

## Welcome to the Season of Increasing Light!

We have been traveling in the dark but the light is increasing. If you look closely, you may notice the days are beginning to get longer. As I write this, many areas in other parts of the country are covered with snow from one of the worst winter storms. People are digging out so they can resume their lives – with work and school or activities. Here in Florida, we have been colder than average. I have been worried about my Monarch caterpillars. The frost has wilted the leaves of the only two milkweed plants I have left. On one plant, there are 20 caterpillars and 8 on the other. There is not enough food to sustain all of them and I know some will die. This saddens me but I know there is nothing I can do for them. Milkweed is their only host plant. In this weather, it is hard to come by. The caterpillars have eaten the leaves on the rest of my milkweed plants. I hope our winter will be over soon and the plants will grow new leaves.



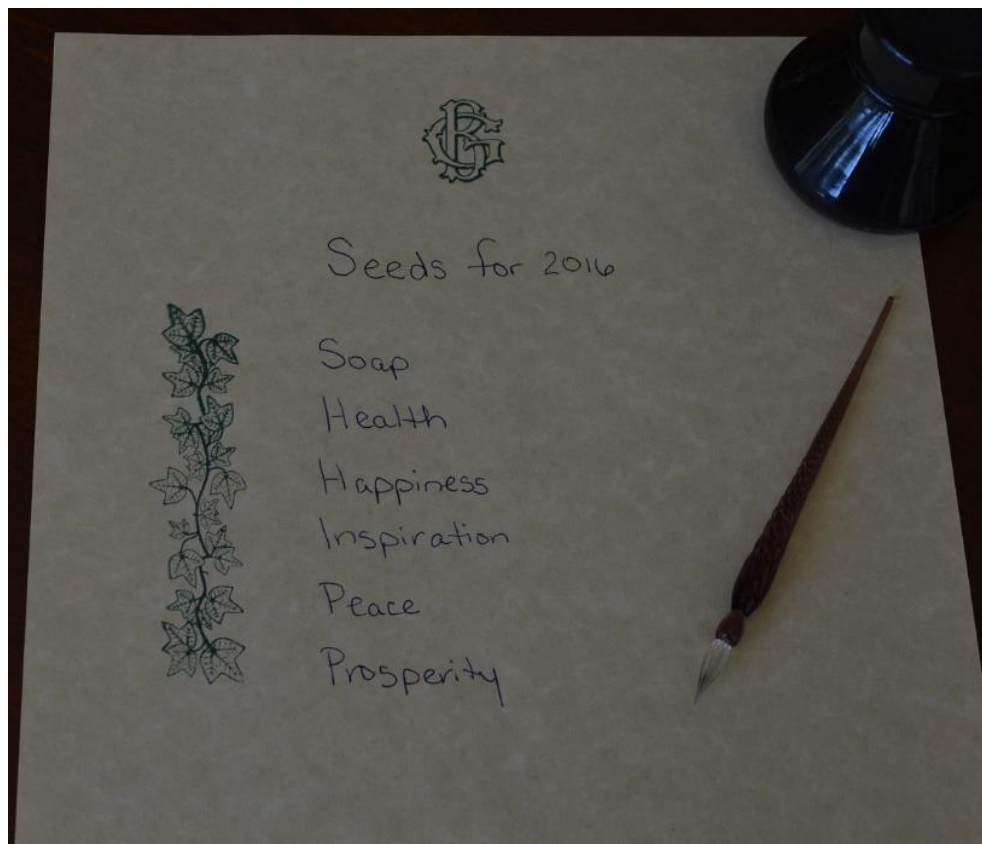
In the Dianic tradition, we honor the quickening in the belly. We have spent some time in the dark and now wait for the increasing light. Those seeds too are waiting in the dark and it is time to bring them out, soon to be planted.



It does not have to be a physical seed. It can be an idea, thought or project. If there is something you have wanted to try, now is the time to do it. It is a time for new beginnings. Do not be afraid. You only need to believe in yourself to begin. I have spent some time thinking about what I want to start and realized I already had an idea. I have said 2016 is the year of soap so I will make it happen.

I have taken steps to become more successful by registering for a conference

and I will be taking classes to improve my knowledge. I hope you will also have the courage to begin something new.



Blessings of the Imbolc season,

Dawn

*Photos by Dawn Thomas*

*Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with her husband. Other book reviews can be found on her Blog: <http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>*

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## Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes

**Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more.**

**\*Ask Your Mama™**

**Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Spirituality and Didn't Know Who to Ask™**

**by**

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A Question of Moon Names

Dear Mama Donna,

I have noticed that when you refer to the new and full moons, you call them by very colorful names, for example the Harvest Moon, the Beaver Moon, etc. What do these names mean? What do they signify? Where do they come from? Could you kindly explain?

Moon Watcher in Massachusetts

Dear Moon Watcher,

You are in good company. People everywhere have always watched the moon, tracked its path, plotted its course, and counted its cycle of eternal return. Originally, the moon delineated the parameters of time, dividing the year into moonths.

