

Whispering Lake Proto-Grove



Imbolc

January 25, 2004

Pre-ritual Briefing 6:00 PM

Ritual 6:30 PM

Grove Attunement (Modified two part meditation) Part I

Let us begin

Please close your eyes and join me taking in a few cleansing breaths. In through your nose and out through your mouth. *(Pause for 5 count)* In through your nose and out through your mouth. *(Pause on 3 count)* In through your nose and out through your mouth. *(Pause)*

As we stand here assembled among the trees of this life, this space, this world, imagine time slowly wearing away and until you are standing among the tallest, oldest trees of all worlds. Perhaps they are giant sequoias or perhaps they are ancient oaks, but these trees have stood the test of time.

As you wander slowly through them, you can feel the ancient energy rise about you, drawing you toward and into one of the tallest, oldest trees. Slowly, you feel your body melt away and your spirit merge into one with the tree. Your feet seem to stretch on and endlessly down in to the dark moist reaches of the earth. Stretching and stretching endlessly on and into the darkness below the surface. You feel the first cool trickling of the water and know that your roots are approaching the water table. A deep thirst for this life giving water urges you to extended your roots deeper until feel your roots plunging into the sacred waters of life deep inside the earth.

For a moment, allow your roots to be washed over by the subtle underground currents of the dark waters. Feel the energy of this current - its time tested presence, strength

and life. Slowly, draw the water up through your roots and allow it to pool in your trunk. *(Pause)* Feel it nourishing your being. Carry it up the length of your branches. Pushing the water and its vitality into your leaves. Lift the water higher and higher through your limbs to the finest and smallest edges of new growth at the top of your branches.

Feel the Earth Mother's life giving water shimmering in the tops of the branches beneath the warmth of the sun before spilling forth and flowing over leaves and branches back into the earth.

(Pause on a 3 count)

Turn your attentions now skyward where the warm radiance of the sun awaits. Feel the glowing light of the sun wash over the smallest branches at the top of your tree and peek through various leaves to warm parts of your trunk.

As you stretch you limbs skyward to draw in the sun's warmth, a tongue of fire strikes forth and covers all of your top most limbs. *(Pause)* You are not scorched or burned but filled with a passionate inspiration. You draw the heat of this caress from the Sky Father downward and through you. Feel the heat of this passion collect in your branches and limbs. Mingling with the cool waters as it travels down and pools in the trunk of your being. *(Pause)* Carry this heat all they way down into the deepest segments of your roots.

While the earth's waters and sun's heat dance throughout

your tree being, reflect upon the passions and wisdoms of the ancient ones, before slowly opening your eyes as you prepare to enter our ritual space.

Procession

Prior to the ritual a Brigid's bed is prepared and placed beside the hearth fire. The brideog, that was decorated prior to the ritual by the male members of the Grove, will be left outside the feasting area until the seasonal enactment..

Now let us raise our voices in song as we proceed to our Nemeton.

In song

*Come we now as a people
To gather at the sacred well
Come we now as a people
To gather in the warmth and the light of the flame*

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Repeat until all participants have entered the Nemeton.

Once all participants have entered the Nemeton they will be censed and asperged.

Opening Blessings

Earth Mother & Sky Father

Great Mother and Father of all
She who hath brought forth all divine
He who hath brought forth our people
Your children stand assembled before you
To honor your great union
That which creates all life.
Earth Mother and Sky Father, accept our sacrifice!

*An offering of bread and white wine is made to the Earth
Mother and Sky Father.*

All: Earth Mother and Sky Father, accept our sacrifice!

And now we raise our voices in song to the Earth
Mother and Sky Father.

All in song

*Earth Mother, We sing to your body,
Earth Mother, We sing to your bones,
Earth Mother, We honor your body,
Earth Mother, We honor your stones.*

*Sky Father, We sing to your spirit,
Sky Father, We sing to your light,
Sky Father, We honor your spirit,
Sky Father, We honor your might,*

*Your children, We gather before you,
Your children, Together we call,*

*Your children, We honor your presence,
Your children, Look to us all.*

Invocation of Divine Inspiration

Stepping from the sea upon her shores
Inspiration consumed both heart and mind
Eloquent words echoing throughout the skies.

