

# Becoming the Ancestor.



## allowed Homecoming A Samhain Retreat

Nov. 7th - Nov. 10, 2024

With special guest, Mortellus.

Prince William Forest Park



## Letter from the Staff

Welcome to Hallowed Homecoming: A Samhain Retreat 2024! We are excited that you've joined us this year.

Please note the following:

1. This year the night owl bunkhouse will be in Cabin Camp B.
2. The Ritual Chapel has moved to the infirmary. We hope this will provide more comfortable space for those who wish to sit within the chapel for an extended time. As always, please feel free to use the chapel for meditations, small rituals, offerings, etc.
3. Our Pastoral Care Team is available for anyone who may require assistance post-ritual or throughout the retreat. You can identify these individuals by the purple bandana indicating they are on shift.
4. Everyone has “stoplight” stickers on their badges. This is to indicate the level of physical interaction/touch they are comfortable with:
  - Red: Please maintain social distancing
  - Yellow: Ask before you engage
  - Green: Accepting hugs and close contact

As always, if you have any questions, please grab a Staff member. All Staff member cabins are marked on the map later in this program, should you need assistance at night.



## Ritual Arc

This year's focus is to look at ourselves through the lens of our families, friends and communities. How will we be seen as we become part of the ancestors? What is the legacy we leave behind? As we look at this, we will determine if the path we have taken to this point has led us to becoming the ancestor we wish to be.

On Friday morning we will bury ourselves within our graveyard. This will allow us to create a grounded, sacred space where we can begin to contemplate upon what we leave behind.

Saturday evening, we will don the funeral shrouds that our families would choose for us and return to our burial site to hear the eulogy our family would give. Our workshops will create spaces for us to think about our paths and how others see us along it.

On Sunday morning we will release or bless all that we have experienced and will have our last workshop for further reflection.



# Special Guest



Mortellus is a Witch, Necromancer, Mortician, Medium, and Best-Selling Author living in Appalachia. They are always dedicated to making inclusive and financially available content for all. They are a Third Degree Gardnerian High Priestex of the Long Island Line, dedicated to traditional witchcraft with a focus on inclusivity in Gardnerian craft. Outside of their work teaching that tradition, their occult practice centers around necromancy, death (generally), and folk practices, in addition to work in the paranormal community.

In addition to their role as High Priestex, Mortellus is a Mortician, and holds degrees in Design, Education, Fine Arts, and Mortuary Sciences. Their areas of expertise include necromancy, necrobotany, mediumship, and the funerary rites of minority faith groups. Currently residing in Western North Carolina on two acres that doubles as the Covenstead for the Coven of Leaves with their spouse, six-year-old twins, and dog; and generally wishing there was a better way to cram their adult child off at college into a bio, and more time in the day for hiding in the studio and playing with clay.

Please make sure to visit their website: <https://www.mortellus.com/>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/mortellus/about?l=en>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/acrowandthedead/?hl=en>

Amazon author page: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B089T6CL3H>

## Workshops:

### **Character Building: The Intersection of Magic & Play**

Join us as Mortellus discusses the “Critical Role” of play in magical practice and how tabletop RPG “builds character.” Topics include becoming a better practitioner through tabletop RPG, thought-form, path-working, leadership, coven work, and magical learning methods for the neurodivergent. Bring along a set of Polyhedral dice and a good sense of humor!

### **Death and Chill: A Fireside Chat about All Things Death**

Join Mortellus as they walk you through an open conversation of everything you ever wanted to know, and everything you never thought about. Did you ever wish you could “ask a Mortician?” Here’s your chance!

### **Necromancy in Practice**

If you’re interested in building a necromantic personal practice, or are curious about what it’s all about, this is the class for you! Join Mortellus as they take you through the history, ethics, stereotypes, and foundational practice. In closing we’ll be touching on practical spell work and ritual practice for as much time as we have available.