Each new moon has usually been associated with and named for common seasonal phenomena — attributes of nature, animal traits, or human activities — which somehow relate to that particular lunar period. How the moonths are named says a lot about a people, revealing specific details of environment, weather conditions, seasonal occupations, diet, and belief systems.

For example, the twelve moonth names of the Omaha, dwellers of the Great Plains and woodlands of the Missouri River valley in what is now Nebraska, clearly indicate that they were hunters, focused as they are primarily on animals: Moon In Which The Snow Drifts Into The Tents Of The Hoga, Moon In Which The Geese Come Home, Little Frog Moon, Moon In Which Nothing Happens, Moon In Which They Plant, Moon In Which The Buffalo Bulls Hunt The Cows, Moon In Which The Buffalo Bellow, Moon In Which The Elk Bellow, Moon In Which The Deer Paw The Earth, Moon In Which The Deer Rut, Moon In Which The Deer Shed Their Antlers, Moon In Which The Little Black Bears Are Born.

The calendar of their neighbors about five hundred miles to the north, the Ojibway, reflects a completely different lifestyle. Here, along the heavily forested waterways surrounding the western Great Lakes, agriculture was impractical and large prey scarce. The people thrived on the wild fruits and grains that they gathered. Long Moon, Spirit Moon, Moon Of The Suckers, Moon Of The Crust On The Snow, Moon Of The Breaking Of Snowshoes, Moon Of The Flowers And Blooms, Moon Of Strawberries, Moon Of Raspberries, Moon Of Gathering Wild Rice, Moon Of The Falling Leaves, Moon Of Freezing, Little Moon Of The Spirit.

The Ugric Ostiak, a group living further north still on the vast, empty tundra of northern Siberia has produced moon names which reflect their chilly existence. Trees seem to have been prized for their rarity and the importance of their wood — less for fuel than for shelter for themselves and their horses. The list also suggests that fish and game birds are import food staples. Spawning Month, Pine-Sapwood Month, Birch-Sapwood Month, Salmon-Weir Month, Month Of Hay Harvest, Ducks-And-Geese-Go-Away Month, Naked Tree Month, Pedestrian Month, Month Of Going Home While Ice Still Remains, Month Of Going On Horseback, Great Month, Little Winter-Ridge Month, Windy Month Of Crows.

Compared with these, the English language month names fall flat. We have inherited our months intact from the Roman calendar, reformed and instituted by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C. The names signify very little to us anymore, and are, as far as most of us know, totally devoid of meaningful allusions to the natural world.

*Januarius*, the New Year month was named for the god, Janus, who looks both backward and forward in time. *Februarius* was for Februus, god who oversees the cleansing of sins. *Martius* was for the war god, Mars, perhaps in deference to March's stormy weather. *Aprilis*, from the Latin, *aperire*, means "to open" or "to bud." *Maius* was in honor of Maia, Goddess of Green Growth. *Junius*, from the Latin, *junores*, "young people," might refer to the fertility festivals celebrated around the summer solstice.

*Julius* was named for Julius Caesar, author of the calendar and *Augustus* was for Augustus, Caesar's grandnephew and heir. As if the cup of inspiration had run dry after allocating the eighth name, the remaining months were given numbers which, having once belonged to a previous and outdated calendar, weren't even correct. The ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth months, *September*, *October*, *November* and *December*, actually mean seven, eight, nine and ten! Boring.

Of all possible moon names, the ones that make the most sense to me living in the Northeast United States are the descriptive names given to the moon months by the Iroquois peoples — the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora — the original inhabitants of the heart of New York State from Albany to Buffalo. The seasonal changes that they describe are completely recognizable. What do I know, after all, about Julius Caesar? Let alone when the salmon spawns, the kangaroo whelps, the crocodiles lay, or when the yams are ripe?

The Wolf Moon, The Snow Moon, when the Winter is long;  
The Sap Moon, The Pink Moon, when Spring rises up;

The Flower Moon, The Strawberry Moon, when the world is in blossom;  
The Harvest Moon, The Hunter Moon, when Autumn settles in;  
The Beaver Moon, The Cold Moon, during the darkest days. Yep!

There are many books that list Native American moon names. Find the original moon names for your geographic vicinity. Most likely, they will still resonate for your bio-region. If they speak to you, use them. If not, invent your own. Just look up, look around, set your mind on the moon and open your heart to the cycle of the seasons. Meaningful names will suggest themselves.

xxMama Donna

### Virtual Moonths

We in the United States have, for all intents and purposes, have evolved a contemporary cultural calendar for ourselves; one that we all recognize; one that bespeaks the ways of our society. These, as I see it, are the moonths we *really* observe:

