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Sword & Chalice

magazine of the Wiccan Church of Canada

Vol. 9 | #3

Imbolc Sp. Equinox

Feb 1 – Mar 21, 2026

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.

Wheel of the Year : Imbolc

Everything has its time.

In Canada, Imbolc arrives amid ice, snow, and slush, accompanied by harsh winds. Finding signs of the Wheel's new turn can prove challenging. During February, we often overlook subtle shifts as we move through days beneath steel-gray skies. Winter feels unending, and our inner flame rests like a quiet coal, awaiting Spring's breath to reignite it. Still, we sense its approach and listen for Life's enthusiastic return like a far-off drumbeat. Our spirits settle into the quiet darkness of germination.

Some paths or traditions honor the Celtic goddess Brighid in her various forms as a deity of fire and fertility. Others center their observances on seasonal cycles and agricultural milestones. Whatever the approach, the season's essential magic flows. The quickening surge of energy beginning to rise and build in the dormant land, the energy we have anticipated throughout January's long, cold darkness. The Exalted One is reborn, whether as the Celtic Brighid of fire and fertility or as the Divine Feminine of the natural world. We lift our hearts in joyful welcome and celebration.

Typically, this is a season for purifying home and heart, practicing divination, blessing new seeds, and creating fresh starts. It offers an opportunity for personal affirmation of our bond with the land and the divine as we emerge from the dark period, our inner focus renewed and restored. Remembering that Imbolc centers on new beginnings, dedications, initiations, and fresh starts... it's a spiritual spring cleaning that comes before we physically throw open windows to let crisp, clean air lift our spirits and influence how we engage with others.

In cleansing our hearts and homes, we honor what preceded, how Winter and the year's dark half have shaped us. Reflect on the ancient practice of Saining, similar to smudging, performed on Imbolc and other sacred days to remove negative influences, energy, or spirits from places, objects, and livestock.

Canada stands farther from spring than the Celtic lands. It remains too early for crocuses or snowdrops to emerge. Yet we have distinctly Canadian signs at Imbolc: a noticeably longer daylight period and the flowing of maple syrup sap. We mark Imbolc with family and friends in our homes, rejoicing in warmth's return and the sun's growing strength. We incorporate purification by cleansing our homes, preparing for spring. This is an ideal time to explore the future through divination with all our hopes and dreams present, and Imbolc gives us a season to watch nature soften, revealing omens of what lies ahead.

This Imbolc, celebrate and embrace all possibilities. Clear away the old and consider what you'll plant in spring. Remember to include some good Canadian maple syrup in your feast preparations.

Purification practices help us maintain our principles of living in proper balance, refocus and realign spiritually, and naturally offer a fresh start as we prepare for Spring. Imbolc brings clarity and intention through purification ... it's time to release the old and let the strengthening sun revitalize us, heart and soul.



Winter Solstice has come and gone. The decorations were taken down over two weeks ago. The cards and letters all placed neatly into a drawer. Breathe. The hustle and bustle of that part of that season, has come to an end. Now, we have the quiet of Winter to attend to. Time to curl up, and dig through the TBR (to be read) pile, while the wind whirls the snow around.

Many of our Gods and Goddesses can change their form to interact with humans. In this other form, they don't necessarily scare us, but then again... Some Gods are also cats. They show up, to show us something, or lead us in a different direction, or just act as inspiration. You get the idea. Some of us have wonderful fur-friends who enhance our lives and add a little more magic to it. They seem to be that ray of sunshine, that seems to just, know, the mysteries of the cosmos...

On one of my journeys, I found a lovely little book that piqued my interest and made me giggle to myself. The Book? **Cat Gods, Goddesses, Deities, and Demons – A guide to Feline Folklore and Mythology** by Natalie Bovis. Published by Running Press (Hachette Book Group inc.,) in 2025, at 162 pages it's packed full of Felines from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe, a delightful romp through the continents. Sorry, Australia has no native =^.^= s. At Chapters it's \$29.00 for the Hardback. ISBN: 978-0-7624-8801-8.

