A Year of Celebration



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By Indigo

# Author’s Blessing

*My answers are but one of many possibilities, but they were formulated to further the paths of love, peace, beauty, and truth. May it be that you find what is written here useful and may it lead you to a better unity with nature, humanity, and deity – for all three are aspects of one another. Use my words for goodness and peace; use them as inspiration for your own works that may come later. But should you use these words for harm, may it be that these words of power would turn to dust upon your lips. Be a blessing to others and you will surely find yourself blessed.*

*So mote it be!*

# Author’s Forward

One of the reasons why I wanted to write this book is to address what I thought was a deficiency in the available books found in the Wiccan and Pagan community. There are many wonderful books addressing the topic of Wiccan spirituality, philosophy, and magical practices. However, there are not many books that give examples of what a Wiccan or Pagan worship service actually looks like. I do not present this book as the “right” or “only” way to hold a ritual. Instead, I present this as a framework and example of how services *could* be held. The way I wrote these rituals feel “right” for me (and many others at Turning Circle, where I serve as a worship coordinator). That said, feel free to modify any ritual in this book so they are “right” for you.

Another experience I’ve had is that solitary practitioners are starting to form loose associations with other witches. I fully support the idea of “open circles” since it gives eclectic solitaries a better sense of community as well as a venue for exchanging ideas. I think a good sense of shared purpose and community is critical for Wicca to become the mainstream faith that I hope it someday becomes. I am a coordinator for a well-established open circle and I’ve had the opportunity to advise new Pagans on the topics of spirituality and liturgy.

What’s in this book? You’ll find an example of a worship service for all eight Sabbats as well as services for wedding (handfastening), dedication, initiation, and funeral rites. Feel free to modify them to your heart’s content. There are also descriptions of (and pictures of) common Wiccan religious tools. For new practitioners, I have included an introduction to basic Wicca.

The rituals can be used in a formal coven setting or in an open circle setting. Ideally, there should be at least six participants for the circle casting (god, goddess, air, fire, water, and earth). The term “Celebrant” is used to designate parts conducted by a service leader, priest, or priestess. The term “Covener” is used to describe non-leading attendees. Open circles don’t necessarily have formal clergy or formal initiates (although some do). However, the terms “Celebrant”, “Priest”, “Priestess”, and “Covener” are still useful in understanding roles for an open circle.

May this book be useful to you.

Bright Blessings!

Indigo

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# 

# Standard Tools for All Rituals

Like many other faiths, Wicca is a religion that uses sacred objects in its rituals. Buddhists have bells; Christianity has a chalice, plate, altar, and Bible; Catholics employ prayer beads (Rosary), candles, incense, as well as adding a dash of ceremonial magic by spiritually-empowering their wine and crackers. Wicca, too, employs special tools that should be on hand for every ritual. If you are a new to Wicca, don’t feel that you need to immediately rush out and spend hundreds of dollars on ritual items. Over time, you will find the tools that really call to you. My first Athame was a Swiss Army knife and my first chalice was a blue coffee cup. Ritual intent trumps gold inlay.

**Athame**: This is a knife with a black handle. It is never used to cut physical objects but rather is used to draw the boundary between normal space and sacred space. An Athame represents the element of Air and is a masculine object. An Athame is also associated with East.

**Wand**: This is a rod that can be made of wood, stone, metal, or any other material. It is typically not longer than the distance between a user’s elbow crease and the user’s middle finger. It is used for spell work. A Wand represents fire. A Wand is associated with South.

**Chalice**: This is a decorative cup. A chalice can be made of wood, ceramic, metal, glass, or any other material. The Chalice represents the element of Water and is a feminine object. In certain Wiccan ceremonies, the Athame and chalice are united as a metaphor for the Great Rite (the intimate union of the God and Goddess). A Chalice is associated with West.



**Pentacle**: As opposed to a tiny medallion worn around the neck, a pentacle suitable for an altar is larger, flat, and often made of wood, stone or ceramic. A pentacle in this context represents the element of Earth and is a feminine object, whereas a pentacle worn around the neck represents all elements as well as serving as a symbol of protection (much like a Christian’s cross or crucifix). A Pentacle is associated with North.

**Boline**: This is a knife with a white handle. Unlike the Athame, a boline is used for cutting. Two examples a boline’s use includes cutting herbs and carving runes into candles.

**Candles**: An altar requires six candles: yellow (East/Air); red (South/Fire); blue (West/Water); green (North/Earth), gold (God), and silver (Goddess). Your local New Age store can sell you these candles for as little as a dollar each. You can also opt for larger candles that will last through numerous rituals.

**Incense** (Air): There are several ways to burn incense, as it comes in stick, powder, and cone forms. Typically, rod-shaped incense is the easiest to use in rituals since it is also employed in circle casting. Incense is placed in a holder on the edge of the altar facing east.

**Salt** (Earth): A small bowl of salt is used (a pinch of salt is placed into a small bowl of water, which is then sprinkled around the edge of a cast circle. Sea salt is best for rituals. The small container of salt is placed on the edge of the altar facing the north.

**Water** (Water): Water (with a small bit of salt) is used in circle casting. The bowl of water is placed on the edge of the alter facing the west.

**Small white candle** (Fire): This candle is placed on the altar on the edge facing the south.

**Broom**: Also called a besom, this is a broom made of natural fibers that is used to sweep the floor prior to conducting indoor rituals. It is not necessary to sweep for outdoor rituals (since nature is fine as-is).

There are other objects that you *may* find useful (see the chapter on Basic Wicca at the end of this book), but the aforementioned list is a standard kit for Wiccan practitioners.

# Assigning Ritual Parts for Rituals

One of the many great things about Wicca is that it is a participatory faith. This means that both clergy and non-clergy take active roles. This differs greatly from, say, Christianity where a single ordained priest or pastor takes an active role and the congregation typically sits and listens. Additionally, in most Wiccan covens, all of the members are clergy of some rank (typically two third degree initiates and numerous first degree initiates and dedicants). However, a self-initiated Wiccan can also rightly declare himself/herself to be a priest or priestess of the faith. Below are some *possible* configurations (and this is certainly not the only possible configurations) for assigning speaking parts for a Wiccan ritual:

* **One person:** This is a ritual led by a solitary practitioner. The Celebrant obviously calls all the parts.
* **Two people:** One person calls Air, Water, and God; the other person calls Fire, Earth, and Goddess. If possible, match the genders (male reads God, Air, and Fire; female reads Goddess, Water, and Earth).
* **Three people:** One person calls God; one person calls Goddess; the third person calls the four elements. Alternatively, one person can call God and Goddess, one person can call the four elements, and the third person can light and snuff candles.
* **Four people:** One person calls God; one person calls Goddess; the third person calls Air and Water; the fourth person calls Fire and Earth.
* **Five people** (one Celebrant): The Celebrant calls God and Goddess; the other four people each call one element.
* **Five people** (two Celebrants): Male Celebrant calls God; Female Celebrant calls Goddess; the third person calls Air and Water; the fourth person calls Fire and Earth; the fifth person lights and snuffs candles.
* **Six people:** Male Celebrant calls God; Female Celebrant calls Goddess; one person each calls an element.
* **Seven or more:** Same as above except that the seventh person lights and snuffs candles as appropriate. Likewise, with more people the guided meditation role can also be shared.

## Ranks within Covens and Circles

Depending on whether you are a solitary practitioner, a member of an open circle, or a member of a formal coven, you may encounter different titles and ranks. The list below includes examples of such possibilities but likely does not have every single possibility. After all, Wicca is a non-dogmatic faith and there are many expressions of the practice.

### Examples of ranks in open circles

An open circle is a less formal organization than a formal coven. Individuals are free to come and go as they choose. Leaders can also come and go. Turning Circle (the organization that I am a Coordinator of) has the following ranks:

* **Member:** This is someone who attends at least three services per year and expresses an interest in active participation.
* **Officer:** This someone who fulfills a particular task that is critical to the functioning of the circle. For instance, “Officer” ranks include scribe, pursewarden, social coordinator, outreach coordinator, and website designer.
* **Coordinator:** This is someone who plans the worship services for the year, assists with ritual design, and makes policy decisions concerning the circle.

### Examples of ranks in formal covens

A coven has a much more formal structure than an open circle. When joining a coven, it is usually for life. Some (but not all) covens restrict worship attendance to coven in which the person is initiated. However, covens tend to teach a lot more about the religion than open circles do. Some examples of ranks in a coven are:

* **Dedicant**: This is a person who has made a decision to study Wicca for at least a year and a day. At this rank, the person is free to leave the coven once that time period has expired. Alternatively, if the dedicants and clergy both agree, the person can be initiated as a first degree initiate.
* **Initiate:** This is a person who is an ordained clergy. Most covens have three levels of initiation.
* **Priest:** This is a male clergy person of first or second degree initiation.
* **Priestess:** This is a female clergy person of first or second degree initiation.
* **High Priest:** This is a male clergy person of the third degree.
* **High Priestess:** This is a female clergy person of the third degree.
* **Handmaiden:** This is a lower-ranking priestess that assists the High Priestess during rituals.
* **Waylander:** This is a lower-ranking priest that assists the High Priest during rituals.
* **Queen of the Sabbat:** This is a lower-ranking clergy that is temporarily serving as High Priestess for ritual purposes.
* **Tradition Head:** This is the founder of the coven’s magical/spiritual tradition.

Most covens have both male and female clergy. A coven can exist with just a High Priestess indefinitely. That said, a coven that loses a High Priestess but retains a High Priest must make it a very high priority to train a new female clergy person as a replacement as quickly as possible.

## How to Choose Between a Coven and an Open Circle

If you’re new to Wicca, you may be wondering which option is best for you: joining an open circle, joining a coven, or remaining a solitary practitioner. The answer is that there is no correct answer. It depends on what you need in terms of growing your faith, skill, knowledge, and wisdom. There is no “wrong” way.

### Coven Pros and Cons

A coven is a very formal type of group. My experience with covens is that the leaders tend to have a lot of knowledge concerning ceremonial magic and have committed a variety of liturgies to memory. A High Priest and High Priestess will likely have a lot to teach a new initiate. However, there is always a price to pay. Firstly, most covens require an exclusive allegiance (meaning that you cannot attend services at other spiritual venues without permission from the HP or HPs). Secondly, the High Priest and High Priestess must be unconditionally obeyed. Thirdly, once you swear an oath of loyalty, you aren’t permitted to leave.

I was involved in a coven of the Black Forest Clan tradition for five years. I found it chafing after a while when I realized that my High Priest and High Priestess were much more interested in receiving adulation from the Covenors than they were in being real clergy. Moreover, the High Priest was generally resentful (and jealous) of my role as Coordinator in a competing spiritual venue. It took several years for me to become disillusioned enough to ask to be released from my oath of loyalty – but it did happen. However, instead of being allowed to leave, I was banished for offering “disrespect”. When you get banished, you also lose all of your friends in that coven because they are then not permitted to speak to you henceforth.

Now, just because I had a bad experience doesn’t mean that covens are universally bad. Quite the contrary, I am very certain that most such groups actually abide by the rule of Perfect Love and Perfect Trust. I’m sure that some coven leadership might even let an unhappy Covenor leave without being banished. That said, always be aware that a High Priest and High Priestess has a disproportionate ability to hurt the Covenors of lower rank.

In summary:

**Coven Pros**

* The leadership tends to have a lot of magical knowledge.
* Covens may have an extensive library of proprietary rites and rituals.
* Some covens have “sister covens” of the same lineage that can offer collaboration for larger magical workings.
* A healthy coven has the capacity to encourage deep and long-lasting friendships.

**Coven Cons**

* The leadership has the power to inflict great harm on Covenors they choose to expel.
* The topic of study may be narrow (i.e. The leadership may teach about Wicca but not teach about other pagan faiths.)
* An unhealthy coven can quickly develop cult-like traits.
* Once you take an oath of loyalty, it is very difficult to leave without being subject to a banishment.
* A banished Covenor is henceforth cut off indefinitely from the members of his/her former coven (and thus those friendships are destroyed).
* The leadership is much more concerned about “respect” than the leadership of open circles. Leadership in covens must generally be unconditionally obeyed.

### Open Circle Pros and Cons

An open circle is a less formal arrangement when compared to a coven. In an open circle, the leadership may or may not be actual ordained clergy. Members can join and leave without cajoling or reprimand. There is more democracy in an open circle. The disadvantage to this model is that open circles generally do not have vast compilations of secret rites and rituals, nor do they generally have access to secret and proprietary ceremonial magic. Members in open circles tend to write their own liturgy and their own spells. Some open circles may offer an initiatory path (but that is certainly optional). Members do not have to swear oaths of loyalty. Leadership may have the power to eject an unsatisfactory member (ie. The person would be banned from attending services), but a leadership person in an open circle does not have the power to banish in the way that a coven High Priest or High Priestess can.