**January** — The Month When Grown Men Compete for Dominance by Fighting Over the Inflated Skin of a Pig

**February** — The Month When We Become Sentimental and Maudlin About Love and Work Ourselves into a Fit of Depression

**March** — The Month When We Stand Eggs on End in Order to Remember That We Are Part of This Planet

**April** — The Month When We Are Coerced into Contributing to the War Chest

**May** — The Month That Ends in a Three Day Shopping Frenzy in Honor of Our Dead Soldiers

**June** — The Month When the Children Are Set Free

**July** — The Month When We Applaud Bombs Bursting in Air

**August** — The Month When We Suddenly Remember All the Warnings About The Greenhouse Effect

**September** — The Month When We Buy New Notebooks and Set Off to School in the Spirit of Renewed Determination

**October** — The Month When We Worry About Our Children Eating Candy with Razor Blades or Poison in It

**November** — The Month When We Stuff Ourselves Silly

**December** — The Month When We Spend Too Much Money and Drink Too Much Egg Nog and Get Depressed Anyway

\*Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more. Send your questions about seasons, cycles, and celebrations to Mama Donna at [cityshaman@aol.com](mailto:cityshaman@aol.com)

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Donna Henes is an internationally renowned urban shaman, ritual expert, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader whose joyful celebrations of celestial events have introduced ancient traditional rituals and contemporary ceremonies to millions of people in more than 100 cities since 1972. She has published four books, a CD, an acclaimed Ezine and writes for The Huffington Post and UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum. Mama Donna, as she is affectionately called, maintains a ceremonial center, spirit shop, ritual practice and consultancy in Exotic Brooklyn, NY where she where she where she offers intuitive tarot readings and spiritual counseling and works with individuals, groups, institutions, municipalities and corporations to create meaningful ceremonies for every imaginable occasion.

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Watch her videos:

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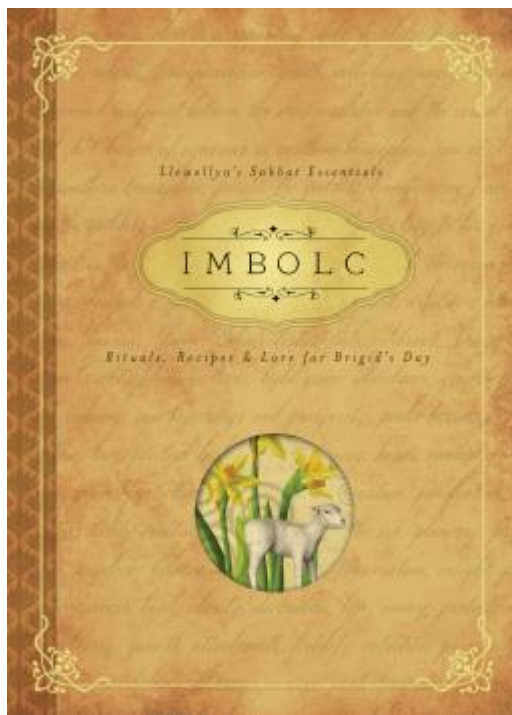
## Book Review: Imbolc: Rituals, Recipes & Lore for Brigid's Day by Carl F. Neal

Review by Dawn Thomas

240 Pages

Publisher: Llewellyn Publications

Religion and Spirituality



This is another installment of the Llewellyn Essential Sabbats series. The chapters are similar to previous books starting with a trip through the wheel of the year. This book is well written and easy to follow.

The first chapter discusses the old ways and the author provides a history of the sabbat. Before reading this book, I did not know the differences between the terms *Imbolc* and *Candlemas* with the exception that *Candlemas* was the Christian version. Most books use the terms interchangeably. *Imbolc* is a time for new beginnings. Mr. Neal discusses the importance of sheep and their reproductive cycle. The ancient people knew spring was near when the ewes

began producing milk. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to different cultures including Celtic, Roman, Native American, Egyptian, and Asian.

The next chapter discusses new ways to celebrate *Imbolc*. The author explains how some Neopagans may feel disconnected with *Imbolc* because of geographical locations. This chapter describes how people honor Brigid by tending flames and wells in her honor. Mr. Neal also covers the origins of Groundhog Day and the theme of emergence. The chapter ends with candle burning etiquette.



The chapter on spells and divination begins with a candle divination to honor Brigid. Since fire and candles are prominent for Imbolc, the author includes a candle blessing. The section on recipes and crafts includes the traditional Brigid's cross, corn dollies, incense, and candle making. There are ideas for a feast with yogurt, cheese, butter, milk, and soda bread.

In the following chapter, the author provides several types of prayers and invocations. These include prayers for new projects, healing, and the theme of newness. The chapter on rituals and celebrations includes a solitary ritual, a ritual for couples and a group celebration.

