

You've asked about Wicca. Whether you are "just curious" or need some practical advice about practicing Wicca in prison, this gives you a brief overview of this religion. If you have any questions, please contact us. YOU MAY COPY THIS BOOKLET ONLY IN ITS ENTIRETY AND UNCHANGED.

WICCA – On Nature's Path

Wicca is a 20th-century revival of paleo-European Paganism. Although our modern roots can be documented from the late 18th century, Wicca took its present name and public form in 1950. Wicca (also known as "the Old Religion," "Witchcraft," or simply "the Craft") has grown and diversified through the years. Modern witches are coming out of the "broom closet" to let the truth be known.

Wicca is a joyous, life-affirming Nature religion, and a way of life. We see Divine Spirit permeating the world in humans, animals, rocks, trees, rivers and many other forms. We respect and honor as siblings other kinds of animate and inanimate life.

This is a religion of experience: we are expected to forge our own relationships with the Gods and Elements, rather than have someone else tell us what the Gods want us to do. The feelings stirred in us by a beautiful sunrise, the scent of rain, a baby's laugh are communions with Deity.

Paganism is a living, always growing way of life. From its prehistoric roots a multitude of forms have branched. In addition to Wicca, these include Greco-Roman and Egyptian traditions, Native North and South American traditions and Afro-Caribbean faiths, Druidism and the Norse Asatru. ("Prison Odinism" is far from the Asatru practiced outside. Aggressive, racist and/or sexist Odinism is unwelcome among Southeastern Arizona's Pagans, and most other places as well.)

ETHICS

The way we live and the magic Wiccans do is governed by moral laws. *If you harm none, do as you will*, says the Wiccan Rede. (Each of us has to consider what "harm" means, and there is more to it than the penal code's definitions.)

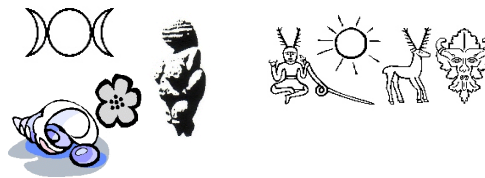
*The energy we put into the world comes back into our lives "three-fold," amplified and on many levels; this principle is called the Three-fold Law. We believe in reincarnation so we like to leave our "karma" cleaner than we find it. We know life, the universe and everything is complementary, not confrontational so we look for cooperative solutions to our problems rather than laying blame or seeking revenge. **Respect for others and responsibility for what we ourselves do is paramount, and critical.***

THEALOGY Goddess and God

The Goddess is all that is eternal and generative; the God is all that dies and is reborn. Together, we say, They are "one and more than one." They are never enemies, but always partners. (He, by the way, has *nothing* to do with the Christian Satan – Wicca does not recognize "the Devil.")

She is Everything: the creative void, grave and womb together. She is a triple Goddess: Maiden, Mother and Crone, represented by the waxing, full and waning phases of the Moon. She is the eternal Source.

He is the grain we harvest in the Autumn and replant in the Spring. He is the buck we hunt to eat this Winter, reborn in next year's fawns. He is our experience and our inheritance, physical, psychological and spiritual. He has many symbols, including the Sun, and wild animals with horns or antlers.



(Note: we haven't spelled thealogy wrong. We've taken it from the Greek thea, meaning Goddess, to reflect the fact that in Wicca, the Goddess is primary.)

OTHER BASIC BELIEFS

*All life is interconnected, through time and space, and this "web" of life is holy.

*Humanity's natural state is harmonious and "at one" with Nature.

* There's plenty of ignorance and fear, and chemical imbalance, but no organized presence of "evil."

* This world and the Otherworld, whatever name(s) we give it, are equally real and "good." Psychic and paranormal talents are natural, and not "evil."

*Magic (the ability to control energy by force of will) is a natural force, just like gravity; how you use it is your responsibility.

