



Hearthstone Community Church, Inc.

"The Full Moon Folk"



JULY 7, 2017 OPEN FULL MOON

Hearthstone meets the Friday before or the Friday of the Full Moon. Beginning July 2017 we will meet 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. Access is through the Blue Doors on the west-facing (Williams St.) side of the building. The doors open at 7:00, and we like to start at 7:30. This month's ritual is FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2017.

The July 7th ritual, "Story time in Ancient Egypt," will be presented by Hearthstone Board member Morgan Drake Eckstein. With the help of volunteers, Morgan will tell us three stories set in Ancient Egypt as well as some interesting facts about the Egyptian civilization. Come join us as we sail down the Nile.

GREETINGS

Midsummer has come and gone. So far, the weather this month has been, ahem, varied. Some evenings it is too hot to sleep; on others, I've needed a blanket. In other words, it's been a typical Colorado Summer. I don't have air conditioning in my very old house, so I must depend upon the weather and fans. Fortunately, my very old house also has double-thick brick walls so that once it does cool down, it stays that way until the afternoon.

As of two weeks ago, the nights have started getting longer again. I suspect that we won't really notice it until around Lughnasadh. Meanwhile, the fertility of the land continues to show. While my lilacs and chokecherries stopped blooming in May, the Russian sage has just begun to flower. Whenever I leave my house lately, I get sage all over anything I'm wearing. It's a good thing I like the scent. The blooming sage attracts the bees. I've been stung once this year – another fortunate thing is that I am NOT allergic to bee stings. It stings a little then goes away.

In spite of the heat, I am grateful that we live in an area where we truly do have four seasons – often we have two of them within the same day! Meanwhile, I can watch the changes in the days and nights while sitting out in my front yard.

–*Catherine*

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, or Deb) so that we may hopefully resolve and heal your concern.

THANKS AND A TIP OF THE HAT

Hearthstone thanks Lady Rowena, assisted by the Clan of the Golden Condors of the Black Forest Tradition, for leading a lovely rite in early June. Cleansing, casting, and calling were aided by Pamela, Laurel, Tanya, and Lady Nightshade. The Norns were invoked, and Rowena explained that the Norns, also known as the Three Sisters, are weavers of destiny and tenders of the earth. She explained the Germanic perspective that the future turns into the present, the present turns into the past and the past is absorbed into the present, all connected in a never-ending spiral. Each participant received a talisman, a rune burned into a wood disk, corresponding to one of the Three Sisters and therefore to either What Is, What Shall Be, or What Was. We were led in a guided meditation down to the roots of the World Tree with the meaning of our rune as the focus of our meditation, and the intent that we connect with the corresponding Sister who will assist for our highest good when we are faced with choices we must make in our lives. Lady Nightshade gently drummed us into and out of meditation. After dismissals and opening of the Circle we were offered fresh strawberries, it being the night of the Strawberry Full Moon.

Thank you, Lady Rowena and Clan, for sharing this beautiful, contemplative rite and offering each of us the opportunity to accept personal, ongoing assistance from one of the Three Sisters. Blessings to all.

---Arynn

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... not to mention making the organizers happy that their 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 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.

NEW LOCATION FOR HEARTHSTONE OPEN FULL MOON RITUALS

Beginning with our July 7 Open Full Moon, Hearthstone will be 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 14th Ave. and Williams St. There are two small parking lots on the north and east sides of the building. Access is through the Blue Doors on the west-facing (Williams) side of the building. We are excited to see what the new space will bring us! Come join us!

Our plan is to meet for OFMs at the Althea Center for the entire second half of 2017.

FREE Cat Spay/Neuter Surgeries

The Dumb Friends League is offering free cat spay/neuter surgeries regardless of income. Visit ddf.org/catclinic to schedule your appointment. Hearthstone supports animal welfare and an end to pet overpopulation. Thank you! And remember: Adopt, don't Buy!

YOU HAVE A RELIGION

The tricky, invisible narrative of the dominant paradigm, or, Religion is bad. Spirituality is good. The false dichotomy of the wounded.

Humans make discoveries and, just as quickly, drive them into assumptions that help us to turn our attention to new discoveries. Thinking, our great gift, is exhausting; as soon as we can, we take new knowledge and incorporate it into our internal autopilot.

In the culture that we live in, Christianity is the dominant paradigm, the overwhelmingly typical pattern of religious practice. On top of its numerical dominance, it is a practice of radical monotheism, a practice which blots out everything else and incorporates a subtle danger into language. It gives us its own assumptions and then puts us on autopilot, to serve its own ends.

