



SUNTREE RETREAT 2022

La Foret Conference & Retreat Center

PROGRAM SCHEDULE, MAY 13-16, 2022

Note: As you will see, there are ample amounts of free time over the course of the retreat. Organize spontaneous rituals or workshops during those periods as you wish.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

3:00 pm

Registration

(Ponderosa Lodge, Suntree Retreat Organizing Team)

Everyone meets at the Ponderosa Lodge for registration. We'll have a quick meet-and-greet and hand out name tags. Write your preferred name and pronouns on your badge as well as your home location if you would like. Please keep your name tag for the duration of the retreat.

People will have an opportunity to drop luggage off at the accommodation and explore the grounds.

5:00 pm

Opening Ceremony

(Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark Green)

A chance to welcome everyone, followed by a land acknowledgement.

We will take part in a grounding ritual that will help us let go of outside concerns as well as create our sacred space and define the boundary.

6:00 pm

Dinner

(Dining Hall)

Communal meal. Variety of dietary options available. Speak to the organizing team if you have any special requirements.

Every meal will begin with an oral statement recognizing the provenance of the food we are about to eat. Contact Robin Clancy if you're interested in helping with this act of recognition.

The dining hall is a shared space, so there may be other groups present as well, but we'll have an area for Atheopagans to sit together.

6:45 pm

Introductory Talk

(Ponderosa Lodge, led by Mark Green)

Mark will give an introductory talk about what Atheopaganism is, what it means to be an Atheopagan, and the purpose of the retreat. This will involve raising the Suntree banner.

7:00 pm

Procession to Ritual Space to Dedicate Our Suntree

(Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark Green)

We'll parade with the Suntree banner from the Ponderosa Lodge to the Yurt Fire Circle. We'll sing along the way. Bring lanterns and instruments as you wish for our parade.

At the fire circle, we'll decorate the Suntree peach tree and maybe have some other rituals.

Yes, we will have an actual peach tree to decorate!

Please bring ornaments with which you'd like to decorate the Suntree. Think about other ways you'd like to honor the Suntree. Feel free to water it (not too much...).

8:00 pm

Fire Circle Walking Ritual

(Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark Green)

We'll light the fire and invoke the qualities we want to be with us during the next few days as we begin walking around the circle. Speak out about anything you want to as you walk around the circle. Share your truth as we circumambulate the fire. Bring a drum or a rattle to help facilitate this ritual!

After we've completed several circuits, and people have had a chance to say their truth, we can sit around the fire for social time.

10:00 pm

Quiet Time Begins (Stargazing Option Available)

This is an opportunity to spend social time with friends indoors or at the fire circle. Or you may head to bed.

Arwen Gwyneth will lead a stargazing workshop at this point for those interested in learning more about astronomy. This will involve a group night walk to a darker part of the property.

END OF DAY ONE

SATURDAY, MAY 14

- 8:30 am **Breakfast**
(Dining Hall)
- 9:00 am **Social Time**
Time to prepare for the rest of the day, hang out with friends, go for a walk, do a small personal ritual, or play a game.
- 9:45 am **Morning Workshop 1**
How to Create an Atheopagan Ritual
(In one of the yurts, or beside the Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark Green)
Mark will discuss his process for creating a ritual and will act out a ritual activity with the participants. You may enjoy reading the [Atheopagan Ritual Primer](#) in preparation for this workshop.

This will also be your chance to get a book signed by Mark.
- 10:45 am **Second Morning Workshop 2**
How to Perform a Ritual Meal — and Create Meaningful, Sensory Rituals That Take the Form of Meals.
(In one of the yurts, or beside the Yurt Fire Circle, led by Michael Halloran)
Meals are an essential everyday routine. Michael will discuss techniques for bringing meaningful ritual to your meals. Plus, we'll perform a sensory ritual that takes the form of a symbolic meal, that is, the ritual will have a "starter" a "main course", and "dessert".
- 12:00 pm **Lunch and Podcast**
(Dining Hall, led by Arwen Gwyneth and Mark Green)
We'll share some food together while Arwen and Mark record their podcast, "The Wonder: Live from Suntree Retreat 2022."

The podcast will take the form of a Q&A session with all Suntree Retreat attendees.

