

Mystic Grove

Report to the 1U Annual Congregational Meeting – May 19, 2019

Respectfully submitted by Cat Rigby (Mystic Grove Chair)

PURPOSE

The Mystic Grove is a Pagan / Earth Centered group that is affiliated with the First Unitarian Church of Orlando (1U) and Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS). The Mystic Grove was organized in 2001 for the purpose of creating a Pagan community within the framework of Unitarian Universalism. To achieve that purpose, the Mystic Grove focuses on the areas of education, worship, service, and fellowship.

CURRENT OFFICERS

The Mystic Grove calendar runs from Midsummer to Midsummer when new officers take up their positions. This report lists key activities according to the church year.

Current officers are:

- Senior Chair – Cat Rigby
- Secretary/Treasurer – Paul Burdette
- Activities Coordinator – Lesley Horwarth
- Historian – Sarah Grant
- Youth (Greeting Card Ministry) – Julia Burdette
- Immediate Past Chair (ex officio)– Mary Murphy

2018-2019 ACTIVITIES:

This report covers activities from May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019.

GOVERNANCE CHANGES

After discussion through fall term, Mystic Grove voted to update its missions in its bylaws on March 3, 2019. We wanted to go from 7 missions to a more clear and concise 5 missions and use them to follow a “5 year element plan” to give our annual charters a clearer focus. The new missions are:

Our mission is to be a UU Pagan affinity group / study group that...

1. Provides a safe, welcoming place for UUs and Pagans to gather where people of differing age groups and ability levels are free to participate.

2. Supports UUs and Pagans in their spiritual growth and encourages personal responsibility through educational opportunities and sharing the collective wisdom of past and present.
3. Provides information and opportunities for Pagan and Unitarian Universalist networking to help promote understanding between people with different belief systems.
4. Provides meaningful, engaging, and vibrant Pagan or Earth Centered worship.
5. Provides fellowship opportunities for people to socialize, laugh, and celebrate with our own brand of UU Pagan flair!

Monthly Meeting: First Sundays at 12:00 PM in Room 1 for planning the next ritual, classes, and fellowship opportunities. In between meetings, we remain in contact through our mailing list. Mid-year, we changed from using Yahoo! Groups to Groups.io.

Summer “Housekeeping”

Summer is the time for “housekeeping” tasks for the group in between church years.

- June 2018: New officers are voted on and any changes to charter/by laws are considered. We also renew our CUUPS group membership. The Mystic Grove continues as a Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) chapter.
- July 2018: Officers and teachers meet to plan the upcoming program year outline. We met in the Assembly Room before presenting the calendar to Mystic Grove at large.
- Aug 2018: MG buys group T-shirts for the first time!
- Sept 22, 2018: Retreat was planned in summer and then held in September. Every 5 years or at the change of a chair we host a retreat to do “re-visioning” work and fill the idea bucket back up.
- Nov 17, 2018: The annual “summer classroom clean up” was bumped to fall. It was followed by the annual dinner at Hollerbach Willow Tree.

WORSHIP

Solar rituals are “Open Circle” where anyone may drop by and participate. Lunar rituals are “Closed Circle” and require registration. If we do nothing else, Mystic Grove holds 8 solar rituals a year.

Solar Ritual

We hold 8 regular solar festivals led by volunteers that are open to members of First Unitarian Church of Orlando and the wider community. Most are held in Gore Hall at 7 PM on the Saturday closest to the Sabbat. The two solstice festivals (Midsummer and Winter) are held in the Sanctuary. Samhain is celebrated with an Ancestor's Feast where the congregation is invited to bring mementos and photos of their departed loved ones.

- Beltane (May 6, 2018) by Cat Rigby and Sarah Grant
- Summer Solstice (11 AM June 25, 2017) by Mary Murphy with MG Group helpers
- Lamas/Kemetic New Year (Aug 5, 2017) by Lesley Horwarth
- Mabon (Sept 23, 2017) by Carie Mendyk, Chip Dockery, Toni Dockery
- Samhain (Nov 4, 2017) By Christi Bass and Mary Murphy
- Winter Solstice (Dec 21, 2017) by Cat Rigby with MG Group helpers.
- Yule Vigil and Morning Ritual (Dec 21-22, 2017) MG Group
- Imbolc (Feb 3, 2018) by Sarah Grant
- Ostara (March 24, 2018) by Barbara Howe

Moon Circle (Covenant Group + Lunar Ritual)

The first block of Moon Circle ran from July 2018 to Dec 2018 on fourth Fridays at 7 PM with a hybrid model that includes teaching, sharing, and worship. Participation follows a covenant group model where members make a 6 month commitment to learning together. This semester we took inspiration from “Gathering for Goddess” by B. Melusine Mihaltses. We studied various deities. The second block from Jan 2019 – June 2019 studies Chakras.