Some of the Divine Cats in this book are out of the ordinary, but the author does hold in reverence, the Egyptian Goddesses – Bastet and Sekhmet, both with a female form and the head of a cat and a lioness, respectively. Even Hathor is occasionally depicted as a lioness. But who has heard of Akongo from the Congo? Or the feline War God named Apedemak from Nubia?

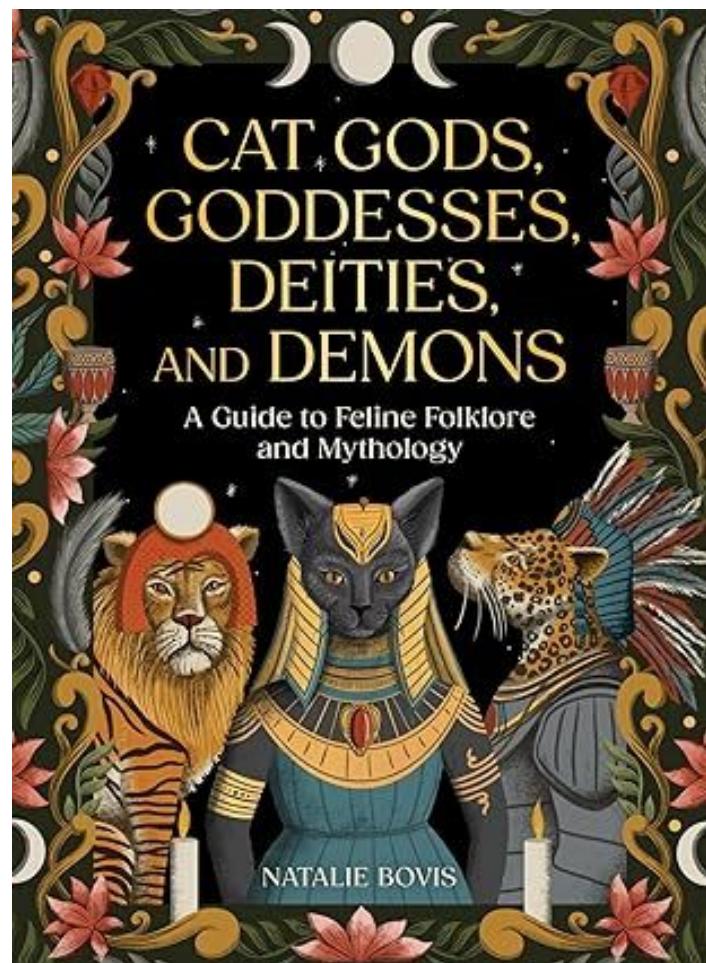
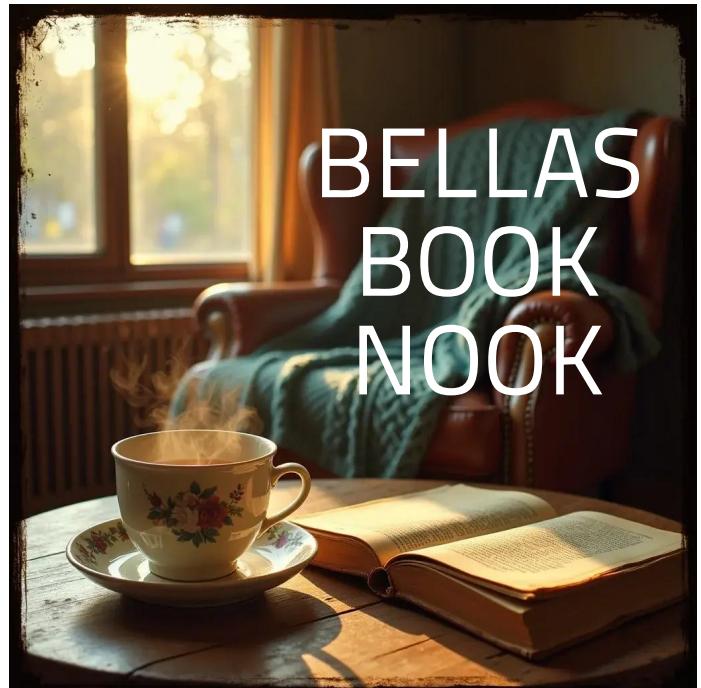
The Zuni have a yellow Cat God named Hokdidasha, who is the guardian of the North, and among other things - loyalty. Or what about the Mayan deity Ix Chel, who is also the mother of the Gods. She had the nickname Lady Rainbow, who was also sometimes called the Lady of the Moon. From the Great lakes, the author introduces us to Mishipeshu. This divine being was the guardian of precious metals, who could also be called upon to help with fishing. He is described as having two massive horns and completely covered in copper scales.