This may also be an opportunity for those who can't attend in-person to take part via Zoom.
- 1:15 pm **Afternoon Workshop 1**
Writing and Art Session
(Ponderosa Lodge and/or walk in the woods, led by Hanna Coy and Michael Halloran)
In preparation for our bardic circle at 8 pm, we're giving over some time for people to unleash their creativity which they can show off later. So, we'll have a writing and art session at this point.

Write a poem, sculpt something out of clay, take a photo, paint a picture, make a collage, do some life drawing, make a mask, create a banner, work on a spoken-word piece, practice a song/dance, or collaborate with someone else on a shared project.

Basically, work on anything creative you'd care to share later. Maybe make an item for your focus or to use in your Atheopagan practice.

Hanna and Michael will provide a variety of prompts and give support and advice on your various projects. We will go on a "haiku walk" in the woods, for example,

to be inspired. Plus, different kinds of art media will be provided, but bring your own materials if you prefer.

Not feeling creative? Feel free to use this time to explore the property, meditate, or rest—after all, this is your retreat.

3:15 pm

Afternoon Workshop 2

Guided Meditation Techniques: Grounding and Shielding.

(Led by Rachel Wallace-Steigely)

This is a short introduction to two specific types of visualization within guided meditation. Both based around increasing a sense of mental fortitude and balance, they can be used as taught or built on as a base for personal practice. We will introduce the concept, get comfortable (outdoors if warm enough) and spend about 15-20 minutes practicing each one, followed by questions and discussion.

4:15 pm

Afternoon Workshop 3

How to Make a Cosmala

(Led by Jon Cleland-Host)

A Cosmala is a set of sacred beads, with each bead representing an event from the Big Bang until today. Being in chronological order, they can be used to feel the gratitude of our history, to venerate Ancestors (all of them, not just human Ancestors!), to show deep time on one's Focus, and other spiritual uses.

Jon will demonstrate the idea using his own 100 bead Cosmala and will show you how to plan and start your own.

5:15 pm

Social Time

Take some time to decompress, hang out with friends, go for a walk, do a small personal ritual, or prepare for the bardic circle.

6:00 pm

Dinner

(Dining Hall)

Plus, Discussion of Rites of Passage (Optional)

On Sunday we will be carrying out rites of passage for those who would like them. *This is an optional activity.*

This could be a:

- Ritual to mark your age
- Handfasting ceremony
- Celebration of the end or beginning of a period of your life
- Ritual acknowledgement of your attendance at the Suntree Retreat
- Cleric ordination

Decide what kind of rite of passage you'd like to perform and choose an officiant to carry out the ritual. Some Atheopagan Clerics have volunteered to be officiants, but you can have any attendee help you officiate your ritual. You can even officiate it yourself.

Discuss the format of the ritual with your chosen cleric, what you want to achieve from it, and start planning how to carry it out in a way that will be most meaningful to you.

- 7:00 pm **Ritual Toasts**
(Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark Green)
We'll take part in some ritual toasts and pour one out for those who can't make it! We'll create a ritual punch in a cauldron and have fun with other merrymaking rituals. BYOB and other refreshments. Hand-pressed apple cider will be available, made by Joy Burton.
- 8:00 pm **Bardic Circle/Show and Tell**
(Yurt Fire Circle or Ponderosa Lodge, weather dependent)
Sharing of talents and creative works. Tell a story, do a magic trick, sing a song, or share something you created during the art and writing workshop. Whatever you care to show.
- 10:00 pm **Quiet Time Begins + Dance Party**
(Ponderosa Lodge)
Quiet time begins, so we'll move indoors to the Ponderosa Lodge for a dance event. Dance till you drop, or head back to your lodgings for a restful night.
- 11:30 pm **Fire Walking Experience**
(Led by Joy Burton, dependent on whether there is a burn ban in place)
Ever wanted to try walking barefoot on hot coals? Joy Burton and her husband, Heath, will lead this unique experience.

END OF DAY TWO

SUNDAY, MAY 15

8:30 am

Breakfast

(Dining Hall)

Michael Halloran will talk about the Carnival of Change event happening later in the evening. This is a chance to show an alternative version of yourself in a safe pagan setting.

