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Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada



Vol. 8 | #1

Samhain  Yule

Oct 31 – Dec 21, 2024

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 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.

This season holds a powerful invitation to honor cycles of life and death, reflection, and release. Samhain stands as a bridge between the worlds, a time when the veil is thin and the spirits of ancestors feel closer, inviting us to connect with them and gain insight from the past year. Many honor this time by creating spaces for ancestors, whether at the dinner table, around the hearth, or with dedicated altars.

The practice of divination during Samhain aligns perfectly with this season of introspection. As we look back on the past year, it's a moment to acknowledge patterns we're ready to release and set intentions for what we hope to cultivate. Working with divination—be it tarot, scrying, or another form—can help bring clarity to what's next on our path.

This time can be deeply transformative, especially when we actively participate in practices like ancestor veneration, ritualized letting-go, and the mindful welcoming of winter.

Samhain reminds us that from the rich, quiet darkness of the earth, new growth and potential await.

Samhain's magic extends well beyond the traditional dates, carrying its energy into November and through the darker month. Observing Samhain at the cross-quarter point between the Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice adds a powerful layer of alignment with the natural rhythms, embracing the gradual shift into the quiet, introspective time of year. The energy of Samhain lingers, offering an extended window for spirit work, ancestor veneration, and deep personal reflection.

The following ideas form small magics for November! Each one aligns perfectly with the energy of autumn, promoting comfort, protection, and clarity as you prepare for winter.

- **Fall Cleaning:** Begin with a physical and energetic clearing. Set aside a weekend or a few hours daily to declutter, organizing items to donate. As you clean, visualize any stagnant or unwanted energy leaving the home.
- **Bring in the Green:** After clearing space, add some green to brighten and purify. Place herbs on windowsills or kitchen counters, near your workspace, or wherever you'd like a touch of life. Consider an indoor herb garden or individual pots to create an intentional, calming space.
- **Blanket Magic:** Enchant blankets to bring warmth and healing. Hold each blanket, envisioning it surrounded by pink and gold light. Infuse it with warmth and protection for all who use it.
- **Home Remedies:** Stock up on or make homeopathic remedies like Fire Cider or Elderberry Syrup to support your health. These traditional remedies bring a touch of hearth magic to your wellness routine.
- **Divination Practice:** Dedicate time to divination each week, whether using tarot, scrying, or any method that resonates with you. This time is ideal for exploring patterns you want to release, gaining clarity for future paths, and connecting with your intuition.

As the wheel turns, this time becomes ideal for inner transformation, self-care, and rest. Embracing this pause allows for a gentle unwinding of old habits or energies, preparing fertile ground for growth in the spring. Personal magical work during this time—such as setting protective wards, practicing divination, or conducting banishment rituals—can be especially potent, connecting deeply to the natural rhythms of rest and rebirth.

The slower pace of the season supports healing and renewal, inviting us to stay connected to the wisdom of our ancestors and to seek guidance from within. Taking this period to honor what we're letting go and what we hope to grow can bring profound clarity and grounding.



Bellas' Book Nook



Just a few weeks ago, the sun was still shining well after 6pm. Now, the days are remarkably shorter, the winds have picked up, and it's really starting to feel like Autumn. The leaves have dressed the trees in their finest colours, and air is beautiful and crisp.

As you may remember from the last Book Nook, I'm not a fan of fiction. I do read fiction, and it's great as an escape, but in the end, it's fiction. As with all reading material, sometimes a disclaimer is needed. This book contains: Misogyny, Murder, Death, Violence/war, and the list could go on and on. The Book in question, **Dreaming the God, An Anthology**. Edited

by Karen Dales, Dark Dragon Publishing in Toronto, 2023, 241 pages. ISBN: 978-1-928104-31-5.

This is the second part of a challenge issued to me, to give an honest opinion of this book. For the most part, I actually did enjoy reading, *Dreaming the God*. Some stories are delightful and easy to read, especially the first story by Glenn Bresciani. It's a twist on the story of Persephone and Hades, and how his well-made plan, bites him back.

Our own Ross W. Carter's contribution, *The Language of the Sky*, was quite thought provoking. It reminded me of the tales of how sea-farers landing on foreign shore, taught and learned from others, in order to survive. However, this story went deeper, in the sense that sometimes, ordinary beings, are Godsend in their own right. That the actions of people, different from ourselves, can enlighten, educate, and elevate in wonderful ways.

James Dick's story, *Between Fire and Infinity*, reads like a cold-war spy novel from the early 70's, complete with warring Gods, and would probably turn out to be a great Sci-fi movie. *The Last Gasp of War* by L.A. Selby, along with Jeff Provine's - *The Weather War*, are two stories that would probably wind up as afternoon B-rated - made for TV movie, perfect for a rainy or snowy afternoon.

