

The background is a painting. It features two dark, leafless trees with intricate, glowing white roots that spread across the bottom. A large, pale blue full moon hangs in the sky, with several small white birds flying around it. A small, glowing yellow lantern hangs from one of the tree branches. The sky is a mix of blue and purple hues, and the ground is dark with white, wavy lines representing hills or clouds.

Hallowed Homecoming: A Samhain Retreat

Embracing the Darkness

Welcome to our 11th year with special guest, Tava.

**Nov. 6th – Nov. 9th, 2025
Prince William Forest Park**

TAVA BAI

Letter from the Staff

Welcome to Hallowed Homecoming: A Samhain Retreat 2025! We are happy you've joined us this year.

Please note the following:

1. The night owl bunkhouse will be in Camp B again this year.
2. The ritual chapel will be in building 70. Please feel free to use the space for meditation, small rituals, offerings, etc.
3. The Pastoral Care Team is available for any individuals who may require assistance post-ritual or throughout the retreat. The care team can be identified by the purple bandanas they wear while on shift. If you cannot locate someone, let a Staff member know you are in need of assistance and we can locate someone for you.
4. We have spotlight stickers for badges. This indicates the level of physical contact each person is 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 ask a Staff member. All staff member cabins are indicated on the map later in the program in the event you need assistance at night.

Enjoy the event!



Ritual Arc

Our opening ritual this year will take place in two parts. The first will occur when you arrive at the retreat: you will pass through a canopy marking the gateway into a liminal space between the darkness and the light. As you enter, we welcome you to set an intention for what you hope to learn, explore, confront, or share with others at this year's retreat. The second part will take place Thursday evening, once most of us have entered, to consecrate this space and join in community within it.



The gateway to this liminal space will remain standing throughout the weekend. If you must leave and re-enter the site, we recommend that you go and return through the gateway. Before departing, take a moment to ground; before returning, pause to clear your mind and re-set your intention.

Our main ritual, on Saturday evening, will mark and celebrate the journey into darkness and the otherworld that occurs during the cycle of the seasons. It will incorporate elements of sound healing, theater, and traditional ritual practice while celebrating the multicultural magickal heritage and diversity of our group. Attendees will be invited to participate in a series of short experiences that will guide them to set down the stories they carry that no longer serve them and rewrite their connection to the divine for the upcoming year.

Our closing ritual will also take place in two parts. On Sunday morning, we will come together to celebrate what we have accomplished as a community and prepare ourselves to return to the mundane world. And as you depart, you will pass one last time through the liminal gateway, where you may find a few gifts to ease your journey home.

Opening Chant

We come together from many paths
Into this place of homecoming
To fill our cups and plant the seeds
Of growth and change and family
Our ancestors watch over us
As we honor them in unity
While we search the darkness in our-
selves
Side by side in community

Closing Chant

We came together from many paths
Into this place of homecoming
Our cups are filled, our seeds are sown
With darkness, strength, and mystery
Our ancestors watch over us
As we honor them in unity
While we ready ourselves to return
Restored by our community



Special Guest

Tava Baird has been a mentor in the Pagan community for over thirty-five years and is a Pagan author and folk artist. A Montessori classroom teacher and art instructor for over twenty years, she has a strong background in theatre arts and has been building theatre experiences for persons of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities for twenty years. She is a metaphysical educator who teaches art, history, and ritual classes in her area and mentors Pagans of all stripes on their journeys.

Workshops

Spirit Guides: Reaching Into Your Shadows (Friday)

Often our guides can be difficult to hear, making us question if anyone is here with us to act as a guide. In this workshop we will discuss common obstacles to connecting with your guides, and conduct a guided meditation to help move those obstacles aside and reach towards the entities that are reaching towards us. The instructor's experience with her spirit guide, Samael, will be discussed, as well as the concept of worth when dealing with the divine.

Dark Divination: Black Mirrors, Tea Leaf Reading, and Scrying Jars. (Friday)

This introductory divination class will give participants experience using each of these divination methods and have the opportunity to share experiences as a group. Students will then use their newfound skills to bind and begin building a personal symbol dictionary for use in divination or dreamwork in their own practice.