As for Asia, we have Haetae or Haechi, who is a protector of the Korean people. In China, he is known as the symbol of judgement. In Japan, this Unicorn horned lion is a hybrid known as Kaichi, who is an enforcer of justice. Lovely Li Shou, is a Cat Goddess, who is able to communicate with the elements and the Gods. It was considered good fortune to gaze upon her image.

When it comes to Europe, right after a brief description of Artemis and her association with cats, we have Aslan, the Lion of C.S. Lewis's, The Chronicles of Narnia. And who can forget Jolakotturinn, The Yule Cat! But have you heard of the Magical Cats of Ceridwen? You'll have to read about them, on pages 151 to 153.

Like all good books, this one comes with a list of sources, which is purrr-fect for furrr-ther reading! So, until next time, wishing you a wonderful celebration at Imbolc.

Stay healthy, stay warm, and of course.... Happy Reading!



ISBN: 978-0-7624-8801-8

STONES WITH SORCHA

RED SPINEL

Red spinel is an aluminum magnesium oxide mineral that crystallizes in the form of octahedral crystals, dodecahedral, cubic, and massive formations of grains and clusters. The presence of iron, chromium and other minerals cause it to display in a variety of colours, dependent on its country of origin. It presents itself in a variety of colours such as red, blue, green, violet, black, orange, grey, brown, white, and even colourless. For centuries red spinel was mistaken for ruby. The name Spinel derives from the Latin word "spinella" which means "little thorn".

Spinel has often been named as one of 'History's Most Underappreciated Gems' due to the significance it played in royal courts throughout the ages. Kings and emperors alike treasured the gems, which were passed down and changed many hands in times of yore. One of the most well-known examples of this is the "Black Prince's ruby". This archaic gem is set in England's Imperial State Crown and displayed in the Tower of London. It first appeared in the fourteenth century in Spain, then finally coming into possession of Edward, Prince of Wales -the "Black Prince" - who received the stone in 1367 as payment for battle victory. Since then, many English monarchs, including Henry the VIII, Queen Victoria and others have cherished this gem. It has survived fires, attempted theft, and World War II bombings. It became one of the centerpieces of England's Crown Jewels, along with the Koh-i-Noor diamond. The Timur Ruby is an unfaceted red spinel that was made into a necklace for Queen Victoria. It was named after the original owner, Emperor Timur, who founded the Timurid Empire. This stone was taken by the British Empire when they annexed the Punjab Region in 1849. The East Indian Trading Company later presented it as a gift to Queen Victoria in 1853. On the back of the gemstone, it is inscribed with the names and dates of its previous owners.

Element: Fire

Energy: Projective

Planet: Mars & Pluto

Chakra: Root

Zodiac: Aries & Scorpio

Tarot: The Devil, The Empress, The Lovers

Sabbat: Imbolc



Magical Properties:

Balance, Courage, Confidence, Vitality, Physical Energy, Wealth, Success, Clarity, Intimacy, Love, New Beginnings, Career, Motivation, Strength, Beauty, Passion, Trust, Wisdom, Truth, Rejuvenation, Creativity, Protection, Grounding

Magical Uses

When you're starting a new project for work or school, place a piece of Red Spinel in your space. It will aid in bringing vision, inspiration, creative thoughts to your process. It lends its energies in helping build determination to complete assigned tasks and projects. It isn't a 'lucky' stone that brings about success and wealth, but it can indirectly boost finances by helping us focus on goals, allowing us to build our confidence and increase our efforts to achieve long-term rewards. Lovers can add the stone into their bedroom to stir passion and desire, especially when attempting to rekindle the flames of desire. Keep it close by wearing a piece of jewelry or keeping a stone in your pocket or handbag for daily protection and enhancement. If you feel 'off', hold the piece in your hand, relax yourself quietly, placing the Red Spinel on the spot of discomfort, steady your breath and let it heal you.

