



The Samhain Edition

“Walking, I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands.” ~ Linda Hogan

Upcoming Events

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Samhain Celebration	Sunday, 11/01/2020	2:00 pm Gather & Check-in 2:30 pm Celebration	Peebles Island State Park Waterford, NY
Libation to Ares	Saturday, 11/14/2020	1:00 pm	Peebles Island State Park Waterford, NY

Due to social distancing requirements and with the cold weather upon us, all in-person gatherings will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Online rituals have not been decided upon at this time. Please continue to check our [Facebook Events Page](#) regularly for updates. A list of calendar observances has been provided on the last page of this newsletter.

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Druid's Corner

The Nemeton of the Ways ~ Mother Grove

by Rev. Jeremiah Lennox, Archdruid of the Nemeton

Brightest blessings and welcome to the Nemeton of the Ways, a sacred community of persons rooted in honoring the living Earth and all her children, whatever paths they may walk. Since the planting and consecration of our first grove, that being the Mother Grove in Galway, New York, ours has been a community open to a multiplicity of traditions and practices. While our community is largely comprised of Pagans of a variety of backgrounds, it is not exclusive to Pagan practice and it has been our deep privilege to hold space in such a way as to welcome all sorts of Pagans, atheists, Christians, Muslims - in short, anyone of goodwill who can uphold the peace and integrity of our sanctuary in a spirit of inclusiveness. "Nemeton" means sanctuary, whether it be the sanctuary of a grove, temple, cave, or that which we co-create together through openness of hands and hearts in shared service to one another. Our community gathers together to celebrate the cycles of the Land that sustains us, to honor the many faces of the Divine, to nurture our relationship with the Ancestors who live on through us, and most importantly, to inspire one another as we delve deeply into our own most authentic being, our true sovereignty. If you find yourself walking your own path in compassionate peace, active justice, and are seeking to share that experience with others, then may you be welcome at the light of our fire.



A Tale for Halloween

by [Loretta Ellen Brady](#)



A Tale for Halloween from Brady's collection, *The Green Forest Fairy Book* (1920), is perfect for young children to celebrate the magic of Halloween, with dancing pumpkins, vegetables, good luck witches -- all for two deserving children!
Story available to read for free online at [American Literature](#).



Druid's Corner

Spooky Samhain

by Asher Miller

I want to share something with you all. Halloween is my favorite time of year. Autumn, black cats, pumpkins, and general spookiness are my jam and I look forward to it every year. As the wheel turns us toward the winter and the leaves turn all crispy and golden you may find yourself wondering, so where does it all come from? Grab your terrifying turnip lantern (because jack-o-lanterns predate pumpkins in Europe) and let's check out everyone's favorite spooky day.

Samhain is the ancient Irish festival that lends its name to the modern Pagan holiday. While Halloween itself is more of a fusion of various European traditions, Samhain and its related Celtic holidays, such as Hop-tu-Naa and Allantide, were old timey celebrations that marked the end of harvest season and usually had some ghost or goblin element. Commonly it includes some aspect of ancestor veneration and is widely considered to be a period when the barrier between the otherworld and here is especially thin.

For my ancestors, this was a time to take in the last crops from the field, slaughter the winter meat, generally prepare for winter, light some bonfires, and remember those who've gone off to Tech Duinn, maybe making some mischief while they were at it. There's a bunch of cool myths that take place around the spookiest time of the year, one of my favorites being stingy Jack and his hellfire lantern. As a modern witch, this is the time of year when I magically make a three-pound bag of peanut butter cups disappear and put pumpkin spice in everything. It's important to take time to make new traditions every so often.

In our primary sources we consistently see Samhain being a holiday associated with the dead, sacrifice, particularly blood sacrifice, fire, and some element of fun or absurdity. The connection of death and sacrifice to an autumn festival is pretty obvious, but most of us don't need to cure our own meats to avoid starvation anymore. We do still carry around things we are best left letting go and Samhain can be a time to consider that. With these ideas of sacrifice and fire, Samhain can be considered a holiday of purification, preparing ourselves to enter the next part of the year.

While we're letting go, think about what we've lost too. The veil is thin and so the dead can return to us. This isn't a grim or scary thing, but a way for us to connect and celebrate their lives and ours we're still living. An ancestor altar or an extra empty table setting at dinner can be a great way to build connections with your lost loved ones. A lantern set outside can help guide souls back and forth from the otherworld, ensuring that no one gets lost before the sun finally rises.