Our Lady of Ravens and Crows: Embracing The Morrigan (Saturday)

The Morrigan embodies many concepts that our modern society warns us to turn away from, when in fact embracing her can make us much more whole. Join Tava as we discuss death, wildness, and appetite while creating and blessing a unique Morrigan-themed altar poppet for raising power and reaching goals. The instructor's personal experiences in reaching out towards the dead in the name of The Morrigan will also be discussed, as well as her relationship with her spirit guide, Samael, who instructs her in her work.

Thursday, November 6th

4:00 – 7:00 PM	Registration Open If the Registration table is unattended, please proceed to the Feast Hall.
6:00 – 7:30 PM	Dinner - Feast Hall
7:30 – 8:00 PM	Opening Ritual - Feast Hall
8:30 – 10:00 PM	Understanding & Reading the Chakras Pt 1 - Craft Cabin
10:00 PM – 12:00 AM	Bonfire Circle - Council Ring



Friday, November 7th

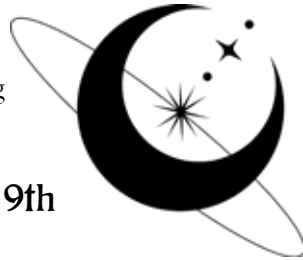
7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast - Feast Hall
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration Open If the Registration table is unattended, please proceed to the Feast Hall.
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Scorpio's Embrace - Craft Cabin
10:00 – 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Spirit Guides - Feast Hall
12:30 – 2:00 PM	Lunch - Feast Hall
2:00 – 3:30 PM	Understanding & Reading the Chakras Pt. 2- Craft Cabin Intro to Archery - Archery Field
3:30 – 4:00 PM	Break
4:00 – 6:30 PM	Dark Divination - Feast Hall
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Dinner - Feast Hall
8:00 – 9:30 PM	Sacred Rage, Sacred Silence - Pavillion
9:30 - 12:00 AM	Bonfire Circle - Council Ring

Saturday, November 8th

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 – 10:00 AM	Self Publishing a Pagan Book- Feast Hall
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Samhain Foraging - Outside of the Ritual Chapel
10:30 – 11:00AM	Break
11:00AM - 12:30PM	Reclaiming Death Rites - Feast Hall Archery Free Shooting - Archery Field
12:30 – 2:00 PM 3	Lunch - Feast Hall
2:00 – 4:00 PM	Our Lady of Ravens and Crows - Feast Hall
4:00 - 4:30PM	Break
4:30 – 6:00 PM	The Dark Divine - Craft Cabin Dinner Preperation - Feast Hall Closed
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 9th

7:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast - Feast Hall
9:30 – 9:30 AM	Closing Ritual - Feast Hall
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Break. Please use this time for reflection, processing, and/or packing.
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Warding the Threshold- Craft Cabin
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch of Many Leftovers - Feast Hall This is a "grab and go" style of lunch.
1:30PM	Departure



Thursday's Workshops



Understanding and Reading the Chakras (2-part series) presented by Lady Mellysandra

This 2-part workshop series will introduce participants to the basics of the chakra system and help them use pendulums as a part of energetic readings for themselves and others.

Class 1: The Chakra System: Topics covered will include the basic physical and energetic properties of the seven major chakras and the emotional, physical, and energetic/metaphysical manifestations of each of the chakras. The workshop will include meditation and breathwork to explore your own chakras. (Please note the craft cabin only has bench seating.)

