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Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada



Vol. 8 | #3

Imbolg



S. Equinox

Feb 1 — Mar 21, 2025

HAMILTON ★ TORONTO ★ WINDSOR

A lit white candle in a clear glass holder, positioned on the left side of the page. The candle is lit, with a bright yellow flame. The glass holder is a simple, elegant design with a wide base and a narrow neck. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

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 Tuesday evenings 7:00-9:00 pm

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.

Everything has its season. Here in Canada, Imbolc is often marked by ice, snow, and slush, along with bitter winds; it can be difficult to find the Wheel manifesting its new turn. In fact, during this time of year, we often fail to notice the small changes hidden in the days of February as we trudge along under iron-grey skies. Winter seems endless, and our inner fire slumbers like a quiet ember, waiting for the breath of Spring to bring it blazing back to life. And yet, we know it is coming, and so we wait for Life's enthusiastic return, like listening to a distant drum. Our spirits rest in the stillness that occurs in the darkness of germination.

By the time Imbolc and the first beginnings of Spring roll around, we are physically and mentally done with Winter. However, this year we have not been locked in under the cold, dark weight of snow and ice; instead, we've been graced with unseasonably warm weather, wind, and sunshine. Where in past years, Imbolc has been greeted with the first thaw, the unmistakable drip from sun-warmed peaks, or that subtle change in color that the warming ground creates in the trees, this year requires us to pay closer attention to the barely perceptible changes that tell us life is quickening within the earth.

Depending on your path or tradition, some focus on the Celtic goddess Brigid, in her many aspects as a deity of fire and fertility. Others focus their rituals on the cycles of the season and agricultural markers. Regardless of the choice, the inherent magic of the season still flows—it's the quickening undercurrent of energy that has begun to rise and swell in the sleeping land, the energy that the human spirit has been waiting for after the long, cold dark of January. The Exalted One has been reborn, whether she is the Celtic Brigid of fire and fertility, or the Divine Feminine of the natural world; we still raise our hearts in joyous welcome and celebration.

Commonly, it is a time of purification of hearth and heart, divination, blessings of new seeds, and the creation of new beginnings. It can be a time of personal affirmation of our connection with the land and the divine, as we emerge from the dark time and our inner focus is renewed and refreshed. Keeping in mind that it is all about new beginnings, dedications, initiations, and fresh starts—it's a time of spiritual spring cleaning that precedes the physical act of flinging open a window to let the brisk, clear air lighten our hearts and be reflected in our actions with others.

In cleansing our hearts and homes, we acknowledge what came before—the way Winter and the dark half of the year have shaped us. Consider the old practice of Saining; similar to smudging, it was carried out on Imbolc and other holy days. It was primarily done to remove negative influences, energy, or spirits from places, objects, and livestock. Purification practices help us uphold our principles of living in right order, refocus and realign spiritually, and, of course, offer us a fresh start in preparation for Spring. Imbolc brings us clarity and intent through purification—it is time to let go of the old and allow the strengthening sun to revitalize us, heart and soul.



Bellas' Book Nook



Everyone has their favourite – ‘Ology’, and one of those, happens to be, Numerology. To my surprise, I was gifted a book, on the very subject.

Numerology by Huneidi Palmer, published in 2023 by Arcturus Publishing Ltd, London, England, ISBN: 978-1-3988-2886-5.

It's 160 pages complete with a section encouraging further reading.

The best way to describe Numerology is found on page 7.

“Numerology is the study of how numbers relate to your personality and your destiny.... of the relationship

between numbers and various elements of the world we live in.... Numerology is concerned with the mystical meaning of numbers by interpreting their inherent vibration or unique qualities. The interpretation is derived from a person's date of birth, or letters composing their name and can inspire significant insight into how to fulfil their life's purpose.”

Through numerology one can discover the life path, by adding together the day, month and year reduced to a single digit from 1 to 9, including Master Numbers 10, 11, 22, and 33. The author includes full examples with explanations on how to find your number.

