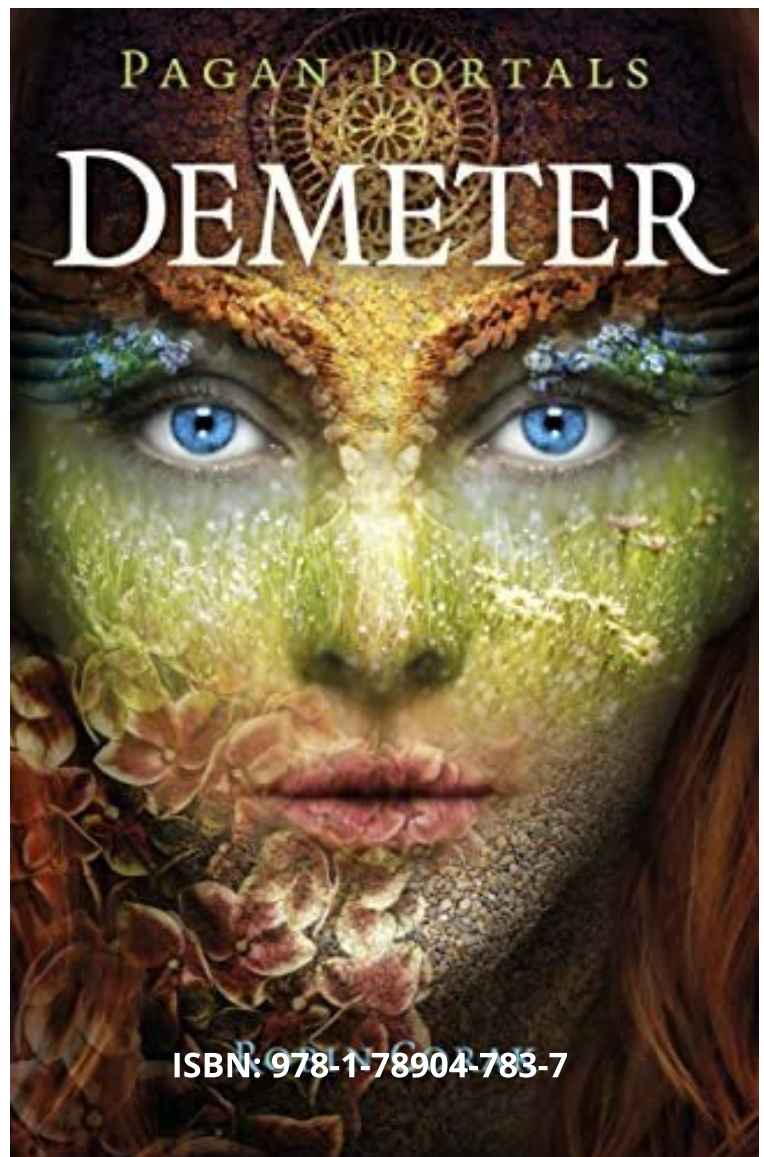
Originally, when I started reading, I thought it was a rehash of the myth of Demeter and Persephone, which is discussed in the first chapter. But unlike most book, how many pose questions to the reader to contemplate and journal? Turns out, at the end of each chapter, there are questions to ponder. The remaining chapters deal with the various titles, the activities of her followers, and how to build a relationship with the Goddess.

What surprised me, was how the author delves deep into separation, loss, and the grieving process, but it is also about healing process. However, I found the meditation on grief, a bit hard to digest. This book may be difficult for those who are, or have experienced loss or separation to read. The book has made me realize that I still haven't come to terms with the deaths of a few very dear people. I chose this book because I thought it was a gloss overview of this subject and considering we are at the threshold to the season of endings (in one form or another, not just death,) I got more than I bargained for.

This book, is peppered with rituals, recipes, introspective work, meditations, and ways to connect with this amazing Goddess. As always, check out the bibliography for further reading!

So, until next time, stay safe, stay healthy!


Happy Reading.



An old fashioned baked good associated with Samhain, barmbrack is a recipe with deep Celtic roots. Traditionally this yeast bread is sweet and studded with dried fruits like raisins and fresh citrus zest. In the same vein as a King Cake, barmbrack can be baked with trinkets inside (make sure they're thoroughly washed and wrapped parchment paper) to act as a form of fortune telling. Every item has its own meaning and can include things like rings (marriage), a coin (wealth), a piece of cloth (hard times), and more.

