

# Celebrating the Circle

Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
www.celebratethecircle.org

Yule/Imbolc 2004/2005

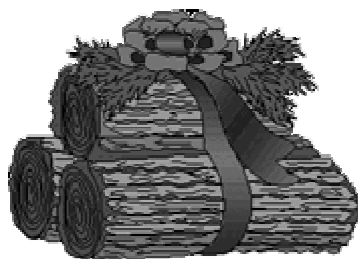
Volume 14, Issue 1

Inside...

## Poetic Yuletide

Dick Merritt

Celebrate the Circle's fourteenth consecutive Yule/Winter Solstice celebration was held in the Commons Room at the Eno River UU Fellowship on Sunday, December 19. Lance Brown and Dick Merritt, the coordinators, chose a ritual most of which had been used before.



Written by Ed Fitch in the long defunct magazine *The Crystal Well*, this ritual is one of the most poetical

rituals I know. I love his language. As an example here is how Priest #1 starts out

*At this time do we know the dark of the year.  
The season of life is past, and all is cold.  
Emptiness and bleakness are all about.  
Let us now give honor to the Triple Goddess  
That the season may be made better  
Through the birth of the Divine Child,  
The Golden Newborn Solstice Sun.*

An unusual feature of this Yule ritual was the two Priests, Lance and Dick, and no Priestess. Gender was balanced with the four female direction callers: Ashely, Becky, Steph, and Tamia.

During the ritual, the Priests asked each direction thus:

*In this the Season of the White Goddess  
And the time of the Divine Child,  
What wisdom says the Watcher of the East?*

The four responses were the basis for a rather

lengthy meditation on the season.

### East Caller:

*This is a time for entering wilderness,  
And seeking its magical strengths.  
A time for standing alone and godlike,  
And seeing all things clearly.  
It is a season of Joy!*

### South Caller:

*This is a time of active seeking,  
Both without in Nature and within oneself.  
Eagerness and resolution shall concern  
mysteries,  
And create results.  
It is a season of Courage!*

### West Caller:

*This is a time for devotion to the Way of the  
Wild Places  
And seeking the calmness of solitary  
locales.  
A time for finding understanding,  
And confiding only in trusted friends.  
It is a season of Meditation!*

### North Caller:

*This is a time to know the endurance of the  
hills,  
And to so grow in one's own inner firmness  
A time for scrupulousness and  
thoroughness  
And considering all things.  
It is a season of Confidence!*

Mulled cider and German gingerbread were shared during the ritual. We continued the celebration with our usual pot luck feast after the ritual was finished.

Besides the usual local suspects, participants included folks from Raleigh, Charlotte and Boston. It was the first Pagan ritual for one young man from Raleigh. ☾☽

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## CTC Schedule of Learning Circles and Rituals

### Celebrate the Circle

CTC is an on-going interest group of the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. CTC holds regular learning circles on Sundays, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Room 7 of the Care Building. Rituals are held for the eight sabbats, gather at 5 p.m., ritual at 5:30 p.m. For more information on events, visit the website at [www.celebratethecircle.org](http://www.celebratethecircle.org)

CTC is a chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS). For more information on CUUPS, visit the website at [www.cuups.org](http://www.cuups.org).

Celebrating the Circle is a quarterly publication of the CTC interest group. While it provides information on the activities of CTC, it also serves as a forum for members to express their views. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the CTC, its Steering Committee, CUUPS, or ERUUF and its administration.

Forward your articles, letters, rants, dates, poetry, artwork and responses to the editor, Amy Brann, at [info@celebratethecircle.org](mailto:info@celebratethecircle.org). **Deadline for the Ostara/Beltane issue is Monday, April 4, 2005.**

#### February 6 - Imbolc

Please see Page 6 for more information. Facilitated by Lance.