In the section entitled, Pythagorean Name Numerology, (page 50 to 55,) among other things, you can find your - First Impression number (how people perceive you the first time around,) and your Character Number (by adding together all the consonants,) and your Expression Number which represents your strength and weaknesses.

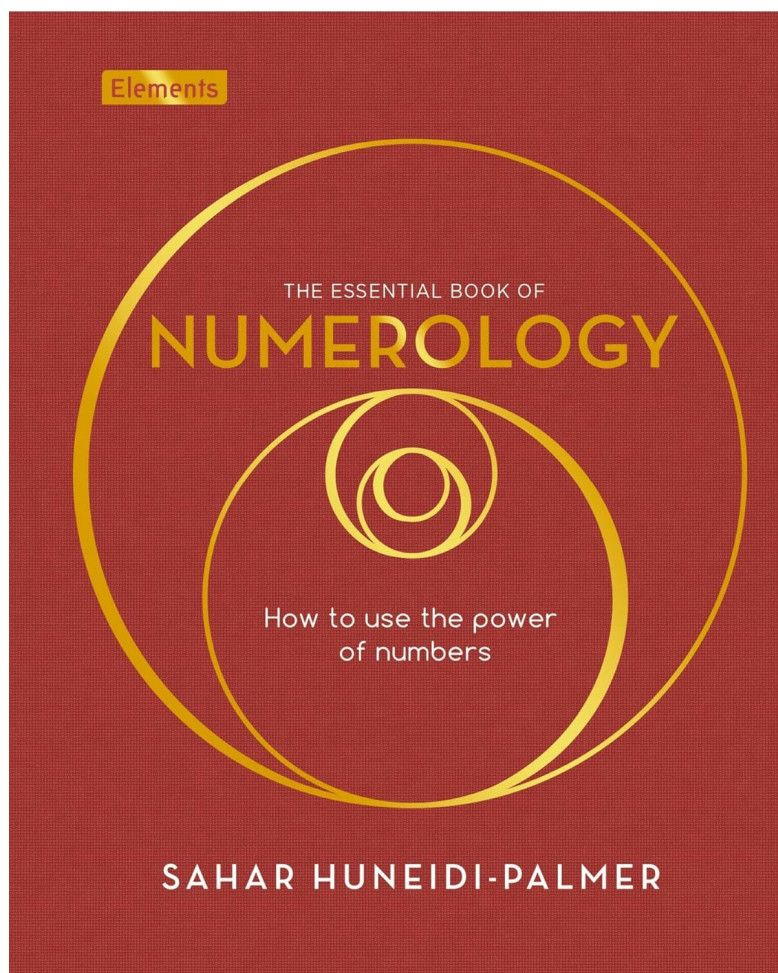
The ‘meat and potatoes,’ of this book begins in part two, and the chapter – Name Numerology Reading Example. This section is written in a way that makes all the calculations easy to comprehend. The Kabbalah Numerology, (page 87 -105,) is explained in a manner that allows those unfamiliar with the Tree of Life, insight into the Kabbalah, and may lead to a life long study of the Kabbalah.

As an introduction to Numerology, this book is well worth reading and possibly, (if curious enough,) having as part of your collect. There are a number of other books you may consider that are not part of the suggested further reading. I would include, Norman Shine's – Numerology -ISBN: 978-1-85906-249-4; and, David A. Phillips, Ph.D. – The Complete Book of Numerology- Discovering the Inner Self – ISBN: 978-1-4019-0727-3.

With that...May your Imbolc celebration be joyous, as the wheel slowly but surely turns, and we get closer to Spring! In the meantime, stay happy and healthy!

Happy Reading!

Bella



STONES WITH SORCHA

ELENITE

Selenite is a beautiful and versatile variety of gypsum, being composed of hydrous calcium sulfate. Selenite is most often transparent, translucent, and white in colour, yet may be opaque or have slight colours of yellow, orange, brown, and green if there is a presence of other minerals such as iron and, manganese. It is commonly found in deposits where it has formed through the evaporation of ancient saltwater bodies.

