



# Hearthstone Community Church, Inc.

## "The Full Moon Folk"



### SEPTEMBER 29, 2017 OPEN FULL MOON

Hearthstone meets the Friday before or the Friday of the Full Moon in the Library Room at the **Althea Center for Engaged Spirituality, 1400 Williams St., Denver, CO**. The Althea Center is easy to find, exactly four blocks east of our previous location. Enter through the Main Door at the corner of Williams St. and 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. **The door opens at 7:00 pm, and we must lock the door at 7:30 to secure the building.** Please be prompt as we don't want you to be locked out! This month's ritual is Friday, September 29, 2017.

The Denver Celtic Women's Circle will be officiating at the Open Full Moon on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

In these difficult times we see alienation and dissent in our country, our community, even within our own paths or sects. While growth will come from our differences, there is a great deal of strength in our unity, and a great value in holding our community together through tempestuous passages.

We can take refuge in the Celtic values of our predecessors; hospitality, truth, right judgement; as we navigate our differences and celebrate our connections.

This ritual will invoke the highest values of Celtic practice in the words of the Morrigan, to provide a structure within which we can find our spiritual center and offer each other mutual respect.

### GREETINGS

I often get requests for information from students taking classes on comparative religions or sociology. I do my best to answer them with kindness and as thoroughly as I can. We also get requests from people writing articles for various magazines. This last month, we got one of each.

The student almost certainly took her questions directly from the syllabus and it is the one that truly amazes me. These projects always force me to re-examine my belief system.

For example, this is the first question – and my answer. Not the best answer, but it is a start:

**1) What is "religion"? How is it different/similar to "philosophy", ideology, cults, and superstition?**

*1. a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.*

*Dictionary.com*

Yes, Wicca is a religion, albeit not a homogenous one. While a specific Wiccan group may have the same basic practices, each person has his/her own vision of deity. It may be individual gods/goddesses for different elements of life. It may be the concept that all gods/goddesses are facets of the same jewel. Either way, most Wiccans are polytheists.

Additionally, Wicca is an initiatory mystery religion. Many details of the beliefs and practices are not communicated until after an initiation and are then bound to secrecy by oath. This is not because they are bad, or even dangerous; but because disseminating the information may lessen its power.

**Religion** also has a legal definition by virtue of Supreme Court rulings: [http://www.religiousfreedom.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=431](http://www.religiousfreedom.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=431). All that is needed for a belief or set of beliefs to be recognized as a religion is that it/they be sincerely held and that the believer consider them to be religious. ReligiousTolerance has a short article on this subject at: [http://www.religioustolerance.org/wic\\_rel.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/wic_rel.htm)

**Philosophy** tends to be more academic. It's a system of thought. Many neo-pagan religions share a philosophy of multiple deities; that does not make them Wicca – which is a specific subset of neo-pagan religious thought.

**Ideology** is more of a political or economic term. For instance, small “r” republicanism or small “d” democracy.

All of these terms have at their core the concept of belief.

A **cult** also has belief at its core, but has aspects of hierarchical control. Isaac Bonewits, a founder of the Druid tradition An Driaocht Fein, developed the Advanced Bonewits' Cult Danger Evaluation Frame (ABCDEF) to rate what may or may not be a cult. Keep in mind that most organized religions have some aspects of control in them, but cults may take this to an extreme state. See <http://www.religioustolerance.org/bonewits-cult-danger-evaluation-frame.htm> for Bonewits' frame.

While Wicca has been called a “cult” by some folk, Wiccan traditions generally rate pretty low on the cult scales.

**Superstition.** Most religion could be called superstition – the magical thought concept that right belief or actions will affect the physical world. I have some very dear friends who are atheists who consider any belief in deity a superstition.

That was just the first question; there are 19 more. I haven't finished my (her?) homework yet, but because I am something of a meanie, I suggested that she read a couple of books about Wicca and gave her some names. After all, it's the beginning of the school year. It's also Mabon, and isn't learning a big part of balance?

Blessings,  
–Catherine

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## HEARTHSTONE RITUALS

Remember, please, that Hearthstone doesn't expect everyone to enter in Perfect Love and Perfect Trust, as there are people you don't know there, but to enter with a willing heart and an open mind, and leave your differences at the door.

Some traditions are more controversial than others, or may contain a component that confuses or disturbs someone attending an Open Full Moon. It is one of the risks of exploring different traditions. Should anyone be uncomfortable, unsettled, or upset about any ritual presented by Hearthstone, please discuss it with the ritual leaders or one of the Board members (Catherine, Arynne, Morgan, Amy, Cynthia, and Deb) so that we may hopefully resolve and heal your concern.

