



# GGSC News

Golden Gate Spiritualist Church, San Francisco, California

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## Message from the GGSC Board President

### Hark! Hark! The Lark at Heaven's Gate Sings

Shakespeare used images of birds, especially larks, in several of his plays to represent sweetness and freshness. And what is sweeter or fresher than spring?

I must admit that this year, it seemed that the Vernal Equinox was a snide joke on the part of Mother Nature, and that spring would never come. As Henry Van Dyke so rightly said, "the first day of spring is one thing, the first spring day, another."

But spring did come, although the first day that really felt spring like was Easter Sunday - some three weeks past due. Interesting synergy there for Christians. As Jesus himself told us, "Ye must be born again so that divine life may spring anew within you."

Spring is all about being born again, transformations, new beginnings; the season is the very symbol of starting fresh and starting over. After the long months of winter that leave many of us feeling somewhat lost and bereft, spring reawakens us and our surrounding environment, bringing everything back to life.

We feel good in springtime because it reminds us of just how deeply we need variety and

vividness in our surroundings. Great things are waiting beneath the surface. Only when the flowers bloom do we realize the potential that existed beneath our feet all this time. The important things are the simple things.

As the shift continues from the quiet and introspective focus of winter to more outward, engaged, and energetic feelings, painful things may surface. There is often discomfort in change. Few find change comfortable, and yet it truly is the only constant. How then do we learn to navigate the discomfort, to reconcile with the inevitable shifts that we see so blatantly in nature and feel so deeply within ourselves?

The symbols of spring, abundance, possibility, new life, and growth lead us to look more closely at Nature's cycle - all of these symbols center around newness: new green growth, newly born animals, colorful bird eggs about to become chicks. Everything is new again. The long winter has passed and life goes on. Everything is fresh again. Spring feels different. The energy has shifted, and we are beginning again. This is the message of Nature, and it has found expression throughout the ages in spring's holidays and the religious messages of many faiths.

This spring, use the symbols of the season as a starting point for your own reflections.

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## We are changing to better serve you.

Golden Gate Spiritualist Church and Celebrate Life! Progressive Spiritualist Community are working towards sharing our historic Franklin Street church building. Celebrate Life! has not met in their church space at 18<sup>th</sup> Street in the Castro District since the beginning of Covid-19. They have been holding services online only. The proposed sharing partnership for both churches allows Celebrate Life! a return to in person services, as well as online services. Sharing the facility will enable opportunities for fellowship, special events, classes, workshops, presentations and more. Sharing our marvelous space assists both our churches to better serve our congregations. Both Golden Gate Spiritualist Church and Celebrate Life! Progressive Spiritualist Community look forward to a step into the future to serve and to continue to grow in a shared focus of sharing the light of Spiritualism with everyone who steps through our doors.



## Special Wednesday Evening Services

Every month with five Wednesdays will have a special evening service. An in-person only, all message evening service with social time

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What in your life is ready for a fresh start? What are you ready to release, to let melt away like winter's snows? What part of you feels tender and vulnerable, like a newly hatched baby bird? Be sure to take gentle care of that part.

Imagine yourself as a flower emerging from a spring bulb, reaching and growing toward the strengthening light. Meditate on that image for a while. What meaning can you discover for your personal circumstances?

Especially in these tough times, a tangible experience of a new start can be tremendously helpful. Nothing in Nature is ever really final. Nature begins anew every season, recycling last year's detritus into rich compost in which to grow something else. The cycle moves onward, and nothing lasts forever. Economic crises don't last forever, nor do personal crises. Spring comes after winter. Embrace it, and enjoy the symbols and the season of spring.

## Easter and May Day Celebrations

Spring holidays of Easter and May Day have the celebrations of rebirth and continuity of life in

common. The reappearance of early spring flowers, leaves on trees and lengthening days with more sunlight herald a return from the short day darkness of winter. Spring is a time of celebration of the continuity of life.