**Open Circle Pros**

* Members can join and leave without fear of banishment.
* Members don’t have to swear an oath of loyalty and don’t have to be exclusive in where they choose to worship.
* Members have a greater chance of being able to lead rituals in an open circle (as opposed to a coven, where the High Priest and High Priestess lead nearly all services).
* Members can have more eclectic beliefs when compared to a coven. For example, the leadership of Turning Circle consists of a Wiccan (me), an ADF Druid (Phoenix), and a Shaman (Sajana). Our members are Wiccans, eclectic witches, spiritualists, New Agers, Hoodoo practitioners, Druids, Unitarians, and interfaith believers.
* Open circles have a better chance of being assisted by the Unitarian Universalist church (in the form of CUUPS patronage). For example, Turning Circle is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia.

**Open Circle Cons**

* Open circles have a less formal teaching path.
* Open circles don’t generally do Wiccan initiations (although some do).
* Witches from established, formal covens may view an open circle witch as “not a real witch”. That is, of course, their problem.
* Open circles don’t usually have vast libraries of tomes and lore. Turning Circle’s library is certainly a lot smaller than that of my former coven.
* Disruptive members are harder to be rid of (since the leadership does not have the power to banish).
* Theoretically, the leadership in an open circle can be subjected to a coup since they are retained each year by a democratic vote.

# http://ts4.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4710540556764831&pid=1.7&w=135&h=141&c=7&rs=1A Yule Rite

Yule celebrates the longest night of the year. Liturgically, it is also the celebration of the rebirth of the Sun God. After this night, the days get longer and give us the hope of spring. Yule features the semi-annual battle between the Oak and Holly Kings. After the Holly King is defeated in combat, the power over the season transfers to the Oak King, and the days get longer until the summer solstice when the two kings fight again. Unlike Samhain, Yule is a festive holiday and one for merrymaking. Aspects of Yule have worked their way into many Christian Christmas customs – such as decorating an evergreen tree, adorning one’s home with holly, and hanging mistletoe over door frames. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery!

Proper colors for Yule are white, green, and red. Like Ostara, Litha, and Mabon, Yule is considered a “lesser” Sabbat. While the other three lesser Sabbats omit the lengthier Gathering Call, Yule is a sufficiently festive holiday that it seems to merit the extra pomp and circumstance.

## Preparing Sacred Space

For an outdoor ritual, it is preferable to have a large central fire burning. This bonfire serves both practical and religious purposes. As for any Pagan ritual, it is preferable to hold the rite outdoors when logistically possible and the space should not be defiled. As December is cold and dark in many places in North America, the fire will provide both heat and light to the gathered Covenors. Ritually, offerings to the gods are burned in the fire prior to the reading of the Omen. An altar bedecked with seasonal trimmings should be in place, as well as cakes and ale. A ring of lit torches should denote the area in which the ritual shall take place (even though this is not technically a magic circle). Representations of the Air, Fire, Water, and Earth should be placed in the cardinal directions within the worship area. The Fire can be a ceramic bowl containing an array of lit candles, the Water can be represented by a bowl of water, and the Earth can be represented by a potted plant, and Air can be represented by a bowl of smoldering incense. These items should be placed on pedestals so as to be at least waist-high.

For an indoor ritual, the torches are not used (for safety reasons) but instead the entirety of the room shall be considered sacred space. Likewise, a large indoor bonfire is replaced with a large offering bowl (offerings to the gods shall be burned reverently outdoors at an appropriate time and place after the ritual). The configuration of the altar and the representation of the Air, Fire, Water, and Earth will remain unchanged.

During the Gathering Call, it is desirable that someone conduct rhythmic drumming. Participants should dress appropriately for cold weather if the ritual is to be performed outdoors.

The Celebrant will need a complete set of rune stones for the reading of the Omen. If the Celebrant is unfamiliar with runes, another divination method may be used, such as Tarot or tea leaves.

## Special Materials Needed

**Altar:** A black candle for the Ancestors call

**Oak and Holly Kings:** A crown of holly, a crown of flowers, and two wooden swords.

**Magical Working:** A divination tool (such as runes or tarot)

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

**Priestess:**

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

**Priest:**

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

**Priestess:**

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**: "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Covenors**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are called in sequence, starting in the east. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air /East

Spirit of Air, we call unto thee

Grant us your breath of diversity

The clouds of winter swirl in the sky

Black and grey, proud and high

Frosty gales pass over the lands

Chilling our faces and feet and hands

Be with us this evening as we honor way of old

Your power over the sky is a wonder to behold

Hail and welcome!

### Fire/South

Spirit of Fire, we call unto thee

Grant us your passion and creativity

We thank thee for warmth against winter’s might

And for granting us vision throughout dark of night

The flaming hearths give light and cheer

And banish the darkness, cold, and fear

Be with us this evening as we honor ways of old

Your presence is welcome against winter’s cold

Hail and welcome!

### Water/West

Spirit of Water, we call unto thee

Grant us keen wisdom and new clarity

White drifting snow will replenish your might

It harbors great beauty and peace in our sight

Icicles glitter in the setting sun

The longest night has now begun

Be with us this evening as we honor ways of old

Your frost and your ice are wonders to behold

Hail and welcome!

### Earth/North

Spirit of the Earth, we call unto thee

Grant us your grounding and stability

Evergreens stand proud in the cold winter night

Covered in snow, a breathtaking sight

And stark, leafless trees sleep quietly in peace

Waiting for the sunlight’s gradual increase

Be with us this evening as we honor ways of old

Your roots carry memories and power untold

Hail and welcome!

#### God

Lugh, god of light, we call unto thee

Grant our frozen fields new fertility

Though the ground is now hardened by winter’s deep chill

The sun shall return, to the fields we shall till

Grant us your blessings at the start of the year

May our fields be robust, may we plan without fear

Be with us this evening as we honor the ways of old

Bring life to our lands, as your legend foretold

Hail and welcome!

#### Goddess

Brigit, goddess of fire and song, we call unto thee

Grant us the your blessing abundantly

Though austerity reigns in the solstice night

Your gift of music can reverse our plight

Grant those who have little a reason to hope

Grant those without warmth the means which to cope

Be with us this evening as we honor ways of old

Bring gifts to the needy, a blessing threefold

Hail and welcome!

### Ancestors

Beloved Ancestors, we call unto thee

Grant us insight for what your blessings shall be

We honor your deeds from long in the past

We thank you for courage and blessings that last

We build our future upon what has gone before

Your deeds and your words are remembered in lore

Be with us this evening as we honor the ways of old

Your presence is felt from beyond the Veil’s fold

Hail and welcome!

## A Winter Storytelling: The Tale of the Oak and Holly Kings

For this section, there Celebrant will have chosen ahead of time three Covenors to fulfill the role of Oak King, Holly King, and Narrator. The required props are blunt swords or staves. The Holly King should be wearing a crown of holly while the Oak King should have a crown of flowers or acorns.

**Narrator:** Since the beginning of the world, the forces of summer and winter battle twice each year for supremacy over the land. The Oak King, the lord of spring and summer, presides over light and warmth. While the Oak King rules, the land is fertile, the days are long, and the winds are clement. The Holly King, lord of autumn and winter, has the power of darkness and cold. His winds are brisk and bracing. The fields are barren under his watch. Twice each year, at the winter and summer solstices, the Kings meet in battle to determine whose power shall prevail for the next six months.

**Holly King:** I am the lord of winter. See my works and rejoice! The night sky is dark and beautiful. The sun is not so bright as to scorch your skin or burn your eyes. The winter snow is white and beautiful. My evergreen trees stand tall and proud. There is no incessant buzzing of insects on my watch. Everything is quiet, pristine, and pure. All is as it should be. May winter last forever!

**Oak King:** No, my brother! It is time for your reign to end. Yes, the long nights are pretty, but now the sun must return. The blue sky of summer is just as beautiful as the starry sky of midwinter. The pines are beautiful, but so are the apple, maple, and oak trees. Snow is a wonder to behold, but so are flowers. Insects may buzz, but they also bring life to flowers and fruit trees. You reign must end. Spring must come!

**Holly King:** My brother, if you seek to rule the land, then you must take it from me by force. Let us be joined in battle.

**Oak King:** Yes, my brother. Spring must arrive, and so I will do as I must. Let us battle!

*The two kings begin mock battle. At first, they are evenly matched, but the Holly King briefly appears to be winning.*

**Narrator:** And so they fought, brother-against-brother, as they have done so since the land first formed.

**Holly King**: See! I hold the power of night, the power of winter. Yield to me, and I will spare you!

**Oak King:** Never! I must bring back the power of the sun. I will not yield!

*The Oak King falls to the ground but then rolls away from a sword blow and regains his stance. Now he appears to have renewed purpose and determination.*

**Narrator:** Will winter last forever? Or will the Oak King be victorious?

The Oak King’s combat prowess increases and the Holly King starts slowly retreating under the Oak King’s relentless blows.

**Holly King:** No! Winter must continue!

**Oak King:** There must be balance, my brother!

The Holly King is now obviously running out of energy. Under the barrage of blows, he drops to one knee, and then collapses to a heap on the floor. The Oak King stops swinging his weapon and holds his sword/staff at the ready position, aimed at the fallen Holly King.

**Holly King:** I yield. I am defeated. But I ask of you, my brother, that you spare me.

The Oak King extends a hand to the Holly King and raises him to his feet.

**Oak King:** Of course I shall spare you, my brother. You are need just as much as I am. The land must have balance between light and dark, warm and cold, waking and sleeping. Take your rest now. And we shall meet again at midsummer.

*The Holly King bows respectfully to the Oak King and exits.*

**Oak King:** Let the light return. Let the days grow longer. May life return to the land. So mote it be!

**Narrator:** And so the balance of power shifts from darkness to light. From now until midsummer, the days shall increase and the skies will brighten. All is as it should be. Blessed be.

## The Offering of Gifts

Each Covenor may offer a gift to the gods. It can be a material item, such as flowers, herbs, or other appropriate mementos. The offering can also be a brief poem or a short dance. It can be the playing of a tune on a musical instrument. Material items are offered reverently to the bonfire (in an outdoor ritual) or placed in the offering bowl (for an indoor ritual).

## Magical Working

**Celebrant:** “As it was before, it shall be now: A gift for a gift. We beseech the gods to grant us an omen for the year to come.”

The Celebrant draws three rune stones and then interprets the meaning. Alternatively, the Celebrant may use his/her preferred divination method.

## Cakes and Ale

The Ale can be spiced wine or hot cider. The cakes can be gingerbread or gingerbread cookies. For sanitary reasons, a Covenor may choose to genuflect upon the chalice instead of drinking directly. Likewise, those with food allergies may genuflect upon the cakes instead of eating them.

**Priestess:** “Drink from the cup of power. Receive wisdom from the gods!”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

**Priest:** “Eat of the bread of life. Receive blessing from the gods!”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The elemental spirits and deities are released in the opposite order in which they were called. At each dismissal, the relevant candle is snuffed.

### Ancestors

Spirit of the Ancestors, we thank you this night

You gave us the courage to do what is right

Return to the realms that lie past the Veil

You’ve taught us that wisdom and courage prevail

Thank you for the guidance and knowledge from the past

Your form the foundation for our culture to last

Return to your realms in peace, you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

#### Goddess

Blessed Bridget, we thank you this night

We have hope for abundance, for austerity you smite

Go with our thanks as you return through the Veil

The darkness is passing, and new light will prevail

At the end of the winter, the snow shall abate

And in the hope of new bounties, we all celebrate

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

#### God

Blessed Lugh, we thank you this night

We have hope for the planting at the return of the light

Go with our thanks as you return through the Veil

Midwinter is passing, the light shall prevail

At the end of the winter, the ice will then melt

The fields will grow green, your blessings will be felt

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Earth/North

Spirit of Earth, we thank you this night

You gave us your grounding, you gave us your might

Return to the realms of spirit and wood

Go with our thanks and our wishes for good

And thanks for the evergreens that stand proudly at night

Defying the darkness and winter’s dread might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Water/West

Spirit of Water, we thank you this night

You gave us your vision, you gave us insight

Return to the realms of spirit and ocean

Go with our thanks, go with our devotion

And thanks for the snow that brightens the night

Crystalline beauty, a wonderful sight.

