



Blessed Mabon by Artist Jessica Marie Baumgartner

Celtic Prayer Circle Mabon/Autumn Equinox

September 22, 2021

The summer ends, and it is time to look another way. —Wendell Berry

Mabon is a Fire Festival and one of the Lesser Sabbats, celebrated on September 20, 21, or 22, depending on when the Autumn Equinox falls. We celebrate the abundance of the Earth. Mabon marks the 2nd harvest, and light and dark are in balance for a brief moment. It acknowledges the waning power of the sun and the coming, once again, of the darkness. Mabon marks the last spoke in the Wheel of the Year.

In the Northern Hemisphere we're turning toward the fallow period of regeneration, of going within and plumbing the recesses of our creative souls. From this day forward our nights will grow longer, with the incremental difference growing larger each day until Solstice.

This harvest and transition to Autumn comes in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, racial disparities and climate disasters of floods and fires. We are invited, called to restore balance in an unbalanced world.

Celebrate the turning colors, the deepening colors of the berries, the ripening seeds. Pick up a few treasures while you are out walking to bring some bits of nature into your home – some leaves, a few acorns, some dried berries perhaps. Set up your own home prayer space to honor the seasonal shift.

Settle into a time of quiet, light a candle

Harvest Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Tb6AIPNKKk> by Jenna Greene

*The Sun King embraces the Mother in her fullness
The fruits of labor she now bears
Dance in celebration for the harvest time is here*

*Feast and mirth are ours to share
Now is the time to bring magic to fruition
Now is the time of thanks and gratitude
We turn the seasons wheel and the darkness closes in
Listen as the Crone whispers to you...
She sings of the seeds worked upon the field
She sings of the harvest that it gives
She sings of the crops that have fallen to the ground
And the seeds of life yet to live
And she says,
Rest in my darkness. Turn your spirit inward.
Dwell upon the seed and your own spark of life.
Think of all you've conquered. Think of all you've done.
Transform within the magic of the darkening time.*

Reading *Reflection on Autumn Days* from Out of the Ordinary by Joyce Rupp

A new season is moving in. We can sense its presence in the coolness of the breeze and the quick gusts of wind that wrap themselves around browning lawns and fading forest leaves. This time of transition belongs to more than just earth. Inside of us there are also quiet changes sending their signals to let go.

Trees of radiant green say goodbye to another's year's growth. Their leaves break away, sailing to the ground. They tell us that in the deepest part of who we are, there is always a call to continue our transformation process.

Across the land truckloads of harvested fruits, vegetables and grains make their way to market. Gardens and fields give of their gifts. Growers fill their baskets and wagons. Sometimes it is only when produce is gathered or grain is caught into the wagons that the harvest is seen in its bounty. We, too, are meant to count our blessings even when the reaping at first looks sparse and lean.

Frost shakes the warmth out of autumn weather and shapes itself into the first hues of winter. We begrudgingly see the signs of future cold and emptiness, knowing full well that our hearts are not immune to this seasonal direction.

We wake up to misty mornings full of dampness, covered by clouds that hang low. Wetness rests on what remains of summer's beauty and fog tries to hide the road before us. We walk once more into the mystery part of life, recognizing that the inner journey also has its clouded, foggy pathways.

Color enriches autumn days with the last laughs of lovely marigolds and the visual flavors of rusted oaks and yellowed maples. A blessing called beauty kisses the sadness in their dying and makes of the ache a tender thing. When our own pain is great we look for beauty and know its soothing respite.

Geese are going south, as are all flocks of birds whose hearts lean toward the sun. They are in tune with the inside timing. We need that same gift of inner sensing so that we can be aware of our leaning toward the divine and follow what is being called forth in the depths of ourselves.

Beyond us, in distant places, there are other seasons of earth and of the spirit. Wars with weapons are mixed with struggles of greed and power. Little children yearn to be fed and old people dream of days when there was peace enough for all.

We are autumn people. We are always called to be in the process of growing and changing. May our minds and hearts be open to this inner season which is a part of us. May we trust in you, Autumn God, who calls us to grow. May we find hope as we enter willingly into the dying that is needed for our transformation.

Questions for Reflection

As a new season moves in, what “quiet changes” or stirrings are sending their signals to you to let go? How are you being called to continue to evolve/grow/transform during this “inner season?” What might you harvest from the plenitude and fruits your life holds?

Intentions

During the Season of Creation <https://seasonofcreation.org/about/> we renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together, recognizing that the current climate crisis is accelerating ecological instability, which results in the loss of habitats that are homes for millions of species, including humans whose homes are at risk due to climate conflict, loss and damage.

We recall our faith commitment which compels us to till and keep God’s creation for future generations and we participate in the renewal of the whole inhabited Earth, so that life may flourish and all may have a just and sustainable home.

We pray for our neighbors in California as multiple fires rage causing loss of lives and property.

We pray for the people still grappling with the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, which destroyed homes and knocked out power to more than 1 million people in Louisiana and neighboring states and which resulted in flooding on the East Coast that killed 71 people in eight states.

We pray that raging fires and storms opened our country’s eyes and hearts and get people to heed the urgent warnings from scientists to change our ways and destructive patterns and restore our Earth to her optimal health so future generations can benefit from what we take for granted.

Sing A Gentle Love Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Sq1K3emMYc> by Kathy Sherman

Sing a gentle love song, sing to Earth,
Fill the air with music for her healing;
Then be still and you will hear her love song
Forever sung to you.

Closing Prayer

Maker of the Seasons, thank you for all that autumn teaches me. Change my focus so that I see not only what I am leaving behind, but also the harvest and the plenitude that my life holds. May my heart grow freer and my life more peaceful as I resonate with, and respond to, the many teachings this season offers to me.

The Circle of Life by Joyce Rupp & Macrina Wiederkehr

To view the Celtic Calendar's eight seasons, each with its own qualities, energies, gifts, symbols and significance, visit <https://www.mercybythesea.org/programs-and-retreats/celtic-prayer-circle/>