The final story by Ralph Mack entitled, *Dawn of Spring*, reminded me of a series of books about life in a coven called *Coven Crafting*, (but that review, I'll save for another time.) It's a beautiful story of life within a coven at a convention and the issues, and personalities and characters that unexpectedly fill your life.

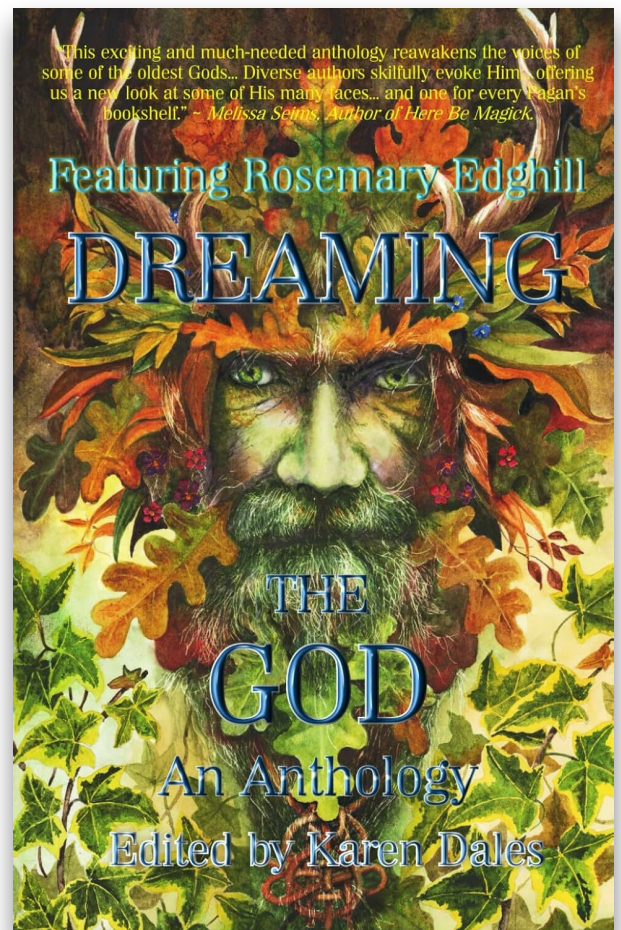
Moirra Scott's story, *The Memory of Trees*, is a beautiful but haunting, retelling of the story of Herne the Hunter. It's marvelous, and has to be my favorite interpretation.

For the most part, I found *Dreaming the God* to be an entertaining, and enjoyable read. The short stories are quite imaginative, and bring into play a different way of seeing the Gods, especially their ways of interacting with people.

With that in mind, until next time, May the Gods smile on you as the wheel turns to Samhain, and may the Ancestors send Blessings your way. Good Health to all!

Happy Reading!

Bella



STONES WITH SORCHA

Jet

Jet, also sometimes known as Lignite (type of coal), Black Amber or the Witch's Stone, has an organic origin having been created through decaying wood under extreme pressure. It comes from the wood from a family of Araucariaceae trees which are an ancient group of cone-bearing trees that existed during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. There are two forms of Jet; hard and soft. Soft Jet occurs when carbon is compressed with freshwater, while hard Jet forms with compressed carbon and saltwater. Technically, it is not a mineral, but a Mineraloid, a naturally occurring substance that seems like a mineral, but does not exhibit structural crystals. It is most commonly black in colour, but has also been found in deep tones of brown

Since the Bronze Age, if not before, Jet from Yorkshire and beyond has been fashioned into ornaments and jewelry. It's been found amongst gravesites and burials for thousands of years, as it was thought to protect the bones and soul in the afterlife. It became popular when Queen Victoria wore it after the death of Prince Albert, her wearing a carving of it as a charm on her dress during her mourning. During the Middle Ages, Jet was carved into images of beetles and worn for protection. Sea witches and fishermen's wives in old Britain prized Jet as a potent magical protectant, and they would burn it in the household fires to guard their absent husbands.

As Jet is essentially coal, you should not use water or sunlight to cleanse or charge it. Instead, bury it in Earth or sea salt overnight to clear any unwanted energies that it may have absorbed. As it is extra effective at absorbing negative energies, it is suggested to cleanse and charge Jet regularly. When rubbed, Jet has the power to electrify and enhance its capabilities.

