

Leaving of the Ego

Upon entering this space, we all equals. Please leave your ego behind and outside of this space as you join us as equals.

Opening Meditation

I invite everyone to close your eyes, and open your ears, your mind, and your spirit. Relax your body... stretch if you need to...and quiet your mind.

Now...breathe slowly and deeply. With each breath, allow all the cares of the mundane world to drift away. With each breath, allow yourself to feel more relaxed. With each breath, feel your thoughts settle and converge until your entire awareness is focused on the sensation of breathing...the feel of the air filling your lungs, the rise and fall of your chest, the sound of your breath as it leaves your body.

You are standing in a field, under the open sky. The sun has just set, and the sky has turned that special blue of twilight. The moon is up, a slender crescent, shining brightly, and the stars are beginning to appear, one by one, as the last light of day fades in the west.

The ground is covered with a light sprinkling of snow, and the air is cold, but now and then, a breeze, strangely warm, brushes against your cheek. The playful breeze caresses your face, lifts your hair and whispers softly in your ear. It carries the scent of warm, damp earth, of new green shoots, of clean, fresh rain. You follow the breeze, as it swirls and drifts, calling you forward.

You are approaching the edge of the woods. Tall trees, their branches bare and sparkling with frost, seem to greet you and beckon you in amongst them. As you walk beneath their sheltering boughs, you feel a deep throbbing beneath your feet, like a heartbeat. The rhythm draws you forward, and you begin to feel the energy of the earth pulsing through you. Your movements begin to match that beat, as you continue walking, until you are almost dancing.

Your friend the breeze has not forgotten you. The playful spirit returns, carrying the scent of wood smoke and fresh baked bread. As you breathe deeply, you can also smell the sweetness of mead and the clean scent of incense burning. You follow the breeze, as you find yourself upon a moonlit path. You continue to follow it, until you see the light of a fire in the distance. Now, the throbbing in the ground has changed into drumbeats, and you can hear a pipe being played and a wordless song being sung.

You emerge from the trees upon a clearing. In the center is a bright bonfire, around which a great celebration is taking place. There are many gathered here. Some appear to be human in form, but some wear fur, and some feathers. Small beings that seem to be made of light fly about the fire like multi-colored sparks, laughing and singing.

A hand reaches out towards you, and you grasp it in your own. Suddenly, you are swung into the dance! Your feet move of their own accord, following the rhythm of the drums, the rhythms of the earth. The pipe is louder now, and the stars above you seem to dance and spiral in response to its music. The light of those stars seems to fill you, making you feel light as air and full of fire.

A loaf of bread is passed to you, and you break off a piece and pass it on. It melts on your tongue, and you know that no food has ever tasted this good. The cup makes it way to you, and you drink deep of

the sweetest nectar you have ever partaken of. As you pass the cup along, you notice something odd about the fire.

As you have been dancing, you've hardly noticed it, save to appreciate its warmth. Now, you pause in the dance, to stare at the flames, only to see that the other dancers have done the same. The fire burns white-hot at its center, and a figure begins to emerge. You watch her as she steps out of the fire, her shapely form that of a woman made of flame.

She approaches you, the flames of her hair fanning out in all directions. She reaches out with a fiery hand and gently touches your cheek. The flame of her fingers does not burn, but leaves behind a warmth that no cold can take away. As she touches you, visions explode in your mind, filled with wonder and joy.

The fire-maiden travels round the circle, and when she is once again standing before you, she raises her arms, and drifts into the sky, dissolving into a shower of sparks that dance about, then fade into the night.

You suddenly feel tired, and sink to the ground, content to sleep beneath the stars, near the warmth of the fire. You awaken to realize that you are now alone, and the fire has been reduced to ash. As you get up, you see the sun rising beyond the trees. You stretch and move and prepare to face the coming day, filled with energy and purpose. The wind has turned cold, and you wrap your arms around yourself as you prepare to return home. Placing a hand to your cheek, you savor the warmth left by the goddess' touch.