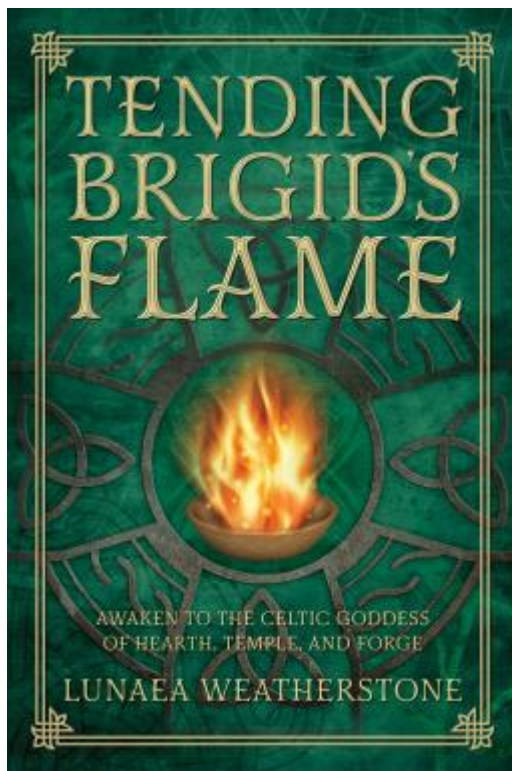
## Book Review *Tending Brigid's Flame* by Lunaea Weatherstone

Review by Dawn Thomas

290 Pages

Publisher: Llewellyn Publications

Celtic, Goddesses, Paganism & Neo-Paganism



I have had this book on my list to read for a while now. This is the perfect time to read about Brigid. The author has an easy to read style. Each chapter has short stories by different contributors. At the end of the book, there is an extensive list of resources. If you honor Brigid or Celtic deities, you will enjoy this book.

The first chapter details the life of the Celtic goddess as well as the Christian saint. Her research reveals a wonderful woman who helped the poor and arranged her mother's release from slavery. In the second chapter, the author gives examples for working with thresholds. They include blessing yourself and your guests. She discusses Celtic hospitality and the connections with faeries. There are several rituals for your home and hearth. Ms.

Weatherstone also discusses the differences between shrines and altars along with how to care for them. The chapter ends with recipes for the Sabbat.

The third chapter explains the importance of the number three. She includes the symbols triskele, triquetra, and beautiful Celtic knot artwork. There are stories of Brigid's sisters and other Celtic goddesses. I was surprised to read the story of the Morrigan and her connection to Brigid. The chapter ends with correspondences associated with Brigid.

In the fourth chapter, the author gives examples of metalwork you can use in your home. She includes directions with pictures to string and arrange prayer beads. The importance of poetry is included. The author talks about the importance of keeping a journal of memories to preserve your history. There is a discussion of shields and swords. They are not only physical but also the personal shields and swords within us. The concept of Celtic tattoos is also addressed. I did not realize Brigid is a death midwife, although, I should have since she is a goddess of thresholds. The section on

Brigid of the augury gives several types of divination and oracle ideas. I cannot wait to try the poetry oracle this next time my friends come to visit.

#### Chapter 5: Tending your flame

The theme of this chapter is charity and activism. She stresses the importance of giving back. The book ends with the nineteen flames for Brigid. There is a line of poetry for each flame.

### From Belladonna's Garden Bay by Dawn Thomas

Names Bay, Bay Laurel, Grecian Laurel, Sweet Bay, True Bay, Noble Laurel

Family: *Laurus Nobilis*

Gender: Masculine

Planet: Sun

Element: Fire

Powers: Protection, Psychic, Healing, Purification, Strength

When I lived in Maryland, I grew a bay laurel tree from a seedling and was so excited when I harvested the first leaves. Unfortunately, I have not had any luck growing one here in the south.



#### Botanical

The bay laurel is a native shrub/tree from the northern area of the Mediterranean. In Italy, the trees grow wild everywhere. It is evergreen and grows up to 25 feet. The pointed leaves are dark green and shiny. The leaves are harvested throughout the year.

### **Culinary Uses**

This time of year finds me looking for warm hardy meals. A favorite memory of mine is my Grandma's cooking. Her Hungarian goulash was wonderful. Although I have not had it in many moons, I remember it as if it were yesterday. She also made a delicious pot roast with pickling spices. This recipe is the one I use and is close to hers.

### Beef Pot Roast (serves 8 to 10)

This recipe is for the classic pot roast. It is perfect to have on those cold nights when you want comfort food. Over the years, I have made this recipe using a chuck roast. Recently I found a cut of meat called the beef shoulder. This meat has less fat than the chuck roast but still has the same tenderness and taste. My thyme this year was very spindly so I had to find a good substitute. I used marjoram sprigs and it was just as good.

### Ingredients

1 Tablespoon olive oil  
1 3-4 pound beef roast  
Kosher salt  
Cayenne pepper  
1 large sweet onion, coarsely chopped  
1 cup red wine (I use Apothic Dark but a Zinfandel will do nicely too)  
4 thyme sprigs (you can also use marjoram or oregano)  
3 garlic cloves, chopped  
16 ounces beef broth  
1 or 2 bay leaves  
4 or 5 carrots, peeled and cut into 1" pieces  
4 or 5 potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" pieces



### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F

Heat olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium high heat. Season the meat with salt and cayenne pepper and brown on each side.