However, you choose to celebrate, make sure you have fun with it. Ghosties, elves, and anything else that crosses over love a good trick. If you don't want to be pranked, make sure you've got some treats for every spook that comes to your door this all hallows eve, after all you never know which one is a goblin or ghoulish visiting from out of town. Meanwhile, I'm going to have hot cocoa, watch Hocus Pocus, and get a little more magical this spooky spooky Samhain night.



Image Credit: <https://www.ancient-origins.net>



Athena's Corner

Establishing a Daily Devotional Practice

by Rev. Marcus Mahoney



Image Credit: Olga Yastremska

When I began my spiritual journey (again), I attended High Days, full moons, and libations. I read books, blogs, articles, and whatever other information I could get my hands on. However, I still felt that I could do more and that I needed to do more to deepen my connection with the divine.

While reading *Keeping Her Keys* by Dr. Cyndi Brannen I was introduced to the concept of "The Witch's Hour of Power." You take an hour out of your day and work on your spiritual practice. It sounded intimidating to do devotional work for an hour every day, and I wasn't quite sure how I was going to do that. The great thing about spiritual practice is just that. It's a practice. You don't seek perfection, you seek balance. You also

don't have to do it continuously for an hour. You can break it up into smaller chunks if you need to.

Daily devotional can be anything from chanting and meditation to devoting the energy of a walk around where you live to the divinities that you work with. A daily practice can be whatever helps you connect with the divine.

My daily practice consists of devotional prayers and meditation. Some days I'm able to devote an hour or so to my practice, and others I can only manage twenty minutes. The length of time you spend in your devotion isn't any less important than the intent behind it.

So I invite you all to sit down in your sacred space, light a candle and some incense (if you are able), and connect with your divinities. Offer prayers of thanks or meditate, or do both if you feel compelled to do so. Start simple and be mindful of the divine presence that is within us and around us all.

Getting to Know Your Neighbors

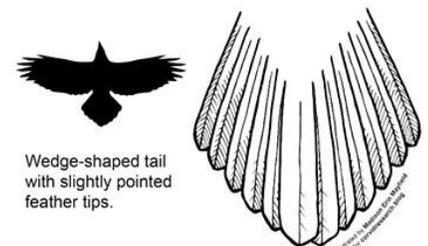
Last month I was sitting out on my deck in Troy, enjoying the birds eating at our backyard feeders. It was maybe 2 in the afternoon when I saw something, I thought was odd. A crow was flying overhead but instead of constantly flapping its wings as they usually do, it was gliding like a hawk. Well, that's strange I thought. And the shape of head, neck and wings didn't look quite right. "Caw-Caw-Caw-Caw" I heard it cry. It was a deep, rough call. Like the crow had a cold or was an old man. ...Wait a minute... Is that?... Oh, my Goddess, I think I just saw my first Raven!!!!

Since that day, I've seen this bird a few more times. Confirmation of it being a raven came the last time it flew overhead. It glided over our house and its tail feathers were splayed out behind it in a spade shape. That is very specifically a raven characteristic not seen in crows. And there was a second raven with it! Maybe they will bless me in the spring with a few additions to their family!!!

Happy Samhain everyone. The ravens are among us!!!

-Brandi

Raven



Wedge-shaped tail with slightly pointed feather tips.

Image Credit: Corvid Research Blog



Athena's Corner



Hellenic Libation 101

by Amy Lupinski

In Hellenic Polytheism, pouring a libation is a common and easy way to honor the gods. Common offerings are water, wine, honey, milk, and olive oil. However, any liquid can be used! (*I personally think Athena appreciates espresso.*) Libations can be poured directly onto the ground or into a secondary vessel that may be poured outside later.

Here is a basic outline:

1. Pick the god you'd like to honor
2. Get your offering, holding the container in both hands
3. Make the dedication to the god you'd like to honor
"I dedicate this libation to Zeus and all the happy deathless Gods!"
4. Pour some of the libation onto the ground or into the secondary vessel
5. You may take a drink of the leftover liquid, but not mandatory

And there you go; you've conducted a simple libation!



Self-Care

by Alyssa Lupinski

When we think of self-care, most folks think of spa days and salons. They think of shopping sprees and pampering. While this is not necessarily *wrong*, these practices may not be *right* for everyone. So, what is self-care? Do you really need it? Let's break it all down.