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## THANKS AND A TIP OF THE HAT

Hearthstone thanks the Circle of Light and Shadow for a timely and meaningful rite at our Open Full Moon in early Sept. HPS Wellyssa led the rite with participation from her coven and students. Lupine led us in grounding, including the beautiful affirmation "I rest in my Center,

bringing in strength and great peace." After Circle was cast, Wellyssa invoked both White Tara and Green Tara and explained that Tara worked for the wellbeing of all humanity, and in this ritual we would petition Tara to aid us in seeking peace in our world. White and green candles were lit on the altar. Warm tea was poured for all participants, and we settled comfortably surrounded by Tara's white light.

We were asked to visualize someone with whom we have conflict, wrap them and us in Tara's white light, then sip tea while meditating on peace surrounding both us and them. When we completed this we refilled our tea cups, then a basket was brought around with slips of paper with names of world leaders of countries in conflict. Each of us selected a paper, then we again meditated on wrapping that leader in white light and asking Tara to bring that leader inner peace, clarity, and a strong desire to find the path to bring his/her country and its people to peace.

Thank you, Wellyssa and Circle of Light and Shadow, for bringing a vision of peace to all of us in both our own worlds and the larger world around us. So mote it be! Peace and blessings to all!

---Arynnne

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## ON DONATIONS

Hearthstone's primary expense is leasing the space for our monthly Open Full Moon rituals. Your donations to Hearthstone and other Pagan organizations make the difference between failing and thriving... and reassure the organizers that our efforts are of value to you. We encourage you to donate to Hearthstone or to the organization of your choice.

We appreciate that many of you do donate to Hearthstone. Thank you! **We ask that you please give what you can to support the work and service of the church to the community. The more you can spare, the longer we will be around, and the more we can help those who need it. We will keep Hearthstone Community Church, Inc. running as long as possible, and we need your support to continue to serve the community.**

We don't collect at the door, and no one will be turned away for not having a donation. However, we *suggest* a donation of 5 to 10 dollars per person. If you can't afford it, you are still welcome. If you can afford more, we'll be delighted to accept it.

Hearthstone is registered as a church and your donations to Hearthstone are **tax deductible**. If you wish, you can write a check so you can keep track of your donations.

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## NEW LOCATION FOR HEARTHSTONE OPEN FULL MOON RITUALS

Hearthstone is now meeting in the Library Room at the Althea Center for Engaged Spirituality, 1400 Williams St., Denver, CO. It's simple to find, exactly four blocks east from our previous location. NE corner of East 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Williams St. There are two small parking lots on the north and east sides of the building. Enter through the Main Doors. Because there is no building representative present, we must lock the doors at 7:30 PM, so please arrive between 7:00-7:30! Come join us! We will meet for OFMs at the Althea Center for the remainder of 2017.

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## FREE Cat Spay/Neuter Surgeries

The Dumb Friends League is offering free cat spay/neuter surgeries regardless of income. Visit [ddfl.org/catclinic](http://ddfl.org/catclinic) to schedule your appointment. Hearthstone supports animal welfare and an end to pet overpopulation. Thank you! Please Adopt, don't Buy your next pet!

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## Culture Clash

I have been watching a culture clash in the Celtic path community between practitioners who feel “called,” rely heavily on unverified personal gnosis (UPG) and who approach deities from a universal perspective, clashing with practitioners who study the context deeply, seek out original sources, and spend a significant time in academic pursuit. Insults of “nasty pretentiousness” are being hurled in response to insults like “sermonizing.” It is painful to see the infighting, but I think that this is a natural result of the seismic changes occurring for our community and I think that the only way to weather them is to rely on strong and honorable values.

The last century or two of neo-Paganism arose from a desire to recapture something we sensed belonged to us from before Christianity. Courageous souls reached out for the evidence at hand and filled in the gaps with imagination. The results were bold, freeing, and frequently flawed. The truth of our preChristian existence was mostly limited, in the hands of scholars, untranslated. When people in our community set themselves up as experts there was no way to evaluate their claims; a situation that can lead equally to freedom and creativity or abuse and dishonesty.

Our rebellion from the ubiquitousness of Christianity led the formation of a new common culture, with shared ideas, songs, practices, some of which glossed over the differences in the many traditions that were covered. The fact that most of us could never really know the truth about ancient practices opened up the idea that no one needed to know the truth about ancient practices and that all paths were the right path. These practices and values have been in place now for the space of several generations. They provided the basis for community, for industries, for human connection, and, in no small part, for acceptance by the larger community.

