



The Rowan Tree Church

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ANNUAL  
REPORT

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2022 - 2023





The Hermits Grove, Houston, MN

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## WELCOME

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This is our first annual report since the passing of our Founder Rev. Paul Beyerl at the end of 2021. Since we did not produce a report in 2022, this combined report covers two fiscal years of The Rowan Tree Church. This report is intended to provide you, our community, with information on the Church's ministries, programs, and finances. We hope you find it insightful and informative. The Board of Directors and College of Mentors have been working hard these past two years to put processes and systems in place to ensure the survival and nurture the growth of Lothloriën and the Church. Thank you for reading!







Rev. Frank Cordeiro at  
The Hermits Grove, Houston, MN



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## OUR MISSION

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To preserve the Tradition of  
Lothloriën for future  
generations.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Rev. Charly McCreary, President  
Isaiah Dearborne, Vice President  
Rev. gerry Beyerl, Treasurer  
Myke Hutchings, Secretary  
Rev. Frank Cordeiro, Voting Director

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Annual Report images by Rev. Paul Beyerl, Anne  
Christensen, and Rev. Charly McCreary. Layout and  
design by Rev. Charly.





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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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After Rev. Paul's passing in 2021, the Church Board of Directors underwent significant growth as its members learned how to take on a new level of leadership on behalf of the organization.

The Board met six times in 2022 and nine times in 2023, and addressed a variety of business including the Prisoner Outreach Program; Church retreats and online events; Church newsletter(s); appointing Rev. Gerry as the General Manager of the Hermits Grove; updating the Book of Legislation; Sunday Circles; the Annual Report; and the variety of pages on Facebook related to the Tradition of Lothloriën, the MHP, and the Church. Succession planning is also an ongoing conversation, and the Board is committed to ensuring systems are in place to ensure continuity of operations for the future.

The Board also continues to discuss how to not only sustain but ideally expand our Membership and donor base in service to the Church's survival. Potential projects on the horizon in support of this ideal include a redesign of the Church's website, a more active presence on social media channels, and outreach efforts on behalf of the Tradition of Lothloriën by our clergy and Lay Ministers.



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## THE MYSTERY SCHOOL

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The Mystery School is the hearthfire of Lothloriën. In the spring of 2021, Rev. Paul delegated responsibility of managing the Mystery School to Isaiah Dearborne and Rev Charly McCreary. In his words: “I would place The Mystery School in the hands of Rev. Charly and you (Isaiah). I would retain the title and all other positions of Eldermentor because that also encompasses so many aspects of the Church and I am needed in all of those jobs and responsibilities. But I will not interfere. You will have the freedom to make mistakes and to make good changes and do so while I am still here for conversation. But oversight and decision making would be in your hands... I cannot think of a way which is more practical and would communicate to the Church that I have faith in the two of you.”

Our primary focus for the last 3 years has been ushering the Tradition through what Rev Paul had referred to during his lifetime as the Meteorite - the passing of its Founder. We have worked to create a culture of safety and trust as we have collectively grieved. We now have a College of Mentors that works collaboratively. We have begun to revise and update the curriculum of the Mystery School and its Ordeals. Rev. Charly is currently preparing to conduct her third Tarot Ritual. In short, we have endeavored to create a systemic shift in alignment with the guiding principles of Lothloriën, one where responsibility is shared.





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## 2023 ONLINE EVENT

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In September 2023, the Church hosted an online event “The Mystic’s Journey” to coincide with the autumn equinox. The event featured rituals, presentations, and special guest Mark Jones (an astrologer, author, and instructor based in the UK). The suggested donation for the event was \$25, and participants were invited to donate at whatever level was comfortable. The event raised funds to support the Church, and we look forward to future presentations of this nature in the coming years.

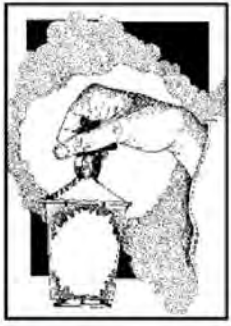
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## PUBLIC OFFERINGS

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The Church has continued its public offerings to its community of Members and guests through a variety of free and by-donation online events. Regular activities include twice-monthly Sunday Circle discussions hosted by Rev. Frank and Rev. Gerry, and rituals for Full Moons and Sabbats, all hosted via Zoom. Regular ritual attendees are invited to read portions of the ritual text, and the ritual actions are presented by a rotating group of hosts that includes clergy and Lay Ministers. The goal of these public offerings is to make the Tradition of Lothloriën available to anyone who feels called to experience it.





