



## FAMILY TAKE-IT-HOME for DECEMBER 23, 2018

### Winter Solstice & Let the Mystery Be

Curated from Soul Matters and created by Mary Borland, Director of Religious Exploration & Congregational Engagement

The December theme is “How are we a people of Mystery?” Mystery is something which we don’t know, like the answer to “What is God?” or “Why do people die?” or “What is the meaning of life?” Mystery can turn to wonder, such as when we gaze at the stars at night. That is when we feel the wonder at our place in the universe and at things so much larger than ourselves. Have you ever sat out at night and gazed at the stars?... What did you see? What did you think about?

Some people use the word “God” or “Goddess” or “Creator” or “Higher Power” to mean things larger than ourselves as well as things in ourselves. “God” is a mystery which we, as Unitarian

Universalists, don’t expect an answer which everyone has to believe to be in our congregations. We “let the Mystery be.” You can be a humanist, agnostic, believe in God or honor earth-centered traditions here. **We don’t always need to be have the answers, or to argue about what is right. We learn from each other about our understanding of the great BIG Questions and mysteries we wonder about.**



**Song: Let the Mystery Be** by Iris DeMents <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlaoR5m4L80>



“Everybody's wonderin' what and where they all came from,  
Everybody's worryin' 'bout where they're gonna go  
When the whole thing's done, But no one knows for certain  
And so it's all the same to me I think I'll just let the mystery be...”

**Craft – Mystery scratch Art** – Option to make at home during vacation time what the PreK-1<sup>st</sup> graders activity <http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/scratch-art-paper/>

**Star Meditation:** (adapted From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters)



- \* Close your eyes. Imagine that you are floating in space, your body feels light and buoyant, there are stars shimmering all around you...
- \* You notice that a bright star is coming towards you. It is an unusual star, it is very small and quite warm for a star and it seems curious about you. It surrounds the lower part of your body and it feels warm and comforting. Your feet start relaxing, then warmth flows up your legs...
- \* This loving and warming star moves its way up your body, warming and relaxing your muscles as it goes. It makes its way through your belly and up to your chest/back...
- \* It moves to your shoulders, neck and then to your head...
- \* It starts to move up and down, around, and through your body. Until your whole body becomes a warm, relaxing body of light. You are now that star that brings warmth, love, and relaxation...
- \* Rest for a moment imagining yourself as a body of loving, yet, mysterious light...
- \* Now (a chime will ring, follow the sound and when it ends) open your eyes and bring yourself back into the room.

**In Service to others:** In gratitude for the abundance of the Earth and for the family and friends this time of year, choose one of these Healthy Holiday treats to make together for your holiday meal or as an unexpected gift <https://www.beachbodyondemand.com/blog/healthy-holiday-treats>

## The WINTER SOLSTICE (Friday, Dec. 21 in 2018) from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Up Chapel message.

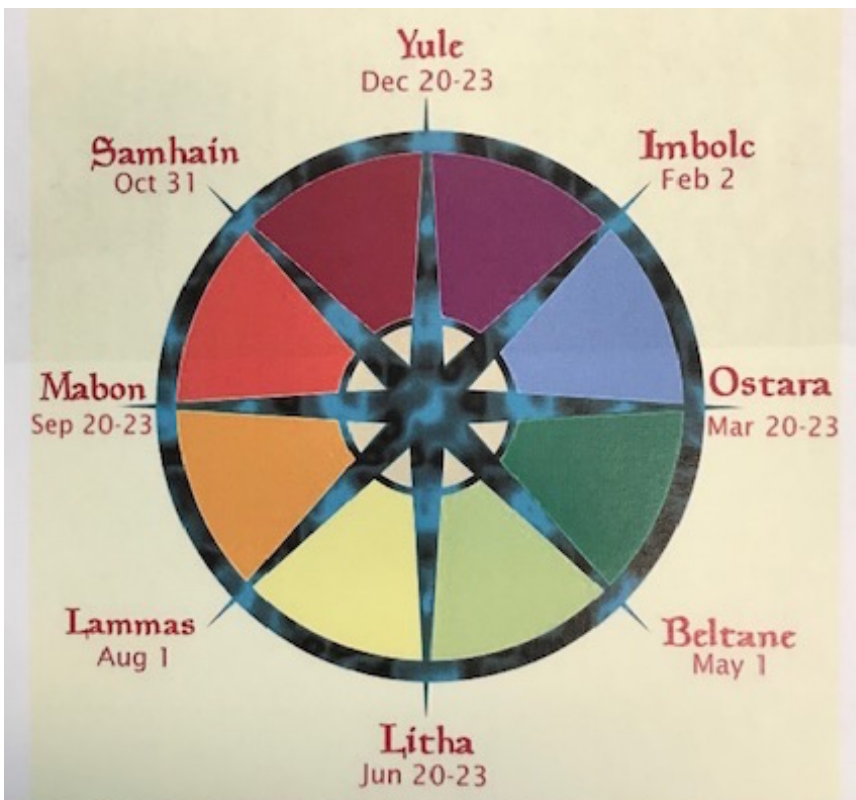
**UU SOURCE: Spiritual Teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.**

**In Earth-centered religions and traditions, also known as Pagan, have a sense of wonder and mystery that is closely connected to the earth and heavens and the yearly cycle of the seasons. (“Pagan” means “country dweller”)**

After the Autumnal Equinox (the moment when there’s an **equal** amount of light and night) Nights grow longer from September to December especially noticeable in the northern hemisphere. No flowers or food grow when the ground is hard and the water freezes to ice. The sun shows for a shorter time each day and appears weak like it’s dying. It feels as if winter’s cold and greyness will last forever. The trees are bare sticks, only the evergreen tree is still green. And so, evergreens were used from ancient times to decorate as a sign of hope during the Yule time season

Yule is the ancient name for the Winter Solstice, the longest night and shortest day of the year.

Solstice means “sun stop” and the days after the Winter Solstice the days finally begin to grow longer again, a little bit more each day until the Summer Solstice.



### < (Wicca) Wheel of The Year

#### **In Earth-Centered Tradition**

The Solstice is a turning point of the when the sun symbolically dies and is reborn from the womb of the Goddess.

In the pagan tradition the darkness is not something bad or something to fear. Babies develop in darkness of their mother’s womb. Seeds must be put into the dark earth in order to send out roots and push up new shoots. We need Light and Dark in balance: without night we would have no day, no chance to rest and dream. Dreams are a gateway to the Otherworld (to new ideas, to deeper understandings of things that we can’t see in the busy-ness of the day).

In the Book **Circle Round: Raising Children in the Goddess Tradition** by Starhawk, Diane Baker, Anne Hill, the author’s note: On the night of the Winter Solstice, grown-ups may

stay up all night to keep the Mother Goddess company as she labors to give birth to the sun, the new year, from her night-sky womb. People sing and chant and feast all night. Children or grown-ups who can’t stay awake ask for special dreams from the Goddess. In the early morning, they find a hill to watch for dawn, (*usually marked with a ritual to call the four directions and elements and cast a sacred circle*). They will drum and dance to welcome the newborn child who brings back the light and the promise of the earth’s fruitfulness again. Pagan or Earth-centered religions, like Wicca, believe that the sunrises and people are reborn with the year. Within each one of us, whatever our age, the miracle child we were at birth emerges anew.

**The wisdom recalled at the Winter Solstice is that  
just when everything looks darkest, the light is sure to be reborn.**