

HomeFront Newsletter

For the Folk Conscious Home

WAU14.COM/homefront



Welcome to the IMBOLC edition of our HomeFront Newsletter. We are starting to see small signs of warmer weather coming our way so that can only mean that Imbolc is on its way!

Imbolc is one of my favourite pagan days to celebrate. It always fills me with hope and the need to freshen everything up from our home to life in general! Blow the cobwebs of winter off and get ready to make great strides in one's life!

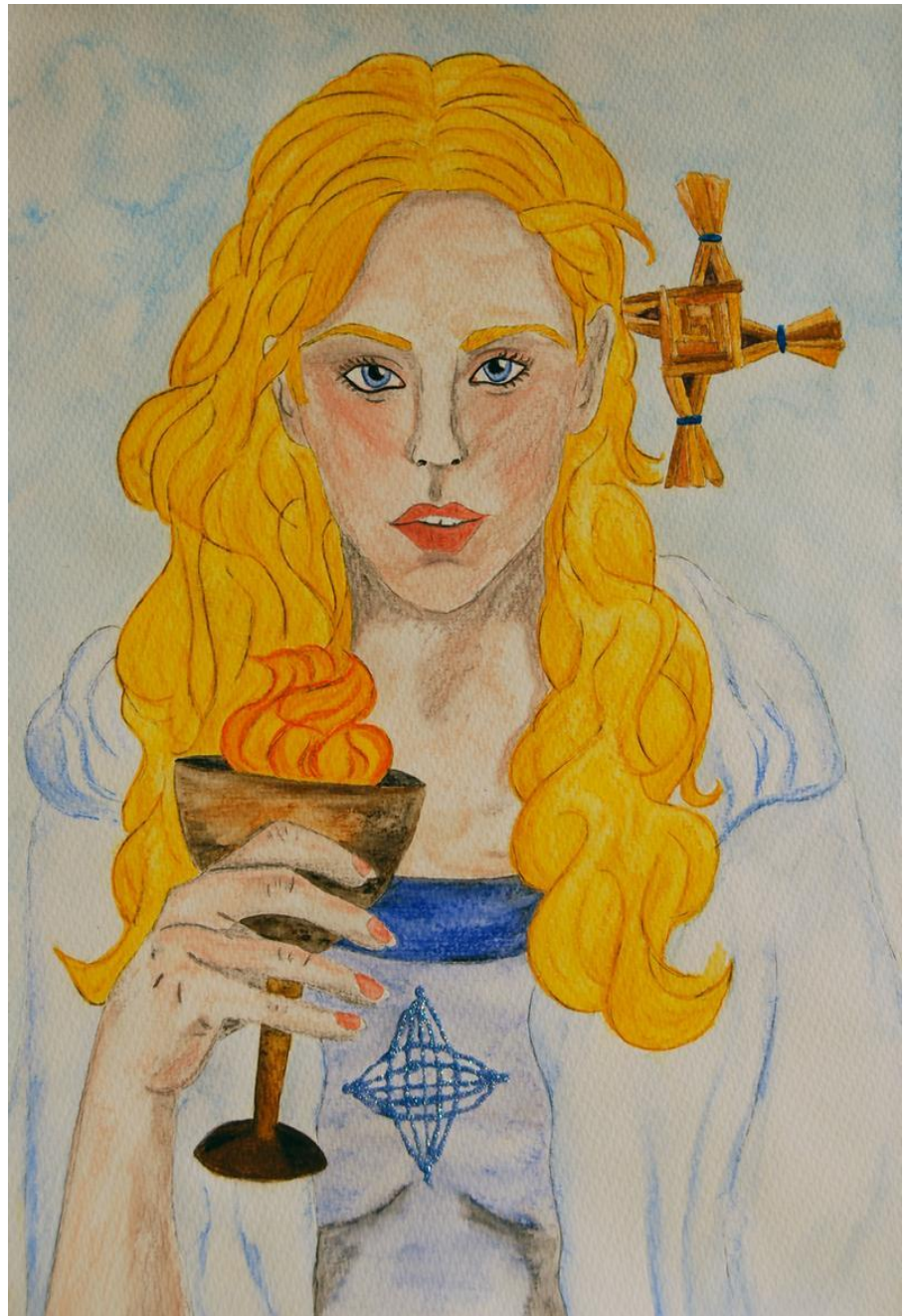
As always, we are looking for writers to submit to HF, so if you have something you think our readers would benefit from - send it our way!