Self-care is simply whatever you do to take care of yourself. Be it mental health or physical health, making steps to improving your health is considered self-care. If you are able to practice your daily living skills, you are already taking part in self-care. So, why is everyone preaching this practice if we're already doing it? The simple answer is mindfulness and intention. To truly get the most out of self-care, you should acknowledge and be mindful that what you are doing is to take care of yourself. When you make this acknowledgment, you are setting an intent to refill your battery, so to speak. If you set your intention, you are more likely to focus more on your needs and filling those needs.

Self-care looks different for everyone. That's why I can't just say, do x, y, and z, and you'll feel better. It's all about what you need. You know your needs better than anyone else. When you are feeling as though your energy supply is being depleted, or you just feel like you need a boost, think of what your needs are. Think of what would best suit those needs. Set your intentions and allow yourself to rest and recharge.



Athena's Corner

"I'm So Busy, I Have to Meditate Twice A Day!"

An Introduction to Meditation

By Brandi Collesides

I don't know about you, but I have been having a very stressful year. My job is chaotic and asks too much of me. There are always more projects to complete at home than there is time in the day. And every time I turn on the news, I want to scream. I probably don't need to tell you this, but none of this is very healthy for my body, mind, or spirit.

This year has made my focus very difficult. I find my mind wandering more than usual. I sometimes forget simple words in the middle of a sentence. I'll walk into the kitchen and forget why I'm there. I know these are symptoms of a more serious possible issue, but these are also all symptoms of having to multitask too much. The stress and the constant go, go, go has definitely put a toll on me.

Luckily, I have found that Mindfulness refocus and distress. Mindfulness in the chaos. Everyone has an continuously talks, shouts, sings, thought leads to another and daydreaming about something topic at hand. This is called the Everyone has one (or two!). It rarely shuts up. Especially Have you ever had an argument someone catches you? Yeah, look like I'm going crazy!

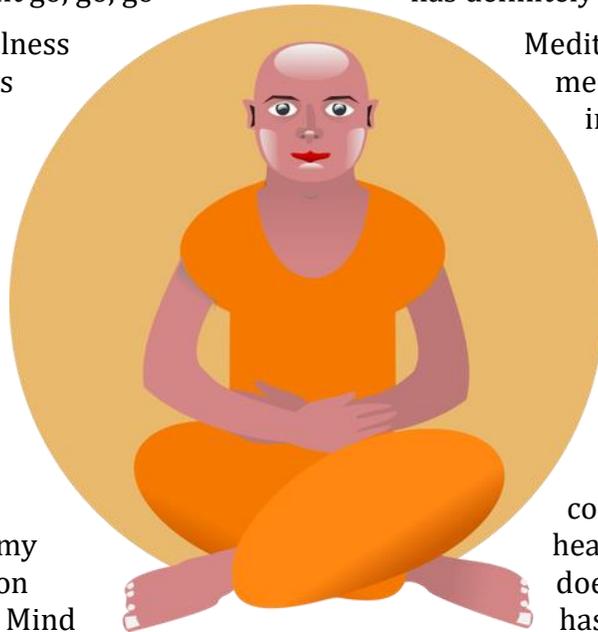
So instead of fighting with this meditation to help me get out of my present moment. What meditation you to notice when your Monkey Mind hand. The linked exercise will give you a starting point for mindfulness meditation, help you to learn to recognize when your mind wanders, and help you to bring it back.

As you sit in meditation, you will notice a thought pop up about something you forgot to do at work for example. When you notice that your mind wandered, acknowledge the shift and bring it back to the meditation. Now this is the important part. If you can only remember ONE piece of advice from this article about your meditation practice, let it be this: It is OKAY to lose focus. Don't berate yourself. Don't feel guilty that it happened or feel like a failure that you let it happen. These emotions are not helpful and will only fuel a lower self-esteem. The Monkey Mind is natural. It happens to everyone, all the time. You are simply noticing your mind, acknowledging when it wanders, and bringing it back to the focus of your session.

If you would like more in depth descriptions and practices on Mindfulness Meditation, please check out *The Miracle of Mindfulness* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

Ready to give it a try? Here is a short meditation practice for you to try.