Swift as the wind upon the sea
Mighty as the roar of the wave
Fierce as the bull of seven battles
And keen as the hawk upon the cliff.

Valiant as the wild boar
Sharp as the head of the spear in battle
Wise as the salmon in a pool
And fairest of all flowers.

A lake in a plain
A flash from the sun
The God that puts the fire in the head.

Amergin of the White Knee,
Grant us the gift of divine inspiration and
eloquence!
Amergin, accept our sacrifice!

*An offering of honey is placed in the offering bowl for
Amergin.*

All: Amergin, accept our sacrifice!

Purpose and Precedent

We gather this eve upon the Earth.
In celebration of the turning wheel.
Enjoying the warmth and protection of our hearth.
While we welcome our friends about us.

We gather this eve beneath the Sky.
In celebration of life, death and rebirth,
Enjoying the promise of the returning sun.
Remembering those who have walked before us.
While we welcome the Goddess Brigid and the Kindred
among us.

We gather this eve at the crossroads.
In celebration of the Feast of Imbolc.
Enjoying the company of friends and family.
Remembering the ways of old.
While we welcome the first signs of Spring before us.

Fire, Well & Tree

To the fire

Kindled of the hearth fire
Scared flame upon the Earth
Joining together hearts and minds
Darkness banished before the roaring blaze

Transcending the realm of light and shadow
Purifier and cleanser of mind, body and spirit
Sacred fire open unto us the way to the Shining Ones.

An offering of clarified butter is made into the fire.

To the well

Threshold to the Otherworld
Window to the souls
Cauldron of inspiration
Sacred shrine of old

Ford of cleansing waters
Vessel of rebirth
Sacred well of Danu, open unto us a path to the
ancestors.

An offering of silver is made into the well.

To the bile

Mighty oak of the ancient grove
Roots burying deep within the Underworld
Wise teacher of traditions old
Branches reaching into the heavens.
Keeper of sacred knowledge
Pillar joining Earth and Sky; spanning the three worlds
Road to all realms; Sacred tree
Let all who walk this way walk in your wisdom.

*The bile is asperged with water from the well and censed with
incense.*

To Land, Sea & Sky

The waters support and surround us.
The land extends about us.
The sky stretches above us.
And the center burns a living flame.
Let us pray with a good fire.
May all the Kindred bless us.
May our worship be true.
May our actions be just.
May our love be pure.
Blessings and honor and worship to the holy ones.

Land, Sea & Sky Text by Ceisiwr Serith

We now raise our voices in song.

All in song

***By Fire and by Water, between the Earth and Sky
We stand like the World-Tree rooted, deep, crowned
high.***

***By Fire and by Water, between the Earth and Sky
We stand like the World-Tree rooted, deep, crowned
high.***

*Come we now to the Well, the eye and the mouth of Earth,
Come we now to the Well, and silver we bring.
Come we now to the Well, the waters of rebirth
Come we now to the Well, and together we sing.*

CHORUS

*We will kindle a Fire, Bless all, and with harm to none,
We will kindle a Fire, and offering pour,
We will kindle a Fire, a light 'neath the Moon and Sun,
We will kindle a Fire, our spirits will soar.*

CHORUS

*Gather we at the Tree, the root & the crown of all
Gather we at the Tree, below & above,
Gather we at the Tree, together we make our call,
Gather we at the Tree, in wisdom and love.*

CHORUS

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Opening the Gates

Oh, Manannan MacLir, Guardian of the Gates between the worlds.

Protector and guide to all those who travel.

We call upon you this night to open the gates and let us walk the path between the worlds.

Guide and ward our passage so that we may walk in safety.
Manannan MacLir, we honor you with sacrifice and love.

Manannan accept our sacrifice!

An offering of Irish Whiskey is made.

A Druid traces the triskel or sigil over the fire and well.

Let the Gates Be Open!

All: Let the Gates Be Open!

Let us now sing our praise to the Gatekeeper.

All in song

*Gatekeeper open the portals,
Between the Gods and mortals,
Power freely flows, as our magic grow*

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Repeat chant three times

Kindred Offerings

Mighty Ones

Oh, Mighty Ones, whose wisdom guides us.
Hear us this night as we call forth your guidance.
Share with us your secrets and allow us to see;
For your knowledge is great.