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Fire/South

Spirit of Fire, we thank you this night

You gave us your warmth, you gave us your light

Return to the realm of spirit and flame

Go with our thanks, go with our acclaim

And thanks for the hearth, so brave and bold

It banishes darkness, it repels winter’s cold

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Air/East

Spirit of Air, we thank you this night

You gave us inspiration in the darkest night

Return to your realms of spirit and sky

Go with good wished and a fond goodbye

Thank you for the winds that blow through the night

Whistling through trees with freezing might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

**Priest:** “May all spirits attracted to our light return to your own domains, harming none.”

**Priestess**: “The circle is open but remains unbroken.”

**Covenors and Celebrants:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry met again!”

# http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.5033985899299041&pid=1.7&w=148&h=148&c=7&rs=1An Imbolc Rite

Historically, Imbolc is the time of year when lambs would be born. It is earliest time of the year when the days first start being visibly longer. There is light without heat. Spring has not yet arrived, but there is hope for spring. This time of season is a good time for planning out goals for the coming year. Imbolc is the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It is a cross-quarter holiday that is considered a “major” Sabbat (along with Beltane, Lugnassadh, and Samhain).

## Special Materials Needed

* Divination Tool: Can be runes, tarot, or any other preferred divination tool.

## Setting up Ritual Space

All but the most hardcore Pagans will likely hold this ritual indoors. At this time of year, not only does the sun set early, the nights are both cold and windy. Should an outdoor ritual be preferred, the Celebrant should consider building a bonfire for providing both light and heat. Torches may be placed at the cardinal directions.

For an indoor ritual, large pillar candles can be placed at the cardinal directions. The ritual space should be swept with a broom made of natural materials and purified with incense. The altar colors should include red, white, and black. Several acorns should also be placed on the altar.

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant shall walk the periphery of the ritual space three times, clockwise starting from the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant shall sprinkle salt water along the edge of the sacred space. On the second pass, the Celebrant shall trace the periphery with a rod of incense. With the final pass, the Celebrant shall use an Athame.

Once the circle is walked three times, the Celebrants issue a Gathering call:

### First Iteration

**Priestess:**

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

**Priest:**

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

**Priestess:**

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

The elemental spirits and deities are called starting in the east, in a clockwise fashion. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

The wind howls mournfully throughout the night

Given force by winter’s might

An icy gale chills hands and face

And blows dead leaves from place to place

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

The heath fires glow with resplendent light

And gives us heat throughout the night

Candles, torches, and braziers bright

Repel the darkness and grant us sight

Guardian of the South we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Flurries spiral down from a slate-gray sky

Pure white snow piles up waist-high

The lakes are frozen, as are the streams

In morning light, the clear ice gleams

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

The mountain peaks gleam white with snow

The valleys are barren here below

The life force sleeps beneath the ground

The Wheel of the Year shall soon turn ‘round

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Light

In love and thanks we invite you here

The diminished sun lights the eastern sky

Pink and crimson greets the eye

Though weak against cold winter’s might

The sun shall soon push back the night.

God of the Sun we give thanks to thee

Lord of Light, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Maiden Goddess, Giver of Life

In love and thanks we invite you here

Your youth and vigor have been restored

Winter’s wrath will be abjured

The path to spring is underway

Evidenced by the strengthening day

Maiden Goddess we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

## Guided Meditation

*Covenors may be seated (if this is an indoor ritual) or remain standing if outdoors. Celebrant reads the meditation.*

Close your eyes and make yourself comfortable. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… We are traveling away from this place. We are traveling somewhere else – to a place of perfect winter.

You open your eyes in this other realm. It is winter and the night sky is full of stars. The full moon shines with a cold, white light. You warm yourself near a large, crackling bonfire. It sends smoke and sparks into the air. You inhale the reassuring scent of the burning logs. The radiant orange glow from the fire banishes the chill from your hands, face, and feet.

The energy from the brave fire reminds you of the sun’s increasing power. Although it is night, and the air is chilly, you can sense the beginnings of seasonal change. You feel the spirit of life beneath your feet. It is vast and quiet. It is not yet awakened, but its slumber is nearly over.

Look now to the moon. It’s pale, steady light contrasts with the dynamic and colorful bonfire. There is a steadiness and steadfastness to the moon’s glow. It offsets the overabundant heat of the bonfire. In its cool glow, you find balance. Draw its cleansing, calming light into your body and spirit. The light brings clarity of thought and enhances your senses. Everything is brought into focus.

Look out into the forest. You see the individual flakes of snow that fall from the branched of evergreen trees. They drift silently to the ground in gentle spirals. Shadows dance on the pure white snow. Somewhere an owl hoots in the distance. It is a solitary sound. A cold, dry wind blows flurries across your boots and the sensation of cold air on your face is exhilarating. It is a good time to be alive.

In this place of solitude, you feel the delicate balance of forces between the waning winter and the nascent spring. It is a time to contemplate the future, to plan what shall be planted, to prepare for the goals for this year.

Now is the time to contemplate the future for the coming year. Look into fire and see its crackling flames. See the flowing, ever-changing patterns. What secrets does it reveal to you?

*Silence for a time.*

We are ready to leave this place. Remember the tranquility and solitude of the winter forest. Remember how good the cold wind felt and keep this memory for when the days ahead turn hot. The wheel of the year turns ever forward. Soon winter will pass and spring will come.

Close your eyes to this place. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

Celebrant shall complete a divination. For a small gathering the Celebrant can perform a divination for each Covenor. For a larger gathering, the Celebrant can conduct a general divination for the circle/coven.

## Cakes and Ale

*If there are two Celebrants (Priest and Priestess), the Priest shall distribute the bread/cakes and the Priestess shall distribute the cup of wine/ale/juice.*

Priest or Priestess: “The celebration of bread and wine is not unique to Wicca. Many religions in many cultures have venerated the bounty of grain and vine. Bread and wine sustain the body and bring us together as a community. In the Wiccan tradition, these gifts also bring us in communion with the God and Goddess. And so we bring you these gifts so that we may be united with one another in spirit.”

**Priestess**: “With the cup, we are one.”

**Covenor**: “Blessed be”

**Priest**: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

Elemental spirits and deities are released in the opposite order in which they were called. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Goddess

Maiden Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

In winter’s gloom, you promise spring

We affirm the wondrous blessings you bring

Though field and forest slumbers still

They shall awaken by your will

Maiden Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Light

We give you thanks for coming here

Your power increases against the night

Warming rays, increasing might

Though still unable to melt the snow

Each day we feel your power grow

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Light, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the mountains and peaks so white

They sparkle in sun and glimmer so bright

Return to the fields, so stark and cold

As we await spring to take hold

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Return to the frozen lakes and streams

Beneath, the life force slumbers and dreams

Return to the wondrous drifts of snow

They shimmer in sunlight with a sparkling glow

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the torches and candles bright

We give you thanks for the gift of sight

Return to the flaming hearth so brave

Against the cold, our lives you save

Guardian of the South we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here.

Return to the skies of churning grey

As we await the warming day

Return to the gales, so brisk and cold

Winter’s grip will soon lose hold

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the circle in a widdershins (counter-clockwise) direction, starting in the east.

**Priest**: “May all spirits attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

**Priestess**: “The circle, though open, remains unbroken.”

**Celebrants and Covenors**: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4817326293713177&pid=1.7&w=135&h=147&c=7&rs=1An Ostara Rite

At this time of year, spring has arrived and winter is in abeyance. The night and day are of equal length and flowers have begun to bloom. Some trees are growing leaves while others are still bare. It is a transitional time. The nights are still cold, but the sun is rapidly gaining power. Life is returning to the land. Ostara is a holiday that celebrates planting. Whereas ideas for the coming year were formulated at Imbolc, the plans for the year are set in motion at Ostara. The agricultural metaphor is that the layout for the fields is planned at Imbolc and the seeds are actually planted at Ostara. Like Beltane (the next Sabbat), Ostara is a fertility holiday (hence the use of pastel-colored eggs as a symbol for the season). Ostara is considered a “lesser” Sabbat, along with Litha (summer solstice), Mabon (autumnal equinox), and Yule (winter solstice).

## Setting up Sacred Space

For an outdoor ritual, four torches should be placed in the cardinal directions. For added significance, appropriately colored ribbons can be tied to the torches. A green altar cloth would be appropriate for this Sabbat. For an indoor ritual, the worship space should be swept with a broom made of natural fibers.

## Special Materials Needed

* A packet of seeds (can be for flowers or vegetables).
* A small potted plant (can actually be a tree seedling or a shrub).

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. In the first pass, the Celebrant uses a rod of incense. In the second pass, the Celebrant uses a small bowl of water and sea salt. With the third pass, the Celebrant employs his/her Athame.

While walking the third circle, the Celebrant says: “I cast the circle with power and love / Earth below to Sky above / With shining Sun and glittering Sea / God and Goddess blessed be.”

**Celebrant**: “The Circle is cast!”

**Covenors**: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to elemental spirits and deities start in the east and progress in a clockwise fashion. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We invite to join us here

The icy gusts have had their say

And warming breezes now hold sway

The winter’s wrath is nearly done

The skies welcome the return of the sun

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

*Hail and Welcome!*

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We invite you to join us here

We greet the sun’s returning power

Night and Day have equal hour

You defended us from winter’s touch

The hearth and candles gave us much

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

*Hail and Welcome!*

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We invite you to join us here

Ice to water, snow to rain

The ground shall drink of life again

Rivers thaw and streams run cool

Icy lake becomes crystal pool

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

*Hail and Welcome!*

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North

Spirit of Earth

We invite you to join us here

The thaw has come to free the ground

The Wheel of Life has come around

Leaf and branch, trees and ferns

The sleepers awaken, the life returns

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

*Hail and Welcome!*

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Grain

We invite you to join us here again

Lord of life, above and below

Your spirit makes the green things grow

Wheat and corn and apple tree

The seeds of life shall now break free

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Grain, Blessed Be

*Hail and Welcome!*

### Goddess

Maiden Goddess, Giver of Life

We invite you to this sacred rite

Beloved Maiden, we sing thee praise

With drum and bell and voice we raise

You give us life to seek and learn

Your love and hope is what we yearn

Maiden Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed Be

*Hail and Welcome!*

## Meditation

*The meditation will focus on communing with the image awakening trees.*

“Close your eyes and relax your body. Put your arms and legs in a comfortable position but keep your spine straight. In your mind’s eye, think of a safe place, a clearing in the forest. The sun shines down in this clearing and the sky is dotted with white and grey clouds. The sun shines brightly, and the sky is so blue, so pure, so perfect. You can see more clearly than you ever have before. The sunlight feels warm but not hot. It drives the wind. You feel the cool air against your skin. The air is clean and smells faintly of blossoms. The trees have new leaves, bright green, and turned upward towards the sun.

“Think of the sun, draw energy from it as you stand in the clearing. Feel how the sun feeds the waist-high grasses and how the trees draw life into themselves. They draw from the sun, and the trees are a conduit between sky and earth. They give so much. In this place, you can sense their life. A year to us is as a day to them. The seasons change, and with it their waking and sleeping. Now is the time of their awakening. Feel the gathering life, the intensifying energy, the unheard humming and rumbling that is the life force of all that is around you.

“Remember the sacredness of the life of trees. Remember how it feels to sense the presence of life. You close your eyes in that other place. Relax you mind. Feel yourself coming back to your physical body. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Open your eyes now, and remember.”

## Magical Working

*This ritual shall require a small potted tree. The ritual also requires a packet of seeds (can be of assorted wild flowers.) The seeds are kept in a small dish next to the tree.*

**Celebrant:** “Ostara celebrates the return of life to the land. It is a time of planting -- not just of physical crops, but of ideas and concepts. What about your life would you like to experience new growth and new vitality? Take a seed, empower it with your will, and plant it in the soil. As it flourishes, and the tree flourishes, what you will for yourself shall come to fruition in the coming months.”

The Covenors each take a seed and empower them with will and intent. If desired, each Covenor may briefly state their intent for the year. For example, a Covenor might say “I plant the seed of better self-discipline” or “I plant the seed of improved health.”

Once all the seeds have been planted in the soil of the potted plant, the Celebrant seals the spell.

**Celebrant:** “Let that with is positive, helpful, and loving be what increases during the light half of the year. So mote it be.”

**Covenors**: “So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

*If there are two Celebrants (Priest and Priestess), the Priest shall distribute the bread/cakes and the Priestess shall distribute the cup of wine/ale/juice.*

Priest or Priestess: “The celebration of bread and wine is not unique to Wicca. Many religions in many cultures have venerated the bounty of grain and vine. Bread and wine sustain the body and bring us together as a community. In the Wiccan tradition, these gifts also bring us in communion with the God and Goddess. And so we bring you these gifts so that we may be united with one another in spirit.”

**Priestess**: “With the cup, we are one.”

**Covenor**: “Blessed be”

**Priest**: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The elemental spirits and deities are released in the opposite order in which they were called.