# The Unicorn & Lantern

P O Box 477, Houston, MD 55943-0477

A Publication of The Rowan Tree Church & Hermit's Grove



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## NEWSLETTER

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Rev Charly inherited the responsibility of editing and producing the newsletter in October of 2021. She has done an amazing job of maintaining the quality of content while utilizing her graphic design skills to beautify its pages.

In February 2022, we surveyed readers of the newsletter to learn more about what type(s) of content they enjoy reading the most, and began to update the publication accordingly.

With the June 2022 issue, the College of Mentors decided to make a change. The newsletter went from being a monthly publication to one which coincided with the Sabbats. In Fall of 2023, Isaiah assumed the role of content editor and began writing regular columns.

The BoD has had discussion about reverting the newsletter back to its previous Rowan Tree News format, as that publication is required by the Church's Book of Legislation. Out of respect for The Unicorn and its longevity, care has been taken in assuring that its publication would also be continued.

Our current subscriber base consists of about 150 recipients via email and 50 via postal mail (200 total).







Marshmallow emerges at  
The Hermits Grove, Houston, MN

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## ONLINE PRESENCE

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The current version of the Church website ([therowantreechurch.org](http://therowantreechurch.org)) went live in early 2020. All content on the site was lovingly written by Rev. Paul, and significant updates to the material were needed after his passing. In 2022 and 2023, Rev. Charly volunteered over 80 hours of her time and her WordPress website editing and design skills to update existing content and remove content that was no longer current (such as Rev. Paul's astrology services). She also performed updates to pricing and inventory on the Hermits Grove online shop, with assistance from MHP Director Kathi Bonnabel.

However, a more substantial redesign and rework of the site is needed. The Board of Directors continues to discuss the Church and Tradition's online presence, and a website redesign, content overhaul, and new format are possibilities we continue to explore. The Board has also discussed how newsletter content and the website might be more integrated, and how social media could be utilized to grow Church membership and increase fiscal support from donors.





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# MASTER HERBALIST PROGRAM

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2022 was a year of big transitions for the Master Herbalist Program. There were challenging decisions to be made in order to see the program continue to thrive and be a sustainable source of herbal education for the future. The most pressing issue was the ability to send course materials in an effective way, both for the labor involved and the cost of printing and shipping. The format of the entire program was in Mac Pages, which is a very good word processor, but not as accessible for those not using Apple products.

MHP Director Kathi Bonnabel's first project was to convert the course material into a more universal format, a monumental task that took over a year to complete. Updating course material was the next project Kathi undertook. As of late 2023, updating and digital conversion of course materials is 97% complete, with only 3 units remaining to be converted.

Printing and shipping costs have been steadily increasing and environmental issues surrounding the use of resources like paper and fuel have also been a concern, and it was decided that the time had come to offer a digital format to MHP students. Most of them prefer to receive their course materials this way. It makes more sense economically and environmentally, and is available to students in a timely manner.

## **MHP Students**

2022: 6 active students, 1 student on family leave

2023: 6 active students, 1 auditing student, 1 student on family leave

Of the 2023 active students, four are in the First Quarter, one is in the Second Quarter, and one has just entered the Fourth Quarter.





# MASTER HERBALIST PROGRAM

## Virtual Meetings

In 2023, Kathi began experimenting with holding virtual meetings and discussions on various topics of interest to students, with the intention of carrying forward some of the teaching that Rev Paul had been doing for the MHP. After 3 monthly meetings, there was a significant drop in engagement, and meetings were placed on hold for the remainder of 2023. The MHP will revisit this in 2024, holding quarterly meetings instead of monthly to see if engagement increases. Alternatively, the MHP may make some recorded discussions available to students like the ones Rev. Paul and Kathi were doing in 2019-2020.

## MHP Income

In FY2023, 22 Introductory Packets were sold - \$5.00 each, \$110.00 total and 161 MHP Units were sold - \$35.00 each, \$5,635.00 total. (This includes one student who purchased 95 units in October 2023.)

## MHP Reflections

In 2022, Kathi shared the following thoughts on her first year of administering the MHP: “It has been a daunting journey moving this program forward without Rev. Paul. I have second-guessed myself and made decisions that I was unsure about. It often felt lonely without his gentle guidance and encouragement. I think that he always knew that I would find my way, even if I didn’t think so myself. I am so grateful for the trust and confidence that he had in me, and it has been my honor to serve the MHP students and the Hermits Grove/Rowan Tree family.”





Whitewater State Park, Altura, MN

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## PRISONER OUTREACH PROGRAM

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In February 2021, Rev. Paul made the decision not to accept any new students into the Prisoner Outreach Program (POP). Since Rev. Paul's passing, Rev. Gerry has informally mentored up to 10 incarcerated Church members. While he does not work directly with the preexisting POP materials, his experience and wisdom offer these individuals a unique opportunity.