@wauirehqs@hotmail.com

Hail Our Glorious Folk!

WAU Sisterhood / Homefront

Brigid is the goddess of the sacred flame and healing wells. She is the patroness of healing, poetry and smithcraft. She is a solar deity so her attributes are related to fire, light, and the hearth. Imbolc is her day!



My Imbolc Traditions!



Imbolc celebrates the returning light and we can see it already starting here in Ireland. The evening doesn't get as dark early and the sun rises a little earlier in the morning. It is a symbol of the awakening of the Maiden. The Maiden is one part of the Triple Goddess. She is the youngest, more free-spirited one who resides over fertility, purity, healing, fire, creative writing and the hearth.

Imbolc traditions centre around light and purification. Candles can be lit in each room of a house to honour the returning sun, or in each window from dusk until dawn. For me, I am just going to go to each room in the house with a candle, I am going to use a beautiful yellow coloured candle this year and I will carve a magick sigil onto it, be as creative as you can be! I typically say something along the lines of 'Welcome Brigid, maiden of the home, we welcome your warmth and sunlight' you get the idea! If there is still snow outside on the ground, walk in it for a moment, recalling the beautiful warmth of summer. With your projective hand, trace an image of the Sun on the snow. Or the Rune Sowilo! You could even light a candle and sit it in the snow!

This is an appropriate time to cleanse or bless your house. I collect water from Brigid's well and use it for rituals and for washing floors and doors etc. Her wells are scattered throughout Ireland, we have a really nice small one also in County Dublin that I visit more often than the one in Kildare!

It is a great time to seek inspiration and to purify yourself of limiting thoughts and negative attitudes. Dairy foods are particularly appropriate to eat on this festival of calving and lambing. I myself do not eat lamb, so I will just have some honey yogurt and cake!

Good offerings at the end of the night can be leaving milk outside. You can start planting outside or in a potted plant, on Imbolc I am going to plant my wee oak trees that have just started to grow! You can also leave a honey cake or nuts out for the fae. There is so many lovely options in regards to rituals and offerings during Imbolc!

Evelyn Kettica!



Breads and cakes are a huge part of Imbolc. Our beautiful Bonnach Bride (Ireland) or Bannock of Bride (Scotland) is a kind of unleavened oatcake left out Imbolc Eve as an offering to Brigid to gain her blessings of fertility, prosperity, and good health.

Bonnach Bride were also eaten while out in the fields and a piece was thrown over your shoulder to honour Brigid and nourish your scared ancestral land. It was also common to save the last piece in your cupboard to ensure there would be enough flour to last out the year. Pancakes were another common food eaten because they were round and golden like the sun. Our pancakes are definitely not like American ones, but instead more like what Americans would call a crepe!

In many regions of Ireland, Scotland and Wales the Bonnach Bride is still made on Imbolc Day and given out to girls who carry a Bridey Doll (an effigy of the goddess) through their village going house to house – bringing Brigid's fertility and blessings to all! Let's be honest most of us are not going to go knocking at folk's door doing this, so this could be a new tradition you could do with friends who are currently trying to conceive.

Brigid is one of the few ancient goddesses whose worship survived the onset of Christianity.

There are so many plants and flowers sacred to Brigid and the sun, such as sage, heather, chamomile, violets, rosemary. They have become part of the Imbolc Feast. Each has

their own magickal purpose, rosemary and sage, for example, brought their powers of purification and cleansing, so ritually important at this time of new beginnings. Use rosemary to season potatoes and lamb for dinner. I have dried Rosemary hanging on my bedroom wall. We all cleanse with Sage, so you could add a little to your Brigid's water when you are cleaning!

Dandelion is another wonderful plant associated with Imbolc. In Irish, dandelion is called *Ius Bhríd* (Brigid's plant) Who doesn't love Dandelions? They have so many uses but are hugely ignored or disregarded by people! I love them so much!

Today the idea of food magick may seem strange, but for our ancestors, it was an act of faith in blessings to come. When I bake, I always inscribe my food with symbols ranging from runes, ogham and sigils. I will chant or sing to my food as I cook or bake, filling them full of magick and nourishment! Cooking gives us so many options to infuse magick. We have to cook every day, so why not take this as an opportunity to work in new or old traditions! There are so many out there so let's start using them or creating new ones.

Raise a toast to the sun, the return of light. Bake a golden cake or bread, and welcome the arrival of Goddess of Spring! Then sit back and enjoy these glorious ancestral moments with folk and family.