Selenite is named after the Greek Goddess Selene, the Goddess of marriage, married women and, mothers, the mistress of enchantment and ritual. In Medieval times, it was said that Selenite contained an image of the moon and it was believed to grow and shrink with the phases. The early Romans and Greeks used thin sheets of Selenite for windowpanes as it allowed light to filter through, yet still maintained privacy.

With it being such a soft stone, Selenite should be handled with great care to avoid scratching or damaging its delicate structure. It is recommended to store Selenite in a soft cloth or lined container to prevent breakage or damage. Selenite is water soluble and can dissolve when exposed to moisture or submersed in water, thus care must be taken when cleansing it, only bathing it in sound, moonlight, incense, and other cleansing crystals to clear it of impurities. Avoid leaving Selenite for prolonged periods in direct sunlight as it can cause it to become brittle over time.

Element:Water

Energy:Receptive

Planet:Moon

Chakra:Crown & Third Eye

Zodiac:Taurus & Cancer

Tarot:The High Priestess & The Moon

Sabbat:Imbolc

Magical Properties

Adaptability, Balance, Calm, Clarity, Communication, Decisions, Emotions, Energy, Harmony, Higher Consciousness, Inspiration, Moon Magic, Motivation, Nurture, Partnerships, Peace, Power, Protection, Purity, Rebirth, Reconciliation, Renewal, Respect, Sexuality, Spiritual Growth, Tranquility, Transformation, Visions, Warding, Wisdom

Magical Uses

Place pieces of Selenite around your home or work space to open lines of peaceful communication, inviting a calm environment, enabling you to see through lies and deception. Sleep with a piece of Selenite beneath your pillow to enhance prophetic dreams and link yourself to the wise ancestors, spirit guides, and deceased loved one who will provide insight and inspiration into your daily life. Using it this way will also promote recollection of dreams and past lives. Wear Selenite to protect your aura, and prevent negative outside energies from influencing your mind. You can use Selenite to decrease shyness and reserve in your professional life, which will aid in business and profit growth. It encourages harmonious partnerships and brings forth insight and good judgement during times of disagreements and negotiations.

Healing Uses

Selenite is beneficial in healing the cells of our body, our fluid and lymphatic system. It is a stone of fertility, pregnancy, and motherhood, lending protection to the pregnant mother and unborn child. Selenite has been used in helping align the spinal column and bone structure. It removes energy blockages in our body, allowing the Kundalini to flow freely. It is widely used during meditation for spiritual attunement and to calm one's mind, and Reiki masters will often use it during their sessions.

We can use Selenite at this time of Imbolc to help us see how we can resolve any current or past life issues that are holding us back. Use it to clean out the cobwebs in your aura, erasing all that unwanted, negative energy that has stored and attached itself to you during the doldrums of the winter months, allowing you to feel that spark of life re-enter your body. It is a time of rebirth and renewal, so get your Selenite working for you so you can again feel that blessed 'joie de vivre'!

Angelica

Herb Lore with Glenys



As the days lengthen, thoughts turn to the coming Spring, and we look forward to the midwinter celebration of Imbolc. It is a celebration associated with the goddess Brigid whose triple aspects are inspiration (poetry), healing and smithcraft. She is a protector as well as a healer.

One of the herbs associated with Imbolc is Angelica (*Angelica archangelica* or *Archangelica officinalis*) It is also known as Archangel, Holy Ghost, Wild Celery, Masterwort and Norwegian angelica.

Angelica is native to temperate and subarctic regions of the Northern Hemisphere, including parts of Europe, Asia, and North America. It grows wild in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland. It thrives in damp environments such as riverbanks and woodlands.

Angelica is a biennial herb from the Apiaceae

or Umbellifers (Umbelliferae) family. It is the same family as carrots and dill etc. It can grow up to 2.5 meters (8 feet) tall. The plant features large, bipinnate leaves and greenish-white flowers arranged in large, globular umbels. The roots are thick, fleshy, and often purplish in colour.