Breathe slowly and deeply and allow the image of the forest to fade. Allow your consciousness to return to the present. Feel the floor beneath you, feel the presence of your brothers and sisters around you. Allow yourself to return to this place, this temple, the beginning of our journey and the end.

Breathe deeply and slowly, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Honoring the Earth Mother

As we gather here in this place, we honor the Earth we stand upon. We call to the Earth Mother who surrounds and supports us. We call to the Earth Mother who feeds and nourishes us. We call to the Earth Mother who shelters us and gives us a home to live in. Without you, we would not be here. Without you we would not survive. Without you, we would not be. We honor you. We love you. We respect you. We all work to make you healthy. We now give to you these offerings in a token of our appreciation. Earth Mother, accept our offerings!

Statement of Purpose

We are here this day to celebrate Imbolc. This is Brighid's day. Brighid can be said to represent many of the functions of the tamed fire. This can be the flame of the heart for her children, and the young of the earth. This can be the fire of the forge where she uses it for creation. It can also be the fire of the spirit used in the healing arts. Today, we are here to honor Brighid. We are also here to ask her to bring healing to ourselves and those we love, and to ask for her protection as we continue to deal with this pandemic.

We are also here to celebrate the groundhog. That furry little marmot is said to be able to predict the coming of spring depending on whether or not it sees its shadow on the second of February. If it sees its shadow, we have 6 more weeks of winter, if it doesn't, we are due for an early spring. It is our tradition

to make offerings to the groundhog to ask that the remainder of the winter be kind to us on the theory that it is close to the Earth Mother, and she has a bit of control over this.

Recreate the Sacred Center

officiant makes offerings during the appropriate sections of the text.

As we stand here in our circle, we see the hallows in the center as our sacred center, each with its role in the cosmos.

We first have the well, our connection to the underworlds. This is our pathway to the realms of the Ancestors and all that are found in those realms. We offer this silver to the well to connect it to all the other wells in the world. As we offer this silver, our well becomes the well.

Next, we have the fire, our connection to the upper-worlds. This is our pathway to the realms of the Deities, and all that are found in those realms. We offer this incense to the fire to connect it to all the other fires in the world. As we offer this incense, our fire becomes the fire.

Finally, we have the tree, our pathway between all the worlds. This is how we travel to all the realms of the Deities and the Ancestors, and all who are found outside of our realm. We connect this tree to the well with the waters of the well. We connect this tree to the fire with the smoke of the fire. As we make these offerings, our tree becomes our path.

Outsiders

All of you who do not stand with us for the purpose of this rite. All of you who only wish to cause harm. All of you who are beyond our light. We call on you, and we recognize you. We ask that you do not disturb us while we do our work. If you do not disturb us we will make you an offering of this beer when our rites are over.

Purification

Officiants will sprinkle the congregation with water and smudge with incense while the following is spoken

As we gather here in this place, let us once again focus on our ritual purity. Wash yourselves with the waters from the well, washing away all your cares and all your worries. Smudge yourself with the incense from the fire, to join us all in ritual. As we do this washing and smudging, see our circle become cleaner and purer until we are all here as one.

Call to the Ancestors

Officiant makes offerings of grains when indicated.

Ancestors! We call on all those who have come before us. We call on our relatives, those that have passed throughout the years. We call on our chosen family, our mentors, and our heroes that have come before. We call on all those in this very earth, those who were in this land long before us. We call to you all and ask that you join us by our fire. Ancestors, accept our offerings

Call to the Land Spirits

Officiant makes offerings of grains when indicated.

Land Spirits! We call to all the spirits of the land around us. We call to all of you animals that surround us each and every day. We call to all of you plants that grow around us each and every day. We call to all of the unseen spirits that live among us each and every day. We call to you all and ask that you join us by our fire. Land Spirits, accept our offerings.

Call to the Deities

Officiant makes offerings of grains when indicated.

Deities! We call to all the gods and goddesses who watch over us and guide us in our daily lives. We call to all our matrons and patrons, the deities we work with on a personal level. We call to all the deities of this place, you who we work with while in this place. We call to all the unknown deities that watch over us who we work to discover. We all to you all and ask that you join us by our fire. Deities, accept our offerings.

