



# Galaxies Evening Service 18 March 2007

Service by Pete Cowley



## Welcome:

### Welcome to our service tonight

Tonights service is : **Autumn Equinox - The Twilight Zone**. Reflection on the Pagan/Wiccan autumn festival of Mabon (one of the Sabbits or solar equinox events) it's history and meaning . The reference to the Twilight Zone refers to the fact that the twilight is earlier and earlier and we seem to spend more time in the twilight that we do in summer.



Autumn Colours – who said death can't be glorious?

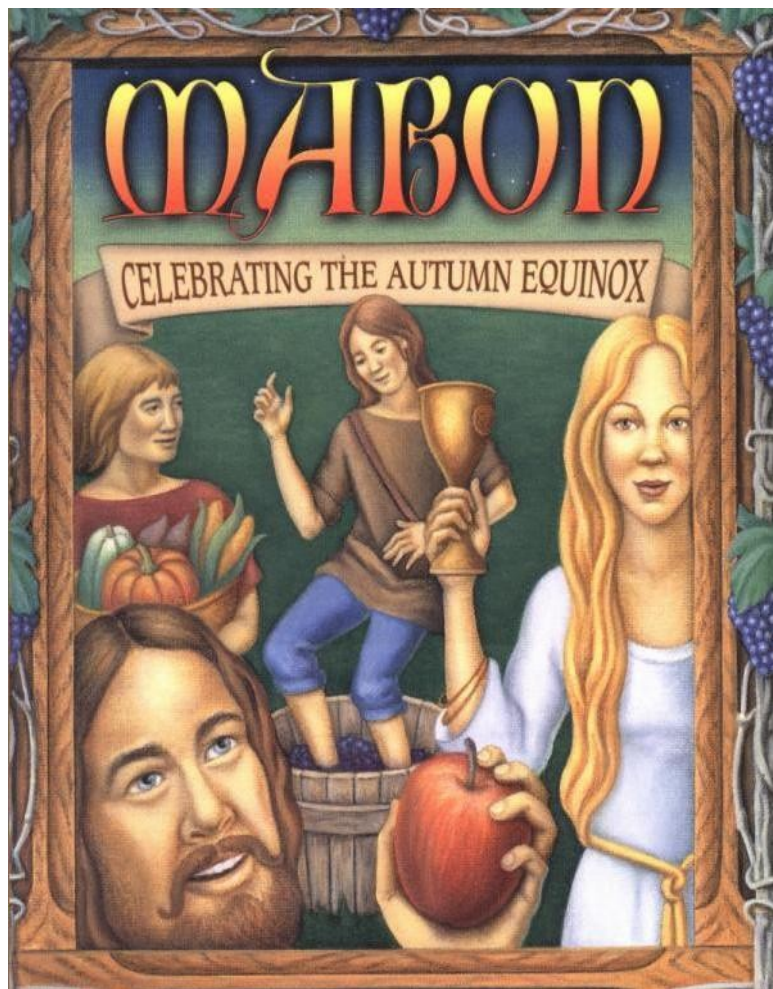
## Call to togetherness and sharing:

Leader: We are all part of the rhythm of life.

As we gather together to share of ourselves and our journey, may peace and love be with us.

All: May we be makers of the peace and givers of unbounded love.

## Reflection



**Mabon** is the name used by some [Wiccans](#) and other [Neopagans](#) for one of the eight solar holidays or [sabbats](#). It is celebrated on the [Autumnal Equinox](#), which in the northern hemisphere occurs on [September 23rd](#) (occasionally the [22nd](#), although many celebrate on the [21st](#)) and in the southern hemisphere is circa [March 21](#).

Also called **Harvest Home**, the **Feast of the Ingathering**, or simply **Autumn Equinox**, this day is a ritual of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth and a recognition of the need to share them to secure the blessings of the Goddess and God during the winter months. The name may derive from [Mabon ap Modron](#), although the connection is unclear.

### Antiquity of Mabon

Mabon was not an authentic ancient festival either in name or date. There is little evidence that the autumnal equinox was celebrated in Celtic countries, while all that is known about Anglo-Saxon customs of that

time was that September was known as *haleg-monath* or 'holy month'.

The name Mabon has only been applied to the Neopagan festival of the autumn equinox very recently; the term may have been invented by [Aidan Kelly](#) in the 1970s as part of a religious studies project. (The use of [Litha](#) for the Summer Solstice is also attributed to Kelly). Previously, in [Gardnerian Wicca](#) the festival was simply known as the 'Autumnal Equinox', and many Neopagans still refer to it as such, or use alternative titles such as the neo-Druidical *Aban Efed*, a term invented by [Tolo Morgannwg](#).

The name Mabon was chosen to impart a more authentic-sounding "Celtic" feel to the event, since all the other festivals either had names deriving from genuine tradition, or had had names grafted on to them. The Spring Equinox had already been termed 'Ostara', and so only the Autumnal Equinox was left with a technical rather than an evocative title. Accordingly, the name Mabon was given to it, having been drawn from Welsh mythology.

The use of the name Mabon is much more prevalent in America than Britain, where many Neopagans are dismissive of it as an unauthentic name. The increasing number of American Pagan publications sold in Britain by such publishers as Llewellyn has however resulted in some British Pagans adopting the term.