Christians believe Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. Many of us celebrate Easter traditions that are not mentioned in the Bible. These traditions pre-date Christianity. The spring celebration of Easter is symbolized by bunnies, eggs, chocolate and chicks. The Easter bunny may be based upon the story of Eostre (as in Easter), a pagan goddess of spring and fertility. Eostre found a bird dying from the cold and turned it into a rabbit so the fur would keep it warm. The rabbit still laid eggs like a bird, and even painted the eggs and gave them to Eostre as a gift of loyalty and love. The rabbits, eggs and chicks are symbols of fertility and new life.

May Day is a festival with ancient origins marking the beginning of summer, halfway between the spring equinox and summer solstice. The earliest known May celebrations appeared with the festival Floralia, for Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers, held from 27 April to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. In Ireland May Day is celebrated as the feast of Beltane, with bonfires lit in rural areas to mark the advent of summer and to bring luck to people and livestock. In Italy, the date is called Calendimaggio, or cantar maggio, as seasonal feast to celebrate the arrival of spring. It is a tradition still celebrated in many regions of Italy

as an allegory to the return of life and rebirth after the winter.

The advent of spring in April and May is also celebrated in other areas of the world, through Passover, the Hindu spring festival of Holi, Basanth Panchami (a Hindu festival to mark the arrival of spring season), and in January, Songkran, the beginning of the traditional Buddhist traditional new year.

Even in our now sophisticated world the months of April and May are acknowledged as a return to life after the depths of winter. Spring celebrations are focused on the renewal of life; an acknowledgement of the continuity of life.



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held for all to share after the service. Scheduled for March, May, August, and November. This is your opportunity for demonstration of spirit communication, with a social hour and refreshments afterwards. Our first and third Wednesdays are on Zoom only. The special services will be in-person only.

Mark your calendars with May 31, August 30, and November 29 for this opportunity to share this special time together.

## April, May and June

## Interesting Facts



In the early Roman calendar, April was the second month of the year when the Romans began using January as the first month; but it became the fourth month when the Roman calendar added three additional months to create a twelve month year due to confusion in the seasons. April is named for the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite. The name April originated from the word Aprilis, which means to open. Chaucer wrote of April as being “filled with unity and wholeness, with the power of regeneration. “The birds sing in melodious tones, and the overall feeling is optimism and rebirth.”

America’s first astronauts were announced by NASA on April 9, 1959. The first Webster Dictionary was copyrighted by Noah Webster on April 14, 1828, the Titanic sank on April 15, 1912 and earlier, in 1775, the Revolutionary War in America began on April 19.



May (or in Latin, Maius) was named for Maia, the Greek goddess of fertility, identified later as the Roman goddess Bona Dea, whose festival of fertility was held in May. The month of May brings warmer temperatures, flowers and

increased optimism of a coming summer.

Many European countries celebrate the coming of spring in May. In Ireland, May Day is celebrated as Beltane, dating back to pagan times. In Italy, it is called *Calendimaggio*, or *cantar maggio*, a seasonal feast held to celebrate the arrival of spring. In Estonia, May Day or “Spring Day” celebrates the arrival of spring. England celebrates May Day with the crowning of a May Queen and maypole celebrations, in which dancers circle with the pole with colored ribbons. May is also the month for Mother’s Day.

May is the third and last month of the season of spring.

- The birthstone of May, the emerald, symbolizes success and love.
- May in the Northern Hemisphere is similar to November in the Southern Hemisphere. And funny enough, May was once considered a bad luck month to get married.



June originated from the Latin word “Iunius”, of Juno (Iuno), the Roman goddess of marriage, childbirth and fertility, wife to Jupiter, the supreme god of Roman belief. June is a favorite month for weddings, and is also known for Father’s Day and graduation days.

June is the month with the longest daylight hours of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, and

conversely, June has the shortest daylight hours of the year in the Southern Hemisphere.

- June’s birthstone is the pearl, the Moonstone and the Alexandrite.
- The June birth flower is the Rose and the Honeysuckle.

### GGSC News

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