The ongoing challenge for the POP is a lack of a qualified volunteer(s) to oversee what would likely be an extensive project. An individual with the responsibility of mentoring, even informally, would need to have undergone training within the Mystery School. There are currently three active Ordained Clergy people within Lothloriën, two of whom are in their 70s. The Church does not currently have the capacity to administer the POP as it existed in the past.

Considerations have been made to update the POP training program to become more of a Spiritual Lifestyle Program with emphasis on foundational level training, rather than a platform to teach the Tradition of Lothloriën. Such a program might alleviate the requirement that a Clergy person would be necessary to oversee it. A Lay Minister of the Church could manage it. This possibility will continue to be explored.





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## THE HERMITS GROVE

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As General Manager of the Rowan Tree Church / Hermits Grove, it is my responsibility to pay bills in a timely manner, keep accurate records of money moving into and out of the Rowan Tree checking account, and to report to the Membership, via this Annual Report, about our finances and any special needs that have drawn on the reserve funds of the Church. Elsewhere in this report, you will find itemized details about Church income and expenses, including Member donations, Mystery School Tuition, Master Herbalist costs and sales, royalties being paid to us by publishers/distributors, and non-member donations.

As you will see in that section, i have continued my own system of recording/reporting all money movement; the check stubs in the Church's checkbook are kept in place, and deposit slips are kept and filed for this fiscal year 2022 - 2023. Sales that were made via Big Commerce have generated a receipt, and those receipts are filed in the fiscal year file. We have had sales to many people and institutions, including herbs that have been purchased by incarcerated people (Members and non-Members) and Master Herbalist Program teaching units.

As Caretaker of the grounds and buildings, it is my responsibility to keep the plants and gardens in good condition, to have the facilities in the Hive available when visitors come (which means keeping things organized, vacuumed and clean), and to have the house and Temple area clean and livable for visitors and guests. This includes all the chores you would expect, plus keeping the vacant beds in the guest areas ready for occupation and use when needed.

i am also the current caretaker of the Ritual Tools of those who have been a part of the Mystery School. In the basement of the house, there is a cabinet (LARGE) containing many tools that have been left in the Church's keeping until reclaimed in the future. More will be added in the future, and the odds are great that we will need to acquire another cabinet (or two, or three, or...), as more tools are left in our protection.

This year, the only large expense was an increase in the cost of our building and liability insurance.

Each year should be easier for me to deal with all these reports, having established my system, and this system should be very easy for someone to take over in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. gerry