Call to the Honored Beings

Officiant makes offerings of grains when indicated.

Groundhog

Oh mighty groundhog! We call on you today and make offerings to you today to ask that you help bring about a mild end of the winter. We have had our fill of freezing days, but are lacking in the snow fall. We ask that we get the water we need, but that the temperatures don't go to the extremes we've seen. We invite you to our fire, and ask you join us to celebrate today. Groundhog, Accept our offerings!

Brighid

Lady Brighid! Daughter of the Dagda. You are the matron of the forge. You aid those that work the craft of smithing. You are also the matron of the inspired arts, the poets and bards, old and new. You are the matron of the healers and all those that strive to aid the sick and ill. You are the embodiment of the tamed fire through these arts.

Brighid, you often come to us in a motherly and nurturing form. You come to us as the healer of the sick. We call to you today in that aspect. We ask you aid us, and aid those in our lives that have need of healing. We call on you to also honor you and remember you for all that you have done and all that you will do.

Lady Brighid! Come to the fire! Accept our offerings!

Praise offerings Anyone that has offerings to the beings, the groundhog, or Brighid, please, come forward and make them now.

Blessing of the Candles

At this time, for all those whom have candles they want blessed by Brighid, please get them out. Focus on them as we focus on Brighid.

Lady Brighid! We have given to you, and we have one ask of you. We ask that you bless these candles. Bless them with the spark of healing. Bless them so that when we burn them, they release your healing energies to those who need them. Bless our candles so they can be our focus to do your work.

Shared Meal

Behold this loaf of bread. With this loaf, we share a meal with Brighid and the spirits. As we tear this loaf in half, one half goes to them and the other will be shared between us.

Bread is passed around for all to eat

Blessing of the Waters

We have made our offerings to all of the spirits. We have honored Brighid and called on her to aid us in the healing we need. We call to all we have honored today to bless these waters. Fill them with the powers of their blessings in return for our offerings. Spirits, give us the waters! Behold the blessed waters!

Waters are passed around for all to drink

Thanking the Beings

Thanking the Honored Beings

Brighid! We have called on you to celebrate you and the healing that you bring to the world. We have made offerings to you, and you have given blessings in return. For all we have asked of you and all you do for us, Brighid, we thank you.

Thanking the Deities

Deities! We have made offerings to you and you have returned the favor. For all you have done for us, Deities, we thank you.

Thanking the Land Spirits

Land Spirits! We have made offerings to you and you have returned the favor. For all you have done for us, Land Spirits, we thank you.

Thanking the Ancestors

Ancestors! We have made offerings to you and you have returned the favor. For all you have done for us, Ancestors, we thank you.

Acknowledging the Outsiders

Outsiders! We asked you at the start of the rite that you leave us to work in peace. You have done so. We will honor our end of the bargain and pour you the beer we offered you earlier.

Thanking the Earth Mother

Earth Mother! We have given to you, and we have honored you. You are the reason we are able to survive in this world. For all that you have done for us both today and throughout our days, Earth Mother, we thank you.

Closing Meditation:

Now, once again, I invite you to close your eyes, and open your ears, your mind, and your spirit.

Breathe slowly and deeply. Remember the breeze that guided you, your journey through the forest, the dance around the fire, the touch of the goddess. Feel that touch once again, warm against your cheek, filled with loving attention.

Feel the energy that we have raised together. Feel your connection to the earth, to the nature spirits, to our ancestors, to the deities, and to one another.

As you continue to breathe slowly and deeply, embrace those connections. Embrace the energy we have raised in our ritual and allow it to flow through you, restorative and cleansing, a warm glow lighting you from within. Savor that warmth, that soothing sense of wholeness and belonging.

Now, breathing deeply and slowly, release any excess energy, holding within you only that which is comfortable. Allow the rest to be grounded, returning to its source, leaving behind a sense of comfort, of peace, and of renewal.

Breathe deeply and slowly. Be aware once more of the world around you: the sounds, the scents, the sensations. Breathe slowly and deeply, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

And so the rite is finished, go now in wisdom and peace.