Oh, Mighty Ones, we call for you to stand with us.
To open our eyes and our minds; that we may walk the
path of ancient wisdom.
Bringing ancient secret's back to our hearts and lives.

Mighty Ones, we honor you with sacrifice and love.

An offering of pale ale is made into the offering bowl.

All: Mighty Ones, accept our sacrifice!

Noble Spirits

From the highest mountain to the depths of sea
Be it creature or noble spirit in fierce reality
Whether by wings, fins or claws
Whether beauty or beast; cunning or brute
At this hour to thee we call

We call upon you to protect our assembled kin
Guide us and teach us your many lessons
Lessons to fight or fly, live or die

Wondrous creatures and noble spirits of all realms,
accept our sacrifice!

An offering of nuts and seeds is placed in the offering bowl.

All: Noble Spirits, accept our sacrifice!

Shining Ones

Shining Ones, Eldest and Wisest
Guardians of our hearths and homes
Bringers of peace and plenty
Wielders of war and destruction

Gods of land, sea and sky
Protectors of kith and kin
Champions of honor and might
Dwellers of light and shadow

Deities' known and unknown
Patrons of song and music
Masters of fire and forge
Gods of life, death and rebirth

You who inspire our hearts and minds
You who guide our actions and intentions.
Hear us this night for we are in need of your blessings.
We ask you to bless our gathering and all who have
assembled.

Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice!

An offering of clarified butter is placed into the fire.

All: Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice!

We now raise our voices in song to the Kindred.

*Gods and Dead and Mighty Sidhe
Powers of Earth and Sky and Sea
By Fire and Well, by Sacred Tree
Offerings We Make to Ye*

Repeat chant three times

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Key Offerings

Descriptive invocations of the patron powers for the rite are given. Offerings are made and a portion of each is held back for the final sacrifice.

Anvil strikes three times

In a four person round.

*Holy water, sacred flame
Brigid we invoke your name
Bless my hands, my head, my heart
Source of healing, song and art.*

(words by Diane Baker/music by Anne Hill)

Brigid

Brigid of the mantels,
Brigid of the peat heap,
Brigid of the twining hair
Brigid of the augury

Brigid of the white plains
Brigid of the calmness
Brigid of the kindness
Brigid of the kine

Woman of Wisdom
Lady of the Flame & Forge
Today is Your day

Today is the day You step from the mound and
Spread Your green mantle across the land
Bringing the Spring to us again

We have come to greet You
We have come to honor You
We have come to praise You

O Great Queen of the Spring!

Brigid, accept our sacrifice!

An offering of silver, milk, & beer is made

All: Brigid, accept our sacrifice!

Seasonal Enactment

Following the Seasonal Enactment, ritual participants are given an opportunity to make praise offerings in the form of poetry, song, dance, or works of their hands etc. Please avoid clapping after praise offerings.

A male member of the Grove will leave the Nemeton briefly to get the brideog from beyond the feasting area bringing her to the doorway of our ritual space. At this time an unmarried female member of the Grove will proceed to the doorway and carry the brideog into the Nemeton and once around the sacred center to her bed by the hearth's fire as the remaining participants chant:

Brigid is come, Brigid is welcome!

The brideog and wand are laid in the bed. The unmarried female, carrier of the brideog, lights the first of nine candles from the hearth's fire saying:

Through this flame may the warmth of the sun return to us, as the days grow longer and life begins to stir within the Earth. May she grant us the strength to **persevere**.

A second candle is lit from the hearth's fire saying:

Through this flame may our hearts and minds feel the spark of inspiration that kindles new beginnings and fosters creativity within us. May she teach us **moderation** in all endeavors.

A third candle is lit from the hearth's fire saying:

Through this flame may all that lay sleeping beneath winter's blanket of white be renewed. May she bring **fertility** to awaken the Green world.

A fourth candle is lit from the hearth's fire saying:

Through this flame may we find protection for our hearths and homes as we forge a pathway within this world. May she bless us that we may find **courage** when facing the storms of our existence.

A fifth candle is lit from the hearth's fire saying:

Through this flame may we extend our love to the Kindred and the folk. May her flame's warmth offer **hospitality** to all.