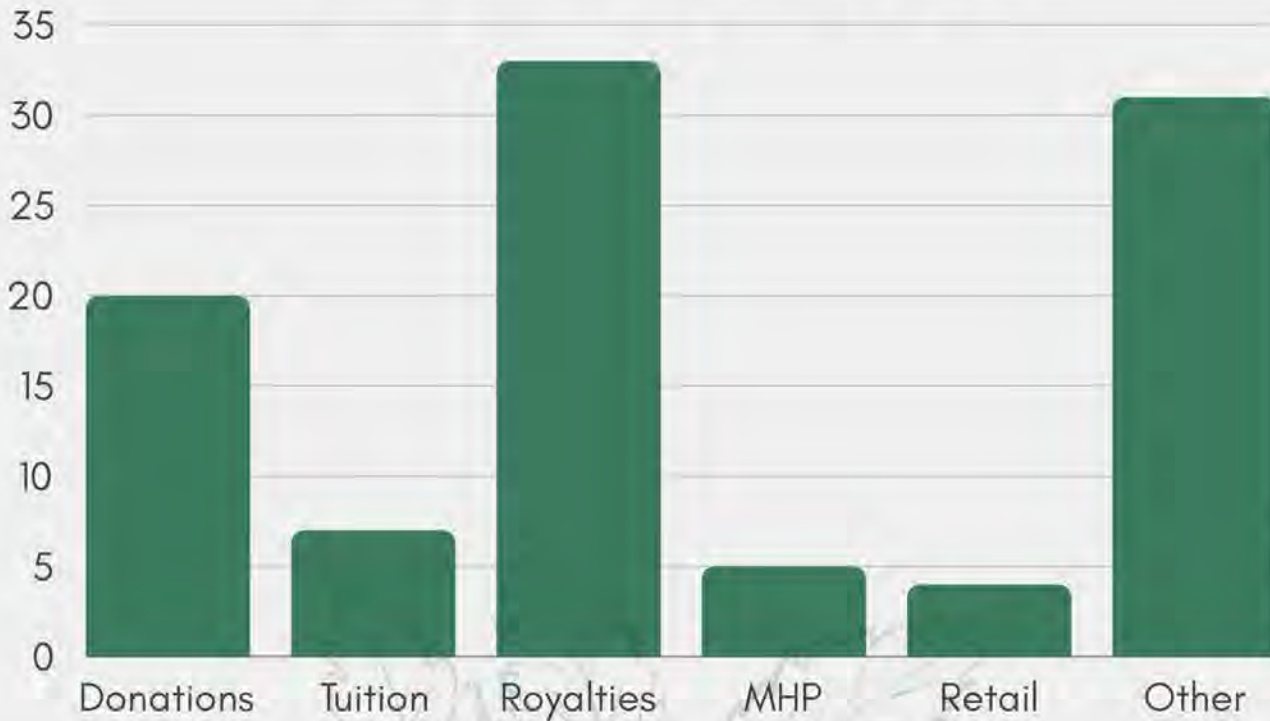


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## 2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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### Income & Percentages by Category



Member Donations: \$5,440.50  
Mystery School Tuition: \$1,995.00  
Royalties: \$9,072.23  
Master Herbalist Program Sales: \$ 828.95  
Books and Other Sales: \$1,110.92  
Master Herbalist Program Donations: \$ 555.00  
Other Donations/Monies In: \$8,550.29

Total Income: \$27,552.89  
Total Expenses: \$40,942.99\*  
(\*includes \$19,925 for roof replacement,  
paid from trust monies)



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## 2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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2022 was a period of learning and education since Rev. Paul's passing at the end of 2021. It was clear to the Board of Directors that while the Church's accounts were well accounted for, the level of detail and granularity that Rev. Paul achieved for his purposes was neither sustainable nor deemed necessary.

As Rev. Gerry took on the role of General Manager of the Hermits Grove, the Board focused on tracking sources of income and expenses in a manner that was scalable and sustainable as the Church continues forward momentum after the death of our Founder. The Board of Directors is grateful for Rev. Gerry, who has kept good account of the Church's income and ensured expenses are managed efficiently.

There was one large, unexpected, expense of replacing the roof at the Hermit's Grove in June of 2022. This became necessary after storm damage was incurred during the winter of 2021-2022. Insurance was contacted to determine what would be covered and the decision to replace the roof was made, rather than repairing the damage. To this end, monies from the Rowan Tree Church trust account were released by the trustees as a one-time only expense.

The largest source of Church income in 2022 was royalties for published works, accounting for almost one third of incoming funds. The second largest source of income, Other Donations/Monies In includes a significant one-time-only donation. Another large source of income is in flux as the person managing the rental of the long building on Church property for winter storage retired in 2023.