But the internet has really changed all that.

There are translations now online, for documents that, in the past, only scholars saw. We can compare ideas, draw our own conclusions. We can embrace or reject “experts” with so much more personal knowledge and power than what was available in the past. We can learn languages that, in my childhood, we would never have had a chance to hear spoken.

And this presents a challenge to the existing neo-Pagan culture that has brought us so far and provided us with so much good.

For some of us, we are ending the time of the supremacy of Pagan universalism where you can choose any “Lord” and cognate “Lady” for your standard altar set up; where there is no difference between celebrating the Greek pantheon or the Germanic pantheon; where all Goddesses are The Goddess, and any God can be The God, ever engaged in the same spiral of courtship and consort; a unified, codified practice.

For some of us, we are entering a time when you can no longer invoke the Morrigan but not know anything about Irish mythology or landscape; can no longer be a part of a Sekhmet group with no Egyptian ancestry, no knowledge of Egyptian history, can't find Egypt on a map; can no longer claim Durga or Kali without any understanding of the Devi Gita or the Devi Mahatmaya, no clarity on Shahkti Sadhana, no understanding of the divergence from the traditional Vedas.

For some of us, we are leaving a time when we accept the words of three wildly different European languages as a unified set of holidays for the Pagan year, when we believe that all cultures

have a Maid-Mother-Crone, when we feel free to use the images of any ancient cultures to speak in the words of our own modern imagination. We know too much now.

For some of us it is immensely satisfying that we are in a time where incredibly detailed and esoteric knowledge is available to any serious seeker, regardless of location. We are in a time when we can see the stones of Stonehenge, the kerbstones of Knowth, the light of the sunrise at the equinox as it creates a golden spear across the inner circle at Dun Aengus, all without leaving our homes, even by just searching on a phone, one that we have in our pocket.

But more than that, and may I posit, better than that, we are standing on the shoulders a new, unique and wholly modern religion that has as much validity as any practiced by our predecessors, and one which deserves our respect. It's a religion where you can choose any "Lord" and cognate "Lady" for your standard altar set up; where there is no difference between celebrating the Greek pantheon or the Germanic pantheon; where all Goddesses are The Goddess, and any God can be The God, ever engaged in the same spiral of courtship and consort; a unified, codified practice. It is not to be sniveled at or rejected because it is, with all of its flaws, a genuine religion providing, as any religion does, comfort, strength and guidance to thousands. And we are better off because it exists.

There doesn't need to be any name calling as we sort out this new state of affairs. We just have to get back to the basics of our highest values. In the spirit of hospitality, especially online, where facial expressions and vocalizations are absent, we need to assume good will and type out to each other as we would a good friend, however misguided we may feel that friend to be. This new state of affairs doesn't represent an end to our community or the replacement of actual religious experience with dusty academics, but an opportunity for growth. Also the seeming refusal of our community members to embrace all this exciting, new information about the past isn't some cynical form of dishonesty, but a continuation of the foundation that provides for our current various practices. Now more than ever, we need to mind our manners.

I have a book, "Anam Cara," by John O'Donohue which annoys the crap out of me. The writer fails to disclose that he grew up in England, not Ireland and that all of his "wisdom" is secondhand at best, nonsense at worst. The title of the book is written in incorrect Irish and doesn't mean what he asserts that it means. It is a wildly popular source of misinformation and bad Irish. Every time I'm ready to throw it out and wonder why I still have it, I flip open the cover and read the hand-written inscription, from one woman to another, which indicates, in its text, the long standing spiritual friendship between them, and between them and the original owner of this item. It speaks to years of love and shared experiences. It gives testament to the most important elements of a spiritual life, a life that included this trite little book. It humbles me and I put the damned thing back on the shelf.

No matter what we believe, no matter what philosophy holds our highest esteem, is most right in our eyes, there is nothing more important than protecting for each other the sanctity of our own individual lives of faith and friendship. When there are two things in front of you and one of them is alive, the thing that is alive is the thing that matters. We matter. We matter to each other and we need each other.

It's time to find the ways in which we can maintain our alliances and our mutual respect. In spite of the thousands of people who find their faith in Paganism we are a tiny community. It is only through our alliances that we will survive.

May I suggest that if we cannot honor our immediate spiritual ancestors, some of whom are still alive and have provided much of the freedom we now enjoy, then we are not really honoring our ancient ancestors who are conveniently lost in the mists of time and thus not nearly as challenging, contradictory, and annoying as the real humans on whose shoulders we stand.

Peace of the Mountains to you!