Simple monotheism is simple. You follow the Morrigan, my friend follows Athena, my neighbor's cousin is dedicated to Odin... that kind of thing. There are plenty of people in our community that are attached to a single deity. They don't necessarily disbelieve in other deities, or maybe they do, but it's not a requirement to disbelieve in other deities in simple monotheism.

Radical monotheism is a little more radical than that. The path itself requires the belief that there is no other deity, there is no other path; there is no other way. That's pretty radical!

Not surprisingly, most radical monotheism is universalizing. Universalizing means that everybody is included. This is a relatively new phenomenon, as far as we can tell. It seems that, possibly, early on, most traditions were inherited, tribal, or ethnic. You were a Hindu (polytheism) because you were born a Hindu, for example. Then Buddhism came along and it was open to everybody. (Still polytheism, but different, and universalizing.)

According to their text, six thousand years ago the foundations of the tribes of Israel were formed, and the text speaks to a tradition in transition. It was radically monotheistic (different from its neighbors), yet inherited. Then Christianity came along, and it was open to everybody. (Monotheism and universalizing)

Yet, getting back to the radical part of radical monotheism, the heart of that practice is the notion that there is no other practice. Three of the ten commandments, that is thirty percent of the most important rules in that rule book, are all about being monotheistic. I'm God, No Other Gods, No Idols, Don't Use My Name for Anything Else. In current practice this can lead to more conservative coworkers and neighbors using phrases like "Cheese and Rice!" when they stub their toes or fall over chairs.

(Side note: so, when people tell you that we should use the ten commandments as the basis of our laws, there's a big problem with that, a thirty percent problem!)

Not surprisingly then, Islam came along and tightened up the focus on the monotheism. The primary prayer of that path is solely about being committedly and radically monotheist.

I happen to think that whatever gets you out of bed in the morning, in this tough world, is probably good. Some people have it tougher than others and a strong structure can be very comforting. So, I don't have a problem with monotheism, even, in theory, with radical monotheism, as long as I'm living in a country that has a clear commitment to real freedom of religion.

But here's the tricky part. Laws are language and the language is the law.

It's important to recognize how often the word "religion" is used to mean "Christian" or to mean "Christian, mostly, but we'll be super generous about this and recognize Judaism and Islam."

All three of those are essentially the same radical monotheism, the same single God, the belief that there is no other God, and built on the same foundation texts. Ironically, most of the traditions from that foundation have also incorporated the other part of radical monotheism, that there is no other path, there is no way. At that point, tiny changes in practice divide them irrevocably from each other, by means of their common radical monotheistic practice. Because of this common belief that there is No Other Way, they do not recognize each other as being on the same path.

Where we see a single, common radical monotheism, they see three different "religions," or a hundred, but only theirs, their one, is real.

Frequently, I have found, when they see us, the Pagan community, or anyone outside of that radical monotheism, they don't even see religion. Regardless of our devotion, our liturgy, and lore, regardless of our training and our traditions, regardless of our common experiences year after year and even the ability for complete strangers to come together and participate seamlessly in ceremony and song, they do not see religion.

In fact, the power of radical monotheism is so strong, that when they follow the beliefs of their tradition, but not strictly, or not within an official organization, they don't see their own religion.

You've probably seen this meme: "Religion is for people who are afraid of hell. Spirituality is for those who have already been there." It is so smug and angry, and utterly bound by the invisible rules of the dominant paradigm. It presupposes that "religion" has "hell." Not Niflheim, the dwelling of the Norse Goddess Hel, but "the" hell. And it exists for those poor fools who are still following religion, which is defined by believing in hell, or more specifically, defined by a strict set of rules that, when violated, condemn the misstepper to hell.

It also presupposes that any practice that is not damning, in the radical sense of that word, is not a religion. It doesn't matter what you believe, it doesn't matter what you practice. If you aren't following that radical One Way, you're just puttering around being "spiritual" which is much better, but definitely not religion.

When they see us, they can't see a religion. And, for quite a few, when they see "religion" they see something painful, controlling, or negative. There's a lot of hurt there, a lot of fear and a lot of anger. For us, there is no small amount of danger if we leave these assumptions unchallenged.

So here's the good news. We don't need to accept a definition of religion that comes out of radical monotheism. We can look to more general, scientific, and neutral sources, and, when we do, we offer a new freedom to ourselves and others. The emperor isn't naked, he's bound by shackles! And we don't have to be.