Healing Uses

Due to the stone's emotional healing energies, wearing or carrying a piece of Red Spinel will help to bring about a balance of emotions, helping alleviate stress, anxiety, and feelings of sadness. It's very beneficial in helping to clear blocked energies in our kundalini, allowing for emotional growth and release of negative emotions. It supports our overall health by stimulating circulation and improving the functions of our vital organs, promoting longevity and natural vitality. It's a wonderful stone for those of us looking to build our confidence and motivation levels. When worn, it can help us to overcome past traumas, aid in boosting our self-confidence, and lend a gentle, consistent energy when we're tired or recovering from trauma or a chronic illness that wears us down. The deeper the red colour, the stronger the energies of the stone.

During the time of transformation at Imbolc, we can utilize red spinel to help in rejuvenating our spirits after the darker months of the year, recognizing the continuous turning of the wheel and Mother Earth awakening from her slumber. Find joy in the returning of light, cherish the new beginnings that are about to be bestowed upon us when old, stagnant energy is being cleansed from our body, mind, and spirit.

Herb Lore

with

Glenys

Nettle



With the snowstorm and extended cold we are experiencing, it's hard to believe that we are almost halfway through winter. Yet Imbolc is around the corner, and you may notice that it is just a little lighter as you head to or come home from work. The earth will soon start to wake up, and early plants will be quickening. One of the early plants that is associated with Imbolc is the Nettle *Urtica dioica*. Some of its common names include stinging Nettle, Common Nettle, Devil's Leaf, Burn Weed and Nettle Leaf.

Nettles are perennial herbs with serrated, heart-shaped leaves and stinging hairs. Nettle flowers are tiny and a greenish white shade found in clusters. They are native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa and naturalized throughout North America. The plants typically reach heights of 3 to 7 feet during the summer and die back entirely in winter. It spreads underground through rhizomes.

Despite its prickly defense system, there is archeological evidence that nettles have been widely used by man for millennia. Ancient cultures used its fibers for cloth and ropes. Nettles were also used as a food source and for their medicinal properties.

Nettles are rich in vitamins (A, C, K and B) and minerals (iron, calcium, magnesium and potassium). It is also high in dietary fibre. As such it is a highly prized plant for spring tonics after a winter where the lack of greens would deplete many of these nutrients. Nettles were used to reduce inflammation, treat pain and boost iron levels. They were also used to treat urinary tract issues. There is also evidence that it

helps with allergy relief and blood pressure regulation. Nettle tea or tinctures were the most common way to ingest the nutrients, but the young leaves could also be cooked and used in soups and stews. Cooking removes the stinging properties of the young leaves

Magically nettles are masculine, associated with fire and the planet Mars as well as the Zodiac sign of Scorpio as well as Aries. Nettles are associated with the deities Thor, Ares/Mars and Brigid.

Nettle's association with Brigid makes it an ideal herb for Imbolc celebration. In Ireland, it's one of the plants that emerge early and can often be found while foraging around Imbolc. It symbolizes renewal and the return to life. Its properties mirror Brigid's aspects of fire (forge) and healing. Nettle soup is a common staple in Imbolc celebrations.

Nettle's properties make it ideal for magical workings related to protection, courage, strength and banishing. Nettles are considered threshold guardians and can be used around perimeters to ward off unwanted visitors. It is an excellent plant to use in spells when setting boundaries. Because of its fiery nature, nettle is also well suited for workings and rituals related to passion and attraction. As a healing herb, nettle is well suited to rituals for purification. Because of its association with Imbolc and Brigid, it is an excellent plant to use in spells related to transformation and growth as well as fertility and prosperity.