[Mindfulness Meditation Practice PDF](#) (492KB - [Download Acrobat Reader for PC](#))



Meditation exercises has helped me meditation is a way to find stillness internal monologue that berates and distracts us. One another and soon we are that has nothing to do with the "Monkey Mind". It is normal. is what our mind does. Mine when I'm trying to be quiet. with yourself out loud, and not my best moments. I really

constant jibber-jabber, I use head and into my body. Into the does at its most basic level is help has led you astray from the task at



Athena's Corner

Tarot Spreads

MODERNWITCHYWOMAN.COM



Samhain Tarot Spread



2. What lessons are to be learned from the spirits of the past?

1. What have you accomplished this past year?

3. What advice can we take from the spirits for the upcoming year?

CELEBRATE SAMHAIN

Tarot Spread
by Feather Fox Tarot.com



<p>Prepare: Strengths</p> <p>3</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>Life: Embrace this</p> <p>1</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>Ancestors: Advice for future</p> <p>5</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
<p style="text-align: center;">Above</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Below</p>		
<p>Death: Release this</p> <p>2</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>Passage: New paths, methods</p> <p>4</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	



Hearth & Home: Arts & Crafts

DIY Pumpkin Candle Holders

by [Skeen Concepts](#)



Items

-  Small pumpkins
-  Tea Light Candles
-  Sharp knife
-  Sharpie or pen
-  Spoon

1. Start with your mini pumpkin top side up. Break the stem off if your pumpkin has one.
2. Using a tea light candle, place the candle on the top of the pumpkin (where the stem would be).
3. Trace the shape of the tea light candle to create a circle in the middle of the pumpkin.



4. Using the knife, cut along the circle that you made on the pumpkin. Make sure not to cut all the way through to the bottom. Just above halfway into the pumpkin should be fine. Pop the top off.
5. Scoop out the inside meat of the pumpkin. Be sure to leave some of the meat inside on the bottom - so that your candle won't sink too far into the cut hole. If you scooped out too much, just turn one candle upside down and stack the other candle right side up on top.
6. Lastly, stick the tea light into the cut-out hole. Light your candle and enjoy!





Hearth & Home: Recipes

Butternut Lasagna with Mushrooms and Sage

By Sylvia Fountaine

This butternut lasagna recipe can be made ahead (or in stages) and stored in the fridge until ready to bake. For more tips visit: <https://www.feastingathome.com/butternut-lasagna-with-mushrooms-and-sage>

Ingredients

- Small butternut squash (2.5lbs – 3lbs, you'll need about 4 cups, roasted)
- ½ a sweet onion, sliced into big wedges
- olive oil for drizzling

Mushroom Filling:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or butter
- 1½ lb. mushrooms, sliced (cremini, button, shiitake, portobello, wild mushrooms, etc.)
- 1 fat shallot or ½ onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped sage
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Optional – feel free to add a couple of handfuls baby spinach or greens and wilt them.



Ricotta Mixture:

- 1 lb. ricotta cheese (or sub vegan tofu ricotta) If using the tofu ricotta, no need to add more salt or egg. Just nutmeg 😊
- one egg (optional)
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt

Butternut Puree:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3–6 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1½ cups grated mozzarella cheese (about 3–4 ounces) or sub vegan “meltable” cheese
- ½ cup Romano or parmesan (about 1 ounce) or sub vegan
- 9 lasagna noodles (uncooked)
- Garnish with 9 crispy sage leaves (optional, see notes)



Hearth & Home: Recipes

Butternut Lasagna with Mushrooms and Sage

By Sylvia Fontaine (*continued*)

Optional Quick Béchamel Sauce:

- 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil (or butter)
- 1 ½ tablespoons flour
- 1 cup milk (or nut milk)
- generous pinch salt, pepper and nutmeg
- remaining ½ cup mozzarella and 2 tablespoons parmesan (or “meltable” vegan cheese)

INSTRUCTIONS

Start The Butternut. Preheat oven to 425 F. Cut butternut squash in half, scoop out the seeds and place open side down on a [parchment](#) lined baking sheet. Place sliced onion next to it and drizzle it with a little [olive oil](#). Roast until fork tender, about 30-40 minutes. Let cool. You could do this a day before.

Lower oven to 375F

Make The Mushroom Filling. In a large skillet, heat the oil or butter. Add mushrooms and shallots and [salt](#), and sauté over medium heat, until the mushrooms release their liquid and begin to brown. Add the garlic, sage and pepper. Cook until garlic is fragrant, about 2-3 more minutes, turn heat off. You could toss in some spinach at the end and wilt for extra nutrients. Taste and make sure the filling has enough [salt](#) and pepper. You could also add a little [truffle oil](#). You could make this 1-3 days ahead and refrigerate.