## Thursday, November 7

4:00 – 7:00 PM	Registration Open If the Registration table is unattended, please proceed to the Feast Hall.
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Dinner - Feast Hall
8:00 PM – 10:00PM	Wild Hunt - Council Ring Please note that this is a guest-led ritual.
10:00 PM – 12:00 AM	Bonfire Circle - Council Ring

## Friday, November 8

7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast - Feast Hall
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration Open If the Registration table is unattended, please proceed to the Feast Hall.
9:00 – 10:30 AM	The Astrology of Destiny - Feast Hall
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Feast Hall closed for ritual preparations
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Opening Ritual - Feast Hall
12:30 – 2:00 PM	Lunch - Feast Hall
2:00 – 3:30 PM	Character Building... - Feast Hall (With Mortellus)
3:30 – 5:00 PM	Crocheting an Heirloom - Feast Hall Intro to Archery - Ball Field
5:00 – 6:30 PM	Spiritual Council... - Feast Hall
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Dinner - Feast Hall
8:00 – 9:30 PM	Death and Chill... - Feast Hall (With Mortellus)
9:30 - 12:00 AM	Bonfire Circle - Council Ring

# Saturday, November 9



7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast - Feast Hall
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Registration Open If the Registration table is unattended, please proceed to the Feast Hall.
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Necromancy in Practice Pt. 1 - Feast Hall (With Mortellus)
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Not A Mama Bear.. - Feast Hall Archery as a Meditative Practice - Ball Field
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch - Feast Hall
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Necromancy in Practice Pt. 2 - Feast Hall (With Mortellus)
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Becoming a Hero - Feast Hall
4:30 – 6:00 PM	Feast Hall closed for dinner preparations
6:00 – 7:30 PM	Dinner - Feast Hall
7:30 – 8:00 PM	Main Ritual Preparations - Feast Hall Closed
8:00 - 10:00 PM	Main Ritual - Feast Hall
10:00 - 12:00 AM	Bonfire Circle - Council Ring

## Sunday, November 10

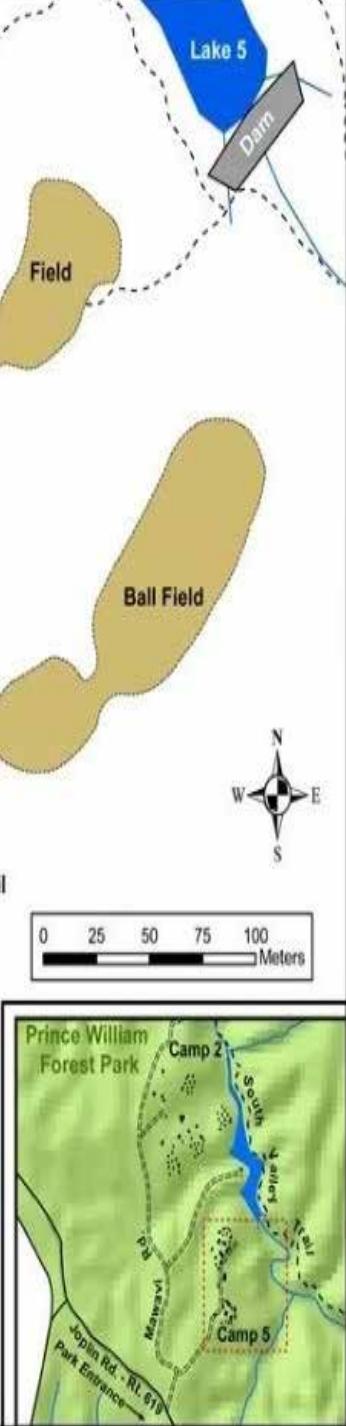
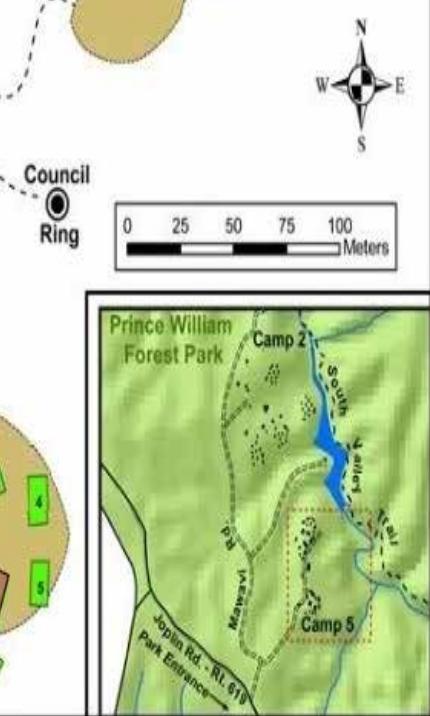
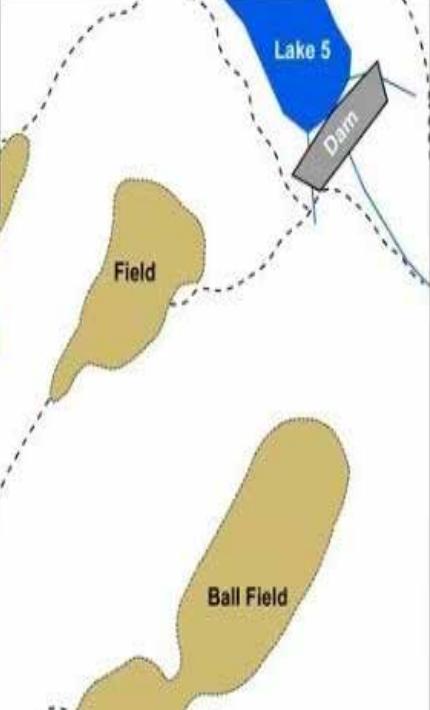
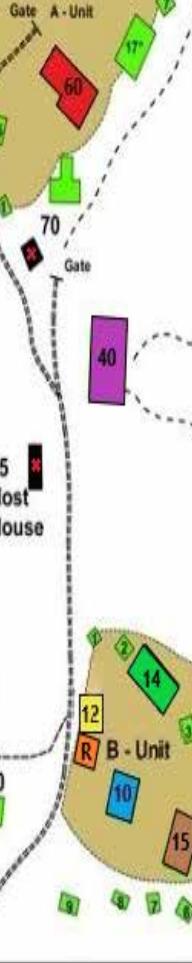
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast - Feast Hall
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Closing Ritual - Feast Hall
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Reflections and Connections - Feast Hall
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch - Feast Hall A selection of leftovers from the event for you to take.
2:00 – 5:00 PM	Clean Up & Pack Out - Feast Hall