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

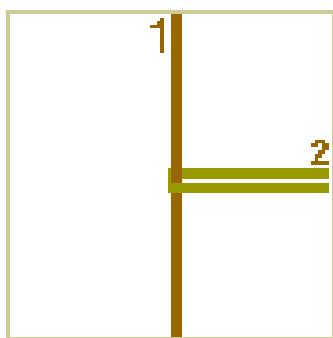
TORONTO Pagan Pub Moot

"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."

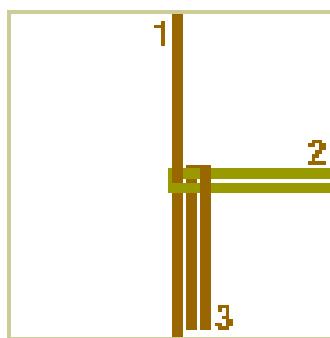
TPPM DATES 2026

BLESSINGS UPON YOUR HOUSE & HOME

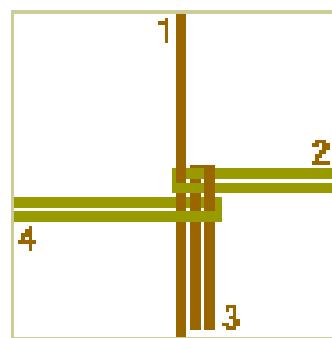
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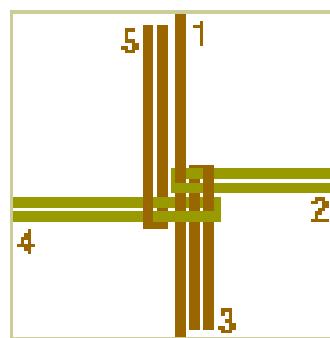
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Step 3:



Step 4:



A Brigid's cross is a Celtic sun wheel is said to ward off evil, fire and hunger; hanging it in one's house was believed to also bring the blessing and protection of the saint for the remainder of the year.

THE SABBAT TABLE

Fluffy and golden, these cheese scones with cheddar and spring onions are a comforting Imbolc bake. Toast the growing sun with this warm treat and celebrate the promise of Spring,



Ingredients

- 1 2/3 cup Flour
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1/4 cup Unsalted Butter
- 1/2 cup Cheddar Cheese finely grated
- 1 Spring Onion / Scallion
- 1/2 cup full cream milk

Optional

- 1/2 tsp Mustard powder
- 1/2 tsp Garlic powder
- 1 Egg yolk for egg wash

Instruction

1. Place the flour, salt, mustard powder, and garlic powder (if using) into a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine.
2. Add the cold butter, cut into small cubes. Using your hands or a pastry blender, work the butter into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs, with only small pea-sized pieces of butter remaining and the flour evenly coated.
3. Stir in the finely grated cheddar cheese and thinly sliced spring onion.
4. Make a well in the centre of the bowl and pour in the milk. Using a spatula or your hands, gently bring the mixture together until a soft dough forms. Take care not to overwork the dough.
5. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and roll it out into a circle about 2 cm (3/4 inch) thick.
6. Using a round cookie cutter, cut out the scones and place them on a flat baking tray lined with baking paper. Any remaining dough can be gently re-rolled and cut again, though for best results, chill the dough in the fridge for 10–15 minutes before re-rolling.
7. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) and place the tray of scones in the fridge while the oven heats.
8. Optional: Once the oven is at temperature, whisk the egg yolk in a small bowl and brush it over the tops of the scones for a golden finish. Sprinkle with a little extra grated cheddar, if desired.
9. Bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until the scones are puffed and golden. Transfer to a cooling rack and allow to cool slightly before serving.