### Goddess

Maiden Goddess, Giver of Life

Thank you for your presence here tonight

Beloved Maiden we love you so

You grant us life, you help us grow

You enfold us in your love’s embrace

So in our lives, you have a place

Maiden Goddess, I give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed Be

*Hail and Farewell!*

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Grain

Thank you for coming to us again

You grow in power with the sun’s increase

The energy for life you do release

Thank you for the warming rays

For growing life, for growing days

God of the Sun, I give thanks to thee

Lord of the Grain, Blessed Be

*Hail and Farewell!*

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

Thank you for joining us tonight

Tree and vine, fern and flower

All shall rise in growing power

The crops shall grow, the corn and wheat

Grown with care so we may eat

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

*Hail and Farewell!*

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

Thank you for joining us tonight

Lake and stream, creek and river

The gift of life you do deliver

Thank you for the mist and rain

That lets the Green Ones grow again

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

*Hail and Farewell!*

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

Thank you for joining us tonight

The weakened sun has grown in power

Winter’s chill has had its hour

The days are warmer and grow in length

As the sun so grows in strength

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

*Hail and Farewell!*

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

Thank you for joining us tonight

The winds now blow and stir the fields

A warming breath of life it yields

And birds return on clement breeze

To reclaim their homes upon the trees

Guardian of the East, I give thanks to thee,

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

*Hail and Farewell!*

### Opening the Circle

The Celebrant releases the circle by tracing the circle in a counterclockwise direction, starting from the east.

**Priest**: “May all spirits attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

**Priestess**: “The circle, though open, remains unbroken. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Blessed Be!”

# http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4845256481244826&pid=1.7&w=116&h=151&c=7&rs=1A Beltane Rite

Beltane is a cross-quarter Sabbat that takes place inbetween the spring equinox and summer solstice. Like Ostara, Beltane is a fertility holiday (relating to animals this time, as opposed to plants). Beltane celebrates the full power of spring and the ascending power of the sun. Liturgically, Beltane celebrates the sexual union between the God and Goddess (unlike some religions, Wiccan deities are fully reflective of all aspects of nature). Beltane is a “major” Sabbat. Thematically, it occupies the opposite position from Samhain on the Wheel of the Year. While Samhain commemorates the death, Beltane celebrates life. Both are important aspects in the never-ending cycle of the ecology and of the universe.

## Preparing the Sacred Space

For an outdoor ritual, there should be four lit torches at each of the cardinal directions. Blooming flowers of the element-appropriate color shall be fastened to the torch shafts. The Celebrant shall purify the ritual space with sage smoke. For an indoor ritual, the four lit torches can be substituted with pillar candles of the appropriate color.

Additionally, for outdoor rituals, the Celebrants should set up a Maypole for the traditional Beltane Maypole dance. This dance celebrates the union of the masculine and feminine forces and the life-creating power that union generates.

## Special Materials Needed

* For an outdoor ritual: Maypole with colorful ribbons.
* For an indoor ritual: Deck of animal oracle cards.

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant shall walk the periphery of the ritual space three times, clockwise starting from the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant shall sprinkle salt water along the edge of the sacred space. On the second pass, the Celebrant shall trace the periphery with a rod of incense. With the final pass, the Celebrant shall use an Athame. Once the circle is walked three times, the Celebrants issue a Gathering call:

### First Iteration

1. **Priestess:**
2. "Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay
3. Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way
4. Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers
5. Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."
6. **Covenors:**
7. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

1. **Priest:**
2. "We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song
3. We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong
4. We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life
5. We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."
6. **Covenors:**
7. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

1. **Priestess:**
2. We remember the fire, the well, and the tree
3. We remember the call that all must be free
4. We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,
5. We remember the charge to love all and harm none
7. **Covenors**:
8. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"
9. **Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"
10. **Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

Calls to elemental spirits and deities begin in the east and proceed in a clockwise fashion.The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air / East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here.

The sky is bright, the clouds are bold

Warmth and life now take hold

Blossoms alight on clement breeze

New leaves grow from awakened trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire / South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

The warmth of spring now holds sway

Trees and flowers bloom more each day

With winter banished for another turn

Let the Beltane fires burn!

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Spring rains come to bless the land

The time of planting is now at hand

With morning dew and mists so pale

You give life to the greening vale

Guardian of the West we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

The trees awake with leaf and flower

They draw from the ground's returning power

Creatures of scales and fur and feather

Make new life when joined together

Guardian of the North we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Fields

In love and thanks we invite you here

Your spark of life is felt in planted seeds

In trees and crops, flowers and weeds

With the Mother Goddess, you create life anew

Within the blossoms that glisten with dew

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Fields, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, giver of life

In love and thanks we invite you here

Fur and feather, hoof and horn

By your power all life is born

With the God, your consort and friend

Life is granted, a cycle without end

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

## Meditation

*This meditation will focus on connecting with one’s animal guide, animal spirit, or companion spirit.*

Make yourself comfortable. Have your feet in contact with the ground and make your spine straight. Close your eyes and take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… and breathe out….

We are leaving this place, this building, this structure, and our awareness is travelling to another realm. You open your eyes and find yourself standing in an ancient and dense forest. The redwood trees are hundreds of feet tall and dozens of feet wide. The rich, green canopy high above obscures most of the sky, leaving the forest floor shrouded in a cool, quiet, verdant gloom. Hidden in the vaulting, leafy branches, birds and insects chirp and buzz. You cannot see them, but you hear them clearly and you feel their presence. A faint breeze gently blows across the ferns and underbrush of the forest. It is a gentle caress upon your skin.

There is a narrow, rarely-tread path that winds through the woodland. You suspect that few people have been here, nor has it been recently. This suits you, as there sacredness to your solitude. You feel part of this place. You sense the life energy of the vines and ferns, bushes and trees, insects and birds. It is intertwined and fully realized. You are part of something so much greater than yourself, and yet your presence also adds to the distinctiveness of the symphony of life and spirit.

In this place, you also sense myriad animal forms, just beyond the range of your vision. Perhaps there are deer here, or perhaps a wolf? Maybe there is a bear or a coyote? Or is it a raven? Perhaps you sense a butterfly?

You stand there for several quiet moments and you make no sudden moves. Your breathing is easy and regular. Perhaps an animal sees you and comes out of hiding to investigate. What comes to you? What does it look like? Does it bear a spiritual message for you or perhaps it is just curious to meet you. What do you see?

[Silence for a time]

Your visitor retreats back into the forest and is hidden from view once more. But you will remember the encounter and you will be able to call upon the image of your animal spirit to help you in magical practices and in times of trial.

We are leaving this place now. We are leaving the ancient redwood forest with the high canopy and shadowy gloom. We are returning to this building and to our bodies. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… and breathe out….

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

**Indoor service:** Celebrant will perform a divination using an Animal Oracle deck (or similar divination tool)

**Outdoor service:** May pole dance with festive drumming

## Cakes and Ale

*If there are two Celebrants (Priest and Priestess), the Priest shall distribute the bread/cakes and the Priestess shall distribute the cup of wine/ale/juice.*

**Priest or Priestess:** “The celebration of bread and wine is not unique to Wicca. Many religions in many cultures have venerated the bounty of grain and vine. Bread and wine sustain the body and bring us together as a community. In the Wiccan tradition, these gifts also bring us in communion with the God and Goddess. And so we bring you these gifts so that we may be united with one another in spirit.”

**Priestess**: “With the cup, we are one.”

**Covenor**: “Blessed be”

**Priest**: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The elemental spirits and deities are released in the opposite order in which they were invited. The appropriate candle is extinguished after each dismissal.

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of life

We give you thanks for coming here

The seeds are planted, with hope and love

Fertile ground fed from rain above

Egg and womb your spirit fills

Granting life as is your will

Mother Goddess we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Fields

We give you thanks for coming here

Cattle and lamb, fish and bird

Their life increases at your word

Horn and hoof, fur and feather

Life begins when brought together

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Fields, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the mountains, return to the plains

Meadows bloom in warm spring rains

Planted seeds poke through rich, dark soil

Sown with love and care and toil

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the rivers, return to the springs

The rain descends, and life begins

Burbling brook and rushing river

The flow of life they now deliver

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the bonfire, return to the flame

The spark of life we shall acclaim

We burn the sage and incense this night

In thanks for the Beltane fires so bright

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds of grey and white

And to the sky so blue and bright

We thank you for the gentle breeze

That whispers past awakened trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

*The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the circle in a widdershins direction, using a wand or Athame to release the sacred space.*

**Priest**: “May all spirits attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

**Priestess**: “The circle, though open, remains unbroken.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

**A Litha Rite**

Litha celebrates the summer solstice, when the power of the sun is at its maximum and the power of the Earth to sustain life is at its peak. From this day until Yule, the days will become shorter, whereupon the cycle of light and dark begins again. Litha is a time to celebrate light, life, warmth, fertility, and abundant energy.  . Litha also features the semi-annual battle between the Oak and Holly Kings (a metaphor for the transition from day’s increase to the gradual return of the longer nights). Litha, like Mabon and Yule, are considered “lesser” Sabbats.

## Preparing Sacred Space

For an outdoor ritual, the Celebrant shall plant four bamboo poles into the ground, oriented at the appropriate compass direction to form a circle nine to eighteen feet in radius (this can be expanded for larger gatherings). The poles should be adorned with streamers or pennants of appropriate color (yellow/east, red/south, blue/west, and green/north). The Celebrant shall cleanse the area with sage smoke and sweep away miscellaneous debris and litter as needed.  A small rod of incense should be lit near each of the four poles. The altar cloth should have patterns of red, orange, and yellow. Likewise, the altar cloth could display a sun symbol.

For an indoor ritual, the sacred space can be delineated by four large pillar candles of appropriate color. The floor/carpet should be clean. The Celebrant may ritually sweep the floor with a broom.

Covenors are encouraged to wear bright colors. Likewise, Covenors should do a ritual bath prior to attending the service.  Additionally, Covenors that are assigned quarter calls should be given a few minutes to read/rehearse the relevant text.

## Special Materials Needed

* Magical Working: Enough citrines for each participant to receive one. These are yellow stones that cost about a dollar each.
* Oak and Holly King Storytelling: Two wooden swords (or similar non-edged weapons, as actual bloodshed is not the goal); crown of holly (for the Holly King); crown of flowers (for the Oak King).

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response from the Covenors after each element is called is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, we call to you this night

Charge up this altar with power and might

Blow negative power away from this place

Let us instead have peace and grace

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, we call you this night

Stoke up this altar with power and might

Burn away all negative power

Inspire our hearts for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we call you this night

Flow through this altar with power and might

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we call you this night

Fortify this altar with power and might

Ground out from this place all negative power

Expand our wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is charged

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

By the sun’s bright glow and the moon’s white light

May this altar serve what’s good and right

With spoken word and directed will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

### Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant uses a want of incense. On the second pass, the Celebrant sprinkles a mixture of salt and water. On the third pass, the Celebrant uses an Athame. One Celebrant could walk all three passes. Alternatively, the Handmaiden/Waylander could walk the first pass, the Priest could walk the second pass, and the Priestess could walk the third pass.

*First iteration*

I call to Air, I call to Fire

The Circle forms by my desire

I call to Water, I call to Earth

May the circle hold love and mirth

*Second iteration*

With intent and will, the ward is cast

Against all outsiders may it last

With incense, salt, and ritual knife

The circle holds back intruders’ strife

*Third iteration*

I cast the circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

The Celebrant stomps his/her heel and declares “The Circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

Elemental spirits and deities are called in sequence, starting with the east. The calls proceed in a clockwise fashion. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Hot winds blast across the bright blue sky

Blowing leaves and blossoms far and high

Clouds race by, so tall and white

Billowing, majestically in our sight

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Brazier, candle, and campfire flame

Its cheerful brightness we acclaim

We lift our torches to the limitless sky

Into the night the sparks shall fly

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Summer storms loom proud and high

And bring relief to a land parched dry

From sky to ground, to streams and sea

The flow of life is carried by thee.

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

The Earth rejoices with trees and flowers

The fullness of life it so empowers

Corn and grains grow from the lands

Carefully tended by loving hands

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Father Sky, God of the Sun

In love and thanks we invite you here

The sun has reached its greatest power

Streaming light on tree and flower

Warmth and heat, light and love

Your radiance shines down from above

Father Sky, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Earth, Giver of Life

In love and thanks we invite you here

We give you thanks for life and love

From seas below to peaks above

In tree and flower, corn and grains

Your blessings flow, you power reigns

Mother Earth, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

## Guided Meditation

Place your body in a comfortable position, with your feet touching the floor and your spine straight. Close your eyes. Take three deep, slow breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place. Your awareness travels somewhere else entirely. You arrive in the middle of a desert plain. The dunes are dozens of feet high and sand drifts in the wind making a soft, rasping sound. Thin, translucent clouds spread out across the sky. They are high and thin, and they do not obscure the sun’s vast power. The sun is at its maximum potency. It shines down with a brilliant light and intense heat. The air shimmers in the dry, hot desert. Brittle shrubs and ancient cacti stand against the ceaseless wind and amber sand.