Element: Earth

Energy: Receptive

Planet: Pluto & Saturn

Chakra: Root & Sacral

Zodiac: Capricorn

Tarot: The Devil

Sabbat: Samhain



Magical Properties

Afterlife, Astral Travel, Bind, Calm, Channelling, Charity, Clairvoyance, Connections, Darkness, Death, Divination, Emotional Balance, Energy, Favour, Fear, Grief, Grounding, Healing, Hexes, Magic, Negativity, Nightmares, Past Life, Problems, Protection, Psychic Ability, Sleep, Spirituality, Storms, Transformation, Transmutation, Travel, Well-Being, Witchcraft

Magical Uses

Jet is receptive, therefore being an excellent stone for absorbing and dispelling negative and baneful energies, a very protective stone. You may wear it to dispel fearfulness and to protect yourself from illness and violence. Placed in the home, it will protect from negativity. You can place small shavings of it in a glass bottle, fill with distilled water, and set it in the sunlight till the water warms. Filter out the jet, and then drink the liquid just prior to divination practices. Place jet upon your altar, or wear a piece of it during health and healing spells as it helps to maintain proper energy flow within the body, promoting good health. The stone will help ease an old animal into death, protecting them on their journey into the afterlife. Jet is used as a doorway into other dimensions, especially the past. Many users find that Jet aids in the exploration of the subconscious mind, uncovering hidden truths and facilitating personal growth when used in relative spellwork.

Healing Uses

Jet is an excellent stone for skin irritations, bites and stings, toothaches, migraines, gastrointestinal pains, and colds. Psychologically, it guards against nightmares and anxiety. Jet has been known to help people get in touch with their own energy and adapt it to their daily life. Jet is a wonderful stone for us to wear at any time, but even moreso at this time of the thinning veil. As we travel amongst the realms, using our scrying tools to divine our little hearts out, we can utilize it to protect us on our journeys on the Astral, and channelling of old departed souls and spirit. Get out those tarot decks and crystal balls, read those tea leaves and coffee grounds, but don't forget your Jet! May the blessings of your ancestors be bestowed upon you. Blessed Samhain!

Rosemary

Herb Lore with Glenys



Once again, the wheel turns, and we find ourselves in the middle of the waning light. It is Samhain and we start to focus on our own thoughts and remembering those that have passed. Divination is frequent practice at this time of year, and we seek herbs to help us focus. Rosemary, *Salvia rosmarinus*, formerly *Rosmarinus officianalis* is one such herb. Some folk names are Compass Weed, Dew of the Sea, Mary's Rose, Elf Leaf, Guardrobe, Incensier, Polar plant and Sea Dew

Rosemary is a member of the Sage (*Salvia*) genus of the Lamiaceae family which includes mint, deadnettle (*Lamia*) as well as the aforementioned sage. Most of the plants in this family are aromatic and particularly useful in cooking as well as medicinally. Because of its aromatic nature it is pest resistant and is often used to keep insects at bay.

Rosemary is native to the Mediterranean but is readily available fresh, dried, or live, as an indoor potted plant. Rosemary is an evergreen shrub with short needles similar to spruce. It is drought tolerant and can withstand cool climates. The flowers can range in colour from white through pink, purple and blue. Rosemary is an ancient plant and the first documented in cuneiform on stone tablets from 5000 BCE. Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians considered rosemary a sacred plant. There is a reference to rosemary in Pedanius Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*

Rosemary needles are a common ingredient in many savoury dishes, especially in stuffings, meat garnishment and sauces. The leaves of Rosemary make an excellent herbal tea. Oil of Rosemary has many applications. Rosemary has antimicrobial (antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal) properties. The oil can be used in a variety of applications such as cleaning, bath and body products and diffusers.

Medicinally, rosemary improves circulation and can aid in preventing hair loss by stimulating the scalp and can stimulate the nerve function to promote healing and growth. As a natural anti-inflammatory it also can heal skin and clear up blemishes. Inhaling rosemary can reduce stress. It also aids in boosting concentration and focusing on the task at hand. Many use rosemary to reduce pain and inflammation. Rosemary also promotes healthy digestion. Because of Rosemary's properties, it has the ability to lower the risk of type 2 diabetes, liver issues and the risk of blood clots.

Rosemary has many magical applications. Rosemary is a masculine plant. It is associated with the Sun, the astrological sign of Leo and the element of fire. Rosemary is an herb of protection, love, purification, healing, remembrance, and mental concentration. It is also a funerary herb and was one of the ingredients the Egyptians used in embalming their dead. It is an ingredient in many incenses.

Many cultures use rosemary in wedding wreaths and bouquets to promote love, fidelity, loyalty, remembrance, and protection.