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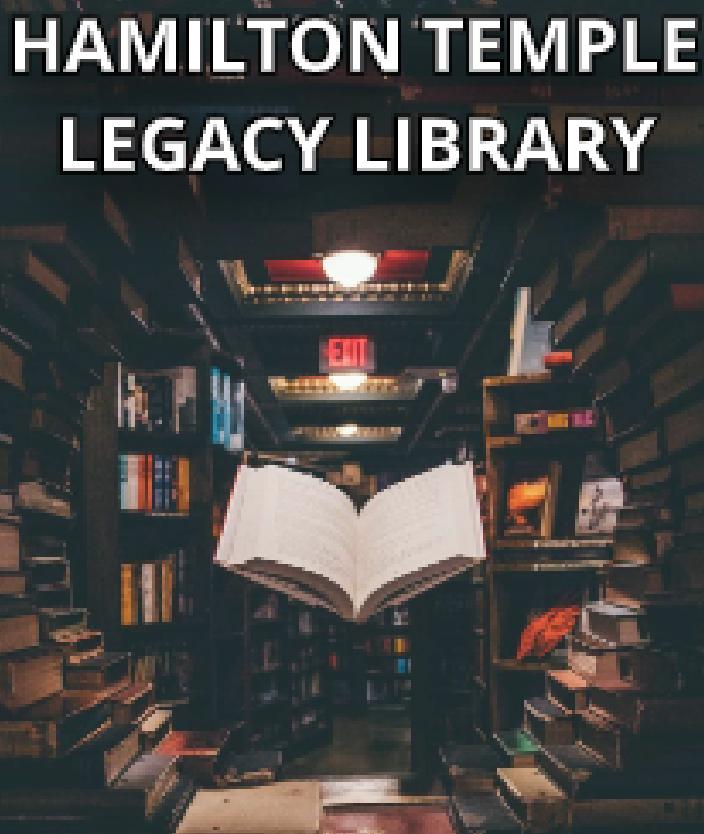


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3 Purification Rituals for Release & Renewal



Before something new can take root, what is stagnant must be cleared away. Imbolc is a time of purification and renewal, the quiet turning point where winter loosens its grip and the first promise of growth stirs beneath the surface. This is a time to cleanse, release, and prepare space for what is coming. These three rituals weave spiritual intention with simple and deliberate action.

The Fire of Release

Fire transforms. It consumes, illuminates, and returns what no longer serves to ash and smoke. For this ritual, you will need a white candle and a small piece of paper.

Sit somewhere still and quiet. Take a few breaths and gently reflect on what feels heavy or outdated in your life, habits, fears, patterns, or situations that have run their course. Write them down clearly and honestly. Precision brings power.

Light the candle and invite the presence of Brigid, guardian of flame, inspiration, and renewal. In a fireproof bowl, safely burn the paper. As it changes from solid to ash, watch the smoke rise. Visualize these burdens dissolving, released into the air, transformed and no longer bound to you.

The Salt and Water Cleansing

Water carries, cleanses, and renews. Salt absorbs, protects, and restores balance. Together, they form one of the oldest purification rites known.

Prepare a bath by mixing Epsom salts with a dried herb such as rosemary or sage. As the salts dissolve into warm water, step in and allow yourself to soften. Imagine the bath drawing out tension, fatigue, and lingering emotional residue, static from the long winter months.

When the bath is finished, remain seated as the water drains away. Watch it spiral downward and consciously release what you are ready to let go of. Trust that it is carried away, filtered, and returned to the great cycle of renewal.

The Threshold Clearing

Your home is an extension of your energy, and clutter (visible or unseen) creates stagnation. Take up a broom, a traditional tool of cleansing and boundary-setting.

Begin at the farthest point of your home and sweep slowly toward the front door. As you move, imagine you are gathering the dense, tired energy of winter and guiding it outward. When you reach the threshold, sweep it fully outside. Pause for a moment before closing the door, knowing you have cleared the way for fresh opportunities and brighter currents to enter.

Preparing the Ground for New Beginnings

With the old cleared away, you are ready to begin again. Imbolc is a time of planting, both in soil and in spirit. Make a wish for your future, plant seeds on a windowsill and tend them gently, witnessing the quiet miracle of life emerging. Alongside this, choose three intentions for the coming year. Write them down and place them on your altar, with the seedlings or in the sunlight. These are not demands, but invitations.

Trust the unfolding. Growth cannot be rushed, only supported.

The light is returning, the ground is prepared, and you are ready to grow.



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.

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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

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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

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FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Looking to find out what's 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