Remove meat from pan and add onions. Sauté the onions until they are tender. Put meat back in the pan and add red wine, thyme sprigs, garlic, beef broth, and bay leaves. Bring pan to a simmer, cover, and then place it in the oven.

Bake at 350 for 1-1/2 hours. Add carrots and potatoes to pan, and cook for another hour or until vegetables are tender. Remove bay leaves and thyme sprigs, and serve.

## Cosmetic Uses



Bay leaves are used as a natural remedy for acne. Because the bay leaf has antioxidant properties, it fights free radicals and prolongs younger looking skin.

The essential oil also has anti-inflammatory, antifungal and antibacterial properties. It can increase the blood supply to your skin, which restores a healthy complexion. Bay also improves the health of hair follicles.

### Acne Treatment

#### Ingredients

8 ounces hot water

3.5 ounces bay leaves, dried and crushed

#### Directions

Add bay leaves to hot water and boil for ten minutes. Cool mixture then strain. Keep the tincture in the refrigerator in a jar with a tight fitting lid. Use gauze or a cotton ball to apply to your face several times a day until acne is skin is clear.

### Bay Leaf Teabag

#### Ingredients



1-2 teaspoons dried, ground bay leaves  
Linen or muslin bag

#### Directions

Place ground bay leaves in a muslin or linen bag. Tie bag tightly and drop in a warm bath. This will help soften skin and gives a healthy glow.

#### Bay Leaf Face Mask

##### Ingredients

1 tablespoon dried, ground bay leaves  
1/2 cup boiling water  
2-4 tablespoons kaolin white clay

#### Directions

Place the dried bay leaf powder into the boiling water. Continue boiling for two to three minutes. In a small bowl, mix the clay and enough bay leaf infused water to make a paste. Apply the paste to clean dry skin. Leave mask on your face for 20 minutes or until it is dry. Rinse your face with cool water and pat dry.

#### **Medicinal Uses**

Bay leaves have many health benefits. They are known to provide relief from anxiety and lower the levels of stress hormones. They also help in managing diabetes, eliminate bad cholesterol, and increase nutrient intake. Bay leaves alleviate respiratory conditions such as asthma. In addition, they reduce inflammation caused by sore joints and arthritis.

#### **Magical Uses**

Put a bay leaf under your pillow to have prophetic dreams.

To ward of negativity, wear an amulet of bay.

Place bay leaves on the windowsills as a protection from lightning.

Carrying a bay leaf while participating in sports can bring strength to an athlete.

Either wear a bay leaf or place one in a sick room to help ward of illness.

#### **History and Folklore**

Laurel leaves are associated with glory and achievement. In some Italian universities, students receiving degrees wear a wreath of laurel leaves. Ancient Romans considered the bay laurel tree a protection from thunderstorms.

There are several stories from Greek mythology associated with the bay laurel tree. The Oracles at the Temple of Delphi would eat bay leaves before divining the future. Like the Oracles, Paracelsus used the leaves for divination. The bay tree was sacred to Zeus. Gaea turned her daughter, Daphne, into a bay tree to hide from Apollo.

*Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with her husband. Other book reviews can be found on her Blog:*  
<http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>



## Goddess for Imbolc: Seshat by Dawn Thomas

Seshat is a special goddess to me. I have a painting of her hanging in my bedroom and look at her every day. To me, she represented all the aspects of myself. I worked for a local government in the construction office. One of my duties was to oversee construction projects. At about the same time that I found Seshat, I began overseeing a library project. The pieces seemed to fall into place for me. She is the goddess of architecture and libraries. She is also a scribe. She wore a headdress with seven stars on it. One explanation is that her headdress is a flower of a papyrus plant. Papyrus was used for writing so this makes sense. In a reference I found that she is also known as a fate goddess and measured the length of lives. This makes perfect sense since she was responsible for measuring. A sacred duty of a High Priestess was to take measurements before the first stone was set when building the pyramids.

### **Ritual for Imbolc**

#### Preparation

- A light blue altar cloth
- A dark blue candle
- Pen
- Paper
- A book that is important to you

#### The Ceremony

*As I sit in front of the painting of Seshat, I light the blue candle and say:*

Seshat, Great Goddess of writing and books, please join me this evening. Hail and welcome.

I offer this writing tool as a symbol of your knowledge. I ask that you guide me with your wisdom as I begin my writing project.



May I be inspired by your image every day and set my pen to paper.

*Touch your pen to paper. Write the first things that come to mind. Continue writing for seven minutes. Pick up your book and say:*

Bless my book as I continue to learn. May I gain wisdom with your guidance. Thank you for joining me tonight. Hail and farewell.

*Blessings to you Great Mother.*

Repeat this ritual for seven nights in honor of her seven pointed star.

## How to Make an Intention Candle by Molly

### **What is an intention candle?**

An intention candle is similar to a vision board in that you use collage as a way to visually communicate and affirm your ideas. It is different than a vision board in that it is not specifically intended to manifest your vision, but instead to offer your purest intentions.