Extra Worship Notes

- Oct 28, 2018 -- “Wheel of the Year” Sermon at University UU
- April 7, 2019 -- “Wheel of the Year” Sermon at First Unitarian
- Cat Rigby attended the LREDA Worship Module held at University UU in March 2019 to assist Mystic Grover in improving its worship skills.

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Adult RE offerings from Mystic Grove are usually held on Thursday nights from 7 PM – 9 PM unless indicated. MG teachers took a rest this year in favor of research and development (R&D) and only one class.

Fall 2018

- R&D: Holidays and Holy Days. We assist CUUPS with their curriculum development while creating content for our table for Orlando Pagan Pride 2019.
- R&D: Ritual Book. We review and prepare archived rituals for hopeful publication for our 20th anniversary.

Spring 2019

- R&D groups continue
- Book Group (3rd Sunday at Noon). This 6 session series examines selections from “Pagan and Earth Centered Voices in Unitarian Universalism.”

FELLOWSHIP

Craft Circle: Mystic Grove sponsors the Craft Circle third Fridays at 7 PM. (1st Friday BYO crafts were canceled this year.) This activity is not specifically Pagan. All members of the church community are welcome to craft and socialize on a drop-in basis. \$5 donation welcome to replenish art supplies

- May 19, 2018 – Paper Silhouette (Mary Murphy)
- June 16, 2018 – God’s Eyes (Lesley Horwarth)
- July 21, 2018 – Origami (Julia Burdette)
- Aug 18, 2018 – Dandelion Painting (Cat Rigby)
- Sept 15, 2018 – Cordial Tasting (Lesley Horwarth)
- Oct 20, 2018 – Elderberry Syrup and Gummies (Mary Murphy)
- Nov 19, 2018 – Acrylic Fluid Painting (Guest teacher Melissa Baker)
- Dec 15, 2018 – Preparing for Yule: decorate Yule log, make song books
- Jan 18, 2019 – Planetary and Element Runes (Heather N.)
- Feb 15, 2019 – Magic Yarn Wigs for Charity (Guest teacher, Carter Shine)
- Mar 15, 2019 – Kitchen Spring Cleaning Theme (Cat Rigby, Julia Burdette)
- April 19, 2019 – Paper Stationary, Flowers, and Journal Buffet (Co-sponsored with Young Adult Group)

Extra Craft Circle

- Dec 17, 2018 Cat Rigby teacher WUURL how to do rolled beeswax candles.

On Campus Fun

- MG hosted a coffee hour in November 2018 to celebrate its 17th birthday.
- MG performed “Pagan Carols” at Dec 2018 Black Cat Open Mic.

Field Trip Fun

- Aug 25, 2018: MG went to the International Food Club to explore fun things to eat.
- Sept 15, 2018: MG went to the “Fairy Doors” exhibit at Leu Gardens.
- Nov 25, 2018: MG attended the “Buddhist 101” class at Guang Ming Temple and took a temple tour.
- Apr 28, 2019: MG attended “Pagans in the Park.”

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Sept 29, 2018: In fall term, Mystic Grove (and First Unitarian) was a “Orlando Pagan Pride 2018” sponsor and provided the venue and some staff. It was held on campus to raise awareness and benefit Second Harvest Food Bank.

This event is part of the larger “Pagan Pride Project.” Through education, activism, charity and community, the project promotes tolerance and understanding between people with different belief systems. If you are a Pagan, the project can help you find pride and confidence in your path. If you are not a Pagan, the project can help you understand your Pagan friends, coworkers, and family members.

- Mar 31, 2019: In Spring term, Mystic Grove lent Coffee Hour / Buildings and Grounds a hand by doing a kitchen clean up and pantry organization day.

ONLINE OUTREACH

In order to promote Unitarian Universalist and Pagan awareness and encourage networking, Mystic Grove maintains an online presence at these locations year round:

- <http://www.orlandouu.org/groups/mystic-grove/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/mysticgrovecfl/>
- <https://mysticgrovecfl.wordpress.com>
- http://www.cuups.org/chapters/chapterlisting_SouthEast.html

As time allows we also list ritual dates at

- http://www.witchvox.com/vn/vn_detail/dt_gr.html?a=usfl&id=41690

PLANNING AHEAD

Mystic Grove will be tabling at the “Orlando Pagan Pride 2019” event at Bill Frederick Park on Oct 5, 2019. (We are sponsoring the monthly planning meetings in Gore Hall starting in March 2019.)

May 26, 2019: Mystic Grove is hosting coffee hour to teach people how to dance the maypole, make a collaborative tree painting to beautify Room 1, and get the congregation’s feedback on what sorts of classes 1U would like us to teach next year.