PRACTICING WITCHCRAFT IN PRISON

Grounding and Centering

Imagine yourself as a tree with roots that go deep in the earth, and branches that disappear into the sky. Breathing slowly, feel your roots and branches grow; feel the warmth of the earth on your deepening roots; feel the breezes of the sky in your branches. Through your roots, pull up the energy of the earth and feel it rise through your body. Release it through your branches and feel it falling back to earth around you. Coordinate this energy flow to your deep, slow breathing and find yourself calm and peaceful. Gradually center this energy within you, and withdraw your roots and branches. Touch your hands to the floor or ground to release any extra energy. Feel it draining back to the earth through your arms and hands.

Shielding

Many drawn to Wicca have an above-average psychic sensitivity. In prison, there's a lot of anger, resentment, hostility and depression. To avoid picking up on these feelings and letting them influence your behavior, you need to be able to shield yourself from unwanted psychic input and create a safe and quiet place in your mind. **Always** ground and center before doing these exercises.

The Ball of Light

Recall an image of soap bubbles. Picture a tiny bubble of glowing light form in expand slowly as you feed it more light. Visualize the bubble expanding until it is bigger than your body and surrounds you with brilliant your center. Make any color you like, and feel it glowing with warmth and strength.



Now slowly pull the bubble back to you, letting it cling to you like a second skin. It fits perfectly and glows brightly; it may make your skin tingle. Will it to filter out all negative and hurtful thoughts, and letting through all the positive and healing energies. Command the shield to stay with you always.

When you feel the shield is secure, take a deep breath and touch the ground. This anchors your shield to the ground and provides a power source that will work even when your attention is elsewhere. Let any excess energy drain back into the Earth. Repeat this visualization once a month to recharge the shield, and more often if you feel the need.

The Aura Condom

This is a graphic image and works very well for men. After grounding and centering, picture a giant condom of energy that you hold in your hand. Raise it above your head and slowly pull it down over your entire body. As it stretches over you, focus on filtering out all negative energies but letting “the good stuff” through. Pull it all the way to the ground, either by touching the Earth or visualizing that in your mind. This shield is easily taken on and off at will, and can be put on quickly after a bit of practice.

Release of Anger and Stress

For this exercise you can use a tissue or one or two sheets of toilet paper. Holding the paper flat in your hand, focus your anger and stress into it. Visualize your anger (as a shape? color? a stain or spill? It’s up to you!) and see it

materialize on the paper. Fold the paper up, and as you make each fold, let yourself feel less and less anger and stress. Flush the folded paper at your next opportunity.

Every shower is an opportunity for psychic bathing, too. Remember the power of Water to cleanse and create. As you shower, let left-over angers and annoyances be rinsed away, and see them going down the drain. Use your hands to brush off more stubborn “psychic dirt.”

Visualization

Most exercises and many rituals require basic visualization skills. Practice creating and holding a detailed image in your mind. Look carefully at a real object for two minutes, and then give yourself five minutes to work on visualizing it exactly in your mind. Directional images to work with include skies, clouds, birds, and the feel of breezes for East, and desert or tropical scenes, as well as candle flames, for South. Try lakes, streams, waterfalls, beaches, and rainstorms for West, and mountains, forests, caves, and crystals for North. (Involve all your senses in your visualizations, not just sight.)

THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR

The Wheel of the Year is Wicca’s liturgical calendar, based on solar and agricultural cycles. Marking ancient cycles of farming, the Wheel originally recognized two seasons, Winter and Summer. These seasons turned at – in mundane terms – May Day and Halloween. Indeed, Halloween is still our highest holy day: we call it Samhain (pronounced “saw-win”). It’s Gaelic for “end of Summer.”

This is the time we mourn our losses and release those ideas, attitudes and relationships we need to get rid of. Samhain is for us a funeral day, but it’s also a family reunion. We invite our beloved dead into our Circles and share our enrichments as well as our griefs and angers.

The Witch’s year begins at Samhain, on October 31st. (This is when we make our New Year’s resolutions, too.)