Dress as an animal, wear your beautiful pagan finery, or think about how to transform yourself during the **Body Painting Workshop** at 11 am. Take on the persona you've always wanted to try out — for one whole night.

10:00 am

Morning Workshop 1

Pagan History Lecture

(Ponderosa Lodge, led by Cornflower)

Nodens: From Ritual to Revolution. This lecture is an overview of Nodens, a healing god from Ancient Britain. The workshop will look at his temple complex at Lydney, the various artifacts found there that reveal some of the nature of his cult and some of the rituals that are theorized to have taken place there as well. Cornflower will also briefly discuss how this figure influenced Shakespeare, J. R. R. Tolkien, Arthur Machen, and H. P. Lovecraft — ensuring Nodens survival into the modern era.

Cornflower has mentioned that singing may take place.

11:00 am

Morning Workshop 2

Body Painting <i>(Yurt, led by Hanna Coy)</i>	Giving your Kids a Foundation – Family Celebrations of the Wheel of the Year <i>(Ponderosa Lodge, by Jon Cleland-Host)</i>
In this workshop, we will explore techniques for making temporary designs and drawings on the face and body using non-toxic materials. You will see some examples of how this practice has been used in ritual, artistic, and celebratory contexts. You'll have a collaborative opportunity to create and wear meaningful adornment that will enhance your other ritual experiences for the day (or not — we will also discuss cleanup and removal).	Having a fun and enriching family practice often takes a little planning. Find out how Jon and his family have built a fun, exciting and real family spiritual celebration of the Wheel of the Year which they've enjoyed for two decades, including activities, spiritual practices, and the main lessons of each of the big 8 pagan holidays. Come find out how you can bring this to life in your own family!

12:00 pm

Lunch

(Dining hall)

This is an opportunity to further discuss your rite of passage with your chosen cleric. Iron out the details, and maybe do a quick practice run.

- 1:15 pm **Community Conversation**
(Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark)
Mark will lead a discussion about the future of Atheopaganism through 2022 and beyond. It's a time for us all to ask and answer these questions:
- Where are we going?
 - What are our needs?
 - What do we hope to achieve before our next Suntree Retreat?
- 2:15 pm **Optional Activities**
At this point, you can go and work on your rite of passage. There will also be an opportunity to do a walking meditation in the labyrinth or go on an outing to The Garden of the Gods: www.gardenofgods.com.
- Or you can prepare your persona for the Carnival of Change in the evening.
- 4:15 pm **Rites of Passage (Social Time for Everyone Else)**
(Yurt Fire Circle, led by various clerics)
We'll carry out the rites of passage that people have chosen.
- 6:00 pm **Dinner**
(Dining Hall)
- 7:30 pm **Carnival of Change + Dance Party + Divination**
(Ponderosa Lodge, or Yurt Fire Circle)
In the tradition of carnivals worldwide, we are going to turn the world upside down. Become someone else for the evening, try on a different persona, wear a mask or costume, paint your face or body. Wear your most outrageous pagan garb and regalia, and bring drums, rattles, bells, and other instruments!
- Live deliciously!
- Games and divination activities will be provided.
- 10:00 pm **Quiet Time Begins**
We'll keep the party going indoors, but feel free to retire for the evening.
- Note: there will be a LUNAR ECLIPSE this evening – an opportunity for special rituals or just sky-watching!*

END OF DAY THREE

MONDAY, MAY 16

- 8:30 am **Breakfast**
(Dining Hall)
- 9:00 am **Social Time/Packing Up/Clean Up**
Help us clean up the areas we've used. Let's leave La Foret the way we found it.
- 10:30 am **Closing Ritual and Farewell**
(Yurt Fire Circle, led by Mark Green)
We will say goodbye to the Suntree and to each other and express our gratitude for what we have shared. Take back your decorations and we'll close the retreat with a ceremony and the promise of meeting again in the future to plant another Suntree.

Joy will be bringing the Suntree back to her property and will plant it there to live a fruitful life.
- 11:30 am **Early Departures**
See you all next time!
- 12:00 pm **Lunch**
(Dining Hall)
For those still onsite
- 1:00 pm **Departures**
See you all next time!

END OF RETREAT