



Sage's CIRCLE
with Candice Marie Sage, PhD

The Wheel of the Year

My father is a first-generation German immigrant to Canada. My maternal grandmother is French-Canadian whose family settled here in the 1700s, while my maternal grandfather (Sage and Boyce) is second generation Irish Catholic from County Cork, and before that, Donegal. I was not alone in my diverse makeup; growing up in Montreal in the 1970s, multiculturalism was a rich tapestry of cuisine, custom, culture, and religion.

My German grandmother might have been a druid; on our walks through the woods, she seemingly knew about every plant - its healing properties and nutritional value, and which mushrooms to eat or avoid. Through her, I developed a deep appreciation for how humans are a part of nature, not overlords.

Though raised Catholic, I began searching for something more in harmony with nature as a teenager, dabbling in the 'occult', reading Tarot cards, and studying astrology to better know myself. It wasn't until I became a gardener in my early forties that pagan traditions really captured my imagination. Along with these newfound 'old' insights into the rhythms of the seasons, my affinity for the holistic nature of Celtic culture, its ties to nature, spirituality, and the Veil (collective unconscious), began to take root (or perhaps they had simply laid dormant in me all of those years).

My doctoral studies in health policy and equity explored the practice of de-colonization, identifying hierarchies and power imbalances, and trying to right them to achieve a more wholesome environment in which to live and thrive. Lately I have been exploring the themes of self-discovery, self-birthing, and self-identity through Celtic Goddesses and the archetypes they represent.

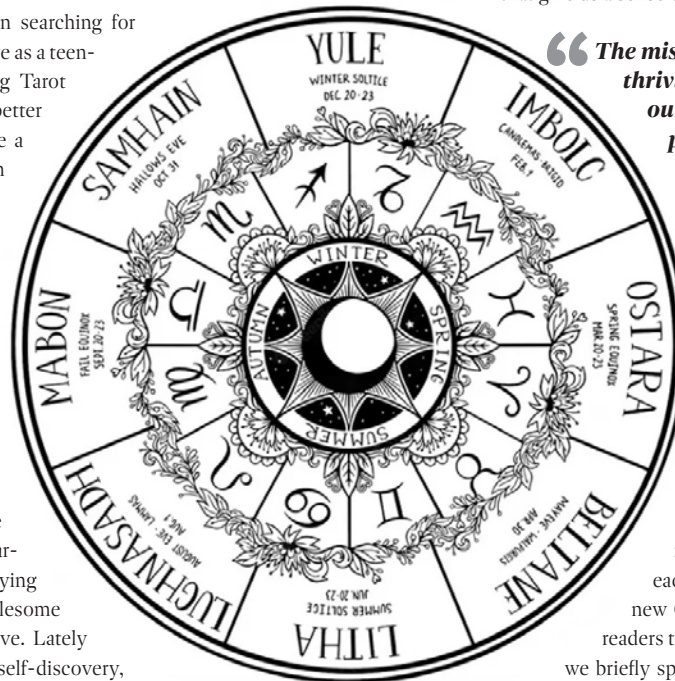
Once my children left home to start their own lives, it was time to re-design mine. While I have always tried to be an authentic person, this new journey in some ways was a homecoming to self once there was no one left for me to "take care of" (except the cat).

My recent pilgrimage to Ireland to search for my 'dán' (life's purpose/work) further revealed a longing to resurrect and re-tell the stories of the Celtic Goddesses to better understand myself, my role in my communities, and my

part to play in the broader, modern world - one that is so in need of grounding and healing. I explored many important sites in County Meade but was particularly inspired by stories of the coronations of Kings at the Hill of Tara (and their marriage to goddesses), Newgrange, and the River Boyne.

A reflection from Ireland and my communion with the River Boyne; when the goddess was written out from the stories of the coronation of Kings, so was the link between human subjects and the Mother, our Earth. Hierarchies were developed and the mundane became the dominion of women and the poor. Our severing from the Divine Feminine cuts us off from the very energy web of creation that birthed all of us, leaving us to grasp for the cords of connection that give us a sense of identity and purpose.

“The missing piece to our survival (and thriving) as a species is the goddess: our connection to the Womb - the place of all creation - the universe, and the soil, air, and waters of our land.”



The marriage of the King - the Divine masculine, the Provider and Protector - to the Divine Feminine that is the Land itself must be resurrected in our imaginations and societies.

This is the theme I will be exploring in each edition of Celtic Life International over the next 12 months, following the pagan Wheel of the Year, reviewing Celtic customs associated with each seasonal sabbat celebration, introducing new Celtic goddesses or gods that may inspire readers to connect with the Old Ways. This edition

we briefly speak to Imbolc, the tri-goddess, and Saint Brigid, with more to follow in February. Spring highlights Ostara (Easter) and Beltane. In summer, we take a look at the fire celebrations of Litha (Vernal Equinox) and Lughnasa, and fall will cover Mabon (harvest thanksgiving) and the end of the pagan calendar with Samhain (Halloween).

Here's hoping your Winter Solstice celebrations were merry and that the lights of Yule continue to warm your January!