Religion is any set of practices or actions, particularly when repeated, that express the supernatural beliefs of a person or group; this can include calendrical or seasonal timing of these actions. These actions can be public or private, can be externally or only internally expressed, performed, or acted upon, e.g. thinking an unspoken set of words in times of stress, when those words are related to supernatural beliefs is an example of a religious practice. These practices may be related to expressing honor, blessing, supplication for protection, the directing of unseen forces, or may represent an acknowledgment of life's passages.

That's religion. That's what we have freedom of.

What is not religion? People telling others what to do; how to celebrate; what words to use. People trying to take away someone else's idea of honor, blessing, divinity and replace it with their own ideas and practices. That's not religion, that's control, and it is certainly not freedom.

Challenge people when they use “religion” when they really mean “Christianity” or “fundamentalism” or “radical monotheism” because those smaller, more specific things are not “religion.” Religion isn’t bad. Even the most fundamentalist practices give comfort to someone. And we are free to have a religion that doesn’t control or damn or hurt us. It’s still a religion.

Categorizing different or preferred practices as “spiritual” and therefore “good” isn’t really helpful either. It’s time to throw off the artificial and narrow normatives of the prevailing dominant culture and be the people who understand how broad, diverse and amazing is the spectrum of religion, especially in our own community.

Is this boring? Is it hard work? Do you just want to understand what’s being said and move on? That’s so normal. The problem is that we are not living in normal times, we are living in very dynamic times where we could get included or left out while other, more dominant forces move to secure their definition of religion and spirituality.

Remember, you have a religion. You don’t have to belong to an institution. You don’t even have to belong to a group. You don’t have to be sworn to secrecy or threatened with eternal punishment. Any set of practices that express your spiritual beliefs are your religion. Every time you stand up for that, you set other people free and you secure our places in the larger community of people who have freedom of, or freedom from, the religion of our own conscience.

Peace of the mountains to you,

--Paulie Rainbow

Founder: Denver Celtic Women’s Circle

Member: Celtic Druid Temple of Ireland

FLIPPING THE MICKEY

And now, for a modern fairy tale involving a hungry cat and a bossy wife.

Over a decade ago my wife and I bought a house, since both of us got tired of having a landlord. In my particular case, I had just been informed that I was going to have to start paying fifty dollars a month “pet rent” per cat I owned.

Everyone who knows me knows that I own more than one cat. While most friends might not be sure about the exact number, they tend to be sure that I am approaching the number of cats that automatically gets you a place in the crazy cat man hall of fame.

I was not the only one with cats—my wife-to-be at the time also had a couple of cats. One of her cats, Jasper, started out as an indoor/outdoor cat, walking into her life through the doggy door at her mother’s house. Jasper was not fond of living in an apartment without a yard. Whenever he could, he escaped from the apartment and would walk all the way around the complex’s courtyard. When we moved into our house, Jasper decided that he once again was going to be an indoor/outdoor cat. When we refused to let him out, he resorted to blackmail—we either opened the door to let him out, or he would piss on the door. Yes, we were outwitted by a cat!

Turns out that he wasn’t the only outdoor cat we had when we bought the house. When we were viewing the house with the realtor, I saw a couple of cats hanging out in the garage. At the time, the garage had no side door, just an empty door frame. The cats glared at me, and I gave them the look that I hope translates into “Nice kitty—I will stay on this side of the room and let you have some peace and quiet.”

What we did not know was that the two cats were a couple who had taken the Noah’s Ark challenge seriously, and that they were actually feral cats living in our yard. We learned this two months after we moved in. On Halloween day, my wife rescued the first kitten. This kitten was

followed by other kittens. Every couple of months this feral couple would have a new litter of kittens.

I started feeding the ferals when a blizzard happened. The blizzard itself brought us yet another kitten, who my wife had to rescue from underneath a pile of fallen tree branches. Now at this point, my more clever readers will notice that my cat food bill is getting larger and larger. Fortunately, we ran into some volunteers from a “trap, neuter and release” (TNR) organization while shopping for cat food one day.

TNR is a method of controlling the population of feral cat colonies. Basically, you feed cats to get them accustomed to eating in a location, then you bait cage traps with tasty food, and see who you catch. Then you take the cats to a vet, and the kitties get fixed – sorry no more babies for you, Noah’s Ark Kitties. Each fixed cat has their ear nipped, so that colony caretakers can tell who got fixed. The cats are then released back in the location they were captured from. The idea is that by fixing the cats, you can lower the population of unowned wild and feral cats.