You had expected to be uncomfortable, but you are not. In this place, you are fully acclimated to the ecology. The sun does not burn you; it empowers you. The heat does not wither you; it enlivens you. Draw energy from the sun and wind, for both are potent forces – limitless and eternal. Your senses expand and you realize that the desert is not sterile at all, merely different. Here, in this land of sun and wind and heat, all manner of life abides – insects, reptiles, rodents, birds, grasses, cacti. They thrive here – just as you are thriving here.

You walk across the hot sandy plain towards a patch of green in the distance. Birds of prey circle overhead, waiting for a hapless rodent to let down its guard. The sand blows in your face and you shield your eyes. The wave of abrasive grit passes by and you find yourself at the edge of a clear pool. All around you, the desert stretches to the horizon in all directions, but here there is water and trees and an intensity of life not found on the dunes. The sunlight shimmers on the water’s surface. The lake is deep and transparent to the bottom. Colorful fish swim about. Birds peck about the edge of the lake and drink of the clear water. You follow suit. The life-giving water is pure and energizing. It cools your face and rinses away the dirt and grit.

Here, in this place, is the intersection of powerful forces – sun and wind, water and earth, heat and coolness. You feel the forces within your own body come into balance as well.

You take a final drink of water before leaving this place. You walk away from the oasis, with satisfaction and gratitude. The wind kicks up again and you close your eyes against the sand. You feel yourself leaving this place of sun and wind and sand. Remember the power of this place. Use it for directing your will.

Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## The Oak and Holly Kings

For this storytelling, there will be parts for the Narrator, the Oak King, and the Holly King. The two Kings can wield wooden staves or prop swords. The Holly King is dressed in green and black and wears a crown of holly and bells (something reflective of Yule/Winter) and the Oak King wears a crown of flowers and oak leaves and dressed in the colors of spring.

**Narrator:** Since the beginning of the world, the forces of summer and winter battle twice each year for supremacy over the land. The Oak King, the lord of spring and summer, presides over light and warmth. While the Oak King rules, the land is fertile, the days are long, and the winds are clement. The Holly King, lord of autumn and winter, has the power of darkness and cold. His winds are brisk and bracing. The fields are harvested under his watch and then stand barren. Twice each year, at the winter and summer solstices, the Kings meet in battle to determine whose power shall prevail for the next six months.

**Oak King:** I am the lord of summer. See my works and rejoice! The night is all but banished, and the sun’s power is supreme. The air is hot; the winds whip across the lands and blow dust devils in the midday heat. Buzzards and falcons alike fly on warm thermals, empowered by the sun. The flowers bloom, the insects buzz, and the trees are lush and green. All is as it should be. May summer last forever!

**Holly King:** No, my brother! It is time for your reign to end. Yes, the long days are wonderful, but night must return. The dark starry sky of winter is just as beautiful as the midday sun in summer. The green grasses and flowers are a wonder to behold, but so are pristine white snow drifts, glittering icicles, and ice-covered lakes. And while your crops are tall and proud, and your orchards are heavy with fruit, the time of the harvests will soon begin. Your reign must end. Autumn must come!

**Oak King:** My brother, if you seek to rule the land, then you must take it from me by force. Let us be joined in battle!

**Holly King:** Yes, my brother. Autumn must arrive, and so I will do as I must. Let us battle!

*The two kings begin mock battle. At first, they are evenly matched, but the Oak King briefly appears to be winning.*

**Narrator:** And so they fought, brother-against-brother, as they have done so since the land first formed.

**Oak King**: See! I hold the power of the sun, the power of summer. Yield to me, and I will spare you!

**Holly King:** Never! I must bring back the power of the night, the power of winter. I will not yield!

*The Holly King falls to the ground but then rolls away from a sword blow and regains his stance. Now he appears to have renewed purpose and determination.*

**Narrator:** Will summer last forever? Or will the Holly King be victorious?

The Holly King’s combat prowess increases and the Oak King starts slowly retreating under the Holly King’s relentless blows.

**Oak King:** No! Summer must continue!

**Holly King:** There must be balance, my brother!

The Oak King is now obviously running out of energy. Under the barrage of blows, he drops to one knee, and then collapses to a heap on the floor. The Holly King stops swinging his weapon and holds his sword/staff at the ready position, aimed at the fallen Oak King.

**Oak King:** I yield. I am defeated. But I ask of you, my brother, that you spare me.

The Holly King extends a hand to the Oak King and raises him to his feet.

**Holly King:** Of course I shall spare you, my brother. You are need just as much as I am. The land must have balance between light and dark, warm and cold, waking and sleeping. Take your rest now. And we shall meet again at midwinter.

*The Oak King bows respectfully to the Holly King and exits.*

**Holly King:** Let the night return. Let the days grow shorter. May life force return beneath the earth and rest. So mote it be!

**Narrator:** And so the balance of power shifts from light to darkness. From now until midwinter, the days shall shorten and the sun shall diminish in power. All is as it should be. Blessed be.

## Magical Working

The magical working involves empowering citrines with positive energy. The Celebrant(s) and Covenors each receive a citrine stone. Each person spends a brief period visualizes his/her stone being charged with positive energy or a positive blessing. After an appropriate period, the stone is passed clockwise to the next Covenor. This progression repeats until each Covenor has had a chance to empower every stone and that the each Covenor has his/her original stone returned.

The Celebrant(s) and Covenors join hands in a circle around the altar (or bonfire). The Priest (or Priestess) declares:

“In the waning rays of the solstice light

We align our will, our power, and might

And to the gods, we also ask

Your seal upon this ritual task

Please bless these stones, and bless them true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale.

Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The elemental spirits and deities are released in the opposite order in which they were called. The relevant altar candle shall be extinguished following each dismissal.

### Goddess

Mother Earth, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

In our minds and hearts you dwell

In sea and river, forest and dell

Rocks and trees, and mountain range

Your spirit brings growth and life and change

Mother Earth, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### God

Father Sky, God of the Sun

We give you thanks for coming here

We feel your power shining bright

The radiant fullness of summer’s might

And now year has turned midway

We soon shall see a shorter day

Father Sky, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the mountains, return to the plains

To forest green and amber grains

Gourd and root, tuber and tree

The crops are growing bountifully

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the lakes, return to the streams

Where the water is clear and life still teems

Return to the seas and oceans deep

Where deeper secrets are yours to keep

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the Litha fires so bright

That gives us vision throughout the night

And to the candles and torches bold

A cheerful light for us to behold

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds, return to the sky

Where insects buzz and eagles fly

We thank you for the cooling breeze

That blows across the plains and trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant discharges the circle using his/her wand or Athame, starting from the east, and walking counter-clockwise (widdershins) around the perimeter of the circle.

**Priest:**

“May the gods bless you this solstice night

May you be inspired to do works that are good and right

May you be the ones others seek in darkness and strife

May you uphold the banner of light and life”

**Handmaiden/Waylander**:

“May all spirits attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

**Priestess**:

“The Circle, now open, remains unbroken. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

**Celebrants and Covenors**: “Huzzah!”

# http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4683237427053408&pid=1.7&w=161&h=155&c=7&rs=1A Lughnassadh Rite

Lughnassadh is the first of the three harvest holidays (corn and grain) in the Wiccan liturgical calendar (followed by Mabon and Samhain). At this time of year, the days are still hot and the sun is still bright. And dusk comes earlier now and the nights are cooler. Lughnassadh celebrates the harvest of grains. This holiday also reveres the sacrificial nature of the God. In the Wiccan tradition, act of harvesting crops necessarily means that the corn and grains are cut down and slain for our consumption. The self-sacrifice of the God for the life of the people is a metaphor for this necessary task.

## Preparing the Sacred Space

It is preferable that the ritual take place outdoors in a natural setting. The Celebrant shall place torches at the periphery of the sacred space at the proper cardinal directions. The space shall be purified with sage smoke and ritually swept with a broom. For a summer rite, decorate the altar with corn and grain. The beverage can be mead or mint tea, while the cakes can be corn muffins.

## Special Materials Needed

* Mortar and pestle; sandalwood, myrrh, frankincense, cedar oil; small pouches (one for each participant).

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

**Priestess:**

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

**Priest:**

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

**Priestess:**

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to elemental spirits and deities start in the east and progress in a clockwise fashion. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

By day, the wind blows through fields of grain

The time of harvest has come again

With dusk comes the cooling breeze

Blowing through pear and apple trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Braziers and torches, burning free

Give us light so we may see

The bonfire roars with amber light

The scent of wood gives us delight.

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks, we invite you here.

Thunderstorms gather, proud and dark

Lightning scatters with violent spark

The blessing of pure water from the sky

Feeds trees and crops so they do not die

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here.

The fertile ground aids the crops and trees

Blossoms, flowers, vines, and leaves

The harvest time is soon at hand

And so we thank the prosperous land

Guardian of the North we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

God of the Harvest, Lord of the Grain

In love and thanks, we invite you again.

Rye and barley, corn and wheat

Your life has grown the food we eat

Thank you for the light of the sun

Shining warmth on everyone

God of the harvest, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the grain, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

With love and thanks we invite you here

The fields are blessed with love and power

Waving grains, fruit and flower

As are our lives blessed by your love

As below, so above.

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

## A Sun and Harvest Meditation

Close your eyes and arrange your body in a comfortable position. Have your feet in contact with the ground and have your spine straight. Take three slow breaths. Breath in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place. In your mind’s eye, you stand in a field of wheat that is ready for harvest. The sky is a perfect blue, so bright and clear, so limitless. The air buzzes with myriad insects. In the distance, you hear the calls of livestock and the sounds of harvesting machines that will soon gather the grains. Crows fly overhead and squawk. Their shadows pass over you briefly as they fly overhead. A faint breeze cools your skin and tousles the heads of wheat as if by an invisible hand. You feel the life energy of the crops. If flows up from the ground and into your body, through your feet and through your spine. Feel the energy of the earth empower you, sustain you. You are part of the ecology, part of this life.

Now look to the sky. The sun is past its zenith and now sinks towards the horizon. It slowly turns from yellow-white to orange-crimson. The sun, though still warm, no longer sears or scorches. Its power wanes, but much of it yet remains. You lift your hands to the setting sun. Draw into your being its energy, its warm colors. The sun’s light flows into your eyes and, in this place, the light does not burn your retinas. You can see the sun in its perfection. It empowers you. It sustains you.

Draw in the sunlight, and remember it. Remember this time, for soon autumn and winter will come. By the sun’s waning light, you have life and energy. All is as it should be.

We are leaving this place of harvesting. We are leaving this place of grains. Close your eyes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## The Magical Working

The magical working will involve creating a portion of consecration incense that may be used for ceremonies that involves empowering items. The items required for this working are:

* A small pouch for each Covenors
* A mortar/pestle
* Three parts frankincense
* One part myrrh
* One part sandalwood
* A few drops of cedar oil

Once the Covenors have made their supply of incense, the Celebrant shall recite the first couplet three times while making the invoking pentagram.

**Celebrant:**

"By my will this spell is sealed

When it burns, its power revealed

Oils mixed and incense milled

Thrice spoken, once fulfilled

So mote it be!"

**Covenors:**

“So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

*If there are two Celebrants (Priest and Priestess), the Priest shall distribute the bread/cakes and the Priestess shall distribute the cup of wine/ale/juice.*

Priest or Priestess: “The celebration of bread and wine is not unique to Wicca. Many religions in many cultures have venerated the bounty of grain and vine. Bread and wine sustain the body and bring us together as a community. In the Wiccan tradition, these gifts also bring us in communion with the God and Goddess. And so we bring you these gifts so that we may be united with one another in spirit.”

**Priestess**: “With the cup, we are one.”

**Covenor**: “Blessed be”

**Priest**: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The elements and deities will be released in the opposite order in which they were invoked. The appropriate candle is snuffed after each dismissal.

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for the grains of yellow and gold

Corn and wheat, as you foretold

Thank you for the fruit-laden trees

And blossoms, wax, honey, and bees

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Lord of the Harvest, God of the Grain

Thank you for coming to us again

The time of harvest is at hand

We reap the blessings of the land

Your life you give to sustain us all

As summer passes on towards fall

Lord of the Harvest, we give thanks to thee

God of the Grain, Blessed be

Hail and farewell.