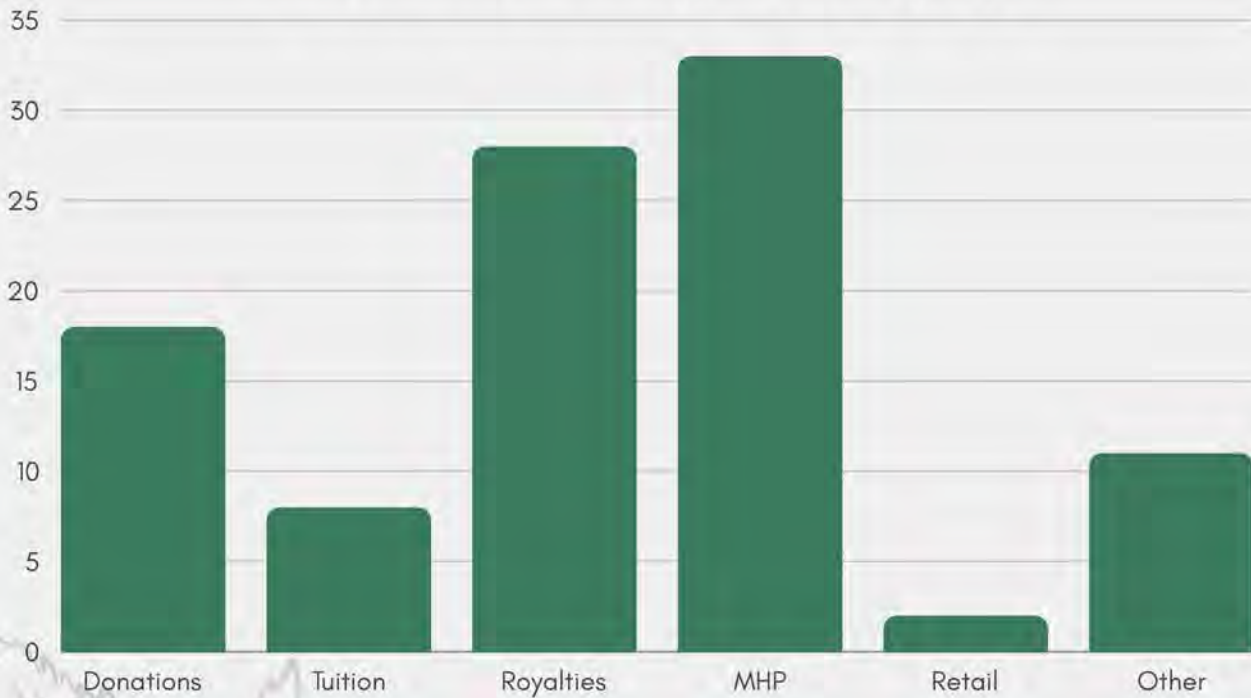


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## 2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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### Income & Percentages by Category



Member Donations: \$3,807.55  
Mystery School Tuition: \$1,810.00  
Royalties: \$6,096.58  
Master Herbalist Program Sales: \$6,866.14  
Books and Other Sales: \$ 527.80  
Master Herbalist Program Donations: \$ 285.00  
Other Donations/Monies In: \$2,325.53

Total Income: \$21,718.60  
Total Expenses: \$36,795.91



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## 2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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The largest source of Church income for FY23 was Master Herbalist Program Sales, accounting for over one third of incoming funds in 2023. The second largest source of income, Royalties, represents ongoing sales of Rev. Paul's books through Phoenix Publishers and New Leaf Distributors.

The September 2023 online gathering generated \$327.00 in donations to the Church, which is reflected in Other Donations/Monies In; the Board will continue to focus on creating and hosting online events as a source of growth and income in the coming years.

In November 2023, there was a one-time, unexpected expense related to an outstanding cost for the 2020 Hive construction project.

In the coming years, we will continue to focus on ways to help the Church sustain itself through donations and income from public offerings, which are the foundations of most non-profit organizations' annual budgets. We are very grateful for those who choose to support The Rowan Tree through their monthly, tax-deductible donations.





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## THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE

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It is remarkable to reflect on the fact that it has been 25 years since I first connected with the Rowan Tree Church and Tradition of Lothloriën. What an incredible journey of spiritual growth, joy, celebration, and even heartache it has been. I have seen so many Members and students come and go, and formed deep and meaningful friendships with those who have stayed. More than anything, I am filled with gratitude for my time within this sacred Grove of trees, as a student and now as a Priestess and President of our Board of Directors.

We are in the midst of a profound time of transition, as we have experienced the passing of our beloved Founder Rev. Paul and our two elders are well into their 70s. *What will become of the Church and the Tradition in the years ahead?* That is a question I reflect on almost daily, and have spent countless hours considering these past few years.

From my Masters' Degree studies in non-profit management and leadership, I know that these critical junctures in an organization's history will set the stage for what lies ahead. The choices we make, the level to which we are able to embrace innovation, to have hard conversations, and step outside of our comfort zones will all impact the future in ways we cannot fully anticipate.

There is a very understandable tendency to want to keep things "as they've always been," and, as a new homeowner living on property that was tended by others for twenty years, I am coming to understand what it means to inherit someone else's vision. While our orchard and gardens are beautiful, they are in need of pruning, reworking, and modification that will serve us as the new caretakers and ultimately mean healthier, happier, more fruitful plants. Each day I spend weeding, planting, and trimming the hundreds of plants on our land fills me with appreciation for the labor, love, and time spent by my predecessors. And it feels wonderful to begin the process of making the land *truly ours*.

What Rev. Paul created is unique, and special, and incredibly precious to so many of us. I know that I am here during this time to be part of what lies ahead for the future. That is my Work as a Priestess of Lothloriën. And it is time to fertilize the fields, prune the trees, and plant the seeds of what we wish to manifest for future generations.

Some of my ideas for the year(s) ahead include:

- Website and newsletter redesign
- Social media presence for the Church and Tradition
- Continue to update and streamline our materials within the Mystery School
- Seek new and innovative ways to increase donations and revenue
- Create an Annual Budget for the Church that supports these goals, is sustainable, and includes reciprocity for those who invest their time and energy

Thank you for reading our Annual Report. We look forward to sharing more with you in the coming months. If you have comments or feedback about this document, please send them to the Church and/or to me directly.

In Service,  
Rev. Charly McCreary