#### February 13 - Creating Personal Sabbat Altars: Ostara & Beltane

Decorating for the holidays is second nature in most households and many office buildings. Altars are natural extensions of that practice in our pagan tradition. Altars that change with the wheel of the year can be quietly incorporated into mundane settings - or celebrated flamboyantly in our private spaces. Bring your own ideas and altar objects with you to this circle for discussion and sharing of ideas for Ostara and Beltane altars. Facilitated by Tamia.

#### February 20 - Tarot Explorations: Minor Suites VII

We continue our studies with the Six through Ten of Wands. Wands represents enterprise, growth and development. We will discuss the attributes of the Six through Ten and share our stories of the Tarot. Please bring your Tarot decks and stories to share! Facilitated by Lance.



#### February 27 - Chants

Come join us for two hours of fun and music! We will talk about music in ritual, uses of chants, and learn some of the most common pagan chants. Facilitated by Cynthia.

#### March 6 - Healing Mother Earth

As pagans, I feel it our duty to try to help heal the damage many humans have done to Mother Earth. A discussion of spells, rituals, and mundane methods for planetary healing. Facilitated by Eliza.

#### March 13 - Magical Aspects of Crystals & Gemstones

We can use crystals and gemstones in a variety of ways, from wearing a certain stone for protection or using particular crystals in circle to focus energy. Each offers us its own unique gift which we can use in daily life and formal ritual. From the healing aspects of Agate to the illumination brought by Zircon, we will discover what many have to offer. Facilitated by Amy.

#### March 20 - Ostara

Please see Page 5 for more information. Facilitated by Tamia.

#### March 27 - Administrivia

Let your voice be heard! What subjects would you like CTC to delve into? What do you desire to teach? The place to share what you want to see taught, what you want to teach, and how the circle is celebrated.

#### April 3 - Tarot Explorations: Minor Suites VIII

We continue our studies with the Ace through Five of Pentacles. Pentacles represent the material and financial aspects of your world. We will discuss the attributes of the Ace through Five and share our stories of the Tarot. Please bring your Tarot decks and stories to share! Facilitated by Lance.

#### April 10 - Tarot & Magick in Ritual

Ever considered using your tarot deck for something besides divination? Tarot is a powerful magickal tool and can be used to enhance almost any ritual. We will discuss tarot use in spells, create tarot mandalas, and look at incorporating tarot into circle casting, cakes and ale ceremonies, and other ritual staples. Bring your tarot deck! Facilitated by Eliza.

#### April 17 - Pagan Movie Day: "Wicker Man"

Facilitated by Dick.

#### April 24 - NO LEARNING CIRCLE

We invite everyone to attend Spring Quest 05. Please visit [www.carolinaspiritquest.org](http://www.carolinaspiritquest.org) for more information.

#### May 1 - Beltane

Facilitated by Dick & Tamia.

#### May 8 - God Against the Gods

Dick Merritt will give a book report on Johnathan Kirsch book, "God Against the Gods." The book tells of the final struggle between monotheism and polytheism in the ancient world and illuminates the ancient roots of today's most bloody conflicts as well as the cherished idea of religious liberty. Facilitated by Dick.

*CTC's schedule of Learning Circles and rituals is subject to change. For the most accurate & up-to-date schedule, please visit [www.celebratethecircle.org](http://www.celebratethecircle.org) for CTC's Calendar of Events* ●●

## Lessons from Nature

Amy Brann

During CTC's trip to the NC Zoo in October of last year, I went mostly to enjoy the company and enjoy looking at the exotic animals. However, nature's full of lessons, and I got a full circle of insights that day.

In the Australian Walkabout, I was drawn to the cage with the famous Kookaburra in it, but it was the Blue-faced Honeyeater that stole my attention. These brightly colored birds perched in their tree chipped away. So often we associate birds with east. I've always thought this had more to do with the fact that birds fly in the sky, but the Honeyeater taught me something else. East is the realm of communication – and birds are exquisite communicators.



South's animals are often associated with the desert, and the Sonora Desert exhibit's Ocelot pair was a good example of South/

Fire animals. These fiery cats (no pun intended) are small but fierce. They look no larger than some housecats. Our passions can often be like that, seemingly small, but once ignited, they become unstoppable.