Traditional Irish Barmbrack Bread

Ingredients



- 6oz/175g raisins
- 6oz/175g sultanas
- 4oz/100g currents
- 2oz/50g mixed candied peel
- 1 cup strong black tea
- 3 tbsp Irish Whiskey (optional)
- 1lb/450g plain flour
- ¼oz/7g dried yeast
- 1 cup/250ml milk (lukewarm)
- 1 level tspn ground cinnamon
- 1 level tspn ground nutmeg
- 3oz/75g softened butter
- 3oz/75g castor sugar
- 1 egg – beaten

On the previous evening, place the raisins, sultanas, currents, mixed candied peel, the strong black tea and, if you wish, the Whiskey, which will give a fuller flavour, into a bowl and leave to soak overnight.

When you are ready to make the brack, grease a 9inch/23cm round cake tin.

Sift the flour into a 'warm' bowl. Then stir in the yeast, cinnamon, nutmeg and sugar. Make a well and pour the lukewarm milk into it. Make sure the milk is not too hot, otherwise it will kill the yeast. Add the beaten egg and mix into a consistent dough. Cover the bowl and leave in a warm place for at least an hour for the mixture to rise to about twice its size.

Place the dough on a lightly floured surface and gradually work in the butter followed by the soaked fruit. Now is a good time to add any trinkets to it such as a ring, making sure they are wrapped in greaseproof paper and evenly distributed in the dough.

Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C.

Leave the dough for a further 20 minutes to continue rising.

Place the dough into the baking tin and bake for 50 minutes or until golden brown.

If you wish to glaze it then mix 1 tbsp sugar with 3 tbsp of hot water and brush this over the top of the brack and bake for a further few minutes.

Remove it from the tin onto a rack and allow to cool.

Herb-craft with Glenys

The smell of Oakmoss reminds me of a walk in the woods in autumn. It's one of my favourite scents and has a powerful masculine undertone.

The name can be confusing as Oakmoss is not a moss at all. Oakmoss is a lichen, a symbiotic composite organism comprised of algae and fungus. The fungus uses its roots to obtain water and nutrients; the algae provide photosynthesis to produce food. It is in the Order of Lecanorales and the family of Parmeliaceae.

Oakmoss originates in temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. Oakmoss is very difficult to cultivate but grows naturally in the wild. It also prefers clean, uncontaminated environs and is a slow grower. Because it prefers pristine areas, it is becoming scarcer to find and should be ethically sourced and harvested. As the name implies, Oakmoss often grows on the branches and trunks of oak trees but is also found on other deciduous and pine trees. The type of tree it grows on will change the undertones of its scent.



Oakmoss is pale grey-green on top and white underside. The flattened thallus lobes are reminiscent of deer antlers. Unlike other lichens, Oakmoss attaches to the trees at a single point and grows in a cluster from that point.

Although Oakmoss is edible, it is highly aromatic and is more suitable as a flavouring agent. Oakmoss is highly prized in the perfume industry and provides the base note for many expensive perfumes. Oakmoss

makes an excellent dye source producing a yellow colour when boiled in water or a lilac purple when utilizing an ammonia method of 1 part ammonia to two parts water

It is an excellent ingredient for incense in its herb form or as an oil. The oil from Oakmoss is a highly concentrated Absolute Oil extracted from the lichen using a solvent base. It is very thick and dark green. Oakmoss can also come in a resinoid form. Oakmoss can cause skin sensitivity in some people

Oakmoss has antimicrobial properties. A sister lichen to Oakmoss, Tree moss (*Pseudevernia furfuracea*) was imported from Greece along with myrrh and other ingredients and used in the Egyptian embalming process.

Magically, Oakmoss is masculine and associated with Jupiter and Saturn. It has a strong association with the Stag King. Oakmoss, like any moss, can be used in spells related to money or prosperity and luck. Because Oakmoss often takes on the essence of the trees it attaches to, one can use it in magic related to that tree. Oakmoss is helpful in magic related to death and dying. Because of its transitional nature between water and earth, Oakmoss is an excellent Herb for use at Samhain



Community Happenings

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

Wiccan Church of Canadas Wednesday 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!

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An Anthology

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retellings, between these pages, you
will experience Her Mysteries in original
stories destined to become new
mythology.

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

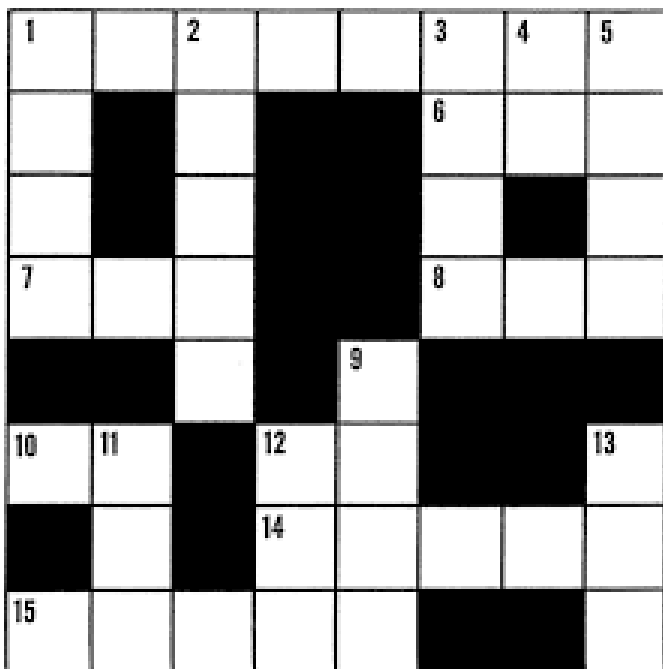
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November