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the verdant hills and fields

Take with you our thanks for its wondrous yields

The corn is ready, the fruit is ripe

The harvest comes with a sickle’s swipe

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the streams the feed our grain

And to the torrential summer rain

Your blessings descend to us from the sky

It cools our skin and delights the eye

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the Bonfires that brighten the night

Wood smoke and incense give us delight

Your blessings shine in candle light

The sun now sets, but you grant us sight

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds of the summer sky

Upon your currents, blossoms fly

We thank you for the fragrant breeze

That blows aloft through verdant trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

*The Celebrant traces the path of the circle in a counterclockwise (widdershins) direction, using a wand or Athame.*

**Celebrant**: The Circle, though open, remains unbroken.

**Celebrant and Coven:** Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

**Celebrant**: Blessed be!

# http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4836378802850498&pid=1.7&w=148&h=150&c=7&rs=1A Mabon Rite

Mabon Sabbat celebrates the second of the three harvests (apples and fruit). It is also a celebration of the autumnal equinox. After this day, the dark half of the year begins in earnest. In the Wiccan spiritual metaphor, the God is dead – harvested at Lughnassadh and continues on as the Lord of Shadow and the god of the dead (don’t worry, he is reborn each year at Yule!) The Mother Goddess is rapidly aging into her Crone aspect as the life force in the ecology rapidly retreats beneath the ground to slumber during the winter months. The corn and grains have been harvested already, and now the apples and other fruit are gathered. Like Yule, Litha, and Ostara, Mabon is considered to be a “lesser” Sabbat.

Practitioners new to Wicca may be initially disconcerted by references to the Wiccan God as a “god of death” or a “lord of shadow” – especially for believers who were once adherents of Abrahamic faiths like Christianity and Judaism. Death and shadow are concepts that need not be feared, as they are every bit as necessary for the continuation of life as birth and light. It is also worth noting that “light” and “shadow” are not synonyms for “good” and “evil”. For part of the year, the Wiccan God is a god of light and for part of the year he is a god of shadow. That does not mean that the God turns “evil” in autumn. Instead, light and shadow represent a metaphor for the necessary balance in the endless cycle of life and death.

## Preparing Sacred Space

For an outdoor ritual, the Celebrant shall stake out four torches into the ground, oriented at the appropriate compass direction to form a circle nine to eighteen feet in radius (this can be expanded for larger gatherings). The poles should be adorned with streamers or pennants of appropriate color (yellow/east, red/south, blue/west, and green/north). The Celebrant shall cleanse the area with sage smoke and sweep away miscellaneous debris and litter as needed.  A small rod of incense should be lit near each of the four poles. The altar cloth should have autumnal patterns of red, orange, yellow, and brown. Likewise, the altar cloth could display representations of apples and pears.

For an indoor ritual, the sacred space can be delineated by four large pillar candles of appropriate color. The floor/carpet should be clean. For added effect, the Celebrant could core out the middle of four apples and set appropriately colored votive candles as quarter candles. The Celebrant may ritually sweep the floor with a broom. Covenors are encouraged to wear festive autumnal colors.

## Special Materials Required

**Magical working:** Each participant will receive an apple.

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. In the first pass, the Celebrant uses a rod of incense. In the second pass, the Celebrant uses a small bowl of water and sea salt. With the third pass, the Celebrant employs his/her Athame.

While walking the third circle, the Celebrant says: “I cast the circle with power and love / Earth below to Sky above / With shining Sun and glittering Sea / God and Goddess blessed be.”

**Celebrant**: “The Circle is cast!”

**Covenors**: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The elemental spirits and deities are called in sequence, starting from the east. Each relevant altar candle is lit after each call.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Autumn arrives with a cooling breeze

It flutters about the red and gold trees

The skies grow dark and night draws near

Rustling leaves is what we hear

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

The sun is fading from our sight

But the merry bonfire makes things bright

The cookfires flame and smoke with power

And roasts the food that we devour

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

From slate-grey sky the cool mists fall

Upon the trees and house and hall

You replenish the lakes and streams and seas

Until the time of winter’s freeze

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

Leaves turn shades of red and gold

As days grow short and nights grow cold

The trees are heavy with apple and pear

Soon to be harvested with love and care

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

God of the Harvests, Lord of Shadow

In love and thanks we invite you here

Your sacrifice for us was brave and good

You blessed us with the gifts of food

Shadow’s power grows this time of year

With you guidance, we’ll have no fear

God of the Harvests, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Shadow, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Beloved Crone, Giver of Insight

In love and thanks we invite you here.

The flower of youth has faced now

You regard us with a wizened brow

Though you change with every Turn of the Wheel

Your love for us we always feel.

Beloved Crone, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Insight, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Harvest Meditation

Please make yourselves comfortable. Make sure your spine is straight and your feet are in contact with the ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…

We are leaving this place. We are travelling somewhere else. You open your eyes and are greeted with a landscape of rolling hills covered with trees in vibrant fall colors. Leaves of crimson, orange, and gold hang proudly from the branches in a celebration of autumn’s power. The sky above is blue and streaked with white, wispy clouds. The sun no longer climbs to the top of the sky, but instead shines down at an angle. You feel its warming rays on your face, but it no longer makes you sweat. The air is crisp, dry, and cool. The pleasant scent of bonfires wafts through the air. And you stand on a well-worn path that winds its way through the bright, cheerful forest.

You walk down the earthen path. The ground is dry and even. You hear the scampering of squirrels and other rodents amongst the dry, brown leaves that have fallen to the ground. The relentless, buzzing sounds of insects that you remember from the height of summer has diminished to an occasional chirp. Geese fly overhead in wedge formations. Empty stalks along the trail mark where the flowers of summer have come and gone. You sense a collective preparation in the forest – that soon it will be time for the trees to sleep. All is as it should be. You feel at peace here.

The path takes you to an orchard where apple trees stand. The branches are heavy with fruit ready for picking. It is the time of harvest. You walk through the copse of trees and you understand that they offer a blessing to help sustain you through the winter months ahead. Each tree offers something different. Though the trees do not speak in words, you sense their slow, deep thoughts. You align your spirit to theirs. And for this brief moment, you understand what it means to have the peace that comes from being directly connected to the Earth and Sky and the joy of measuring time in seasons instead of minutes.

*Silence for a time.*

You ask the tree for its blessing to you, and you feel its quiet, slow response. Knowing you have permission, you take an apple from a low-hanging branch. You feel the power of the tree’s blessing transfer to you. You acknowledge the tree’s gift with gratitude.

You turn away and walk back to the earthen path. We are ready to leave this place. Close your eyes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

The magical working shall involve each Covener inscribing a rune into an apple and giving it to another Covener as blessing for the autumn season. For rune meanings, consult the chapter on Basic Wicca at the end this book. Once all the apples have been inscribed and subsequently given to each recipient, the Celebrant seals the spell.

**Celebrant:** “Let that with is positive, helpful, and loving be what increases during the dark half of the year. So mote it be.”

**Covenors**: “So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

*If there are two Celebrants (Priest and Priestess), the Priest shall distribute the bread/cakes and the Priestess shall distribute the cup of wine/ale/juice.*

Priest or Priestess: “The celebration of bread and wine is not unique to Wicca. Many religions in many cultures have venerated the bounty of grain and vine. Bread and wine sustain the body and bring us together as a community. In the Wiccan tradition, these gifts also bring us in communion with the God and Goddess. And so we bring you these gifts so that we may be united with one another in spirit.”

**Priestess**: “With the cup, we are one.”

**Covenor**: “Blessed be”

**Priest**: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The elements and deities will be released in the opposite order in which they were invoked. The appropriate candle is snuffed after each dismissal.

### Goddess

Beloved Crone, Giver of Insight

We give you thanks for coming here

We thank you for your guiding power

As the Wheel turns toward the darker hour

You give us wisdom, you give us peace

It shall sustain through winter’s increase

Beloved Crone, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Insight, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

God of the Harvests, Lord of Shadow

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for the harvest fair

Apples and fruit are picked with care

Into the looming night you ride

Your gifts to us we receive with pride

God of the Harvests, we give thanks to thee

Lord of Shadow, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the hills of red and gold

Autumnal colors so bright and bold

Though the harvested fields stand bleak and bare

Your power remains, we’ll not despair

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the lakes so deep and clear

The time of frost and ice draws near

In quiet streams and oceans deep

The power of life you safely keep

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the bonfire so brave and bright

Its amber glow beats back the night

With flaming braziers and candles tall

Your bring light to house and hall

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to swirling, darkened sky

The churning clouds impress the eye

The winds blow a cool and mournful sound

And tosses discarded leaves around

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

*The Celebrant traces the path of the circle in a counterclockwise (widdershins) direction, using a wand or Athame.*

**Celebrant**: The Circle, though open, remains unbroken.

**Celebrant and Coven:** Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

**Celebrant**: Blessed be!

# http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4594563571974628&pid=1.7&w=250&h=155&c=7&rs=1A Samhain Rite

This ritual honors the Goddess in her Crone form and the God in his Lord of Summerland aspect. Samhain is the night in which the Veil between the material world and the spirit world is at its thinnest. Tonight we shall use this time as an opportunity to speak our remembrances of loved ones who have crossed over. Samhain is also the third of the harvests. Agriculturally, this is when gourds and pumpkins would be gathered. It is also when hunting parties would bring back game that would be salted and preserved in preparation for the winter.

Samhain marks the end of one liturgical year and the beginning of the next. Like Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnassadh, Samhain is considered a “major” Sabbat. This is also the most serious and somber of the Wiccan holidays. Whereas Beltane is a celebration of life, Samhain cause us to contemplate the mysteries of death and to reflect upon those who have come before us.

## Preparing Sacred Space

Weather permitting, this shall be an outdoor rite. The space shall be ritually cleansed by sweeping a corn broom across the worship area followed by ringing chimes in the four cardinal directions. An unlit torch shall be placed at each of the four cardinal directions. Around shaft of each torch, four large salt crystals and four incense wands shall be placed (the incense wands shall be lit). As it would be technically difficult to make the torch flames approximate the appropriate color for each element, a colored ribbon will be tied near the top of each shaft instead.

The altar shall have a black cloth, a gold and silver candle to represent the God and Goddess. Additionally, four small candles of appropriate color shall represent the elements: yellow/east/air, red/south/fire, blue/west/water, green/north/earth. A small bowl of salt crystals, a small bowl of water, a black chalice, and incense shall be placed upon the altar. A small cauldron shall be placed in the middle of the altar. At the bottom of the cauldron, an array of tea lights shall be lit. Additionally, a supply of white candles shall be available so that each Covenor may have a candle.

If possible, the participants should wear black and have bathed shortly before arriving. The Priest/Priestess shall then either assign quarter calls or ask for volunteers for quarter calls. The four chosen Covenors shall be given a reasonable allotment of time to familiarize themselves with the text of their assigned calls. After that time, the Priest/Priestess may choose to give a pre-ritual briefing so as to inform the coven what will take place in the rite.

## Special Materials Needed

A small white candle is needed for each participant.

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

*Priestess*:

“Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers.”

*Covenors*:

“We come to the Circle, we answer the call!”

### Second Iteration

*Priest*:

“We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife.”

*Covenors*:

“We come to the Circle, we answer the call!”

### Third Iteration

*Priestess*:

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

*Covenors*:

“We come to the Circle, we answer the call!”

**Priest and Priestess***:* “The Circle is cast!”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The Priest/Priestess/Celebrant shall choose four Covenors to Call the Quarters. After each Call, the selected Covenor shall light the candle that corresponds with the appropriate element. The coven responds to each Call with “Hail and Welcome!”

### Air/East

Hail to the Guardian of the East

Blessings to the Spirit of Air

We invite thee to stand watch with us this night

And guard us for this sacred rite

Dry wind blows the rustling leaves

Red and gold now garbs the trees

The air is cool and crisp and clear

The time of second sight is here.

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire/South

Hail to the Guardian of the South

Blessings to the Spirit of Fire

We invite thee to stand watch with us this night

And guard us for this sacred rite

With flame and candle we shall not fear

When the time of deepest night draws near

Nor shall we fear the looming cold

Let the hearth burn bright and bold

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water

Hail to the Guardian of the West

Blessings to the Spirit of Water

We invite thee to stand watch with us this night

And guard us for this sacred rite

We thank thee for the autumn rain

That cools the air at summer's wane.

Blue seas turn to cold slate gray

Color drains from the fading day

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth

Hail to the Guardian of the North

Blessings to the Spirit of Earth

We invite thee to stand watch with us this night

And guard us for this sacred rite

Barley, apples, corn and grain

The fields gave much to us again

The farming lands lay wide and bare

The harvests complete with joy and care

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

Hail to the God of Harvests

Blessings to the Lord of the Summerland

We invite thee to our circle here

We ask in love and not in fear

Lord of harvests, of gourds and grain

We give thanks to thee again

Lord of Summerland, of the dead and living

Death is not the end, it is the beginning

God of the Harvests, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Summerland, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Hail to the Giver of All Life

Blessings to the Maiden, Mother, and Crone

We invite thee to our circle here

We ask in love and not in fear

Loving maiden, mother, and crone

You shall never abandon us alone

You give us life, to love and learn

And welcome us home when we return

Giver of life, we give thanks to thee

Beloved Crone, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Ancestors

Beloved Ancestors, we call unto thee

Grant us insight for what your blessings shall be

We honor your deeds from long in the past

We thank you for courage and blessings that last

We build our future upon what has gone before

Your deeds and your words are remembered in lore

Be with us this evening as we honor the ways of old

Your presence is felt from beyond the Veil’s fold

Hail and welcome!

