

**MoonFire welcomes all who wish to participate.**

Rituals are held on the third Sunday of the month at 1 o'clock at the UUCA Church ([www.uucava.org](http://www.uucava.org))

Steering Committee meetings are open to all; they are held the first Thursday of the month at 7:30PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington.

To sign up for the newsletter, or our Yahoo! chat group, please e-mail the Secretary!

### **Officers**

#### **Co-Coordinator:**

**Ed McGrady, Leah Pellegrino, Patrick Quinn**  
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#### **Treasurer:**

**Erich Steinbeck**  
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#### **Secretary:**

**Raina Johns**  
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### **Mission Statement**

“We strive to build a safe and nurturing community which is inclusive and provides for spiritual growth and service to the Earth and Her children. We are the Hub of the Wheel of Life, the Crossroads where all meet; We are a Chalice of the Goddess; We are of the Earth, rich and empowering; We are a Rock, safe and secure; We are a Rainbow, diverse with many colors yet together in one band; We are a Flame of Spirituality, providing the light to see our path before us.”



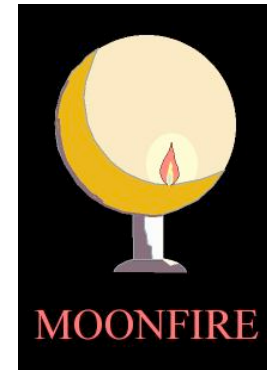
<http://www.moonfireuucava.org>

## *We are MoonFire*

*We are Pagan!*

*We are Eclectic!*

*We are Welcoming!*



## Samhain 2006

### Witches' Sabbat and Ball: Remembering those absent, linking us together, blessing our fates

*Honoring those who have come before*

*1662 - Hartford Conn. coven*

Andrew Sanford  
Elizabeth Seager  
James Walkley  
Judith Varlet  
Mary Sanford  
Nathaniel Greensmith

Rebecca Greensmith  
William Ayres  
Goodwife Ayres  
Goodwife Grant  
Goodwife Palmer  
Goodwife Sanford

– *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, Margaret Murray

## Samhain

Samhain is the Pagan New Year. It marks the end of summer and the beginning of winter in the agrarian, seasonal, Medieval-Irish calendar. It is mentioned in the *Tochmarc Emire* as the first of the four agricultural feast days and is the day when summer takes its rest. It was a time when warring and harvesting was done, and the quiet of winter was about to settle in over the countryside.

It was a time of celebration, and a time when the supernatural roamed. Stories of monsters, fairies, and slain kings surround the holiday.

In the modern Pagan calendar Samhain is one of the four cross-quarter or agricultural holidays, the others being Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnassa. In modern times it is when we honor ancestors, recognize the fruits that have been laid away from our harvests, and contemplate the darker imagery of the coming season. It is also a time when magic, conversing with spirits, and divination are enhanced by the thin veil between worlds.

Samhain is a time for transformation and change, a time to celebrate the community that will carry us through darkness, and a time to hold again those who have passed over.

## Witches' Sabbats

Witches' Sabbats are a controversial and much discussed topic. The concept of a Witches' Sabbat originated during the late Middle Ages with the witch persecutions. Some thought that the concept was a legacy of a pre-Christian Witch cult that had survived. However much recent evidence suggests that many of the activities associated with a Witches' Sabbat started in the minds of the Christian inquisitors who tortured and burned those accused of Witchcraft.

Whatever the origin of a Witches' Sabbat, it is a time of coming together to make magic and worship the old Gods and Goddesses. It is also a time for reflection, within the Pagan community, and within society as a whole. Sabbats connect us, to each other, to the Gods and Goddesses, and to the larger Pagan community of which we are a part.



**Cernnunos**

In past times our Pagan ancestors would gather in a secret place to honor their old Gods, the Gods of the Land and the Hunt. These were not Gods of the elite, but Gods of the people, of farmers and woodsmen, hunters and fishermen. Cernnunos is the horned god of Gaelic France, Britain, and northern Europe. He is seen with the ram-headed snake, sometimes merging with it, and with animals and creatures of the forest. He is often associated with the traditional vision of the God of the Witches, with horns, staffed, and sometimes with hooved feet.



**Cerridwen**

Cerridwen is our dark mother. She is the owner of the magic cauldron of life. Her son Gwion was ordered to stir the cauldron, but tasting of the potion within gained the possession of all knowledge. She chased him and as they ran they changed shapes, first into a greyhound chasing a hare, then into an otter chasing a fish, then into a hawk chasing a bird, and finally, when Gwion turned into a kernel of corn, she changed into a chicken and ate him up. She then found herself pregnant, and later gave birth to Taliesin, the greatest of Welsh bards. [Which goes to show, watch who you eat]. Cerridwen may be a dark mother, the crone aspect of the Goddess, but her cauldron also holds inspiration and the ancient, secret, wisdom of the Goddess.

### **Cakes and ale**

We will pass around the cakes and ale.

