

# UU Church West EarthSpirit Samhain Kit: "Ritual, Relationship and Remembering" – October 31, 2021

**HELLO FRIENDS!** *We hope you'll join us at [www.uucw.org](http://www.uucw.org) at 10 am for our online Samhain service* - or in person outdoors!

This "Samhain Ritual Kit" has instructions for "setting the table" for your ancestors to create an altar you can use during the Samhain worship service or any time.

*A picture of Rev. Suzelle's altar/table-setting for her mom and dad is included.*

## ABOUT EARTHSPIRIT SAMHAIN

**Earth-centered religious traditions like Samhain are both ancient and new.** Hundreds of years ago, when most people grew and harvested their own food every family depended on nature and on the cycles of the sun and the moon and the seasons of the year. People respected the natural world – and held ceremonies that helped them live in harmony with the earth and all the forces of nature. At UUCW, the EarthSpirit Team helps us be part of these new-old spiritual traditions.

## HOW TO SET UP YOUR ANCESTOR

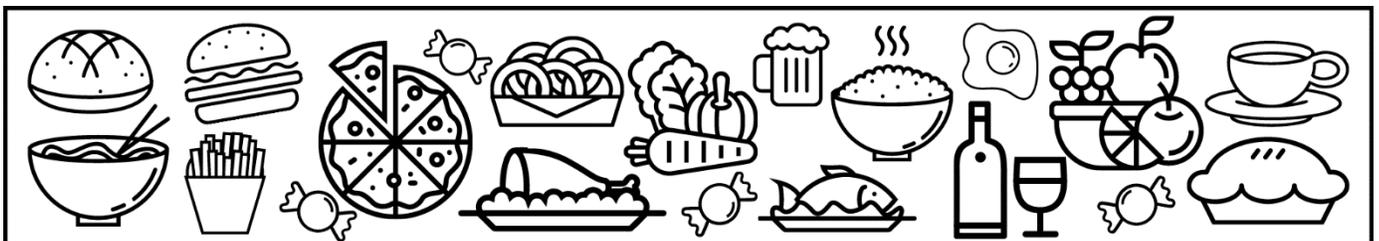
**ALTAR** For your EarthSpirit Samhain Ancestor Altar-Table you will need:

1. **A small table or shelf** to create your altar upon.
2. **Plate, silverware, napkin, and a glass.** Use beautiful dishes if you have them – your ancestors will be delighted!
3. **Optional:** Tablecloth or placemat
4. **"Feast Paper" strips** – If you print out this Kit, you can cut off the bottom of this sheet to use as your Feast Paper. Or simply use any slip of paper you have.
5. **Marker, pen or pencil** (to write on Feast Paper)

6. **Optional** – Flowers or food items for your ancestors can be added – but save room on the plate for your Feast Papers!
7. **Optional** – A photo of your ancestor(s)
8. **Optional** - You may wish to assemble symbols of the four elements (of air, fire, water & earth) & a chalice with a candle or electric tea light.
  - a. **Air:** Hand fan, bubbles to blow, feather, or pinwheel
  - b. **Fire:** Candle or electric tea light
  - c. **Water:** Small bowl of water
  - d. **Earth:** Stones or dirt
  - e. **Center:** Chalice or candle



**Introduction** -- Samhain (pronounced *SOW-en* and also known as Hallowe'en) is a celebration of the final fall harvest, and is the ancient Celtic New Year. Long ago, in the days of our great-great-great-grandmothers, people divided the year in two halves – a dark half for rest and contemplation, and a light half for growth and activity. At Samhain, we are moving from the time of brightness and action into the darker, more restful half of the year. **(continued)**



**(Continued from page 1)** Also at Samhain, it was said that the “veil between the worlds” grew thin, and that ancestor spirits could come into the land of the living and visit, bringing wisdom and advice. Food was set out for them, and extra places set at the table!

**Samhain is not the only celebration to honor ancestors.** Our friends with Mexican heritage may celebrate Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) at this time of year with ofrendas (ancestor altars). Veneration of ancestors is common in Confucian-based cultures in Asia, and is also present in West and Southeast African cultures, including the African diaspora. Sometimes ancestors are seen as messengers between humans and god (including in some Christian sects), and in other cultures, the purpose of ancestor veneration is not to ask for favors but to do one's filial duty. And some believe that providing for their ancestors is key – and their practices include offerings of food and other items.

**As You Set Your Ancestor Table** – Set the table with a feeling of caring, reverence and invitation to your ancestors – they are very special guests!

### **Invitation to the Ancestors: A Meditation for You**

Most Ancient ancestors -- you who began in the savannahs of Africa 200,000 years ago; you whose DNA is in our very bones...

We call back through the vast reaches of time to you!

Back through recorded history,

Back before the Romans fought and fell: before City, Republic, and Empire

Back before the fertile lands between the Euphrates and the Tigris were cultivated and cultures rich and vast sprang up.

Back before the taming of the wild horses,

Before the land bridge to the Americas was crossed,

We call to you.... Back through the reaches of time.

We call to you, O beloved ancestors, and we invite you to breathe with us, inhaling and exhaling the same air you once breathed alive;

Breathe with us and be with us in these bodies which are made from the same star stuff your bodies were made from ...

Ancestor spirits -- the leaves are falling now and the crops will soon go brown. The land will become dormant as the days grow colder and the nights longer. As we prepare to enter the dark time, we ask: Will you walk with us until the sun returns?

Will you help us take care of our families and our communities?

Will you remind us of intentions and promises we have made?

Ancestors - we thank you for your gifts and for your survival. We thank you for your minds bright and shining, your clever words, your hands that worked just as our hands work today. We thank you for your presence and your guidance this day.

And we promise to turn our hearts and hands to serve those who need us as winter's dark and cold draw in. We promise to take up the vision and values you gave us to help shape a world that is more peaceful, fair, equitable and free for all people, more whole and nurturing for all beings.

Shalom, Amen, Ase and Blessed Be.

### **Using Our EarthSpirit Oracle Cards**

At the designated time in the service, think of a question you might have, or guidance you'd like your ancestors to offer you. An open-ended question is best, such as, “What do I need to do about this particular concern I have?” or “What can you tell me about my current course of action regarding this particular action in my life.” It could even be as simple as “What guidance do you have for me, O ancestor?”



**With your question firmly in mind, go here to consult the Oracle Cards:**

<https://wheelofnames.com/view/sv5-z96/>

Oracle cards work on the principle that our subconscious minds hold the wisdom we need. Our deep inner knowing isn't always easily accessible to our conscious minds especially in times of stress or change. The words and symbols on our EarthSpirit Oracle Cards were chosen to help draw your inner wisdom to the surface.