*--Paulie Rainbow*

Founder: Denver Celtic Women's Circle

Member: Celtic Druid Temple of Ireland

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## **At what point does it become “selling my soul”?**

While I generally claim not to have ethics because it is easier than having to say, “My ethics bear no resemblance to societal norms” every time I make a cruel decision, every once in a while I am reminded that there is something that might pass for ethics lurking in the depths of my deprived soul. These moments are always alarming and troublesome to me. Let me tell you about my latest ethical outbreak.

Recently, I did a fundraiser on Facebook to raise some money to feed my cats until an insurance payout could be issued to my wife. This naturally came with all the baggage from my childhood about not asking for help—it is wrong to beg for money. Well, other people can beg, but I can't. It was one of my mother's rules; she liked to project an image that our family was better off than we really were, which I assume ties into all the wonderful myths we have in this country about poverty and the poor.

I didn't have high hopes for the fundraiser; mainly because I am not comfortable asking for money. Or advertising my own stuff. Or coping with the emotional issues that cluster around the issues of money. At some point in my childhood, I took on the financial issues of my family and simply, never learned to let go of the worst of the baggage, including the idea that it is a sin to beg for money and to self-promote.

I was pleasantly surprised by the response to my fundraiser. There were some small donations, both through the Facebook fundraiser and through direct aid (some people sent me cat food directly from Amazon). And I did get enough donations to meet my goal (which was just enough to enable me and my wife to keep feeding the cats until the insurance check was issued).

But the identity of one of the donors did surprise me. As my regular readers know, I have made enemies—mainly through the fact that I openly talk about the danger signs of bad occult leadership, both in this column and on my blog. Some of these enemies have been enemies for close to two decades. So it really surprised me when one of them donated half of the money I needed to raise.

Cue the little voice that says, “Should you really accept this money?” I told the little voice to shut up. I also told it that due to the way the fundraiser was set up, I couldn't figure out how to refuse a specific donation...that and I was too lazy to write this particular enemy a check to refund their donation. Besides, if my enemy really wanted to buy my cats some cat food, who was I to refuse? After all, my cats took a vote and decided that they really did not care where the money came from to buy the cat food as long as it was tasty cat food.

The little voice also asked what did my enemy want. After dealing with this particular person online for nearly two decades, I knew that this person never does anything without an ulterior motive. I have always been careful to never give this person an inch, for I have watched this person try to turn inches into unconditional surrenders when other people showed weakness. At the very least, I assumed that he wanted to look like one of the good guys, the gentle father to the greater Golden Dawn community.

Turns out that he wanted a little bit more than just a few public good guy brownie points. One morning I opened Facebook to discover that he sent me a private message. It was an offer to give me some ghostwriting work at a rate that I was attempted to accept...if I didn't already know

what type of weasel he was (maybe I should not call him a weasel because that is an insult to weasels—but I am at a loss to name a single species that deserves to be associated with him, so we are just going to have to go with weasel). On one hand, the extra money would be nice...

...on the other hand, I spent a large amount of time advising people to avoid this person and his Order.

At this point, the few ethics I had started to argue with the old rule that governs the self-employed desperate writer: A job is a job— money is money; and one should always accept writing work when it is offered. My keen business sense kicked in and sided with my ethics, expounding upon how this ghostwriting gig was a way to pay silence from a critic; and that sure as the goddess made cute puppies, my enemy would eventually use the gig to force me to take back all the bad things I have said about him over the years. My keen business sense concluded that no amount of money would actually make working for this individual acceptable, besides there were some projects that I had planned that not only made accepting such an offer a conflict of interest, it was also potentially cutting my own throat if I was serious about finishing those projects.

I will admit at this point in the internal argument, I would have picked up the phone and called Alia. She had watched me deal with this person before, and had a good sense of his worth. Alas! I settled for talking to my wife about my conflicted feelings about this issue.

Now, I have done some ghostwriting over the years. I have also written a lot of stuff under pen names I will never admit to. Some rather dubious stuff. All in the name of making a dollar-pound-yen...and whatever other currency units are accepted at my bank. So it is not like I have standards. I am well aware of the fact that I do not write literature.

On the other hand, this would not be the first ghostwriting job in the occult community that I have turned down. Typically, the simple fact that I ask how much I will be paid is enough to turn down a job. I kicked around doubling the quote and asking for more money for the task; but even then, it sounded like digging latrines would be more pleasant.

