

Celebrating Fertility of Heart and Mind: A Beltane Celebration
Sunday, May 5, 2024
Tri-County Unitarian Universalists
Summerfield, FL
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County
Eustis, FL
Rev. Cynthia A. Snavelly

Story: [The-Goddess-Blesses-All-Forms-of-Love-Beltane.pdf \(magickandmystery.com\)](#)

Beltane or May Day is a cross quarters holiday on the pagan calendar about halfway between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. Fertility rituals are an important aspect of Beltane. In their book Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Traditions Starhawk, Diane Baker and Anne Hill write, “Beltane is the holiday of fertility. For Pagans, one of the great gifts of the Goddess is the power of the earth to grow wonderful flowers and fruit and all the things we eat. We are thankful for the fertility of the earth, and our job is to keep the land and the soil healthy, to protect the animals and plants and trees so that fertility can continue. The earth is a living being, and all of her creatures are part of her body. Each has a place, a purpose, a special part in the great dance of life.

“On Beltane, we also celebrate all the different kinds of human fertility and creativity. We give thanks for the power women and men have to make babies, to bring new people into the world. But people can create in other ways as well. When we paint pictures, make up songs, tell new stories, plant a garden or cook a dinner, we take part in the fertility of the Goddess.”

I titled this sermon “Celebrating Fertility of Heart and Mind.” What kinds of love do you want to nourish in yourself and in this community this year? You have a strong caring committee reaching out to one another in times of need. Perhaps you want to add new people to it, perhaps come up with some new ideas about how to share the work. You have a home here that you love. Perhaps you want to figure out ways to use it more fully. Come up with ways to use your currently fallow property. Many of you have artistic pursuits. Perhaps you will find more ways to share those with each other. Dr. Seuss says the Grinch’s heart grew three sizes in one day. None of you are grinchies. But with some cultivation, all of us can grow our hearts.

And what of our minds? New ideas too take cultivation. Dream. Wander outdoors. Give yourself time that isn’t scheduled. I think Mary Oliver’s poem “The Summer Day” is perfect for Beltane.

“ Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?"

Write a poem. Paint a picture. Layout a garden. Create a new recipe. Dance a dance of your own creation.

Allow the mind and the heart to be fertile.

This prayer is from the Singapore Church Missionary Society, but I think it is appropriate for Beltane.

“Stir the soil,
Run the plowshare deep,
Cut the furrows round and round
Overturn the hard, dry ground,
Spare no strength nor toil,
Even though I weep.
In the loose, fresh-mangled earth
Sow new seed.
Free of withered vine and weed
Bring fair flowers to birth.”

May the flowers we share with one another today be but symbols of all that we will share with one another in the coming year. Happy Beltane!