## The Meditation

Drawing Down Moonlight

Put your body in a comfortable position, whether sitting or standing. Make sure your feet touch the ground and your spine is straight. Close your eyes and breathe in... breathe out... breathe in... breathe out... breathe in... breathe out...

(Silence for a time)

In your mind's eye, we're traveling away from this place. It is night and the sky is full of stars. You stand in a small clearing within a dense evergreen forest. The full moon shines down from above and you feel its cool, silver radiance against your skin. You inhale, and you can smell the familiar musty scent of pine and decaying leaves. It is natural and undisturbed. The air is clear and when you look to the night sky, you can see so many stars. A faint wind blows, cool and dry. It is refreshing and makes you feel more alert but it does not make you shiver.

Look to the full moon. It is bright and cool. Draw its energy into your body. Its cooling light quenches the smoldering anger, fear, and sadness you might have. It is a healing light. Feel the light on your hands. Feel the pale rays on your fingertips, across your palms and to your wrists. Let the energy flow to your shoulders. The energy from the moon cools the smoldering embers of fear and hate and anger. The silver energy flows to your heart now. And from your heart it travels down through your torso to your legs and feet, and travels up through your neck to your crown.

Embrace the moonlight. Know that you are loved by the Goddess. She who gives us life did so because she loves us. We are made in love, to be loved, and to love others. Nothing can ever change that. In all our lives before, in this life now, and in all the lives to come, we are made in love, made to learn, and made to affirm life. She who loves us shall always love us.

The silver moonlight has neutralized the negative energy from your body, mind, and spirit. Now let unused power flow from your body, through your feet, into the earth. It is good to give back what is unused. For it is our path to fairly take and fairly give.

We are traveling away from the evergreen forest, away from the clearing. We are returning to this place, to our bodies. Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... When you are ready, open your eyes.

## A Poetry Reading

This poem is provided as an example, but the HP/HPs can use any suitable seasonal affirmation here.

**A Year and a Day** (by Indigo)

Shining sun and glimmering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

Earth below and Sky above

God and Goddess thanks and love

A time of darkness, of Autumn's hold

The God of Shadow rules the cold

Of fallen leaves, of wind so chill

The wizened Goddess loves us still

A spark of light in dark forlorn

The infant God is thus reborn

The time of loss is nearly past

The ancient Goddess declares at last

A ring of ice begins to melt

The Sun God's presence soon is felt

A ring of fire shall warm the night

The maiden Goddess shines with light

The day and night have equal hour

The Sun God has returned to power

Light and Dark, in balance be

The Maiden Goddess dances free

The time of growth, here and above

The Sun God bids the Goddess love

Fertility now of womb and fields

The Goddess to her lover yields

A time of light, a time of power

The Sun God's love doth rule this hour

A time of green, of warmth, and light

The Mother sings out with delight

A time of harvest, of wheat and grain

The Sun God's power begins to wane

A time of reaping, as spring foretold

The Mother Goddess is growing old

The days grow short, the fields are fallow

The Sun God becomes the Lord of Shadow

The fields stand barren, the fruits are stored

The Loving Crone has kept her word.

Shining sun and glimmering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

Earth below and Sky above

God and Goddess thanks and love

## The Ritual of Remembrance

Samhain is a sacred time in which the Veil between the physical world and the spirit world is the thinnest. Tonight, we will honor friends and family who have passed on by remembering something good about them.

(Each Covenor takes is given a small white candle. In turn, he/she lights the candle and makes a brief recollection about a loved one or friend who has passed beyond the Veil.

**Celebrant** (after the last of the remembrances have concluded):

"Our loved ones have touched our lives, and their memories live on with us. We are richer for having known them. May their spirits spend a few moments lingering over our candles with us knowing we  
love and honor them, and may they journey safely back across the veil to the other side when Samhain night is past.”

**Covenors**: So mote It be!

## Cakes and Ale

The chalice should be filled with apple cider. Once the blessing is given, the cup is passed to each Covener in sequence. The bread can be pumpkin loaf or any other seasonally-appropriate bread.

The Priest blesses the bread with the following invocation:

“In gratitude we receive this bread

The bounty of harvests’ reaping

With honor to the God of the dead

And the elder ways we continue keeping.”

Priest: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

The Priestess blesses the ale with the following invocation:

“Pour the waters, raise the cup.

Drink your share of wisdom deep.

Strength and joy now fill us up.

As the elder ways we keep.”

Priestess: “With this cup, we are one.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Chant

*“Hoof and Horn” (c) Ian Corrigan*

Hoof and Horn, Hoof and horn,

All that dies shall be reborn.

Corn and grain, corn and grain,

All that falls shall rise again.

[Other chants as appropriate and time-permitting.]

## Releasing the Quarters

The Celebrant shall release the circle by tracing the perimeter in a counter-clockwise direction, starting in the east. The candles shall be snuffed in the order in which they were lit. The coven response is “Hail and Farewell!”

### Ancestors

Spirit of the Ancestors, we thank you this night

You gave us the courage to do what is right

Return to the realms that lie past the Veil

You’ve taught us that wisdom and courage prevail

Thank you for the guidance and knowledge from the past

Your form the foundation for our culture to last

Return to your realms in peace, you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Goddess

Gratitude for the Giver of All Life

Thanks for the Maiden, Mother, and Crone

Thank you for your presence here

At this sacred time of year

Thank you for the lives we live

Love and hope and peace you give

Mother of Life, we give thanks to thee

Beloved Crone, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### God

Gratitude for the God of Harvests

Thanks for the Lord of Summerland

Darkness and death we shall not fear

This is a sacred time of year

We remember families, lovers, and friends

We know that life never truly ends

God of the Harvests, we give thanks to thee

Lord of Summerland, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Earth

Gratitude for the Guardian of the North

Thanks for the Spirit of the Earth

Thank you for standing watch with us this night

On this sacred Samhain rite

We rejoice the gifts of gourds and grain

Forest and field is your domain

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Water

Gratitude for the Guardian of the West

Thanks for the Spirit of Water

Thank you for guiding us this night

On this sacred Samhain rite

We rejoice the clouds and mist and rain

Storm and sea is your domain

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire

Gratitude for the Guardian of the South

Thanks for the Spirit of Fire

Thank you for enlightening us this night

For this sacred Samhain rite

We rejoice the torch and candle flame

Light and warmth is your domain

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air

Gratitude for the Guardian of the East

Thanks for the Spirit of Air

Thank you for blessing us this night

For our sacred Samhain night

We rejoice the wind and clouds that came

Sky and breeze is your domain

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priest/Priestess/Celebrant opens the circle starting from the east and in a widdershins direction.

**Priest**: “May all spirits attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

**Priestess**: “The circle, though open, remains unbroken.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Blessed be!”

# http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_Hy2yajib7DE/TUKx44Wx6DI/AAAAAAAAElU/THwlzU4EHgw/s320/Birch_Trees.jpgA Birch Moon Esbat

This moon ritual can take place anytime between November 1st and November 30th. Physically, a birch tree is slender and has bark that is white or silvery. A birth tree’s bark tends to peel easily. From an astrological perspective, a Birch Esbat would correspond to Scorpio. The rune Berkano corresponds to birch (new beginnings, rebirth). Of course, the timing of this ritual (November) is when the ecology is at rest and the harvests have been completed (in the northern hemisphere at least.)

As a birch tree continuously sheds its bark, so must we shed that which is no longer needed as well as that which actually impedes us. The magical working for this ritual will focus on burning away debris and leaving ourselves more purified.

This ritual can be performed either indoors or outdoors. Given the time of year, a robust bonfire in the middle of the Circle would provide both light and heat should the ritual be conducted outside.

## Preparing Sacred Space

As this ritual takes place in late autumn (nearly winter), the altar cloth should be colored dark grey with mottled patterns – so as to be evocative of the texture of birch bark or the swirling skies November. If possible, the representation of deities should be seasonably appropriate, with the Goddess as a Crone and the God as a Lord of Darkness (always remembering that “Darkness” is not “Evil”).

For altar decoration, some of the trappings of autumn include small gourds, colorful fallen leaves, dried flowers, apples, and acorns. If you have access to birch bark or a rod of birch wood, those items can also be placed on the altar.

### Standard Ritual Materials Needed

* Ritual tools: Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle.
* Altar dressing: incense holder (w/ incense), small red candle, tiny bowl of water, tiny bowl of salt.
* Candles: yellow (air), red (fire), blue (water), green (earth), gold (God), silver (Goddess).
* Consumables: salt, water, incense, matches or lighter.
* Food: apple cider (ale) and pumpkin bread (cakes).

### Special Materials Needed

* A bonfire (for outdoor rituals) or a cauldron with tea lights lit inside.
* Strips of discarded birch bark (if available, and for outdoor rituals).
* Flash paper (for indoor rituals or if birch bark is not available).
* A rod of birch wood (if available). This is symbolic and is placed on the altar.

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, please hear our call

Empower this altar for the use of us all

Blow aside all negative power

Let us have peace for this ritual hour

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, please hear our plea

Endow this altar with renewed energy

Burn away all negative power

Inspire us for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we call unto thee

Imbue this altar with renewed purity

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we call upon thee

Imbue this altar with renewed stability

Ground out from this place all negative power

Grant us wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is cleansed

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

In the moonlit glow of this Esbat night

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

### Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant uses a want of incense. On the second pass, the Celebrant sprinkles a mixture of salt and water. On the third pass, the Celebrant uses an Athame. One Celebrant could walk all three passes. Alternatively, the Handmaiden/Waylander could walk the first pass, the Priest could walk the second pass, and the Priestess could walk the third pass.

*First iteration*

I call to Air, I call to Fire

The Circle forms by my desire

I call to Water, I call to Earth

May the circle hold love and mirth

*Second iteration*

With intent and will, the ward is cast

Against all outsiders may it last

With incense, salt, and ritual knife

The circle holds back intruders’ strife

*Third iteration*

I cast the circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

The Celebrant stomps his/her heel and declares “The Circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The invocation of elemental spirits and deities starts in the East and progresses clockwise. The ritual response is “Hail and welcome”. If a Handmaiden/Waylander is available, that person lights the appropriate candle for the elemental spirits and deities at the close of each call.

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

A chilly wind blows through the late autumn night

Clouds are as ghosts beneath the moon’s light

The crisp breeze turns our cheeks to red

The winter season looms ahead

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

May the bonfire burn both warm and bright

May their flames hold back the chill of night

Let heat be felt from the brave hearth’s flame

It’s cheerful light we gladly acclaim

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

The mornings are cold with mists so gray

They linger in the dawn of shortened day

The lakes are cold, the streams are still

There is tranquility in this autumnal chill

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

From green to gold, then gold to brown

The dry leaves fall and scatter around

The crops are taken, the fields are cleared

The harvest times have been revered.

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

God of Shadow, Lord of the Night

In love and thanks we invite you here

In the guise of Shadow, your powers grow

With looming nights and the promise of snow

We shall not fear the winter season

You gift us with courage, will, and reason

God of Shadow, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Night, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Wizened Goddess, Beloved Crone

In love and thanks we invite you here

The nights turn cold as the Goddess grows old

From autumn to winter, the transition takes hold

With your care and love, we shall not fear

As the days grow dark with the turning year

Wizened Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Beloved Crone, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Purifying Meditation

Place yourselves in a comfortable position, with you back straight and your feet in touch with the floor or ground. Close your eyes to this room [or other setting] for we are leaving this place. Now, take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are arriving at a different place. You open your eyes and you are standing in a forest of birch trees. It is night and the sky is cloudless. The full moon shines with a cold, silver glow. The sky if full of stars. Where we are, there is no light pollution, so you can make out the spectacular arch of the Milky Way. In the moon’s steady light, the birch trees seem nearly to glow on their own accord. They stand like silver ghosts, like quiet sentinels. In this late season, their leaves are long gone. The forest is silent except for a chilly breeze that whistles through the trees’ angular, empty branches.