Yule is the next Sabbat, a.k.a. the Winter

Solstice (on/about December 21st). This is the shortest day and longest night of the year, and we say the Sun God is reborn. Customs like decorating a tree, garlanding the house, stringing lights, caroling and giving presents were part of ancient Rome’s celebrations, and probably old traditions by then. (The decorative Christmas customs we know today developed from the mid-1800s.)

Bride is pronounced “breed,” and is celebrated on the first or second day of February. It’s also known as “Imbolc,” “Brigit,” “Lady Day” and “Candlemas.” The days are noticeably longer now. “Imbolc” is Gaelic for “in the belly,” for this is the time that lambs are being born. Our celebrations encourage the returning light.

Ostara is celebrated at the Vernal (Spring) Equinox, around the 21st of March. Called after the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring, Ostara’s focus is on balance. Coloring eggs to strengthen the Sun and encourage fertility is a pre-Christian custom, too; and “bunnies” were sacred to the goddess Eostara.

Beltane is May Day – and yes, Witches really do dance the Maypole. The first of May is “across the Wheel” from Samhain, and Beltane is our other highest holy day. The braided Maypole is obviously symbolic of the sacred marriage of the Goddess (ribbons) and God (pole), and this Sabbat is associated with fertility and creativity of all kinds.

Litha is usually pronounced “lee-ha,” and it’s the Summer’s Solstice, around June 21st. The Sun is at its zenith now, and after this day the hours of daylight will begin to diminish. We celebrate strength and abundance and peak intensity – not forgetting that in the cycle of the Year, the God has begun to die again.

Lammas is the first harvest festival, celebrated on the first or second day of August. We celebrate the abundance of grain and corn harvests, secure in the knowledge that the dying God of the Grain will be reborn from next Spring’s planting. (Lughnassadh isn’t another name for Lammas, it’s a different holy day, celebrated on the same date.)

Mabon is the second and main harvest

festival, celebrated at the Autumn Equinox, around the 21st of September. At this festival, which also celebrates balance, harvested stalks of grain symbolize death and rebirth – death of the stalk that is cut, and rebirth through its seed.

(If you wonder why we say a Sabbat is “about” the 21st of a month, it’s because Solstices and Equinoxes are actual astronomical events, and the calendar date on which they occur varies from year to year.)

Esbats and Sabbats

The solar holidays – Sabbats –marked on the Wheel are celebrations of stages in the God’s cycle of life, death and rebirth. Meetings on the Moon’s phases, frequently at the full Moon, are called Esbats. There are 13 Esbats in every year. At these, primarily the Goddess is honored, and magic is done as needed.



CASTING A CIRCLE

Witches create sacred space to worship in every time we work or celebrate. First, we ground and center.

Then we draw (cast) a Circle around the space we’re using. We cast it first with Fire, represented outside by an athame (ritual blade) and inside by a wand or your index finger. See a ring of blue flame, like a gas burner on low, burning around the outline of your Circle. Then cast again to cleanse the Circle with Salt (representing Earth) and Water together, and once more with incense (or breath) for Air, to

“charge” the Circle with the task of holding the energy you raise till you are ready to release it.

Next, “call the Quarters.” Start at North or East, and go to your right. We always move to the right in Circle because that’s the way the Sun moves; we call that direction of movement *deosil* (usually pronounced “day-o-sill”). Invite the Guardians of each Direction to witness your Circle and to bring to your work Their special qualities.

East: clarity (from academic understanding to seeing relationships right) and new beginnings

South: activity, courage, social passion (for a cause)

West: emotion (love, grief, jealousy; death, birth, comfort, empathy ...)

North: strength of all sorts, from bulging muscles to infinite patience

Use a feather to represent Air (East), a red ♥ for Fire (South), a paper cup for Water (West) and a small crystal or stone for Earth (North).

Now your Circle is prepared and you can invoke the Gods. The Great Mother and the Horned God have many names. If you don’t know or favor any, use Their oldest names:

Oh, Great Mother, Eternal Source, You who are grave and womb, be with me now in my Circle and bless my work. Hail and welcome!