Using a fork, mix the ricotta cheese with the egg, [nutmeg](#) and [salt](#). (You really don't have to add the egg, but it adds a nice richness.)

Make The Butternut Sauce: When the butternut is cool enough to handle, scoop all the flesh out into a [food processor](#). You should have about 4 cups. Add the roasted onion, [olive oil](#), water, [salt](#), pepper and garlic powder. Puree until smooth. You will need at least 3½ cups pureed and you want it to be almost *saucy*, like a marinara sauce (so add water if need be!). This will act as the “sauce”.

Assemble The Lasagna. In a *greased* 9 x13 inch [baking dish](#), add 1 cup of the butternut puree and spread out into a thin layer. Top with 3 lasagna noodles. Add ½ of the ricotta mixture and spread out evenly. Top with half of the cook mushrooms. Sprinkle with ½ cup grated mozzarella and a couple tablespoons Romano cheese. Add 3 more lasagna noodles. Spread out the rest of the ricotta mixture as evenly as possible. Spoon half of the remaining butternut puree, erring on the side of less than half, so you have enough to cover the top (save at least 1 ¼ cups for the top.) Add the remaining mushrooms and all the good bits (onions and sage) and sprinkle with another ½ cup [shredded mozzarella](#) and couple tablespoons parmesan. Place the final three noodles over the top. Lather with the remaining butternut puree and sprinkle with the rest of the cheese (or make the creamy béchamel sauce - see notes) You could assemble this 1-2 days before baking.

Cover tightly with foil and **bake in 375 F oven for 40 minutes.** (If the foil touches the lasagna, place a layer of [parchment](#) between the foil and lasagna). Uncover and continue baking 15-20 minutes until golden and bubbly. Cut into 9 servings. Garnish with optional crispy sage leaves.



Hearth & Home: Recipes

Samhain Pumpkin Bread

By LApagmom2 on [Allrecipes.com](https://www.allrecipes.com)

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: 50 mins

Additional: 20 mins

Total: 1 hr 30 mins

Servings: 16 **Yield:** 2 loaves

Ingredients

- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 (15 ounce) can canned pumpkin
- ⅓ cup water
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup chopped walnuts

Cook's Note:

The flour represents fertility and prosperity, the sugar love and passion. Salt stands for protection; the spices for protection, luck, healing, and health. Pumpkin represents abundance, while water is cleansing and eggs symbolize fertility. Vanilla is for love and mental prowess, while nuts represent health and wishes.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:

197.1 calories; protein 3.1g 6% DV; carbohydrates 32.2g 10% DV; fat 6.7g 10% DV; cholesterol 23.3mg 8% DV; sodium 261.3mg 11% DV.



Directions

Instructions Checklist

- **Step 1**
Preheat an oven to 350° F (175° C). Grease 2 loaf pans.
- **Step 2**
Stir the flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and cloves together in a large bowl. Whisk together the pumpkin, water, eggs, vanilla, and vegetable oil together in a separate bowl. Gradually pour the wet mixture into the dry while whisking until everything is well mixed. Fold the walnuts into the batter. Divide the batter between the two prepared loaf pans.
- **Step 3**
Bake in the preheated oven until the top is golden and springs back when lightly pressed, 50 to 60 minutes. Allow to cool 20 minutes before removing from the pans.



Holiday & Lunar Observances

The observances that contain a link are upcoming events with the Nemeton of the Ways.

Date	Observance
Sunday, November 1st	Samhain Celebration
Saturday, November 14th	Libation to Ares
Sunday, November 15th	New Moon in Scorpio
Monday, November 30th	Full Moon in Gemini
Saturday, December 12th	Libation to Dionysus
Monday, December 14th	New Moon in Sagittarius
Tuesday, December 29th	Full Moon in Cancer
Saturday, January 9th	Libation to Hera
Wednesday, January 13th	New Moon in Capricorn
Thursday, January 28th	Full Moon in Leo



We encourage each and every one of you to go vote in the upcoming election. We can't tell you who to vote for, but we can remind you of your right to do so. If you are not sure where you are registered to vote, check the NY State Board of Elections website at <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>.

"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time." Ruth Bader Ginsburg