The Druids call this celebration, *Mea'n Fo'mhair*, and honor the *The Green Man*, the God of the Forest, by offering libations to trees. Offerings of ciders, wines, herbs and fertilizer are appropriate at this time. Wiccans celebrate the aging Goddess as she passes from Mother to Crone, and her consort the God as he prepares for death and re-birth.

Various other names for this Lesser Wiccan Sabbat are *The Second Harvest Festival*, *Wine Harvest*, *Feast of Avalon*, *Equinozio di Autunno (Strega)*, *Alben Elfed (Caledonii)*, or *Cornucopia*. The Teutonic name, *Winter Finding*, spans a period of time from the Sabbat to Oct. 15th, *Winter's Night*, which is the Norse New Year.

At this festival it is appropriate to wear all of your finery and dine and celebrate in a lavish setting. It is the drawing to and of family as we prepare for the winding down of the year at Samhain. It is a time to finish old business as we ready for a period of rest, relaxation, and reflection.

## Celebrations at the Autumn Equinox

As with the Spring Vernal Equinox, the Autumnal Equinox, also known as Mabon to those who follow the Olde Way, is the time when day and night are equal. Here the land is full of the gifts of nature and the effort of humankind

The night air has a tang about it, the darkness of winter is coming and it's time for the earth to sleep until the sun is again brought forth from the dark.

### The Second Harvest

In the ancient cycle of the year, this was actually the second harvest; the first harvest festival occurs on August 1st in the Northern Hemisphere (February 1 in the Southern Hemisphere) and is known as Lammas. As methods of agriculture became more uniform and sophisticated, the autumn harvest was moved back until the last possible growing time was completed to maximize its size. As such, the Autumnal Equinox became synonymous with not only the completion of the harvest, but also the end of summer.



### The Wine Moon

The full moon associated with the fall equinox is known as the Wine Moon. This is the time of year when grapes are harvested and the process of making wine begins. In past times, many farmers would harvest their crops by the full moon, using the light from the moon to extend their gathering time.

### Relationship to Thanksgiving

This final gathering of the crops and the beginning of preparations for the long winter that lay ahead marked a time of thanksgiving for all that Nature had given her children and for the completion of another turn of the Great Wheel. Although the Autumnal Equinox falls in September and not November, (in the Northern Hemisphere) the connection to the harvest and the fall highlight similarities to our modern (American) Thanksgiving.

Corn and maize are often harvested by Mabon, so corn bread and apple cider are popular choices for food during the autumn equinox. Also features of the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving. Ginger is another popular ingredient in Autumnal Equinox food. Gingerbread and ginger beer are popular additions to the table. These are classic fall foods that sometimes appear in Thanksgiving meals.

### Gateway from Fall to Winter

The Autumnal Equinox marks the beginning of shorter days and longer nights. We gather with friends to strengthen our spirits in preparation for the passage into Winter. But it is a time of thanksgiving, for on the other side of that dark Winter is Spring.

The autumn equinox is the last of the pagan holidays before the return of the Samhain.. The pagan holidays that make up the Wheel of the Year are part of a tradition going back over the millennia.

### Other Autumn Equinox Celebrations

In Japan, the Autumnal Equinox marks a time for visiting the graves of loved ones and honoring one's ancestors. In England, many autumn celebrations include corn dolls, made of the corn husks from the harvest. These dolls are often burned, to represent the "death" of the god for the season, or doused

with water, recalling the importance of rain to the crops. The burning of figures has been adopted and embraced in the United States. A festival, known as **Burning Man**, has become incredibly popular.

### **Symbols of Mabon:**

wine, gourds, pine cones, acorns, grains, corn, apples, pomegranates, vines such as ivy, dried seeds, and horns of plenty.

### **Activities of Mabon:**

Making wine, gathering dried herbs, plants, seeds and seed pods, walking in the woods, scattering offerings in harvested fields, offering libations to trees, adorning burial sites with leaves, acorns, and pine cones to honor those who have passed over.

### **Deities of Mabon:**

Goddesses: Modron, Morgan, Epona, Persephone, Demeter, Pomona and the Muses.

Gods: Thoth, Thor, Hermes, and The Green Man.

Mabon is considered a time of the Mysteries. It is a time to honor Aging Deities and the Spirit World. Considered a time of balance, it is when we stop and relax and enjoy the fruits of our personal harvests, whether they be from toiling in our gardens, working at our jobs, raising our families, or just coping with the hussle-bussle of everyday life. It is a time to reflect, as we reap the harvest of experience from the past year - the completion of another turn of the Great Wheel

**Let us talk about the things that we have brought along that reminds us of Autumn and our give thanks for our particular "harvest" over the last year.**

### **Lady Autumn (by Deirdre Akins)**

Lady Autumn, Queen of the Harvest,  
I have seen You in the setting Sun  
with Your long auburn tresses  
blowing in the cool air that surrounds You.  
Your crown of golden leaves is jeweled  
with amber, amethyst, and rubies.  
Your long, flowing purple robe stretches across the horizon.  
In Your hands You hold the ripened fruits.  
At Your feet the squirrels gather acorns.  
Black crows perch on Your outstretched arms.  
All around You the leaves are falling.  
You sit upon Your throne and watch  
the dying fires of the setting Sun  
shine forth its final colors in the sky.  
The purple and orange lingers  
and glows like burning embers.  
Then all colors fade into the twilight.  
Lady Autumn, You are here at last.  
We thank You for Your rewards.  
We have worked hard for these gifts.  
Lady Autumn, now grant us peace and rest.



### **Notices**