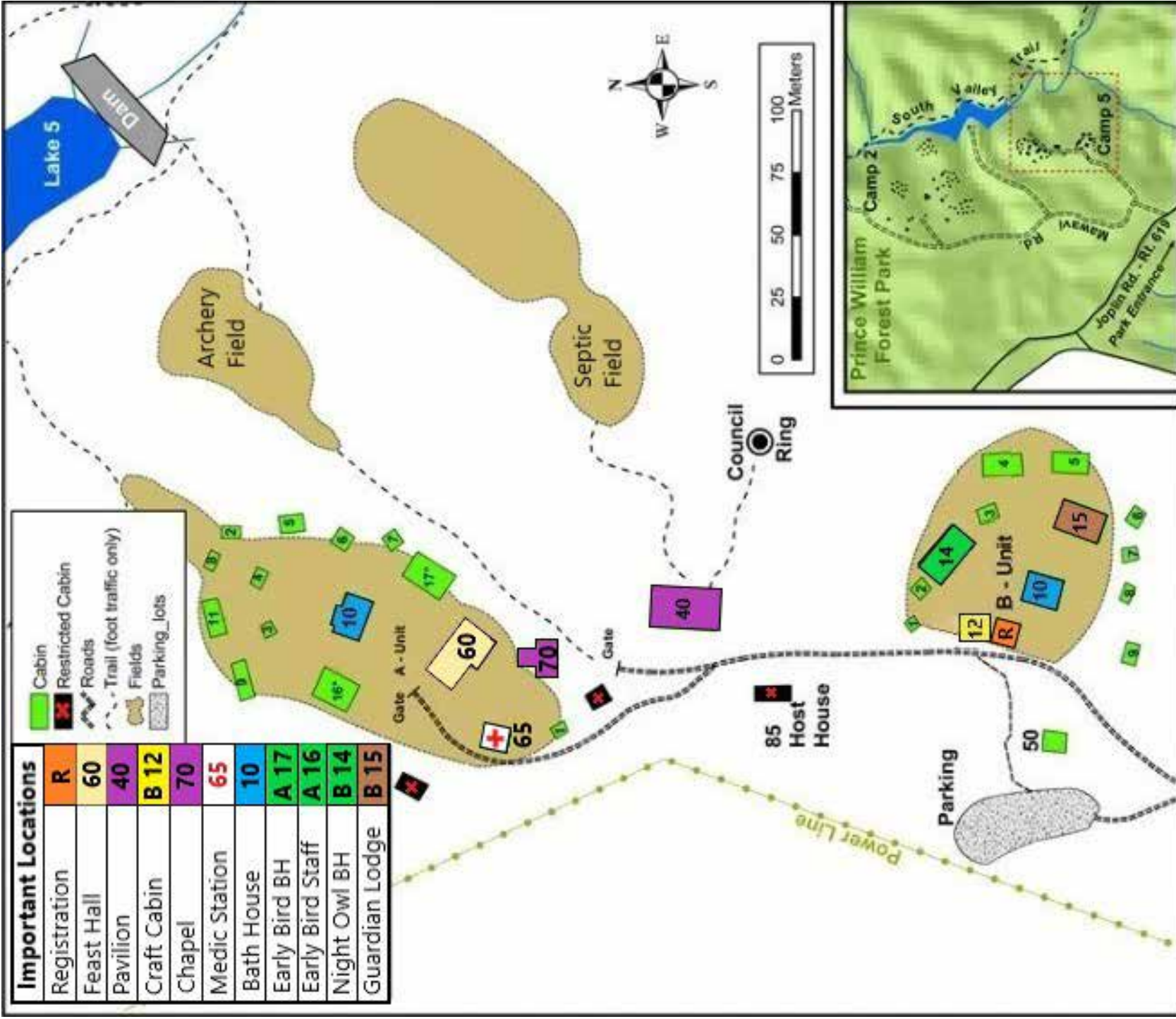
Lady Mellysandra has been a practicing pagan and energy worker for more than 20 years. She is a Reiki Master, Registered Yoga Teacher, and Certified Meditation Teacher. Over her life she has studied a variety of spiritual and healing pathwork-ing from several pantheons including: tarot, runes, bone casting, chakras, medita-tion, herbal folk medicine, energy work, 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, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. Class topics have included: chakras, pendulums, energetic reading, energetic protection, meditation, yoga, etc.

Friday's Workshops

Understanding and Reading the Chakras presented by Lady Mellysandra

Class 2: Chakra Reading and Pendulums: This class will assist participants in learning to communicate with a pendulum and how to use it in your practice as a quick tool that's readily at hand for divination, readings, etc. This will build on the chakra workshop in helping people read and interact with the chakras as a status check on their body, their emotions, and others. Hands-on opportunities during the workshop will provide techniques and practice in using pendulums for divination and reading chakras/energy flow.





Friday's Workshops (Continued)

Scorpio's Embrace presented by Britnie Goldberg

Dive beyond the surface of the Scorpio sun and explore the many layers of this enigmatic sign through a multidimensional lens. In this immersive workshop, we'll work with tarot, medical astrology, and herbalism to uncover how Scorpio energy manifests across different aspects of life-body, mind, and spirit. Whether you're a Scorpio or simply intrigued by its intensity, this experience offers a holistic look at the archetypes, shadows, and healing potential associated with the sign. You'll leave with a deeper personal understanding and practical tools to integrate what you've discovered.