Evelyn Keltica



Modern day bannocks come in a large variety of types ranging from cake to shortbread. They can be thick or thin, include dried fruit and spices, and are usually leavened to have more of a cake-like consistency to suit modern tastes, which I am not a huge fan of.

For the following recipe I chose to make a more traditional version using only oats and oat flour. I added a couple of tablespoons of sugar and minced rosemary for flavour and don't forget rosemary is an herb sacred to Brigid. This I cut into four quarters to mark the "cross quarter day" of Imbolc which is halfway between winter solstice and spring equinox.

The Below Makes two small Bannock cakes (or eight pieces total)

Ingredients

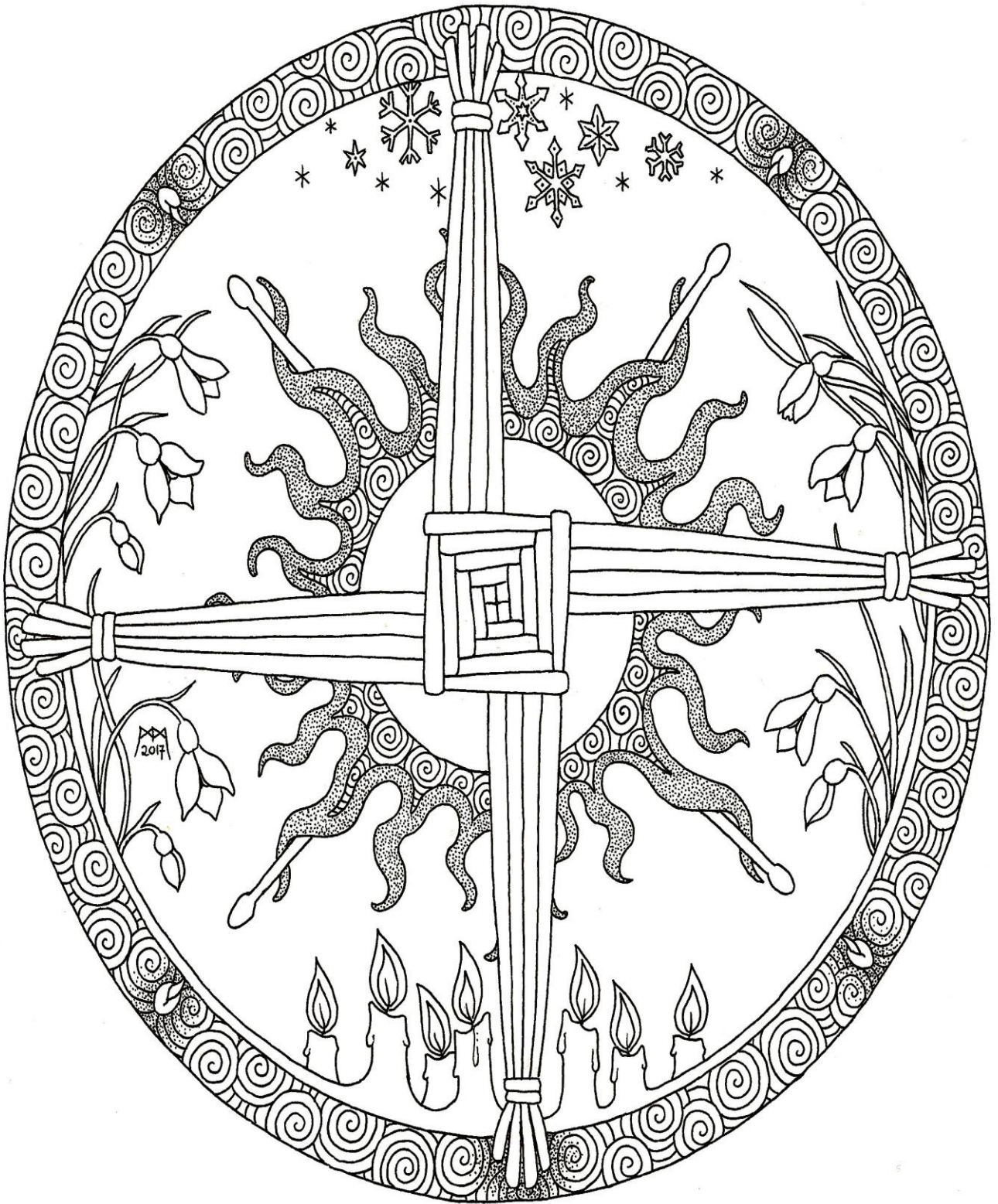
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup oat flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled
- 1/2 cup cream or milk (plus one extra tablespoon for the caudle)
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary (1 tablespoon dried)
- 1 tsp. of grated orange zest (optional)
- 3 tablespoons of sugar (and three more tablespoons for sprinkling)
- 1 egg yolk (for the caudle)

