



# *The EarthSpirit Community*

December 2015

Dear friends,

Many thanks to those of you who donated to EarthSpirit's special fundraiser and helped to send our delegation to The Parliament of the World's Religions this autumn. We are very grateful. (More about that below)

As we move into the winter and toward the end of the tax year, we again invite all of our members to contribute to EarthSpirit's annual fund to support the work it does all year round.

EarthSpirit holds and nourishes a community that supports families and individuals in truly living our spirituality, maintaining and passing along pagan culture and traditions in a world that does not always share our values. Generous donors, like you, enable us to offer the rituals, classes and gatherings that create meeting places where we can build and deepen meaningful face to face connections and also to provide financial support to community members who are ill or struggling.

In the US this year, we hosted more than a dozen seasonal rituals in both eastern and western Massachusetts. We reached out to the public at Boston Pride, at academic institutes, Pagan Pride events, environmental actions and at other festivals and interfaith services. We performed handfastings, baby blessings and funerals, counseled members in need and supported those facing medical and emotional crises. We made improvements to the ritual spaces at Glenwood, our sanctuary in western Massachusetts, which we open to the community on a monthly basis. We began working to develop a long-range strategic plan for the organization and made strides toward improving our infrastructure - all while facing severe illness within our core leadership.

The biggest undertaking in 2015 was EarthSpirit's participation at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Salt Lake City in October. Nineteen EarthSpirit members attended this international event of nearly 10,000 attendees from over 80 nations and 50 different religions, participating in hundreds of programs. -- all of them partially subsidized by our generous donors. Our members offered workshops and rituals, participated in panels, performed and spoke at Plenaries, volunteered at the Sikh community's Langar (a free vegetarian lunch available to everyone) and immersed themselves in interfaith dialog. Some details are already available on our blog EarthSpirit Voices ([earthspiritvoices.wordpress.com](http://earthspiritvoices.wordpress.com)), and more will be coming throughout the winter. It was remarkable to be able to see the progress that has been made as a result of 20 years of EarthSpirit's active pagan presence. The international interfaith culture now includes pagan traditions, indigenous

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traditions and other earth-centered ways as a matter of course - with respect and equality - in a manner that would have been unthinkable in 1993 when we participated for the first time.

EarthSpirit's spiritual director, Andras Corban Arthen, has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the Parliament for many years and is currently one of the longest serving members on it. This year he was elected Vice-chair and will now be serving on the Executive Committee - offering him even more of a leadership role with this renowned organization. We are very proud of him and his work.

EarthSpirit continues its networking with pagans around the globe - in Spain and Latin America through Alma de Tierra, and across Europe through our connection with the European Congress of Ethnic Religions - supporting groups there in developing strong community and in seeking legal recognition from their governments and bringing members of those communities to the US to see our community in the flesh. The EarthWays Initiative joins us specifically in support of indigenous peoples and practitioners in the US and around the world as well.

As you might imagine, all of this work in so many areas, in addition to maintaining an office and online presence, requires a significant amount of money to sustain it. Our community has been very generous. We have consistently received contributions large and small - both through our annual appeal and at the auction at Rites of Spring allowing us to continue to serve our local community, pagans at a distance and the global interfaith network. We appreciate every single one. Please consider increasing your donation to EarthSpirit this year to help us continue to move forward with all of this good work.

While financial support is crucial, we also want to recognize that EarthSpirit could not continue without the help of our volunteers - from our office personnel, to the presenters, performers and teachers who offer their expertise to the community, to the technical experts who work to keep EarthSpirit's information systems operational and improving. We count on all of you to be a part of the web that holds us together on so many levels.

We wish you all a prosperous and healthy year ahead.  
Thank you all for being part of and supporting the EarthSpirit Community!

Deirdre Pulgram Arthen, Executive Director

*You can find out more about EarthSpirit's work by liking "[The EarthSpirit Community](#)" on Facebook or by visiting our website: [www.earthspirit.com](http://www.earthspirit.com)*