The NC Zoo's "Rocky Mountain Coast" is home to Sea Lions. These cute guys mesmerized children from all around, and the adults couldn't help but laughing too. Swimming with the grace so often found in sea creatures, they

played and frolicked with ease. While these animals have such a seemingly blissful life at the zoo, you learn that their counterparts in nature haven't got it that easy. That strikes a cord with me regarding the West's famous emotions. But Sea Lions adapt to their environment and keep going. Which is what I should do even when those "bad" emotions overwhelm me.

Coming around the directions we end up in the North - the home of Bear. The NC Zoo's Black Bears gave a particularly adorable performance that October afternoon. Sunning on rocks, lumbering around – they seemed very "bear like" in my mind – slow and solid. However, we were all given an extra treat when one clambered down to the pool of water and sat there playing with a toy. Reminded me that the Earth element isn't all about "work" – it includes relaxation too. Work hard, play harder.

Oh, and next time someone calls the Stag God by screeching like a train stopping on rusty rail road tracks, chances are, the person is just remembering the awesome roar of the American Elk. It was mating season when we trekked to the Prairie. The sound of the male and the sight of his impressive antlers, is something I'm not going to forget soon.

There are so many lessons we can learn from Mother Nature, if we just stop and listen. And the NC Zoo's only a couple hours away and a great spot to learn quite a few. ☉

## A Thriving Community

Editorial by Cynthia Campbell

Recently on email lists and discussion groups there has been a sense of depression. People wondering if the pagan community is dying, people complaining that they can't find open groups and events, people asking where the leaders are nowadays.

My response to that is, "Right here!!" I have been truly baffled by those comments. Our area is lucky to be one of the most active in the country. Our Pagan Pride Day sees several hundred people each year, even when it rains. We have many open events every month sponsored by Church of the Earth and Sacred Spiral in Raleigh, and Celebrate the Circle and the School of Living Paganism in Durham. Small groups meet for more focused study or worship – most started by people who found each other at the open events. Central N.C.

Pagans is an organization helping to network all our groups. And we have Spirit Quest hosting gatherings twice a year. This is not a description of a dying community!

All anyone has to do is reach out and volunteer their time to whatever organization calls them. The organizations DO exist, the leaders are already in place. And they would be even more successful if they had more real support from the community. We need people to ATTEND those great events we hear about, give a few hours of our time, actually offer to present that great workshop we've been thinking about doing, put our dollars into what we feel is important. If we really want an active, vibrant pagan community then it takes EVERYONE's participation. ☉

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### Cakes & Ale: Stollen & Glögg



Brought to you by  
Linda Huegel  
Kitchen Witch

#### Fruit Stollen

Mix and set aside the following six ingredients:

- 1/2 c. blanched almonds (chopped). I used toasted blanched almonds.
- 1/4 c. walnuts (chopped and optional)
- 1 1/2 c. raisins
- 1 c. candied red cherries (cut in thirds)
- 1 c. candied pineapple or diced citron
- 1 Tbsp. grated fresh lemon peel (colored part only)

For bread:

- 1 c. milk
- 1 stick unsalted butter, set at room temperature for several hours
- 2 Tbsp. brewer's yeast or 2 packets of dry yeast
- 1/2 c. lukewarm water
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 5-6 cups flour (includes rolling it out)
- 2 eggs (well beaten)

Scald milk in double boiler until a thin film appears. Soften yeast in water with 1/2 tsp. sugar added, until yeast is frothy and softened. Into a large bowl, put the 1/2 c. sugar, the butter and the salt. Pour scalded milk over ingredients in bowl and stir until butter is completely melted. Blend in 1 cup of the flour and the nutmeg. Beat until smooth. Stir in yeast, mixing well. Add about 3 cups of the flour and beat until smooth; then add the beaten eggs and mix well. Stir in fruit-nut mixture. Mix in enough remaining flour to make a soft dough.