Mighty Horned God, Hunter and Hunted, like us, you die and are reborn! Be with me now in my Circle and bless my work. Hail and welcome!

When you’ve done your magic on a Moon or celebrated the Sabbat, you are ready for “Cakes and Ale.” We call the ritual meal Cakes and Ale even when we’re using crackers and water. Outside, we consecrate with an athame. Without one, use your hands. Cup your hands over the “ale.” Project your vitality into the liquid, and visualize it glowing with light. Sip, thinking or saying that you will never thirst. Then, hold your hand over the “cakes” and project your energy into them. Say, aloud or silently, “Blesséd are these cakes, that give us life from death.” Say or think that you will never hunger, and take a bite. Leave a sip and a bite for

the God\dess.

When you are done, close your Circle. First, thank the Great Mother and the Horned God for Their presence, protection and empowerment. Bid them “hail and farewell” or say “go in peace, and blessed be.” Then go to each Direction in turn and thank the Guardians for their presence. Bid them a respectful “hail and farewell,” or say, “go in peace and blessed be.”

Walk around the Circle one more time. Remember that blue fire you drew the Circle with? Draw it back into yourself. Do not leave it to dissipate on its own. As you do this, say “the Circle is open, but unbroken: merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.”

A WITCH’S TOOLS

Most witches outside have an assortment of Tools that are not currently available to you. That’s okay – the power’s in you, not the Tools. If you wish to study Wicca, though, you need at least to know what these Tools are and how they are used – and what you can use instead.

Before you *use* a Tool in your Circle, you need to consecrate it – dedicate it to religious use only. Do this with your hands and breath, in the names of each Element and in the names of the Great Mother and the Horned God. Declare that this Tool will never be used for harm. If a Tool (such as a tumbler) has been used mundanely since your last Circle, consecrate it again before you put it back on your Altar.

An athame is a ritual blade used to project personal energy on the material and astral planes. It is *never* used for cutting material things. *Hands and fingers serve the same purpose.*

One or more bowls are used for Water, for Salt and as a libation bowl, in which to share Cakes and Ale with the Gods. *A paper cup is fine for all of these purposes.*

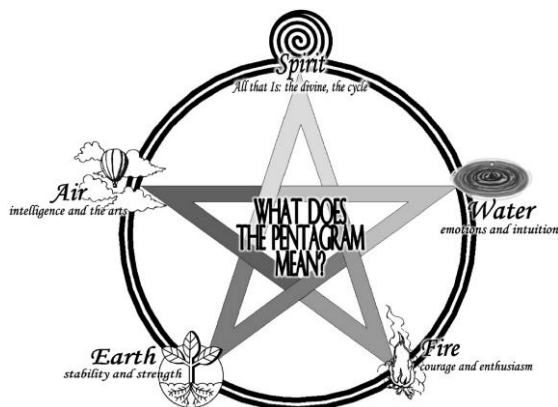
Candles are used to mark the compass Quarters of the Circle, and burn for the Goddess and God on altars, as well as supplying light and being burned for specific magical purposes.

Objects or drawings can substitute as Quarter markers.

A censer (or thurible) is something to burn incense in. *Anything practical will work; it's better if it's something you can pick up and carry.*

A chalice or goblet (a very wide range of personal taste takes over here) represents the Goddess, represents West, and is used during Cakes and Ale. *A paper cup is fine.*

A pentagram is the five-pointed star, points connected, with a circle around it. There are some very elaborate models, but *a drawing on a piece of paper will work just as well*; the power comes from you, not the Tools. (Tools become reservoirs of your power as you use them over time.)