A sixth candle is lit saying:

Through this flame may we cleanse and heal our hearts, our bodies and our minds that we may find peace within us. May she show us the way to **wisdom** and ancient knowledge.

A seventh candle is lit saying:

Through this flame's light may we forge a pathway to the Otherworld that we may travel in safety beneath its shield. May she grant us the **vision** to see beyond this realm.

An eighth candle is lit saying:

Through this flame may we bring forth the ways of old with new vitality that the Kindred may flourish with our honor and worship. May she guide us to act with the truest **integrity** always.

A ninth and final flame, the eternal flame is lit saying:

Youthful Maiden and Great Mother, may your eternal fire burn bright within our hearts and minds. May your eternal flame bring forth life anew.

Lady Brighid, You have come!
Great Lady, You are most welcome!

Praise offerings

At this time cluties can also be brought forward and tied on the tree on the Shrine with or without spoken words.

Sacrifice and Omen

Through Manannan MacLir, Great Warder of the Ways,
We have opened the Gates this night.
Through our praise, love and sacrifice;
We have honored the mighty Kindred as they walk among us.
Through communication with the Otherworld;
We receive guidance, inspiration and insight;
As we prepare to make our final sacrifice.

A final sacrifice is prepared.

Kindred of land, sea and sky we call to you!
Hear us this night for we are in need of your guidance and wisdom.

Tonight, we call out from the crossroads to all who aid us!

We call to those of the middle realm; those of the Green World!
You who have offered their guidance and friendship.
All spirits of nature that aid us in our journey.

We call to those from the realms below; from the Lands of the Dead!
You who have offered their wisdom and inspiration.
Ancestors and beloved friends that aid and inspire us.

We call out once more from the crossroads!
Hear us eldest and brightest of the upper realms!
Deities known and unknown to us;

Shining Ones, whose might and bounty knows no bounds!

Mighty Kindred, accept our sacrifice!

The final sacrifice is made.

All: Kindred, accept our sacrifice!

It is with love, honor and respect that we have offered hospitality to the Kindred this night.

We have called through the Gates and deep within the Otherworld our invitation to gather in their honor.

We have sung their praise; made our sacrifice.

Participants meditate on the kindred, sending their energies through the gates.

It is our hope that our words and sacrifice have conveyed our love.

Let us now close our eyes, opening our hearts and minds to the Kindred pouring out our love as we prepare to receive their blessings upon us.

The Omen is taken. One Ogham stick is drawn for each of the three Kindred. The seer then interprets the omen, leading the company to contemplate the things they would ask of the powers, especially as suggested by the omen.

From the Nature Spirits _____.

From the Ancestors _____.

From the Shining Ones _____.

The Kindred have spoken. What use have you in your lives for their knowledge and wisdom.

The Blessing

Two cups will be filled and sat in the midst of the hallows. The following words will be spoken over the cups.

As in the ways of old we have given our gifts freely and as in the ways of old a gift is given unto us in return.

We will drink deep of the Cauldron of Rebirth. May the blessings of health, wealth and wisdom be ours.

Shining Ones your blessings upon us!

All: Shining Ones your blessings upon us!

We gather with you between Earth and Sky.

We are proud to call ourselves your people.

Once again, Shining Ones your blessings upon us!

All: Shining Ones your blessings upon us!

We have brought our offerings. We have made sacrifice.

One last time, Shining Ones your blessings upon us!

All: Shining Ones your blessings upon us!

The cups are lifted saluting the fire, well and tree.

Behold the Waters of Life!

Shining Ones hear and bless us.

Brighid hallow these Waters of Life.

The cups are lifted before the participants.

Behold the Waters of Life!

All: Behold the Waters of Life!

Now Good folk, drink deep; the blessings of the Shining Ones.

Drinking horns and/ or cups are passed and all participants share the waters. As the cups are passed the following chant is sung by all participants.

As we receive the blessing of the Shining Ones let us raise our voices in song.

All in Song

Pour the waters, raise the cup; Drink your share of wisdom deep; strength and love now fill us up. As the elder ways we keep.

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Repeat until the cups have been passed to all participants.

Thanksgiving and Closing

We now prepare to thank the powers that have attended us during this rite. At this time the gates between the worlds remain open and we invite any to give personal offering or sacrifice to the powers.