An intention candle sets forth your intentions. How do you want to experience yourself? What do you want to offer to others? What do you want to share? How do you wish to move in the world? What do you want to celebrate? What do you want to share about yourself?

Each lighting of the candle throughout the year serves as a reaffirmation of your intentions. I use mine to focus and to create sacred space. Lighting it is my signal to myself that I am going to do focused, sacred, centered work.

### **Supplies:**

- Tall white candle in glass (sometimes called "7 day candles" or prayer candles). These are usually available for a dollar from Dollar Tree and similar stores.

- Magazines, old calendars, postcards, quotes, images. Thinner paper is better than cardstock weight in order to have it actually stick to the candle.
- Glue: white glue works well for paper and hot glue works best for 3-D attachments
- *Optional:*
  - ribbon or cord
  - charms (+ split rings to attach them to the cord)
  - beads
  - tiny gemstones or shells
  - mini resin goddess charms from [our shop](#)

If you want to include [Womanrunes](#) on your candle, you can draw them on, or use the printables available in our [free introduction](#) class.

### Steps:

1. Cut out anything from your collage supplies that speaks to you and what you'd like to offer to 2016.
2. Glue the paper items to the glass outside of your candle. Layer the images so they overlap and there are no glass spaces left visible.
3. Hot glue any 3-D items onto the glass. These can be pried off again if you make a mistake. As the candle burns down, sometimes the glue will detach and the charm will fall off. That's okay! It has done its work.
4. Attach any charms or beads to your ribbon or cord and tie it around the top of the candle in the groove around the glass. I used a piece of red cord from our Red Tent Circle.
- 5.



### Dedicate your candle:



You may anoint your candle with a special essential oil or with herbs or flower petals or incense (I used rose petals in mine this year).

Light it and sing [Free Ticket to Heaven](#) by Ruth Barrett. The song is available from iTunes also. I like to sing it on my own though!

*Let the path be clear before me, let all go as I will  
And the past be clean behind me, let all go as I will  
And the ones I love beside me, let all go as I will  
And the Goddess light above me, let all go as I will  
And the Mother Earth beneath me, let all go as I*

*will*

*And my own true self within me, let all go as I will*

*let all go as I will*

*let all go as I will*

*Molly is a priestess, writer, teacher, and artist who lives with her husband and children in central Missouri. She is finishing her dissertation about contemporary priestessing and is the author of [Womanrunes: A guide to their use and interpretation](#), [Earthprayer](#), and [The Red Tent Resource Kit](#). Molly and her husband Mark co-create goddess art and jewelry at [Brigid's Grove](#) and she blogs about theopoetics, ecopsychology, and the Goddess at [Woodspriestess](#).*

*"Great wind" in poem above is from the Ojibwa prayer.*

## Imbolc Solitary Ritual by Dawn Thomas

**Theme:** Welcoming the increasing light

### **Altar Needs**

White altar cloth  
Five white candles  
Cauldron  
Pen and Paper  
Chalice

*To prepare for the ritual have a ritual bath with some bath salts. Play some relaxing music. Set up your altar with the five unlit candles - one for each element and one in the center to represent the Goddess.*

**Call the Elements and the Goddess:**

Hail to the Spirit of the East, Element of Air. The winter winds blow in a new season. Please join me tonight. *Light the candle in the East.*

Hail to the Spirit of the South, Element of Fire. The warmth of fire makes me aware of the increasing light. Please join me tonight. *Light the candle in the South.*

Hail to the Spirit of the West, Element of Water. The melting snow flows into the rivers and provides water for the beginnings of new life. Please join me tonight. *Light the candle in the West.*

Hail to the Spirit of the North, Element of Earth. The fruits from the last harvest have provided nourishment during these winter months. Please join me tonight. *Light the candle in the North.*

Great Mother Brighid, Guardian of poetry and smith crafts. I am honored to have you here and to bask in the light of your eternal flame. Please join me tonight. *Light the candle in the center of the altar.*

Tonight I celebrate the return of the sun and the rebirth of light.

**Work and Meditation**

*Sit in front of your altar and think about what you would like to manifest in your life. When you are finished, write your thoughts on your piece of paper. Place the paper in the cauldron and light it to release your thought to the Elements and the Goddess. While the paper is burning say the following:*

Great Mother Brighid  
Watch over your daughter  
Let your water heal me  
Let your wind inspire me  
Let your fire warm me  
With your blessings and protection, I go in peace.