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease a cast iron skillet or baking sheet.
- Place the oats, flour, salt, sugar, rosemary and orange zest in a large bowl, mix together with a fork. Cut the cold butter into the flour mixture. Stir in the cream until all the flour is absorbed.
- Gather the rough dough together and place on a surface lightly dusted with



- oat flour. Knead until the dough holds its consistency (but don't overwork).
- Divide the dough in half and roll out each half into a circle about 1/4 inch thick.
- In small jar, vigorously mix your egg yolk with a tablespoon of cream. Then brush the mixture over the top of the bannock. Sprinkle with sugar.
- Cut each circle into 4 wedges and arrange the wedges 1/4 inch apart on the baking sheet.
- Bake about 20 minutes or until golden and crisping at the edges.





We made a Brigid's Cross every year in school for Imbolc. The Brigid's Cross is made out of plants called rushes. Some people are now making them out of wheat and they also look really good. If you have neither, you could make them out of coloured pipe cleaners with your children. Go onto Pinterest as you will see loads of unique ideas to make them out of many types of materials! If you make one out of paper you could burn it during a ritual!

A fresh-made Brigid's Cross may be hung over a doorway (or elsewhere) in your house to offer protection throughout the year. (They are particularly said to guard against house fires and other disasters.)

There are YouTube tutorials available for those of you who need a visual aid!

Send us pictures of your Brigid's Cross if you made one!