And there was the simple fact that the task that they wanted me to perform, writing personal “benefits that studying Golden Dawn provides” stories, went directly against my advice that I always give about this person: you are better off without any support and guidance in the Golden Dawn system—this person is simply trouble. This is advice that I give even after deciding that I was happy never having to deal with a large group ever again (my upper limit is a dozen people—after that, my patience simply runs out).

Therefore, my ethics say to walk away from the job offer. But there is a magical aspect to consider which will be the subject of next month’s newsletter column...

### **Morgan Drake Eckstein**

Morgan Drake Eckstein writes about Golden Dawn, Wicca and other mystery traditions on his blog at: [Musings from the pen: The writer blog of Morgan Drake Eckstein](#); [Gleamings from the Dawn: Thoughts about Golden Dawn from one of its members](#) and [Book Reviews by Morgan: My archive for the book reviews that I have done](#)

*Editor’s note: As usual, the foregoing column reflects only the views of Morgan and are not necessarily those of Hearthstone or any of its other Board members. Please direct all comments to Morgan.*

### **[Morgan’s wife, Khari, sells mundane pottery on Etsy at:**

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/celticsouljewelry> and witchy pottery at: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Khariswiccantreasure>

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## 7th Annual Orpheus MeadFest

Taste, savor, and buy mead from Colorado's best mead makers at a unique mead tasting to benefit *Orpheus Pagan Chamber Choir*.

Saturday, September 30, 4 – 7 PM

The Tears McFarlane House

1290 Williams Street, at Cheesman Park

\$25 per person or 2 for \$45 (online only)

For complete info and tickets: [www.orpheuspcc.org](http://www.orpheuspcc.org).

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## TURTLE MONKEY CHILDREN'S BOOKS



### Introducing the Turtle Monkey children's book series.

Turtle Monkey and Mama Monkey are the only green monkeys in the village. Turtle Monkey has lots of gas. She received Fuzztastic, her cat, as a Yule gift. Fuzztastic also has lots of gas—but he's afraid of it! Turtle Monkey spends most of her time outside when she isn't in school. Turtle Monkey's Uncle Red and Aunt Tawny live a ferry's ride away, and her Grandma and Grandpa live at the beach. Aunt Fuchsia and Uncle Titian are honorary family members that live down the street from Turtle Monkey and her mother. Turtle Monkey and her friends Coco Monkey, Cap Monkey, and Squirrel Monkey hide in the forest when Little Ape and his friend, Orangutan, are outside. Little Ape is mean, and Turtle Monkey and her friends avoid him as much as possible. Turtle Monkey is mischievous, this gets her into many awkward situations for which she has to think and talk her way out of. There are certain situations that Turtle Monkey cannot talk her way out of, and the results are hilarious. Her hobbies include hunting fairies, catching her own pets, and meeting new friends. Visit our website to sign up for our newsletter at [www.turtlemonkeybooks.com](http://www.turtlemonkeybooks.com)

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## **EARTH TEMPLE**

Earth Temple meets at Full Moon Books and Event Center, at 9106 W. 6th Ave. in Lakewood, for New/Dark Moon ritual work. We normally begin our rituals right on the dot at 7:30 PM. Join our Meetup Group for reminders and information about specific rituals: [www.meetup.com/EarthTemple](http://www.meetup.com/EarthTemple).

Ritual dates 2017

October 21  
November 18  
December 23

*---Chris, Dara, and Michelle  
the Earth Temple steering committee*

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## **WHOM TO CONTACT**

For Pagan or Wiccan clergy or for any other Hearthstone business, please contact Catherine by phone or email, or contact Arynne by email. Catherine's phone number is 303-886-7067, and her e-mail address is [fionnula.harp@gmail.com](mailto:fionnula.harp@gmail.com). If you would like to officiate at a future Open Full Moon, please contact Arynne at [ArynneD@aol.com](mailto:ArynneD@aol.com)

Hearthstone Community Church has an active website at <http://hearthstone.fnorky.com> where our dates and newsletters are posted monthly. You can contact us through our web site as well. Hearthstone also has a Facebook page.

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## **GUEST COLUMNS?**

If you have something to say, and are willing to let Catherine edit it slightly, (generally for grammar and spelling: Catherine has been known to grammar-check television commercials) please feel free to submit your writing to [fionnula.harp@gmail.com](mailto:fionnula.harp@gmail.com). Content will not be edited. We can usually make room for more voices. We appreciate our contributors!

This newsletter is for Hearthstone Community Church, Inc. of Denver, Colorado. Editor and Publisher: Catherine Mock.
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## **Hearthstone Open Full Moon Dates 2017**

**At the Althea Center, 14<sup>th</sup> Ave & Williams St:**

September 29

November 3

December 1

December 29