Turn dough onto a lightly floured board and allow it to REST about 5 or 10 minutes. Knead dough until smooth and elastic for 8 minutes. Place in greased bowl. Cover bowl with wax paper and a kitchen towel and let stand in a warm place until doubled in bulk (about 1 1/2 hours). Punch down dough and turn onto lightly floured board. Divide into two portions. Shape each into a smooth ball. Allow to REST for 5 to 10 minutes.

Roll out each ball into a 12" long roll about one inch thick. Brush with melted butter and fold over. Press the fold down firmly with palm of hand. Lightly grease two large baking sheets or jelly roll pans. Place one Stollen on each. Brush tops with melted butter. Cover with wax paper and towel again and let rise for about one hour or so. Bake at 325 for 35-40 minutes. Test with a cake tester. If it smells good and is slightly browned, you will also have an indication that it is done. Mine took 35 minutes and I rotated them from top to bottom about mid-way of the cooking time.

Cool for 30 minutes. Then mix 1 cup of sifted confectioner's sugar with 1/2 tsp. butter and 2 Tbsp. of hot water. Stir, then drizzle over each Stollen. Enjoy with a cup of hot chocolate.

#### Swedish Glögg

- 1.5 litre bottle of inexpensive dry red wine
- 1.5 litre bottle of inexpensive American port
- 1 bottle of inexpensive brandy or aquavit
- 10 inches of stick cinnamon
- 1 Tablespoon cardamom seeds
- 2 dozen whole cloves
- Peel of one orange
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 cup blanched almonds
- 2 cups sugar
- Garnish with the peel of another orange

Pour the red wine and port into a covered stainless steel or porcelain kettle. Add the cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, orange peel, raisins, and almonds. Warm gently, but do not boil. Boiling will burn off the alcohol.



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The  
Mailing  
Address  
Goes  
Here

## Imbolc ~ Manifesting Our New Beginnings

Sunday, February 6, 2005, at 5 PM  
Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



At Yule we gathered to celebrate the birth of the Divine Sun Child, honored the shortest day and longest night of the year, and explored Joy, Courage, Meditation, and Confidence. Now Imbolc approaches and the Sun Child climbs higher, making each day longer than the last. Our thoughts turn from Winter's darkness and quiet to consider our work for the coming year. What idea's came away with you from Yule? What work is before you?

Imbolc is the time of new beginnings. To our Northern European ancestors, it marked the beginning of the lambing season and the arrival of the 'new milk' in the ewes and the beginning of the end of Winter. Today, many Pagan traditions initiate new members and/or confer new degrees or honors at Imbolc. CTC honors this tradition by providing an opportunity to accept a Challenge from the Goddess/God.

We will invoke Brighid to join our circle as we gather to celebrate the growth of the Sun Child, honor those who accepted Challenges in the past year, hear those with new Challenges for the coming year, and bless the tools of our Crafts. Please bring any candles, tools, and other items you wish to be blessed for the coming year!

Those who have accepted Challenges during past CTC Imbolc rituals may speak of their accomplishments and those wishing to accept new Challenges may do so. What inspiration came to you at Yule? What seed of an idea or plan was planted deep in your mind, ready for nurturing and growth in the coming seasons? This is an opportunity to announce new beginnings, or continuation of old tasks, and ask for the help and support of our whole community and the Gods in your endeavors.

Our Lady Brighid is the Patron Goddess of the Muse, the Forge, and the Hearth and watches over all who Create, Craft, and Nurture. If you wish it, you may ask a Boon of Her during the ritual. A gift of the Goddess, be it large or small, that you desire for yourself.

We will gather at 5:00PM on February 6th, in the Commons Room of the CARE Building at the ERUUF with the ritual beginning at 5:30PM. Directions to ERUUF can be found on our website at [www.celebratethecircle.org/directions](http://www.celebratethecircle.org/directions). Everyone is welcome to attend!

We will feast after the ritual so please bring a dish to share. There are many wonderful foods associated with Imbolc and I encourage you to explore some of the links mentioned on our website's announcement and bring something special for the feasting! The Lamb's Stew from the first link will be provided!