Britnie has been interested in fantasy and magic from a young age and, sensing there was more than what she was limited by, she consumed books and media to expand her knowledge and understanding. She aims to guide others through their own journeys, using the wisdom she has gained through her experiences and through engaging with others. Thanks to 2020, she decided to dive into her passions and found what she enjoyed doing with the support of her partner and family. After switching employment, she got her Reiki 1st and 2nd Degree Certification from Reiki Master Jenn Bateman in 2021. Britnie also received Certifications for the Vitalist Herbal Practitioner, Astro-Herbalism, and Alchemical Herbalism Programs from The School Of Evolutionary Herbalism between 2021 and 2023. She continues to branch out for her studies with focuses on Psychology, Homesteading, Tarot, and Medical Astrology

Intro to Archery presented by Tabitha Stacy

Learn the basics of recurve archery, from equipment to proper drawing, through to accurate aiming techniques. Perfect for those who have never picked up a bow and those who need a refresher. Equipment and safety gear provided, or bring your own!

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

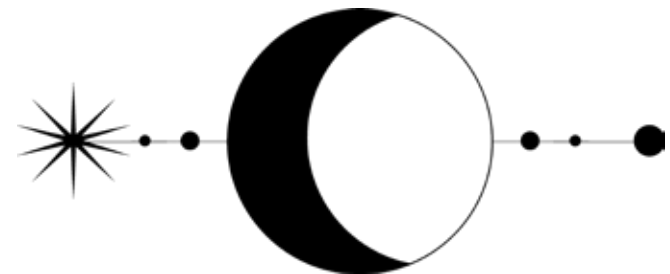


Friday's Workshops (Continued)

Sacred Rage, Sacred Silence: A Somatic Ritual for Release & Renewal presented by Lauren G. Koch: Keeper of the Old Ways

Rage. Silence. These emotional states are often feared-but in the dark, they become powerful messengers. This deeply embodied workshop offers a space to express, witness, and transform emotional intensity through gentle movement, breathwork, sound, and creative ritual. Participants will explore the spectrum of emotion and release what no longer serves through embodied expression and creativity. A grounding meditation will be offered in this sacred container, providing space for somatic movement & breathwork. This will be followed by space holding with channeled sound immersion for personal silent or vocal expression of rage and grief. Finally, participants will be invited to participate in collaborative painting or personal mark-making ritual for symbolic release.

Keeper of the Old Ways is an itinerant, small-batch, organic Herbal Apothecary based in Frederick, MD, owned and operated by Lauren G. Koch (she/they), an integrative wellbeing practitioner, educator, and full-time creative. Lauren's artwork explores themes of sacred geometry, magical correspondences, and communing with ghosts. A long time scholar of world religions as well as Appalachian and Northern European folk magic, Lauren is an eclectic, animist, hedge witch and pagan clergy working primarily with inclusive Norse Heathenry practices. With over 20+ years of creative, herbalism, accessible-trauma informed somatic breathwork & mobility, and pedagogy experience, Lauren's greatest passion is to aid others on the path to creating a life brimming with abundance and authenticity by nurturing connection to MIND•BODY•SPIRIT through creativity, mindfulness, and nature. You'll find Lauren leading workshops on herbalism, veneration practices, creative techniques, and self-care within the Frederick, MD and CUUPS community, in addition to vending handcrafted items and leading ritual experiences throughout Appalachia and beyond.



Saturday's Workshops

Self Publishing a Pagan Book presented by Scott Mohnkern

Been thinking about writing a pagan book? Don't want to go through the hassle of a publisher? In this workshop Scott will talk about his experiences self publishing his two books, and lessons he learned along the way.

Scott Mohnkern has been a prior featured presenter at Hallowed Homecoming, and has just retired after serving 4 years as Coordinator for Free Spirit Gathering. He's the author of "Hanging from the Tree: Living with the Runes" and "A Year of Viking Ritual". He's been a practicing Heathen since 1997 and is currently the Maryland Steward for the Troth.

Samhain Foraging presented by Blake Leaf

The wild wood calls! Venture with us onto the trails of Prince William Forest Park to see what edible, medicinal, and otherwise useful plants we can find. Although many autumn fruits and nuts are past their peak by Samhain-tide, this liminal time of year holds its own hidden bounty of roots, twigs, tinder, and more. We will discuss how to identify these plants, their practical uses, and the folklore surrounding them. (Note that this workshop will involve up to a mile of gently paced walking over at-times-uneven terrain.)