comes

And November goes,
With the last red berries
And the first white snows.
With night coming early,
And dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket
And frost by the gate.
The fires burn
And the kettle sing,
And earth sinks to rest
Until next Spring.

Clyde Watson



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Halloween

by Malisha

The night is approaching and the moon is high in the sky,
Close to full, shimmering light falls down as if to spy,
Upon the earth and her children, as they gather to say goodbye.
The autumn has come and the summer has to comply,
Hereby, in reply, to the turning of the wheel we want to defy.

But tonight is a special night, The Mother calls out, what a beautiful sight.
Dressed in a long black gown, her hair wavy, and white. She is the depiction of
night.

The children come running as if in flight, to feel her love and delight.
For scary secrets are revealed, stories of grandeur and plight,
Secret rites, triggering the fight or flight, guaranteed to overexcite.

This twilight is All Hallows'Eve, the night the veil is thin between the living and
the dead.

The spirits will follow you and stay where they should not dwell or even tread.

Mother hands out bread to help shed ... "huh, they must be misled"

One child yelled out. Another said "A mask, a disguise is needed for all, this will
deceive the undead"

Mother kissed each child and said "Don't be filled with dread, instead, look ahead"

"Let's confuse the spirits even more." With their disguises complete,

It was time to head out onto the concrete paved street.

On this sacred night the goblins, ghost take a backseat and eventually retreat.

As we gather a fleet of sweets, trying desperately not to eat. Ok, maybe one little
cheat.

We greet the answer of each door we beat, with a holler of "Trick or Treat!"

LOCAL RESOURCES

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

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TORONTO

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Hail the Travelers

By Lady Iris (Kate Russell)

When a beloved family member, loving friend, close colleague or well-known community member passes we often hear the phrase 'Hail the Traveler' to bid them farewell on the transition of death.

As pagans we see death as part of the cycle of life and find there are many destinations we may journey to once we leave our physical form behind. So as we 'Hail the Traveler' we leave it up to the spirit to find its way home to some distant shore of their own intention.

Whether our family member is off to heaven, our friend journeys to Summerland, our colleague thinks life ends in death and has no specific idea of where they pass to or a community member will take ship to Valhalla...it is not for us to determine.

So we hail them on their journey as they pass from our living sight. We may honour their wishes and ensure their final plans are carried out, but the journey is for them to take alone.

At the same time, their leaving also provides opportunity for us to contemplate where we are going. For indeed, we will all face our own travel eventually.

When seventeenth-century English metaphysical poet and later clergyman John Donne(1572-1631) was ill and contemplating his own death in hisseries Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, he famously wrote the oft-quoted lines:

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Donne offers here the idea that each passing affects us all as a whole. That each of us will face our own death so the metaphorical tolling of the funeral bell is a memento mori to remind us that death waits for us all.

This year our community has lost many bright lights, pieces of our foundations shifted away from us. From sudden unexpected endings to relief from long suffering, each has taken from us and touched us in ways as unique as each of their lives were. As we remember them here in these pages may their memories be written in our hearts, their gifts echo in our minds and their portion of our lives be honoured in our souls.

May we learn and grow from their lives so we too may plant life and build anew in their absence so we may face our own mortality with grace to prepare for our own eventual journey. Hail the Travelers!

Hail the Travelers

Hail the Traveler! We commit you back from where you came — to the arms of your ancestors. May there be peace where there was anger. May there be healing where there was hurt. Go quickly to the place that your old ones called home. For those who grieve for your passing, let there be healing. For those who grieve for who you were, let there be healing. For those who grieve for what you could have been, let there be healing. Hail the Traveler. We celebrate your journey.

Quetta Garrison-Madsen

Hilary

Paul Apaulo Harris

Paul Sciberras

Kym Oldham

Tony Swinton-Lee

Lois Darlene stone

D Christopher Gillette (Devyn)

Gail Marie

Poet Lynn

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Rhonda Sussman

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Monika Uesson-Talpek

Alder Luke Moonoak,

Poppy Miller

Alex Galvacky

Kevin Garrison

Ceadar Man

Florence Follo





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!



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