Important Locations	
Registration	R
Feast Hall	60
Restrooms/Shower	10
Craft Cabin	B 12
Pavilion	40
Guardian Lodge	B 15
If you need assistance from staff, look for folks wearing staff badges/lanyards or carrying radios. You can also go to the Feast Hall or Registration.	



If you need assistance from staff, look for folks wearing staff badges/lanyards or carrying radios. You can also go to the Feast Hall or Registration.



## **Friday's Work Shops**

### **The Astrology of Destiny - Blake Leaf**

Not sure how to make your mark on the world or what you want to be remembered for? In this intermediate level astrology workshop, we'll examine how to read a natal chart with an eye toward destiny: the long-term, overarching purpose of one's life. Natal charts do not prescribe one's life or fate, but they provide a good starting point for inquiry into one's personality traits, preferences, values, and karmic path. By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to perform their own destiny-related chart readings, and any who bring their own natal charts will get the chance to do so for themselves. (Charts can be generated for free at <https://horoscopes.astro-seek.com/birth-chart-horoscope-online>) Prior experience with chart interpretation is not required but would be helpful.

Blake Leaf is an animist, polytheist Pagan who recently realized a lifelong dream to move from Northern Virginia to the countryside. Blake has held a variety of jobs, all of which have in some way involved gathering, organizing, and sharing information. When not presenting on Pagan or naturalist topics, or teaching a less interesting subject to less enthusiastic high-school students, Blake writes, knits, grows herbs, and looks after a hyperactive cat.

### **Crocheting an Heirloom - Heather Fireheart**

We sometimes receive heirlooms from our ancestors, both tangible and intangible. Now is the time to start creating our own heirloom to leave behind. Participants will join in discussion and stich & witch with the presenter, a fairly easy, yet heirloom-worthy project that would serve as a gift to those left behind when we enter the next plane. Advanced beginner to intermediate crocheting experience required to participate. Pattern, starter skein of yarn, crochet hook, and tote for project included in materials fee.

Heather Fireheart has been a practicing pagan since 2007 and for the last 13 years has been a part of the NoVA Pagan community. She has helped with planning, coordinating and volunteering at local Pagan events since 2011, including Fertile Ground Gathering, NoVA and Front Royal Pagan Pride, and Hallowed Homecoming. Currently on a solitary path, she always seeks connection to Spirit, the land, and people of similar beliefs, while on her small home in the mountains of WV that she shares with her husband, two cats and dog.

## Friday's Work Shops Continued

### **Intro to Archery - Tabitha**

This intro to archery is to learn the basics of shooting and the safe use and handling of the bow. Recurve bows, arrows, safety equipment and targets will be supplied for left and right handed shooters. You are also welcome to bring your own equipment for this class. This is perfect for those with zero experience and seeking an introduction to the sport. The follow up for this class to this is to learn how to use archery as a meditative practice while shooting.

Tabitha is a solitary witch who studies a range of pagan practices.