Blake Leaf is an animist polytheist Pagan, shamanic practitioner, wilderness skills instructor, and spiritual guardian in training. Blake has presented on various metaphysical and naturalist topics at Free Spirit Gathering, the previous Hallowed Homecoming, and state and local parks. Blake is also the founder of Earthcraft Wilderness School, which offers practical instruction in foraging, wilderness survival, and preparedness, open to all. Blake lives in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia with an ever-expanding herb garden and an adorably vicious cat.

Archery Free Shooting presented by Tabitha Stacy

Take your time shooting a recurve bow to improve your skills, or just to take a break and clear your mind! Must know the basics of archery or attend the Beginner Archery class to brush up on the equipment and techniques. **No inexperienced walk-ins will be permitted.** Range Safety Officers must stay focused on the range and not teaching.



Saturday's Workshops (Continued)

Reclaiming Death Rites: Workshop and End-of-Life Ritual presented by Jennifer Jurlando

This is a workshop focused on the transition from life to death. We will discuss the opportunities often missed by dying people and their loved ones to speak bravely about end-of-life, discuss wishes, and perform rituals. Attendees will reclaim the end of life, for themselves and their loved ones, as a sacred space to honor legacy, ritual, and our ongoing connection to our dead. This session will include end-of-life planning and a body preparation ritual featuring a volunteer "corpse." Participants will leave with a plan for their own end of life, their preferences for the treatment of their bodies after death, and ideas for starting conversations with loved ones about death and their final wishes.

Jennifer Jurlando is a trained death doula and Reiki provider, a ritual facilitator, and a death educator. She currently leads grief support groups for preschoolers and assisted living communities and has also led perinatal and child loss groups for Full Circle Grief Center and The Miss Foundation. Jennifer is an adjunct instructor in VCU's Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program, where she teaches a course on Death and Grief. Her writing on loss, survival, and worth has been published online at RVAMAG and Life in 10 Minutes and in the anthologies, "Unspoken: Writers on Infertility, Miscarriage, and Stillbirth" and "Nine Lives: A Life in Ten Minutes Anthology". She believes that mindful conversations and experiences about death make it possible to live life more authentically. Jennifer has a years-long ancestral veneration practice, facilitates monthly self-care ritual groups, and is driven to help people plan for the sacred space linking the end of life, death's arrival, and body blessing rituals.

The Dark Divine: Working with Baleful, Transgressive, and Chaotic Spirits moderated by Blake Leaf

In this open discussion moderated by Blake Leaf, participants will share their experiences honoring and working with "dark" deities and spirits: those whose chaotic, uncomfortable, or dangerous aspects place them on the edges of what is considered safe and ethical practice. We will discuss what draws us to these spirits, the ways we engage with them, and what precautions we take, as well as share suggestions for those who feel called to form their own such relationships. This discussion will take place within a circle of trust and non-judgment, with honesty and understanding as our goals; all perspectives will be heard and honored. Note that heavy topics will likely arise, including death, violence, sexuality, and hard moral questions; think carefully as to whether you will be comfortable participating in this workshop.

Sunday's Workshops

Warding the Threshold: Talismans of Protection for Dark Times presented by Lauren G. Koch: Keeper of the Old Ways

During periods of transformation, grief, or spiritual turmoil, practicing protection transforms into an expression of love and self-care. In this interactive class, participants will discover traditional warding materials, including correspondences, knot magic, and beyond. They will then craft their own protective talisman or spell bundle, suitable for wearing or displaying in their home. We will delve into the significance of protection magic across diverse folk traditions, while also creating a personal charm rooted in both intention and ancestry. Supplies will be provided, however, participants are welcome to bring their own felt, embroidery thread, sewing notions, or any other materials they feel called to use in their creations.



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 and during designated events.

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.

Event Rules (Continued)

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, and 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.

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.

The Hearth Fund

The Hearth Fund allows us to provide varying levels of financial support for those in our community who may otherwise be unable to attend

Hallowed Homecoming. If you are able to, please consider donating here:

<https://hallowedhomecoming.ticketspice.com/hhsr-donations>