Sleeping with a sprig of rosemary under your pillow will aid sleep and drive away nightmares and memories. Burning rosemary as an incense will purify the surroundings and repel negative forces. It aids in concentration, memory, and divinatory practices. Drinking rosemary tea will also aid in concentration, memory, and divination..

The Sabbat Table

Rowan Berry Caramels

(Recipe excerpted from The Season Of Harvest Ecookbook at Gather Victoria Patreon)



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of rowan berries
- ½ cup salted butter, cut into slices
- 1 cup honey
- 1 cup whipping cream
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- coarse sea salt, for sprinkling

1. In a saucepan, bring the rowan berries to a low simmer to soften them and release their juices. Pour into a sieve over a bowl and press the berries through to extract as much of the juice as possible. Discard the seeds. You should end up with just under a ¼ cup of puree. Set aside.

2. Place parchment paper into an 8×8-inch baking dish and grease with butter or oil.

3. In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add in the honey, heavy cream, and brown sugar and whisk to combine. Remove from the heat and attach a candy thermometer to the side of the pan, making sure the tip of the thermometer isn't touching the bottom of the pan. Slowly pour the rowan berry mixture into the mixture and gently combine.

4. Return the pot to medium-high heat. Once the mixture is bubbling, reduce the heat just a tad and let simmer for 20-30 minutes, whisking constantly, until the mixture reaches a temperature of 250 degrees F (121 degrees C). Remove it from the heat and quickly whisk in the vanilla extract.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and allow it to set at room temperature for at least a couple of hours, preferably overnight.
6. When the caramels have set, lift them out of the pan by the parchment paper. Place them on a cutting board and cut them into rectangles with a sharp knife. Sprinkle the caramels with the sea salt and wrap them in wax paper). Place the caramels in containers between layers of parchment paper to store. You can also freeze these caramels.

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 2023

SABBAT SCAVENGER HUNT

mini
pumpkin

a ghost

a candy
apple

5 witches

candy
corn

a set of
bones

a green
gourd

a jack o
lantern

1 black
candle

3 bats

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Listen on
Spotify

Catherine Starrs'

Community tarot reading

Tarot reading for October 31, 2024, from the Ced Tarot deck:

Five of Coins, the Moon, Eight of Staves

Distractions can easily pull you away from the tasks you need to accomplish. Under the light of the waning Moon, the shadows dance and the veil draws thin. Messages fly as the last of the harvest is gathered. Look to the omens and seek more guidance, and remember to leave an offering for the Ancestors





LOCAL RESOURCES

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

Obskurah Bazaar

www.obskurahbazaar.com

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.

Madame Phoenix Esoterica

madame-phoenix-online.myshopify.com

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

Madame Phoenix products are hand made in Canada. We use only the highest quality, earth friendly, fair trade ingredients.

The Occult Shop

www.theoccultshop.ca

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.



HAMILTON TEMPLE

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

CONTACT US

TEMPLE STAFF:

wcchamiltontemple@gmail.com

PRIESTHOOD:

LPH.WCC@gmail.com

Halloween



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

GHOST
SCARY
BATS
CHILDREN
CANDY CORN
TREATS
JACK O LANTERN
FALL
WITCHES
FUNNY
LEAVES
SPIDERS
COSTUMES
PUMPKIN
HAPPY
BROOM
EYEBALLS
DECORATIONS
MIDNIGHT
GOBLINS
BOO
TRICKS
MONSTERS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/830/>

In November, the earth is growing quiet. It is making its bed, a winter bed for flowers and small creatures. The bed is white and silent, and much life can hide beneath its blankets.

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.

~by Quetta Garrison-Madsen

Richard James

Paul Niziol

Julia

parents, Alan & Joan & dear
friend Irene

mother, Jacqueline Perry.

mother, M. Aracely Sr.

Vincenzo, Joe, poppa emery

Brian, Doreena, & Lynda
Eddy. Jesse Parkes

mother Catherine Blacklock

Karl Walker, Lila Walker and
Bernadette Bunting.

Furbabies - the Nacho and
Shakespeare

Marylou, Bob, John, Sammy,
Lawrence, William, Chris

Grandpa Rivaldo Tavares

Sandra, Margaret, Gordon,
graham

Claudia Messier Metcalf

son Karl Haase, Aniela and
Walter

grandmother Hattie Ashworth
and Eddie Mangan

Terry McKay sr and Jr. Marie
Repose

Danish

brother Tom

Rob Foehr, brother

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

We are a continuum. Just as we reach back to our ancestors for our fundamental values, so we, as guardians of that legacy, must reach ahead to our children and their children. And we do so with a sense of sacredness in that reaching.

Paul Tsongas