



## ANNOUNCEMENT

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2025

[info@pagansolidarity.us](mailto:info@pagansolidarity.us) | [www.pagansolidarity.us](http://www.pagansolidarity.us)

### Statement from the Pagan Solidarity Alliance on Religious Harassment and Desecration in Salem, Massachusetts

The **Pagan Solidarity Alliance (PSA)** condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing acts of **religious harassment, desecration, and intimidation** targeting Pagan practitioners and businesses in Salem, Massachusetts.

**Paganism** is a family of **Earth-centered** spiritual paths that honor nature, celebrate the cycles of the seasons, and affirm personal responsibility, creativity, and reverence for life.

Modern Pagan practice encompasses traditions such as Wicca, Druidry, Heathenry, Witchcraft, and other nature-based faiths. Our rituals include lighting candles, offering blessings, celebrating seasonal festivals, and working for healing and balance in our communities and the world.

These are **peaceful, lawful, and life-affirming** religious expressions—recognized under federal and state law as protected forms of worship.

Over the past week, Members of a group associated with **Philip Renner Ministries** carried out repeated intrusions and acts of intimidation into Pagan-owned establishments, including HEX: Old World Witchery, New England Magic, and others. These individuals **entered private property, disrupted spiritual services, and smeared consecrated oils**—intentionally used to desecrate Pagan altars and sacred items, an act that carries both **physical** and **spiritual** implications.

While early responses from the **Salem Police Department** characterized these incidents as minor or ‘non-criminal’, precedent in multiple jurisdictions across the United States—including cases investigated by the **FBI** involving pork products left at mosques—demonstrates that such targeted defilement of sacred spaces

**has been recognized as vandalism and investigated as religiously motivated hate crimes.**

The deliberate use of consecrated Christian oil to anoint and contaminate a Pagan altar constitutes a symbolic act of domination and desecration. It is not protected **religious** expression; it is religious **intimidation** and **bias-based vandalism**. Pagan businesses and temples are no less sacred than churches, synagogues, or mosques.

---

## **A Call for Equal Enforcement Under the Law**

The Pagan Solidarity Alliance calls upon the **City of Salem**, the **Salem Police Department**, and **state and federal authorities** to act swiftly and decisively by:

**1. Opening a full and transparent investigation** into all incidents occurring between October 26–31—including the events at the Psychic Fair, HEX, Tim Maguire’s Shop, and New England Magic—with **specific attention to violations that may fall under** the following provisions of Massachusetts law:

- **M.G.L. c. 265 § 39** – *Hate-crime assault, battery, or property damage motivated by religious bias;*
- **M.G.L. c. 265 § 37** – *Interference with civil rights by intimidation, threat, or coercion;*
- **M.G.L. c. 266 §§ 126A–B** – *Institutional vandalism or defacement of religious property;* and
- **M.G.L. c. 12 §§ 11H–11J** – *Massachusetts Civil Rights Act*, authorizing **Attorney General enforcement of bias-related intimidation or failure of local protection.**
- **Massachusetts Civil Rights Act (MGL c. 12 §§ 11H–11J)** - One of the Commonwealth’s strongest civil rights protections. It provides both **civil and criminal remedies** when someone’s rights are **interfered with by threats, intimidation, or coercion.**

*These laws collectively prohibit the intimidation, harassment, or defilement of **any person or property on the basis of religion and require equal protection for all faiths** — including Pagan, Witchcraft, and other Earth-based traditions.*

Pagan temples, covens, and spiritual practices in Massachusetts are recognized under state law as legitimate **religious societies** (M.G.L. c. 67) and **nonprofit religious corporations** (M.G.L. c. 180), entitled to the same rights and protections as any other house of worship.

The **Massachusetts Constitution, Article II**, explicitly guarantees that “no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained... for worshipping God in the manner most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience.”

These principles are reinforced by the **Dover Amendment** (M.G.L. c. 40A § 3), which bars discrimination in municipal enforcement or zoning against religious institutions.

Accordingly, the defilement of Pagan sacred spaces and the failure of local authorities to provide equal protection are not only acts of bias and vandalism — they are violations of the Commonwealth’s own constitutional and statutory commitments to **religious liberty and equal protection under the law**.

2. **Reassessing police procedures** to ensure that bias-motivated crimes against minority faiths receive the same urgency and seriousness as those targeting majority religions.

3. **Instituting comprehensive religious diversity and sensitivity training** for all officers and municipal employees, with particular focus on Pagan and Earth-based traditions.

4. **Issuing a public affirmation** of Salem’s commitment to protect the religious freedom and safety of all faiths equally, without preference or prejudice.

Failure to act decisively would send a dangerous message: that in the very city whose history warns against persecution in the name of religion, intolerance is once again being tolerated.

---

## The Broader Principle

The attacks in Salem reflect a broader national pattern of escalating hostility toward Pagan and Earth-centered traditions.

From workplace discrimination to public defamation and vandalism of temples, our communities continue to face challenges to their constitutional rights to worship freely and without fear.

The **Pagan Solidarity Alliance** is a coalition of Pagan clergy, educators, and allies dedicated to **documenting violations, advocating for equal protection, and mobilizing collective response** when our faith communities are attacked.

Our message is simple: **We will not be silent. We will not be dismissed. We will not allow our sacred spaces to be defiled or our people to be harassed.**

We extend unwavering solidarity to those affected and reaffirm that no faith community stands alone.

---

## A Pledge to the Pagan Community

We stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Salem, and with all who walk a Pagan or Earth-based path, affirming that:

- Witchcraft and Paganism are federally recognized religions under U.S. law (Dettmer v. Landon, 1985).

- Our altars, circles, and shops are sacred spaces entitled to the same protection as any other house of worship.
- Any act of desecration motivated by religious bias constitutes a violation of **civil rights and human dignity**.

To our members and allies: remain calm, lawful, and resolute. Document incidents thoroughly, support affected practitioners, and route all reports of religious intimidation or vandalism through appropriate legal channels.

To public officials: we urge you to uphold the Constitution you swore to defend—including the parts that protect us.

---

## Closing Declaration

We call upon all people of conscience—Pagan and non-Pagan alike—to recognize that **religious freedom only exists when it protects everyone**.

The Pagan Solidarity Alliance will continue to stand as both shield and voice for those whose beliefs are marginalized, misrepresented, or attacked.

Wherever prejudice rises against Pagan faiths, **we will respond—with law, with unity, and with unwavering resolve**.

Where **sacred ground** is **violated**, we respond as one: in **truth**, in **justice**, and in **peace**.

**Pagan Solidarity Alliance (PSA)**

[info@pagansolidarity.us](mailto:info@pagansolidarity.us) | <https://pagansolidarity.us>