*Drink from your chalice and offer blessings.*

*If you would like to make a corn dolly, now is the time to do that. As you are braiding continue your thoughts you want to manifest. When finished, open the circle.*

**Release the Goddess and the Elements**

Great Mother Brigid, your growing light is increasing all around me. Thank you for joining me tonight. Hail and Farewell. *Extinguish the candle in the center.*

Spirit of the North, the earth is beginning to show new life. Thank you for joining me tonight. Hail and Farewell. *Extinguish the candle in the North.*

Spirit of the West, the rivers are rising and the water is warming. Thank you for joining me tonight. Hail and Farewell. *Extinguish the candle in the West.*

Spirit of the South, the days are growing longer and the sun is providing much needed warmth. Thank you for joining me tonight. Hail and Farewell. *Extinguish the candle in the South.*

Spirit of the East, there is a hint of March winds swirling around blowing in new life. Thank you for joining me tonight. Hail and Farewell. *Extinguish the candle in the East.*

The Circle is open but remains unbroken.

Blessed Be!

## Moon Schedule Imbolc to Spring Equinox

By Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

(Times are Eastern Time)

**New Moon** – February 8<sup>th</sup> 9:39 a.m.

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – February 15<sup>th</sup> 2:46 a.m.

**Full "Quickening" Moon** – February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1:20 p.m.

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter – March 1<sup>st</sup>:6:11 p.m.

**New Moon** – March 8<sup>th</sup>: 8:54 p.m.

Solar Eclipse – March 8<sup>th</sup>: 8:57

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – March 15<sup>th</sup> 1:03 a.m.

### **Moon Void of Course Schedule**

| Date                      | Starts     | Ends                                |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| February 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 5:04 a.m.  | 7:44 p.m.                           |
| February 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 10:54 a.m. | February 7 <sup>th</sup> 12:59 a.m. |
| February 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 9:39 a.m.  | February 9 <sup>th</sup> 3:31 a.m.  |
| February 10 <sup>th</sup> | 11:25 p.m. | February 11 <sup>th</sup> 4:55 a.m. |
| February 13 <sup>th</sup> | 5:32 a.m.  | 6:36 a.m.                           |
| February 15 <sup>th</sup> | 5:54 a.m.  | 9:35 a.m.                           |
| February 17 <sup>th</sup> | 11:37 a.m. | 2:24 p.m.                           |
| February 19 <sup>th</sup> | 9:36 a.m.  | 9:17 p.m.                           |
| February 21 <sup>st</sup> | 8:17 p.m.  | February 22 <sup>nd</sup> 6:24 a.m. |
| February 24 <sup>th</sup> | 9:22 a.m.  | 5:41 p.m.                           |
| February 26 <sup>th</sup> | 6:18 a.m.  | February 27 <sup>th</sup> 6:26 a.m. |
| February 29 <sup>th</sup> | 2:55 p.m.  | 6:56 p.m.                           |
| March 2 <sup>nd</sup>     | 9:55 p.m.  | March 3 <sup>rd</sup> 5:01 a.m.     |
| March 5 <sup>th</sup>     | 11:05 a.m. | 11:22 a.m.                          |
| March 7 <sup>th</sup>     | 3:46 a.m.  | 2:08 p.m.                           |
| March 8 <sup>th</sup>     | 8:54 p.m.  | March 9 <sup>th</sup> 2:40 p.m.     |
| March 11 <sup>th</sup>    | 1:24 p.m.  | 2:44 p.m.                           |
| March 13 <sup>th</sup>    | 5:46 a.m.  | 5:03 p.m.                           |
| March 15 <sup>th</sup>    | 1:03 p.m.  | 8:57 p.m.                           |
| March 18 <sup>th</sup>    | 12:09 a.m. | 3:54 a.m.                           |
| March 19 <sup>th</sup>    | 4:43 p.m.  | March 20 <sup>th</sup> 1:39 p.m.    |

### Planting Days

February: 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>

March: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>

### Harvesting Days

February: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>

March: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>



## Pagan Every Day: Anahita by Barbara Ardinger PhD

February 10th

Anahita, one of the earliest of the Great Mothers and whose titles include Golden Mother and Immaculate One, originated in Babylon, traveled throughout Asia Minor, Egypt, and India, and finally became the preeminent mother goddess of the Persians, who identified her with the planet Venus. During the reign of Artaxerxes (436 – 358 B.C.E.), Persians built numerous temples in her honor. She was so popular that it is said that Ahura Mazda himself worshipped her, though Zoroaster generally ignores her. She was also said to be the mother (or consort) of Mithra.

In a part of the world where water is scarce and a spring can mean the difference between life and death, this goddess of fresh water deserves great honor. Another of her names is Ardivi Sura Anahita, which means "humid, strong, immaculate one." As Nahid (a modern name), she is associated, like Aphrodite and Ishtar, with love and music. As the ruler of water, semen, and milk, all of which flows and fertilize, Anahita also rules human propagation, which is why "sacred prostitution, was practiced in her many temples. An Iranian scholar says, "... after the occupation of Iran by Moslem Arabs, the ritual of respecting women and mother and the sanctity of Nahid ... became a secret creed." If any rituals to Anahita/Nahid remain in the Islamic Republic today, they must be conducted in extremely remote locations by people who are careful not to be found out.