### **Spiral dance**

The God and Goddess will lead us in a spiral dance around the room. Participate, as you are able.

For safety: please move your chairs to the edge of the room, outside the circle, and watch your cloaks/capes around fire. Capes can also be a tripping hazard, as can altars, and other Pagans.

### **Moment of Prayer or Meditation**

#### **Thank the God and Goddess**

The Priest and Priestess will thank the God and Goddess for attending our rite.

#### **Release the Quarters**

When your suit is called, dismiss the appropriate quarter using the sheet you were given when you arrived. We will start with North.

#### **Open the Circle**

Merry Meet, Merry Part, and Merry Meet again!

#### **Potluck Follows**

## **Amulets and Talismans**

Amulets are magical objects that derive their power from the nature of the object itself. It could be a physical form, or a symbol or word written on the amulet. Amulets are generally designed to protect the wearer from some sort of harm. Talismans, on the other hand, bear no magical power until they are consecrated and have power placed within them. In this ritual we will be constructing a talisman for good fortune, or luck. We will ask it, and so our fates, to be blessed by the God and Goddess. Into the talisman we will be placing objects associated with fate and luck.

### **The Ritual**

This ritual is loosely based on a ritual MoonFire conducted in 2003. The difference is that the previous ritual emphasized contact with our ancestors, while this ritual incorporates the concepts of “those who are here, those who are not here, and those who have passed on.”

By calling the quarters together, and by exchanging blessed tokens within our charms, we seek to weave together the blessed community of Pagans on this sacred night. By dancing the spiral dance, and sending our strength out to those in need who are willing to accept it, we seek to call out to those less fortunate, and to those who are not here in our circle. And by calling out the names of our ancestors, and asking their blessing on our fates to come, we seek to connect that which will come in our lives to that which has passed before.

## **Ritual**

### **Assemble**

Assemble in the Sanctuary for a time of quiet reflection. As you are waiting you may want to think about what you would say to the God and Goddess about your actions in the coming year, what fate you wish for yourself, and what you will do to help or honor those who are needier than yourself.

As the ritual starts you will be given a short description of what we will do, have an opportunity for a brief grounding, and then be asked to follow the Shepherds to the terrace.

If you have come in late, please join us on the terrace!

### **Terrace**

On the terrace we will chant, drum, and dance to raise our energy in preparation for ritual. Feel free to participate by drumming, dancing, or chanting:

*The Goddess is alive and magic is afoot!*

*The Goddess is alive and magic is afoot!*

### **Through the Veil**

We will pass through the veil into the sanctuary, led by the Shepherds. The Priest and Priestess will issue the challenges, and purify with water.

### **Cast the Circle**

As the Priestess is casting the circle, we ask that you call out a name of a loved one, present, absent, or deceased, whom you wish to honor, and wish were here with you in celebration.

### **Call the Quarters**

When you arrived you were given one of the Minor Arcana from the Tarot deck and a quarter call that corresponds to that card. Turn doesil (clockwise) through the directions (starting with East) as the Priest or Priestess directs, reading the your quarter call from the sheet provided when your card and its associated quarter arrives. For example, all those with the "swords" suite will read "East" when we begin to call the quarters.

### **Call Cernunnos and Cerridwen**

The Priest and Priestess will call the God and Goddess into our circle, and to attend our rite. We have chosen Cernunnos as the Horned God of the

Sabbats, and Cerridwen, keeper of the Cauldron of Life, as his consort.

During the call you will be asked to pick up the chant of their names:

*Cernunnos*

*Cerridwen*

*Cernunnos*

*Cerridwen*

### **Assemble the Talismans**

Under your seat you will find a bag containing a variety of objects. These objects will be used to assemble the talisman by placing them in the black cloth pouch provided. As the Priest or Priestess calls out each item, take it from your bag and hold it in your hand. Concentrate on it, on those who are closest to you, both living and dead, and the things that they would wish to have for you, and from you. Place those thoughts into the objects one by one as you place them into the pouch when instructed by the Priest or Priestess.

When it comes time to place the coin into the pouch, you can use the one you brought with you, or the penny that is provided in the bag. Should you have your own coin, just leave the penny in the paper bag.

During the construction you are asked to leave one item out of the pouch. You choose which item, but go ahead and place your thoughts and goals into the item. This item will be given to the God or Goddess to pass along to another participant in the ritual.

Through the exchange of our intentions, goals, and gifts, we weave the beloved community of Pagans.

### **Energy Raising Chant**

Once the talismans are assembled we will chant to raise energy. The energy will be placed into our talismans.

*Ancestors, Guardians, hear my plea,*

*Guide my fate, so mote it be!*

### **God and Goddess**

The Priest or Priestess will indicate when you can come forward to present your talisman for blessing by the God or Goddess. Please wait until the person before you has finished before beginning your journey.

When you do, give the item you kept out of your talisman to the God if you are female, or to the Goddess if you are male.

Also, you can tell the God and Goddess what you will do in the coming year that will bring honor to them, and to the memory of your ancestors.