Prison Altar Gear

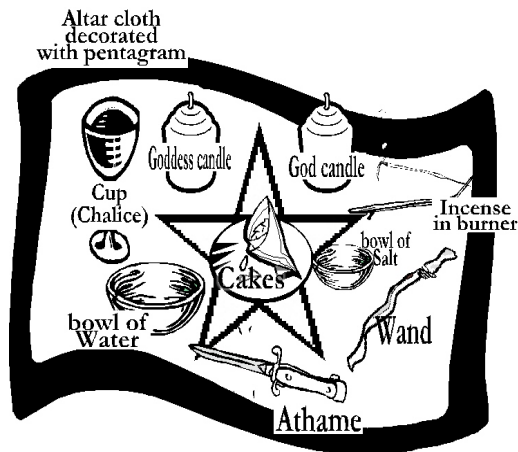
An arrangement of altar tools is a representation of the universe. The altar is oriented toward the North or the East (depending on the Tradition). On it are items representing the Goddess and the God, and the four Elements. In prison, you will have to do things differently.

To mark the Quarters of your Circle, tear a piece of paper into four rectangles. On each one, draw an image or symbol of one direction. You might draw a bird or clouds for East, fire for South, a stream or lake or rain for West, and mountains or trees for North. You can also use animals or abstract symbols. You're not an artist? That's okay. When you draw or paint Quarter pictures for yourself, it's what they *mean* that

matters.

You can have a stone to represent Earth, a feather to represent Air, another picture of fire or the Sun to represent South, and your paper cup can stand for West.

The illustration below is an example and guideline; your Altar doesn't have to look exactly like this one. Do what you can with what you have, and remember that creativity is an offering to the Gods.



Maybe your most important Tool – next to your mind, of course – will be your **Book of Shadows** (BOS). This is a hand-written journal, and can be bound, loose leaf, or a collection of papers in a folder. In it, you record the rituals and exercises you do (when, what you used on the altar, what you did and said, what you intend to accomplish, how you feel about the rite), dreams, ideas, hopes, fears, poems, sketches, questions, notes about the books you've read, and so forth.



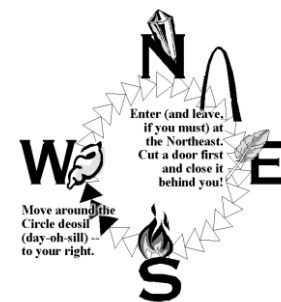
ETIQUETTE

Wiccans of all Traditions follow a few basic rules, and these include

- ⊗ moving deosil (toward your right) whether you are walking or turning in place
- ⊗ **not** touching other people's Tools/jewelry
- ⊗ being ready to stay for the whole rite when you

enter the Circle

- ⊗ asking the Priestess to cut a Door if you **do** have to leave the Circle
- ⊗* crumbling and/or pouring your share of Cakes and Ale into the libation bowl if you can't partake (rather than just refusing).
- ⊗ repeating "Blesséd be," "So mote it be," "Hail and welcome," and "Hail and farewell" when you hear those phrases.
- ⊗ focusing your attention on the working Priest or Priestess if you have no specific task.
- ⊗ asking questions before and after a ritual, not during.



WORKING MAGIC

Magic is the art of bending reality in accordance with Will (and Will is one's true purpose in life, not what one feels like doing right now). We do magic on our own lives, to meet our own needs and for personal growth. We make sure we know what we want and why we want it before we ask for it; and we make sure we don't intend to hurt anybody else to get it. We know the Goddess has wider resources than we do, and can meet our needs in ways we may not be able to imagine.

We work for ordinary things like better jobs or better health; we work for world peace and environmental recovery. We do not work on other people's lives without their informed permission (and we don't have to do magic for people just because they ask us to). We don't do magic "against" anybody, either. This is all in keeping with the Three-fold Law and the Rede.

We use "correspondences" to strengthen our magic – there's a sample Table of

Correspondences below. Most Wiccans add their personal preferences to the chart.

	EARTH	AIR	FIRE	WATER
Direction	North	East	South	West
Color	green brown, black	yellow white	red gold, orange	blue aqua
Season	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Time	midnight	dawn	noon	dusk
Animal	stag	eagle	lion	salmon
Tool	pentacle	wand*	athame*	chalice
Qualities	strength	thought	passion	intuition

* Some Traditions reverse these. There are lots more correspondences, and for some, the ones listed are different. These are examples. Go with what seems right to you; be consistent when you use them.