While releasing ferals back into their home environment has a dampening effect on the growth of a colony, with the existing ferals keeping other cats out of their territory, occasionally new unfixed cats will wander in because of the free cat food available to them. As a result, colony caretakers periodically have to trap cats to keep the population down.

During one of our periodic trappings, we ended up fixing a black and white cat, who I named Mortimer. He had wandered in one day, and kept coming back for food. He did not like me or my wife. At the time, we saw a spike in the numbers of our colony – several people in the neighborhood abandoned their cats when they lost their houses due to foreclosure. If Mortimer had an owner, we assumed that they chose to abandon him when they moved away. One thing was certain, he was willing to take off your arm if you tried to touch him.

After Mortimer got fixed, his attitude changed. He decided that free food was nice, and he was a hungry cat; therefore, the person who was feeding him could give him a couple of strokes on the head. Mortimer still refused to come into the house. No, he decided that the yard was all his, and his alone.

Over time, we would be able to tempt him into the house to eat. And in recent years, Mortimer has decided that the couch is a good spot to sleep when it is snowing outside. Morty, as my wife calls him, even comes into the art studio, earning him the nickname of Studio Cat.

But Mortimer still insists on being an outdoor cat and defending his territory. One day we were working out in the curbside area of our yard – with the humans pulling weeds, and Mortimer supervising. Our house is just a couple of blocks from the Denver City Park and golf course, so a lot of people walk by with their dogs. This afternoon, a man was walking by with a Rottweiler – suddenly, there was a black and white hissing ball of fur lunging towards the dog like a rogue cruise missile. Both the dog and his owner were shocked and backed away as quickly as they could.

Having defended his yard successfully, Mortimer has started to watch people walking by. “Do they have a dog? Do I need to beat someone up? Because I can – I am a tiger!” You can see it in his eyes that he is not going to allow any filthy dogs near his yard.

One of the problems with having outdoor cats is that they wreak havoc on the local wildlife. Mortimer treats the local wildlife as his own personal all-you-can-eat buffet.

Grasshoppers – “Yum.” Mice – “Yum.” Birds – “Yum.” Squirrels – “Yum.” Baby rabbits – “Yum.” House elves – “Haven’t eaten one of those yet, but I bet that they are yummy.”

I try not to think of the death toll among the local wildlife. I once saw Mortimer kill and eat four mice in the space of a couple of hours. Basic math tells me that his kills have to be in the hundreds – not that I have a complete account of his kills, just the occasional random wing, limb or

head that he leaves lying around. My basic response when seeing such is to tell Mortimer to “finish his leftovers.”

In the meantime, my wife is busy trying to convince Mortimer not to eat the wildlife. Her standard reason is that the wildlife is cute. “Don’t eat that bird – it’s cute.” “Leave the baby bunnies alone – they are cute.”

Generally, Mortimer ignores her. I can tell he is ignoring her, as he sits perfectly still except for his ears that keep twitching. Oh yes, I think he might be sassing her back. But that ear twitch: that could just be him thinking about taking a nap. It is not like he can open his mouth and talk, right?

Or so I thought. The other day, he walked into the studio holding a mouse in his mouth. Looking at my wife, he dropped it on the floor and it scampered under a shelf. Mortimer cocked his head to one side, and looked at my wife – and I could swear that this was his way of saying, “Oh, you don’t want me to eat the wildlife. What about now?” I think that we just got outwitted by another cat.

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>

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

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.

Ritual dates 2017

July 22

August 19

September 23

October 21
November 18
December 23

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

WHOM TO CONTACT

Catherine's phone number is 303-886-7067. If you would like to officiate at a future Open Full Moon, for Pagan or Wiccan clergy, or for any other Hearthstone business, please contact Catherine.

Hearthstone Community Church has an active website at <http://hearthstone.fnorky.com> where our dates and newsletters are posted monthly. We also have a Facebook page.

Catherine's e-mail address is fionnula.harp@gmail.com. Arynne's is ArynneD@aol.com.

GUEST COLUMNS?

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

This newsletter is for Hearthstone Community Church, Inc. of Denver, Colorado. Editor and Publisher: Catherine Mock.

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2017 Open Full Moon Dates

At the Althea Center, 14th & Williams:

July 7
August 4
September 1
September 29
November 3
December 1