Participants are given time to make final offerings.

Exalted One, Lady of the Forge
She who brings honey to the mouths of the poets
And blessings to our fields.
We thank you for your blessings.
Brighid, we honor you. May there be peace between us until we meet once again by the hearth's fire.

All: Brighid, we thank you.

Shining Ones, deities known and unknown
Guardians and protectors;
Gods of life, death and rebirth,
We thank you for your blessing upon us this night.
Shining Ones, we honor you. May there be peace between us until we meet once again by the hearth's fire.

All: Shining Ones, we thank you!

Creatures and spirits of peace and ferocity, we thank you for your teachings, guidance and protection. Noble Spirits, we honor you. May there be peace between us until we meet once again by the hearth's fire.

All: Noble Spirits, we thank you!

Oh, Mighty Ones, ancestors and beloved dead. We thank you for your wisdom and inspiration. Mighty Ones, we honor you. May there be peace between us until we meet once again by the hearth's fire.

All: Mighty Ones, we thank you!

Amergin of the White Knee, Great Bard of the Celts, The God that puts fire in the head! We thank you for divine inspiration and eloquence throughout our rite. May there be peace between us until we meet once again by the hearth's fire.

All: Amergin, we thank you!

Great Mother of divine and Great Father of our people, For your life giving union, we thank you. May there be peace between us until we meet once again by the hearth's fire.

All: Earth Mother and Sky Father, we thank you!

Oh Manannan MacLir, Guardian of the Gates; We thank you for your protection and guidance this night. Now we ask that you close the gates once again to keep the path safe until we return. Manannan MacLir, We Honor You!

Let the Gates be Closed!

All: Manannan, Let the Gates be Closed!

We now return all that has gone unused to the Earth and the Sky, may they continue to support, surround and sustain us.

All offerings that remain are burnt in the fire or scattered upon the Earth.

Grove Attunement & Meditation-Part II

The great work has concluded. Friends, take a moment and reconnect yourself to the meditation we began with at the opening of this rite.

With the honor and lessons of our deities learned and remembered, recall now the image of your ancient tree. Feel the vitality of the waters mingling with the fire's passion. Feel the ebb and flow of all life's energy. (Pause) Now feel the sun's fire slowly move back up through your being, mingling with the waters and then flowing up and out through the branches in the highest parts of the sky. (Pause)

In the same manner the waters slowly retreat from your being coming down from the top most branches and pooling in your trunk before retreating down through your roots. Note the ebb and flow of all life's energy as the waters return to the earth.

Slowly you emerge from the tree and with thanks you begin walking away through the woods and the ancient woods become the woods of this place and of this space which surrounds us and we return to this time.

Take a moment to reflect on the lessons of fire, water and tree and all that was given by divine spirit and deity. Opening your eyes you have returned as you were but more than you were, when we began this rite. And so with thanks we conclude.

All: We will keep the faith until the sky falls upon us and crushes us; until the earth opens and swallows us; until the seas arise and overwhelm us.

Once more may we now raise our voices in song as we
leave our Nemeton.

*As participants leave the grove the following song will be sung
until all participants have exited.*

Way To The Well

*We Will Never, Never Lose Our Way To The Well Of Her
Memory .*

And The Power-- Of Her Living Flame

It Will Rise, It Will Rise Again. (x2)

*Like The Grasses, Through The Dark, Through The Soil,
To The Sunlight -- We Shall Rise Again.*

*We Are Thirsting -- For The Waters Of Life,
We Are Moving -- We Shall Live Again. (x2)*

***Words By Starhawk and Rose May Dance, Music adapted from
a South African Freedom Song.***

Special Thanks To:

All who attended, participated and shared in this Imbolc
celebration.

Stone Creed Grove, ADF for the use of the following
chants: *The Gatekeeper Chant, The Portal Song, Gods &
Dead and Mighty Sidhe, Pour the Waters.*

The unknown author of the chant: *Earth Mother*

Anne Hill and Diane Baker for the chant: *Holy Water,
Sacred Flame.*

Starhawk and Rose May Dance for the words to the chant:
Way to the Well.

Ceisiwr Serith for the text for recreating the cosmos

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