Healing

If you're sick, see yourself in a bubble of blue light. (If another color represents healing to you, use that.) As much as you understand what the problem is, visualize its reversal. See yourself standing up and fully recovered.

Or, try projecting your illness into a tissue or toilet paper, similar to getting rid of anger or stress. Another method is to set a cup of water in sunlight so that it absorbs the rays. Then drink the Sun-water, visualizing and feeling its healthy power displacing your illness.

Protection

Draw lines of blue fire in front of all the openings to your room. Go all the way around the door and where the walls meet. As you do, say or think, "All within these bounds is protected, in the names of all the Elements and Gods." Be sure to move clockwise (deosil). Recharge the barrier monthly.

Personal Growth

Set a realistic goal. On a full Moon, in your Circle, see yourself walking in a wood, where in a clearing you meet an old woman. She hands you an object or gives you advice. You make a promise that you'll keep for ... a day? a week? a month? Don't over-promise. Write your thoughts and ideas in your *Book of Shadows*.

If Wicca proves to be your path, then sooner or later, other ways of doing these and more rituals will occur to you. Keep notes. These

will be both a record and a proof of your devotion, and will help you develop self-control that will be useful to you no matter what path you pursue upon your release.

A SHORT READING LIST

Books alone are not enough to learn Wicca from, but books are part of a complete Wiccan education.

Adler, Margot, *Drawing Down the Moon*. Beacon Press, Boston, 1979

Buckland, Ray, *Complete Book of Witchcraft*, Llewellyn, 1991

Budapest, Zsuzsanna, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, Wingbow Press, 1989

Campanelli, Pauline, *Ancient Ways and The Wheel of the Year*, Llewellyn, 1991

Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Bollington Foundation, Inc., New York, 1949

Cunningham, Scott, *Wicca: a Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* and *Living Wicca: a Further Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*, Llewellyn, 1993

Farrar, Janet & Stewart, *The Witches Bible Compleat*, Magickal Child, 1991

Fortune, Dion, *Psychic Self-Defense*, dist. by Samuel Weiser

Garr, Carol and Ashleen O'Gaea, *Enchantment Encumbered: The Study and Practice of Wicca in Restricted Environments*. CreateSpace, 2009

O'Gaea, Ashleen, *Celebrating the Seasons of Life* (two volumes). New Page Books, 2004.

RavenWolf, Silver, *To Ride a Silver Broomstick* Llewellyn, 1993

Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, HarperCollins, 1987

Becoming Wiccan

To be Wiccan, you must practice Wicca. That means observing the Sabbats and Esbats, following the Rede and the Law, and learning to control your personal energy. You can do these things on your own or with others, but you must do them, the best you can, not just want to.

You may decide that Wicca is your path and you want your records to reflect this. Procedures vary from state to state, and policies

in all states change from time to time. Check with your chaplain.

If you need a letter from a priest/ess affirming that you understand the basics of Wicca well enough to be making an informed decision to study and follow the faith, we may be able to help. To get a "Wicca letter" you must write and **tell us what you think are the basic beliefs of Wicca** (not just how much you like Wicca, or how good walking in the woods makes you feel). When you have satisfied us that you understand, a supporting letter can be provided.

For more information or to discuss changing your official religious preference, please contact Mother Earth Ministries, Post Office Box 36906, Tucson, Arizona, 85740. An SASE is not required, but is appreciated.

MEM does not offer formal courses, and we don't sell religious items, or books other than *Enchantment*. (*Enchantment* is available for \$20, in check, money order, or stamps, from MEM, Post Office Box 35906, Tucson, AZ, 85740-5906. Please be sure you are allowed to buy from us; we can't be responsible for books returned as unauthorized.)