To celebrate Anahita, remember that Imbolc is when ewes were milked for the first time in the spring. Drink a glass of milk today. Consider the connections between milk and fertility and praise this ever-flowing goddess. As you drink, ask Anahita for good health, good sex, increase (of herds and/or wealth), and safe childbirth.

## Pagan Every Day Concordia by Barbara Ardinger PhD

February 22nd

Concordia, the personification of community harmony, had at least two temples in Rome, a city that certainly needed her blessings. The Romans acknowledged her by holding a feast called the Charistia, where people met to reconcile their differences and settle their disputes.

Reader, it sometimes happens in a tradition, coven, or circle that fragmenting issues arise. Fault lines of power and control appear. Eris, goddess of discord, starts whispering in our ears. Words are said that were better left unsaid. Actions are taken that cannot be taken back. Let's bring Concordia into our circle.

Here's a ritual to keep Concordia present. First, get a big ball of rainbow colored yarn. Next, everyone sit on the floor in a circle. Sit so close that you're all touching, shoulder to shoulder,

thigh to thigh. Now, holding the end of the yarn in one hand, the first person tosses the ball so it flies like a comet with a rainbow tail to someone across the circle. As you toss the yarn, speak the words that Concordia whispers in your ear. "I honor the way you tell the truth" or "I respect your right to want to do things differently." The person who catches the yarn touches it to his or her heart, then tosses it to someone else with another affirmation of harmony.

Keep tossing the ball around the circle and speaking words of harmony until you've used up all the yarn. What you'll have now is a great big knot, an untidy web. (Well, concord is seldom tidy). You also have a cone of harmonious community energy hovering above you. Ground the energy into yourselves and work together to figure out a way to preserve that great big knot as a symbol of your determination to preserve the harmony of your community.

*Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her new book, **Secret Lives** is a novel of magical realism about elderly women, younger women, good men, and mythological characters including the Green Man and the Norns gone mad in a modern world. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at [bawriting@earthlink.net](mailto:bawriting@earthlink.net)*

## Tarot & Charms for the Season by Carmen Reyes

"And the seasons they go round and round" as the wheel of Fortuna turns we arrive at the festival of lights the time of quickening....

### Imbolc

Seeds are stirring in the earth and above ground we feel the quickening stir our spirit. Our inner eye visualizes renewed energy and we create this inspired season preparing us for spring. We celebrate the power of this sacred time with a tarot spread that invokes the magic of Brigid, Goddess of fire, inspiration, protection and healing. Brigid of the mantle encompasses with her bright flame as she lights the way through the winter darkness unto the spring's light.

### The Quickening

To reveal what is quickening within, an Imbolc tarot spread from Alexis J Cunningsfolk is used:


1. Seed. What is the dream seed that I hope to grow in the brightening year?
2. Quickening/Stirring. What energies are stirring awake within me?

3. Quickening/Slumbering. What part of myself that has been slumbering is slowly awakening?
4. Fire. What aids and inspires my dream seed?
5. Ice. What blocks and challenges my dream seed?
6. Forge. How can I support and shape my dream into reality?
7. Forge. What are my best tools for the job?
8. Surfacing. What part of my dream is currently emerging and what should I seek to support right now?

## The Reading



1. Seed – VI Coins – harmony, sharing, loaning, or receiving tangible things
2. Quickening/Stirring – X Coins – wealth, establishment, completion and accomplishment
3. Quickening/Slumbering – X Wands – hard work, completion, responsibilities and fulfillment
4. Fire – V Vessels – let go of the past, learn and move onward
5. Ice – VIII Vessels – change, transition, not giving up too soon, creative work, being present in the moment
6. Forge – VII Vessels – wishful thinking, imagination, choices
7. Forge – I The Magician – Hermes the god of alchemy, manifesting our dreams
8. Surfacing – VII Swords – things once held secret are surfacing, isolation become community

 I also cast a few charms and ogham, a tree divination for  
**luck and clarity**

Saille – the Willow Tree, cycles, dreams, vision to imagine the future

Ken – creativity, torch, insight

Triple Spiral – Goddess, inner guide

Star – light, hope, vision

Cat – mystery, protection, secret knowledge

Ice Cream Sundae – reward, sentimentality, the past

## The Tarot Speaks



In the upcoming season there will be harmony and sharing of tangible things. You are on the verge of completion and accomplishment. Much hard work is needed to realize your heart's desire and clarity of the responsibilities that will occur upon completion. You are aided by an inner guide and a desire to move on from the past and cautioned to stay the course. Use your imagination and choose wisely, manifest your dreams, bringing to light that which was shadow.

Resources:

Tarot Spread from Alexis J Cunningfolk of Worts + Cunning

Apothecary 2015, last accessed January 11, 2016

<http://www.wortsandcunning.com/blog/2015/1/26/quickenng-an-imbolc-tarot-spread>

Art from Tree Readings: 13 Ogham Tree Oracle

Reading by The Herbal Tarotist with the Alchemical Tarot: Renewed 4<sup>th</sup> Edition