For Your Traditional Brigid's Cross

You Will Need

16 Reeds

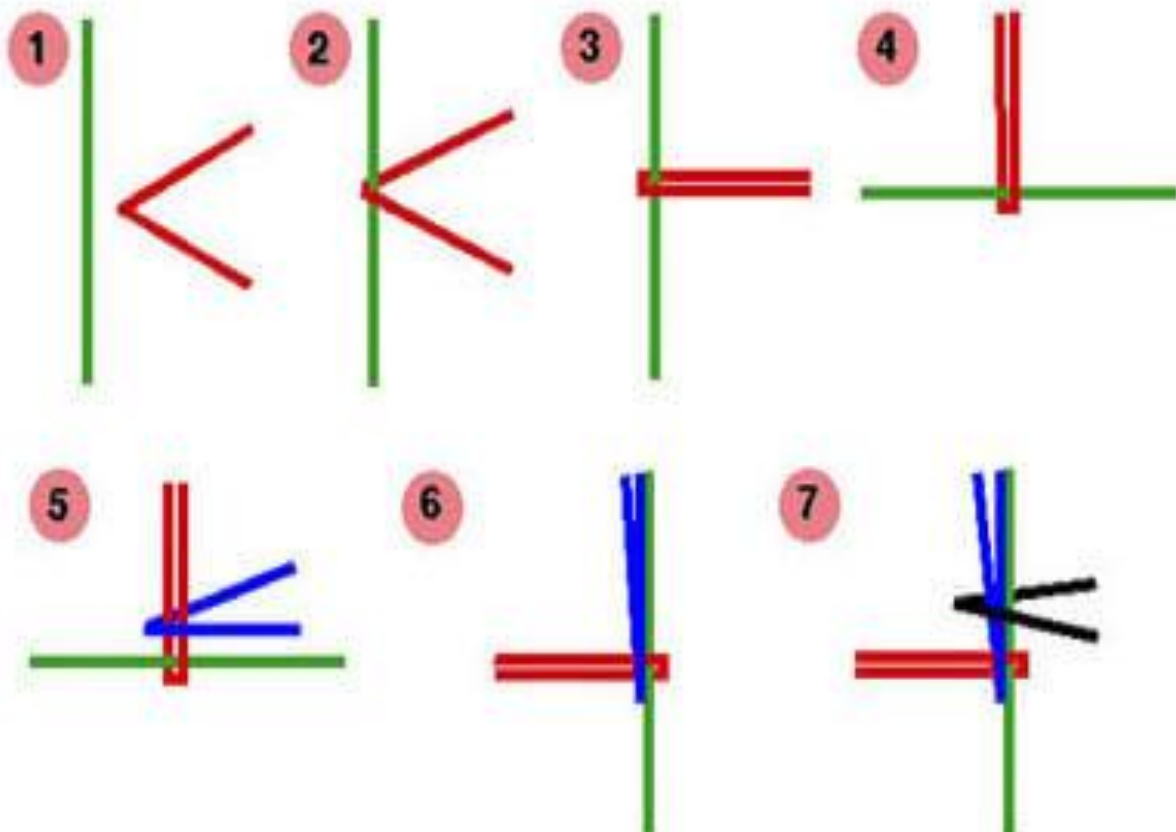
4 small rubber bands

Scissors

What You need to do!

1. Hold one of the reeds vertically. Fold a second reed in half as in the diagram.

2. Place the first vertical reed in the centre of the folded second reed.
3. Hold the centre overlap tightly between thumb and forefinger.
4. Turn the two rushes held together 90 degrees anti-clockwise so that the open ends of the second reed are pointing vertically upwards.
5. Fold a third reed in half and over both parts of the second reed, to lie horizontally from left to right against the first straw. Hold tight.
6. Holding the centre tightly, turn the three reeds 90 degrees anti-clockwise so that the open ends of the third reed are pointing upwards.
7. Fold a new reed in half over and across all the rushes pointing upwards.
8. Repeat the process of rotating all the rushes 90 degrees anti-clockwise, adding a new folded reed each time until all rushes have been used up to make the cross.
9. Secure the arms of the cross with elastic bands. Trim the ends to make them all the same length. Your Brigid's Cross is now ready to hang.



Some Brigid Tidbits



Other ways to say her name: Brigit, Brigid, Brighid, Bríde, Brìd, Brìg, Brigantia, Breo-Saighead, Breo Aigit (Gaelic)

The Celtic word *Brig* means “exalted one”, and her Gaelic name of *Breo-Saighead* or *Breo Aigit* means “fiery arrow” or “fiery power”.

She is the daughter of the Dagda, and one of the Tuatha Dé Danann. The Morrigan, another triple goddess, is also thought to be Brigid’s mother.

Brigid was the wife of Bres of the Fomorians with whom she had three sons, including the warrior Ruadán, killed in battle.

Her association with fire is so strong that a perpetual sacred flame is kept burning by the nuns at her sanctuary in Kildare, Ireland. It is a really nice place filled with heathen magick!

Crafts that honour her role as the protector of the hearth include Brigid corn/grain dollies and Brigid’s crosses.

Other symbols tied to Brigid includes arrows, bells, thresholds and doorways.

Animal correspondences include ewes, dairy cows, bees, owls, and serpents.

Three rivers are named for Her – Brigit, Braint and Brent in Ireland, Wales and England.

Why BRIGID is my Goddess

By Sara WAU/USA

People often ask me how I can find a connection to the Celtic Goddess, who has been so interwoven with the Catholic Church's St. Brigid. I believe a person has to understand that our ancestors passed down lore, traditions and knowledge of the past mainly through word of mouth. Rarely were these things written down. Anything that was is now either lost or altered with the rise of the Catholic Church. The church was determined to either convert or destroy anything that took away from their doctrine. They took the much-loved Goddess and presented her to the people as Saint Brigid. Since the Saint held the same qualities of the Goddess, even some of the same lore, it was easier to convert the Celtic people who with what they already knew and loved. For me the Goddess has never changed and will forever be spoken of.



enter it. As the crone, sharing that knowledge with the next generation and helping with the healing of wounds seen and unseen. As I learn and put that learning into practice, the call and guidance of my Celtic ancestors grows and with it my love of Brigid.

Baked Custard - Jess WAU Supporter Ohio

During this time of year, the lambs are coming into their milk for the new born lambs to arrive soon. At this point in the winter season food sources are getting low and dairy became a staple in people's diet. This recipe for Baked Custard makes a perfect addition to any celebration as well as a lovely offering to Brigid and our ancestors.

Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 3 C. milk
- 1/2 C. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- A pinch of salt

Directions

Preheat your oven to 350. Combine all the ingredients into the bowl of a food processor, and blend for about 15 seconds, or until well mixed. Pour custard mix into ramekins or custard cups. Place the ramekins into a baking dish, and fill the dish with hot water up to a depth of about 3/4". Bake the custards for one hour.



