

What We Offer to Inmates

*Mother Earth Ministries' mission
is to provide accurate information about Wicca and other Neo-Pagan religions
to interested inmates and prison staff,
and to facilitate Pagan prisoners' study and practice of their religion.*

WICCA? PAGANISM?

Paganism is an umbrella term that covers a lot of religions, all of which are poly-theistic, but not all of which identify as "Neo-Pagan." Wicca is one – and probably the best-known – modern form of ancient religious tradition of stone-age European cultures.

Heavily-armed monotheism conquered Europe's formal Pagan religions – but after suppression for about 600 years, the old perspectives came back, rearticulated in the 18th and 19th centuries by the Romantic Movement. The Craft was re/created and Wicca's modern structure developed in the middle of the 20th century. It has continued to grow since then.

Wicca is joyous and life-affirming. Our Goddess is all that is eternal and generative; that which is mortal, dying and reborn, we call God. The Goddess and God are partners, not opponents – so Wicca doesn't see the world as full of opposites, either. We see life as deeply interconnected and complementary, not adversarial.

Wicca is one of several Neo-Pagan religions. These include (but aren't limited to) Afro-Caribbean faiths, Norse Paganism, Native North and South American religions, and Polynesian traditions.

All Earth-reverencing religions are growing now; like many other people, prisoners are getting interested too. For many who can't accept mainstream beliefs, Nature-based spirituality is appealing and MEM helps make some of it accessible behind bars.

HOW DO WE PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT WICCA AND OTHER NEO-PAGAN RELIGIONS?

We offer two brochures about Wicca: *An Introduction to Wicca* and *The Wheel of the Year*. We also offer introductory brochures about Ásatrú and Druidry. In addition, we have a single-page flyer of the current year's Sabbats and Esbats, and a variety of other flyers and brochures about various aspects of Neo-Paganism. These are available free to any inmate or prison official who requests them.

Enchantment Encumbered: the Study and Practice of Wicca in Restricted Environments, written by two of MEM's priestesses, is available through Amazon.com, through the publisher via our website (www.MotherEarthMinistries.org); and by "snail-mail" for \$17 plus \$2 shipping from The Blue Eyed Witch, Post Office Box 475, Tombstone, Arizona, 85638. We hope to make it available through additional vendors soon.

Our writing priestess answers questions and discusses various aspects of Wicca in greater depth than our brochures. Scheduling sometimes keeps us from answering letters immediately, but we do respond to everyone who writes to MEM.

HOW DO WE FACILITATE PAGAN PRISONERS' STUDY AND PRACTICE OF THEIR RELIGIONS?

Our brochures can start inmates on their studies. Our visiting priestess (currently available only to some Tucson units of Arizona's state prisons and some local federal facilities) can answer many questions in person. Our writing priestess is not a pen-pal, but she can go into considerable depth on a variety of subjects.

We help inmates modify conventional rites to accommodate prison rules. We help inmates hear and revere their goddesses and gods right through the prison walls, and in spite of any ignorance, prejudice and/or discrimination they may encounter.



L → R: Lord Campion, Lady Garr, and Lady O'Gaea

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Photo by CanyonDancer, February 2010)

Lady Garr founded MEM in the year 2000, and is our President; she visits Tucson units of Arizona state prisons as requested. Lady O'Gaea (say it *oh-jee-uh*) is our Board Secretary and senior Writing Priestess. Lord Campion is our Treasurer.

All of our Board members are fully ordained Wiccan clergy, and all have been active in Tucson's Neo-Pagan community for many years. Lady O'Gaea is the author of several books about Wicca; she and Lady Garr wrote *Enchantment Encumbered*.

Mother Earth Ministries-ATC
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Tradition of Wicca does MEM teach?

The exercises, spells, and rituals that appear in MEM literature are eclectic and designed to work in the restricted environment of prison. They do not represent a distinct or specific Tradition. MEM's volunteers follow a variety of Neo-Pagan paths.

How can an inmate join MEM?

S/he can't! MEM is *not* a coven or Tradition. MEM is a small group of Pagan clergy who volunteer to minister, in person and by mail, to inmates who want practical guidance and/or spiritual advice.

Does MEM . . .

influence DOC policy? No! Lady Garr's a member of the AZ DOC's Religious Advisory Committee, and we are available to answer questions about Neo-Pagan practices, but neither the RAC nor any of us are policy-makers.

have a catalog? No. MEM does not sell or provide religious items or books – not even our own!

have a newsletter? We used to, but we don't now.

advocate for inmates? No; we are not allowed to do so. We don't do Internet research or contact third parties for inmates, either.

offer a correspondence course? No. We don't have the staff for it.

match inmates with pen-pals? No. Our writing priestess is not a pen-pal, either, nor can she contact other people for inmates.

have info about *all* Pagan religions? Unfortunately, no. We offer information about Asatru, Druidry, and – mainly – Wicca.

offer spiritual counseling? Yes: in person in some Tucson facilities and by mail across the country.

BROCHURES AS OF THE SPRING OF 2011

An Introduction to Wicca glosses the basics of the faith: ethics, theology, fundamental energy skills, the liturgical calendar, casting a Circle, altar gear, and correspondences.

The Wheel of the Year begins to explore the meaning of each Wiccan Sabbat

An Introduction to Druidry takes a quick look at ancient and modern Druidry, its ethics, deities, and relationship to Wicca.

An Introduction to Asatru looks at ethics, deities, holy days, practice, altar gear, the Runes, and history.

We have flyers to provide brief overviews about a variety of other topics:

Are Wiccans Vegetarian?

Witchcraft and Violence

Wiccan Traditions and Covens

An Introduction to the Wiccan Priest/esshood

The Wiccan Priest/esshood

The Left-hand Path

The Charge of the Goddess

Wicca's History Revisited

Tarot at a Glance

MEM Sheds Light on Neo-Paganism

Yule Songs

Magical Alphabets

We are always working on more brochures, and we are happy to send *one or two pamphlets at a time* to inmates who request them. We do not charge for our literature, but we appreciate return envelopes and/or donations of stamps when they can be included.

Chaplains may request full sets of our literature if they are willing to make copies – of each brochure in its entirety, without changes, additions or deletions – for individual inmates upon request.

MEM is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax deductible. Please let us know if you want a receipt for donations beyond those to cover the cost of sending brochures.