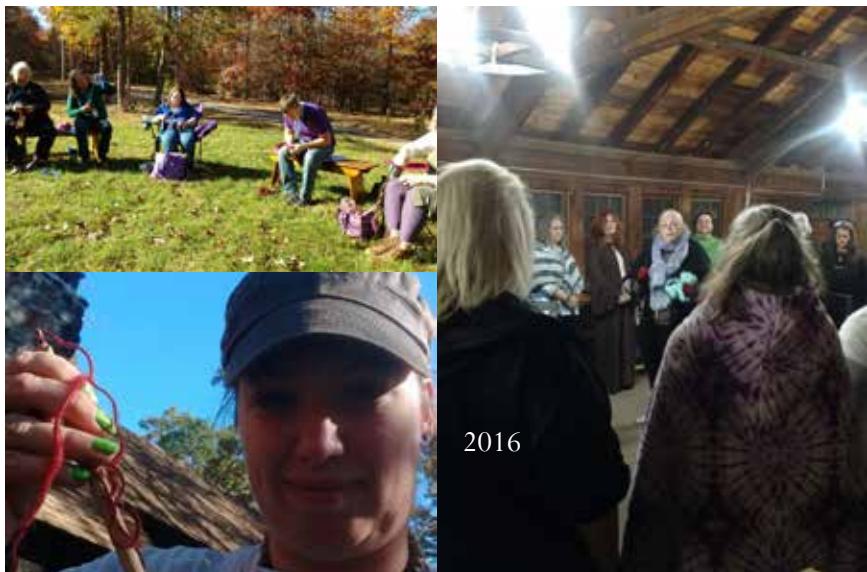


### **Spiritual Council: Finding the Ancestors: - Lady Mellysandra**

This experiential workshop will help participants through breathwork, ritual, and meditation to find and communicate with your ancestors. The workshop will include instruction in using breathwork to transition the mind from the mundane to the magical and using guided meditation to find your inner sanctum and to meet with your own Spiritual Council of ancestors, teachers, spirits, guides, and Gods. Bring a blanket, pillow, chair, or other comfort items. We will be doing a deep meditative dive and have lots of time to journal and talk about your experiences and how this can be used to help guide your life.

Lady Mellysandra has been a practicing pagan and energy worker for more than 20 years. She is a Reiki Master, Registered Yoga Teacher, and Certified Meditation Teacher Yoga. Over her life she has studied a variety of spiritual and healing pathworking from several pantheons including: tarot, runes, chakras, meditation, herbal folk medicine, etc. She maintains a daily energetic and meditation practice to help her keep her energetic body clear of obstructions and stay connected to her inner light. Over the years, she has led rituals and taught a variety of classes for both public and private groups throughout Virginia, DC, West Virginia, and Maryland.

## Saturday's Work Shops



2016

### **Not a Momma Bear-Parenting the next generation - Illara Silverbreeze**

There are few opportunities for Pagan parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles to gather in discussions that provide support, insight, and humor as we walk the parenting pathway. Illara plans a facilitated discussion sharing strategies developed while parenting 6 children – aged 26 to 11 – from 9/11 and subsequent deployments, global pandemic, and insurrections in a country torn by increasingly polarizing political viewpoints which threaten human rights. Discussion will include concepts from a) general health and well-being; b) earth-centered spirituality parenting, c) trauma-informed parenting, d) lessons in parenting from allyship, e) deity-devotion inspirations, and f) animal ally inspirations (hint – not a bear). – Bring a notebook and pen for journaling moments.

Illara Silverbreeze has been consciously Pagan for more than 30 years. Illara completed initial training as a member of the Burning Branch, Coven of the Silver Hive, Order of the White Moon, and now serves as High Priestess of Shadows and Light, an eclectic Pagan circle. Illara is an ordained Cleric in Sacred Well Congregation and serves as the Secretary for the Board of Deacons. Illara is also a member of ADF, OBOD, and First Degree Initiate in Greencraft Wicca. As a dual Board Certified Family Medicine & Integrative Medicine physician and 500 hour Registered Yoga Instructor, Illara is an expert in health and wellness. Illara's hobbies include gardening, crystal collecting, tarot, and gaming with her children.

## Saturday's Work Shops Continued

### **Archery as a Meditative Practice - Tabitha**

Learn how to use archery to engage your body and bring your mind into a meditative state through focus. No experience? Even better! Here, as you work to improve your ability, your mind becomes grounded and centered through focusing on the small changes to improve your shot. Equipment and safety gear will be provided. Don't know which side of the bow to use, the Intro to Archery class is to get you past that and into using the bow correctly just for this class. You are welcome to bring your own equipment for use or to share.