Many cultures have used angelica in traditional medicine for centuries. It is known for its digestive benefits, helping to alleviate issues like indigestion and bloating. The herb also has antimicrobial properties, making it useful for treating infections. Additionally, it is used to support respiratory health and reduce anxiety.

In the kitchen, angelica is prized for its unique flavor. The stems can be candied and used as a decorative element in desserts. Several liqueurs are flavored with roots and seeds of angelica such as Chartreuse, Frangelico, Benedictine, Vermouth and Dubonnet. Adding Angelica can to soups, stews, and salads will provide an aromatic touch. Angelica became immensely popular in 12th century Scandinavia and is still used today, especially by the Indigenous Sami culture. Like many plants in the Apiaceae family, the edible plants are often similar to poisonous ones. Therefore, you must be sure that you have identified the plant correctly before using it.

Angelica is considered masculine and associated with the Sun and the element of fire. It is associated with the Goddess Venus and the Archangel Michael. Angelica is revered in magical practices for its protective and purifying qualities. It is believed to ward off negative energy and evil spirits. The herb is often used in rituals to create a sacred space, enhance spiritual awareness, and attract positive energy. It is also associated with healing and is used in magic pertaining to health and well-being. Because of its association with fire and its purifying and protective aspects, angelica is an ideal herb to add to your Imbolc celebration. Use it in your feast food, incense or in an arrangement on your altar.

A close-up photograph of several purple crocus flowers with green stems and leaves, some in full bloom and some as buds. The background is a soft-focus landscape with more flowers and greenery.

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 2024

A close-up photograph of a small green seedling with two leaves growing out of dark, moist soil. The soil is rich and textured, with some small rocks and organic matter visible.

WHATEVER YOU CAN DO,
OR DREAM YOU CAN DO, BEGIN IT.
BOLDNESS HAS GENIUS, POWER, AND MAGIC IN IT!

THE SABBAT TABLE

Boxty is a traditional Irish potato pancake that contains a mixture of mashed and grated potatoes, resulting in a unique texture that's part pancake, part hash brown..

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



INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds (3 to 4 large) Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled
- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 1 1/4 teaspoons fine salt, plus more for seasoning the potatoes before cooking
- 1 large egg
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 to 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

DIRECTIONS

1. Peel and chop half of the potatoes into medium sized pot.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and simmer uncovered until fork tender, about 8 minutes.
3. When the boiled potatoes are ready, drain them, return them to the pot, add 1/4 cup of the milk, and mash until the potatoes are smooth.
4. Meanwhile, grate the remaining potatoes. Toss with 1/4 teaspoon of the salt and place in a fine mesh strainer set over a medium bowl. Press excess liquid out of potatoes. Add the grated potatoes to the mashed potatoes .
5. Place the egg, 1/2 cup milk, flour, pepper, and 1 tsp. salt in a large bowl and whisk until smooth.
6. Add the potatoes and stir until evenly incorporated.
7. Heat a large nonstick frying pan or griddle over medium heat.
8. Once the pan is ready, add enough butter to lightly coat the bottom when melted.
9. Drop 1/4 cup each of the batter into the pan and spread each to about 1/4 inch thick.
10. Cook until the pancake bottoms are golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes. Flip and cook the other side until golden brown.

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

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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.