Other Resources

After 22 years, Witchvox.com retired, but when you have access to a computer, you can still find them on Facebook (accounts are free): [facebook.com/TheWitchesVoiceInc/www.Witchvox.com](https://www.facebook.com/TheWitchesVoiceInc/www.Witchvox.com) to see what's going on where you are. Witchvox lists groups, shops, classes, and events by state, and is a good place to start looking when you're ready to be part of the wider Wiccan community.

You can also look online for Wiccan and other Pagan Meetup groups.



Mother Earth Ministries^{ATC}

Supported by volunteers, Mother Earth Ministries' mission is to provide accurate information about Wicca for interested inmates and prison staff, and to facilitate Pagan prisoners' study and practice of Wicca and other Neo-Pagan religions.

Lady Garr is a Third Degree Wiccan priestess, seven years the Coordinator of TAWN (a networking group that disbanded in 2020). A witch for over two decades, she is authorized as a religious volunteer by the State of Arizona's Department of Corrections. She's the founder and driving force behind M.E.M.

Other members of MEM's Board are practicing Pagans with years of experience serving the local Neo-Pagan community.

The DOC does not allow people who visit prisoners to write to them. Ashleen O'Gaea is MEM's Writing Priestess. A Third Degree Wiccan, she has been corresponding with prisoners since the late 1970's.

For more information about Wicca, or about the prison ministry in southeastern Arizona, write to Mother Earth Ministries at P.O. Box 35906, Tucson, Arizona, 85740-5906.

ATC

Founded in 1979, the Aquarian Tabernacle Church is an internationally recognized and respected Wiccan church; its Woolston-Steen Theological Seminary is an accredited religious college. Mother Earth Ministries is proud to be an Affiliate of the ATC. However, the ATC refers inmate inquiries to us, and offers no distance education by mail.

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www.MotherEarthMinistries.org



She beckoned from the midnight sky
Many years ago.

She offered then to teach me
Many things I wished to know.
I pledged my future to her,
Though I didn't know her name,
And I took her hand and followed
As I learned the ancient ways.

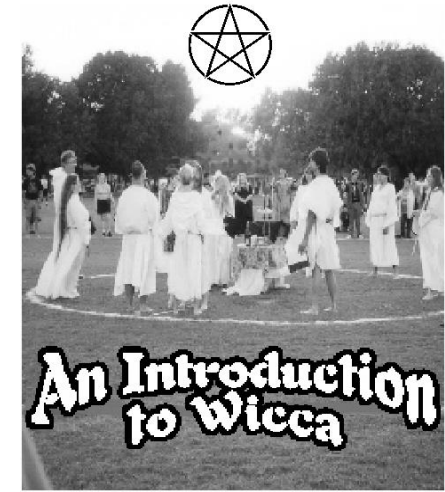
She taught me of the pulse of life
In wind and rain and fire
We heard the mountain's mysteries
And touched my own desires.

She showed me many faces,
And we sang so many songs.
I came to know the Mother's love
And know it can't be wrong
To follow for eternity
And then to lead the way
For others, to the rainbow's end,
Toward a better day.

Lady Carol Garr
Silver Midnight Coven



If you have a Smartphone with the right app, you can visit MEM's website by snapping a picture of this QR code.



Although we know now that Western Pagan religions were so effectively suppressed by conquering monotheisms that our ancestral faiths didn't survive the Inquisition, we still sometimes call Wicca "the Old Religion." And even though it's one of many forms of Witchcraft, we still sometimes call Wicca "the Craft."

Wicca's not an historical re-creation of ancestral rites, it's a reinterpretation of ancestral religious values.

Since Raymond Buckland brought Wicca to the U.S. in the 1960's, Wiccans have worked to overcome religious prejudice. No, we don't kill cats. No, we don't kill babies. No, we don't worship the devil or cast evil spells on people. Yes, most people have been watching way too many B-movies!

This brochure's an introduction to Wicca and some of its basic and common practices. If you want to know more, please write to us. (A self-addressed, stamped envelope isn't required, but it's appreciated.)

Mother Earth Ministries-ATC
Post Office Box 35906
Tucson, Arizona 85740-5906

We're on line at www.MotherEarthMinistries.org