### **Becoming a Hero - Mara**

In times of darkness, we need heroes to step into service, so the community can thrive in safety. We need people who can act bravely time and again, in service of something greater than themselves. But real life heroes aren't inherently exceptional people - they become heroes through what they do. In this class, we'll examine the practicalities of becoming a hero - how we can get in alignment with our truest self, how we can move through fear, and how to strategize meaningful action we can take to create a better world for our descendants.

Mara (they/them) is a witch and devotional polytheist with a primarily Irish pagan practice. Their approach includes a deep appreciation for historical sources and cultural contexts combined with listening to spirits active today, and using knowledge from the body sciences to enhance magical practice. They are also a licensed occupational therapist blending somatic therapy and lymphatic drainage massage to provide trauma-informed holistic therapy. Mara is queer and genderqueer, and prioritizes liberation and social justice. They can be found at their private practice Rainbow Spring Wellness at [www.rainbowspringwellness.com](http://www.rainbowspringwellness.com)





## Sunday's Work Shop

### Reflections and Connections - Mason

A structured experience of shared sacred listening (group spiritual direction) to reflect on and/or help process any experiences from the day.

Mason is a fellow seeker and aspiring mystic following a winding path of Druid wisdom and intuitive magic. Seminary taught him how to translate various faith ideas into sacred language he can understand. He possesses few answers but relishes every question, certain only that he is blessed as a queer and trans individual. Mason is a spiritual care worker serving individuals and groups through Seek Sincerely Spiritual Care and a Steward of Wilderness Between, a Druid-inspired, nature-revering collective in the DC area.



## Event Rules

In order to ensure we have a safe gathering and also abide by the rules set by our host, the National Park Service we ask all to be aware of and follow these basic rules:

**Alcohol:** Alcohol is only permitted in designated areas.

**Weapons:** No weapons are permitted within the gathering. Blades may be used during ritual by those with designated roles.

**Drugs:** Illegal drugs are not permitted in compliance with national and Virginia laws.

**Clothing:** Clothing is required. Please feel free to wear comfortable, climate appropriate, and ritual attire throughout the event.

**Smoking:** Please only smoke in designated areas and use the sand-filled buckets provided to dispose of your smoking trash.

**Pets:** Only registered service animals are permitted.

**Interaction with Wildlife:** If you encounter any resident wildlife, please do your best to avoid as much contact as possible. If you feel uncomfortable or in danger, please contact a member of staff.

**Violence/Conflict:** Violent, rude, & inappropriate behavior will be addressed by staff as needed and may result in being asked to leave.

**Fires:** The only fires permitted are in the Feast Hall, Craft Cabin, Pavilion, and Fire Circle. Only designated fire tenders can light, maintain & extinguish the fires for the safety of the participants and the park.

**Sacred Fires:** The Feast Hall and Fire Circle are designated as “Sacred Fires”. Please respect them appropriately by not throwing trash in them.

**Kitchen:** For your safety and the safety of the Kitchen Staff, please do not enter the kitchen without permission. The kitchen is full of Hot and Sharp items – unexpected people can be hazardous to all involved.

## Event Rules

**Volunteers:** Please arrive for your volunteer shift on time. If you will not be able to perform the duty you volunteered for, please check in with Registration or the coordinator of the area you are scheduled to help in.

**Trash/Recycling:** Please ensure all trash is deposited in designated receptacles. When you depart, please ensure all trash is deposited in the dumpsters near the Feast Hall.

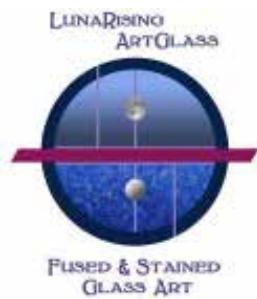
**Communications:** If you are using an FRS radio, please use the odd channels only.

**Identification:** Please ensure your participant lanyard is visible at all times.

Staff can be identified with “Staff” lanyards. Please see any Staff if you have any questions.



Thank you to our 2024 sponsors:



[lunarisingart.com](http://lunarisingart.com)



[mistymountainmead.com](http://mistymountainmead.com)



[temperedraven.com](http://temperedraven.com)

# 2024 HHSR Event Feedback

Please be as thorough and honest in your responses as possible! We cannot grow and improve our event without your anonymous feedback, so we greatly appreciate the time you take to let us know what we are doing well and what we could do better.

<https://forms.gle/HgyAAs8ngaEWG6ut9>