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SABBAT SCAVENGER HUNT

Brighids
Cross

white
cloth

an oat
cake

5 white
candles

a corn
dollie

3 fresh
snowdrops

a serpent

a burning
yule log

milk

a toy sheep
or lamb

spring

T	S	E	L	S	V	R	N	L	D	E	E	S	H
S	P	S	L	I	D	T	B	L	O	I	A	A	O
A	S	U	S	P	E	E	N	T	R	F	D	E	D
E	E	O	I	O	L	Y	W	P	C	R	T	A	U
S	O	H	I	R	I	H	A	Y	E	I	O	E	F
V	N	D	T	D	C	I	R	N	H	A	E	N	R
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L	W	T	O	A	T	T	B	E	S	D	A	M	P

DELICIOUS
 SUNNY
 FROSTY
 BIRDHOUSE
 SNOWDROP
 AIR
 FRESH
 EARTH
 DAMP
 ALIVE
 TINY
 WARM
 MELT
 SEED
 BLOSSOM
 NEST

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/142422/>



HAMILTON TEMPLE

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

CONTACT US

TEMPLE STAFF:

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PRIESTHOOD:

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A Symbol of Protection

Traditionally, people make the crosses in Ireland on February 1st. They then place the cross inside the house, above a door or window, to welcome the spring season and celebrate St. Brigid's feast day. People believe it protects the home from evil, fire, and hunger.

The St. Brigid's Cross was a popular gift for those with a new home, and to newlyweds, so as to offer the couple protection and to wish them well in starting a family.

Materials for making a St. Brigid's Cross

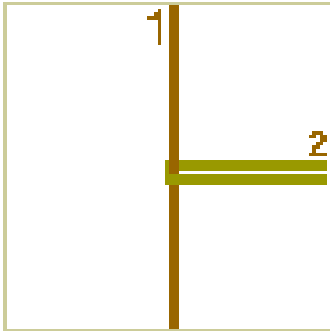
1) 16 x Rushes - 2/3 to the full length of a standard ruler. Be sure to have some spare rushes in case a few break or aren't suitable.

Alternative: You can substitute straw, OR pipe cleaners, OR paper drinking straws, OR thin rolled up tubes made from newspaper or magazines. All of the same 2/3 ruler to full ruler length. Really any material that is thin, somewhat strong (so the cross doesn't fall over on itself) and flexible (so it can be woven).

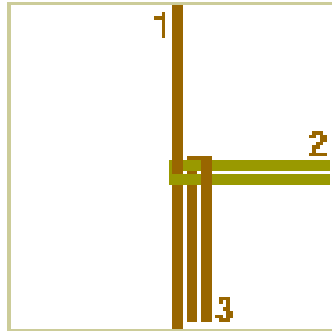
2) 4 x pieces of material to secure the "arms" of your cross. These can be the traditional rushes themselves tied in a knot.

Alternative: String OR elastic bands are much easier to work with, so this is what we suggest. We typically use elastic bands even when working with rushes. It is not traditional, but it holds the cross together well even after it shrinks a little when the rushes dry out.

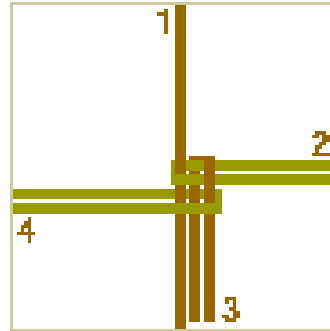
Step 1:



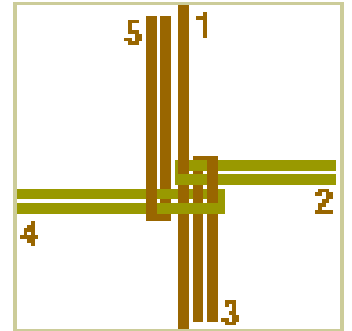
Step 2:



Step 3:



Step 4:



3) Time and good company

St. Brigid's crosses are often made with company. People gather together in their homes, schools, churches, or sacred wells if the weather allows to weave their crosses. It is the perfect task to attempt with others. It can take a little while, and a friendly chat makes the work much more fun.



Toronto Temple

Inquiries and donations: toronto.sc.wcc@gmail.com

Find updates on our Facebook group.
Circles every two weeks at
The Society Clubhouse 967 College St.

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
of Canada



Hamilton



Toronto



Windsor

**There is always in February some one
day, at least, when one smells the yet
distant, but surely coming summer.**

~ Gertrude Jekyll