You walk thought the birch forest and the cold makes you shiver. It is not yet winter and there is no snow on the ground. Your boots crunch the dry discarded leaves as you walk a narrow path towards a bonfire in the distance. You look forward to warming your hands near the flames of amber and orange. You can see your breath as you pick up your pace. You feel your cheeks turn red as your exertion makes your blood flow faster. And, all around you, the birch trees stand like silver ghosts. But you do not fear the night, for you are a servant of Nature.

The bonfire comes into full view and you smell the aroma of burning logs. You are alone. And yet somehow this fire was left behind for you on purpose and not out of carelessness. The crimson, orange, and amber of the crackling fire contrasts sharply with the steady, cold light of the full moon overhead. You warm your hands and you sit on a log near the fire. The ring of trees reflect the firelight on their mottled trunks. You feel safe here.

With the stiffness and chill banished from your extremities by the welcoming bonfire, now peer into the flames. The warmth-giving fire changes and shifts constantly. The flames dance and churn. It holds a mesmerizing beauty. You remember fire’s special properties. It gives light. It gives heat. It consumes. It transforms. Without fire, there would be no life. And you remember another important thing about fire: it also purifies. Now, in this season between the time of harvest and the time of planting, it is appropriate to seek purification. And so you stare into the fire. As you do, you also look inward. What aspects of your life should fire transform? What chaff should be burned away? What negativity in your life should be cleansed? You meditate on this.

[Silence for a time.]

You stand and give thanks to the flames. You then look to the full moon directly overhead and are grateful for its cool, balancing light that offers welcome contrast with the bonfire. There is a purity to that light as well. Remember this place. Remember that you always have the purge the detritus from your life and move forward with boldness as autumn fades and winter takes hold.

We are ready to leave this place. We are ready to return to the circle. Close your eyes and take three rhythmic breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… and breathe out.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

The magical working will involve purification. For an outdoor ritual with a bonfire, the Covenors will write their ritual intent on castoff strips of birch bark (if available) or parchment paper (if birch bark is unavailable). For an indoor ritual, the Covenors can write their ritual intent on flash paper and burn it in the cauldron.

Examples of ritual intent include, but not limited to, the following: “transform laziness to industry”, “purify my motives”, “Burn away my anger”, and “give me the will to eat healthier”.

Each Covenor can choose to either burn the bark/paper in silence or announce his/her magical intent.

### Sealing the Spell

The Celebrant(s) and Covenors join hands in a circle around the altar (or bonfire). The Priest (or Priestess) declares:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

We call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless our intents, and bless them true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale.

Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

### Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response is “Hail and Farewell!” The candles are snuffed in sequence by the Handmaiden (or Waylander).

### Goddess

Wizened Goddess, Beloved Crone

We give you thanks for coming here

The Wheel of the Year continues its endless turn

In shadowy night, the hearth fires burn

For now, the land is at rest under your quiet care

The trees are stark and the fields lay bare.

Wizened Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Beloved Crone, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Shadow God, Lord of Night

We give you thanks for coming here

With sunlight dim and days gone cold

We will not fear as winter takes hold

Share with us the darkened sky

With shining stars that please the eye

God of Shadow, we give thanks to thee

Lord of Night, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return the barren hills so bleak

And to the mountains and craggy peak

The land now rests, its grasses grey

It awaits the promise of the lengthening day

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the lakes ringed with trees

The surface calms before the freeze

Return to the ocean with cold grey tides

Beneath its surface, life still abides

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the cookfires and candles bright

Thank you for hold back the chill of night

Return to the hearths so warm and brave

Its cheerful glow and heat we crave

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the sky with clouds so bold

They endlessly change as the season turns cold

Return to the gale and chilly breeze

That whistles through the leafless trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the light of faith guide us

May the God and Goddess bless us

May our bonds of friendship empower us

May our words and deeds honor us”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

# A Ivy Moon Esbat

Following the Celtic Tree Calendar, the Ivy Moon pertains to a full moon that occurs between August 8th and September 4th. The Ivy Moon is associated with the Labyrinth, the journey into our own souls, and finding knowledge within. The Ivy Moon associated rune is Gebo (which looks like a capital “X”). This rune has several meanings, including unity, sexuality, partnerships, contracts, giving gifts, freedom, and union with one’s higher self. Ivy always climbs from darkness into light.

Ivy is a tenacious plant. It quickly grows back after being damaged or attacked. Ivy is a plant that often manifests after a devastating disaster that scars the land. They cover open wounds in the Earth. They cover sheer surfaces. They reclaim abandoned buildings. Therefore, calling upon the power of the ivy can be used for healing and recovery in the wake of a catastrophe.

Since August is a warm time of year, and typically dry as well, it is an ideal time for an outdoor ritual. The Ivy Moon Esbat takes place around the same time of year as Lughnassadh – the first of the harvest holidays.

## Preparing Sacred Space

Good altar colors for the Ivy Moon Esbat are green and blue. Some altar cloth suggestions include an ivy theme, a spider’s web, or a labyrinth. The altar can also be decorated with ivy leaves. Given the time of year, harvest or agricultural deities may be represented on the altar.

### Standard Ritual Materials Needed

* Ritual tools: Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle.
* Altar dressing: incense holder (w/ incense), small red candle, tiny bowl of water, tiny bowl of salt.
* Candles: yellow (air), red (fire), blue (water), green (earth), gold (God), silver (Goddess), pale green (Ivy).
* Consumables: salt, water, incense, matches or lighter.
* Food: mulled cider (ale) and corn bread (cakes).

### Special Materials Needed

* A bonfire (for outdoor rituals) or a cauldron with tea lights lit inside.
* Green glass discs (for inscribing runes)
* A mottled green candle (to represent ivy)
* A ceramic pen
* A booklet on the meaning of runes (as a reference)

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response from the Covenors after each element is called is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, we call thee near

Cleanse this altar for the use of us here

Blow negative power away from this place

Grant us instead more peace and grace

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, we call thee to us

Empower this altar for those that you trust

Push harmful shadows away with you power

Inspire our hearts for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, a blessing we ask

Empower this altar for our ritual task

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, please give us a boon

Strengthen this altar in the light of the moon

Ground out from this place all negative power

Expand our wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is cleansed

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

In the moonlit glow of this Esbat night

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

### Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant uses a want of incense. On the second pass, the Celebrant sprinkles a mixture of salt and water. On the third pass, the Celebrant uses an Athame. One Celebrant could walk all three passes. Alternatively, the Handmaiden/Waylander could walk the first pass, the Priest could walk the second pass, and the Priestess could walk the third pass. Alternatively, the Celebrants may find it convenient for the Waylander to walk all three passes of the circle while the Handmaiden reads the first iteration, the Priest reads the second iteration, and the Priestess reads the third.

*First iteration*

I call to Air, I call to Fire

The Circle forms by my desire

I call to Water, I call to Earth

May the circle hold love and mirth

*Second iteration*

With intent and will, this ward is cast

Against all outsiders may it last

With incense, salt, and ritual knife

The circle holds back intruders’ strife

*Third iteration*

I cast the circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

The Celebrant stomps his/her heel and declares “The Circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The invocation of elemental spirits and deities starts in the East and progresses clockwise. The ritual response is “Hail and welcome”. If a Handmaiden/Waylander is available, that person lights the appropriate candle for the elemental spirits and deities at the close of each call.

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we ask thee here

Evening fades to a starry sky

The full moon hangs above so high

Insects buzz and the fireflies light

Their sounds and colors evoke delight

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we ask thee here

Bonfires crackle in the summer night

The flickering flames are a welcome sight

Let the fire toast the marshmallow treat

Let us have light as we revel and eat

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we ask thee here

Along sandy shore, the breakers roll

White foam, salt spray, to calm the soul

Tiny crustaceans skitter then hide

Fed and sustained by the nourishing tide

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we ask thee here

The corn stands high in the moon’s soft glow

Soon to be harvested row by row

The trees stand proud and garbed in green

The grass is slick with a dewy sheen

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Ivy

Spirt of Ivy, vine of power

Please join us for this Esbat hour

To our higher selves, help us reach

And for damaged relationships, please span the breach

Let your leaves soothe wounds that have not healed

May your power persist until they are sealed

Spirit of Ivy, be welcomed in peace

May healing and unity ever increase

Hail and welcome!

### God

God of the Harvest, Lord of the Grain

In love and thanks, we invite you again.

You gaze upon the wheat fields bold

The harvests start, as the Wheel foretold

Rye and barley, wheat and corn

The bounty is stored, the treasure shorn

God of the harvest, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the grain, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

With love and thanks we invite you here

The fields are blessed with your love and power

The waving grains, the fruit and flower

Sustain us as the darker seasons loom

As sunlight yields to autumnal gloom

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

## A Renewal Meditation

The Ivy Moon Esbat concerns both renewal from devastation and connection with one’s higher self. Sometimes, in order to recover from the injuries of the past, one needs guidance from your higher self. So now, as we begin this meditation, close your eyes. Place your body in a comfortable position, with your feet in contact with the floor (or ground), and your spine straight. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place and we are travelling somewhere else entirely…

[Silence for a time]

You open your eyes. You stand atop a grassy hill in late summer. White, gauzy clouds streak across a bright blue sky as the sun’s pure light warms your skin. You get a sense of velocity and power as the clouds race from east to west. Gusts of warm, dry air blow up the verdant slope from the plains below, whipping your hair and making your skin tingle. You look down the hill and see ruins in the distance. The land is scarred and abandoned. You walk down the hill to investigate the place of shattered columns, broken spires, and empty frames. Here, the plans and dreams of the past lie in rubble. The ground lays bare and nothing green breaks the surface of this unhealed wound. The wind kicks up dry dust, and the taste is bitter. You squint at the crumbling facades and faded banners that flap in the breeze like rags. Everything is silent except for the wind. No bird or insect or mammal makes its home amongst the ruins. It is a place of ancient desolation. You feel the need, the ache from this land and you know that it has to be made whole.

You are a witch. You are a healer of spirit and dreams. You are a healer of body and land. And so, you send your spirit deep beneath the surface of the Earth, to that place of power at the world’s core, that place of warmth and energy. Draw to the ruins some of that ancient, radiant power. Draw it upward so that the land may be healed. Think about the warm, renewing, life-energy that the generous Earth so willingly gives. Bring some of that bounty to this place of desolation.

[Silence for a time]

Your hands tingle with energy. Your senses heighten and the world around you draws into such precise focus, such supernatural clarity. You see every mote of dust, every fissure in every brick, every bump on each discarded pebble. Now you turn your gaze skyward. You look to the sun and its light is pure and sustaining and yet – in this form – it does not burn your eyes. You draw energy from the sun and sky and it augments the power of the Earth. You feel luminous. Your body shimmers. This is your true self, your spiritual self, the part of you not weighted down by the petty jealousies and trivialities of your mundane existence. For this moment, you are who you *really* are.

[A brief silence]

With a sound like a thunderclap, you slap the palms of your hands together and release the energy you have drawn to this place. The ground ripples like water in a pond, churning the dry, sterile dirt. Steam rises from the ground and the soil turns from gray to dark brown. It smells wholesome, alive. You direct your will at the ground and verdant strands of icy grow from the living earth, spreading outward along the ground. The ivy begins to cover the old wounds. The leafy tendrils climb the shattered buildings and hollowed-out husks. The vines reach for the sun, ever climbing upward. The ivy manifests its power here, reclaiming the empty places that had been abandoned. They bridge the gap between Earth and Sky. The ivy brings with it the return of life to this place of sterility and ruin. The ache and emptiness you felt from this place recedes as the land is healed.

Your body has stopped shimmering and your hands no longer tingle. But as you look upon the former ruin, you see a place of greenery and life. Insects arrive seemingly out of nowhere and begin to chirp and buzz. Birds fly overhead and alight on the ivy-covered spires, ready and willing to make this place their home. Field mice skitter amongst the runners that cover the rich, renewed ground. The land is ready to begin again. What was a ruin is now a home for life and new growth. Feel the wholeness of this place. Feel the life-energy made manifest.

[A brief silence]

We are ready to leave this place. Remember your true self, your uncorrupted self that has been purified from the experience and wisdom of all your prior incarnations. Remember the power to heal even the most ancient wounds. Remember your call to be a guardian, seeker, and healer. Now, close your eyes, for it is time to return to where we started. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## The Magical Working

The magical working will involve empowering runes that will aid in connecting with one’s higher self or in healing old wounds. If used for healing, the wounds in question need not be physical wounds. There are certainly life-events that can leave one emotionally, psychically, or spiritually wounded. Sometimes these intangible wounds can keep hurting long after physical scars have become desensitized. Alternatively, a rune can be crafted as a gift to another, as the Ivy Moon also pertains to the giving of gifts.

Materials needed:

* A ceramic pen (for writing on the stones)
* Stone squares (to be used as the runes)
* A guide on the meaning/identification of runes, as a reference.

It is recommended that drumming or changing take place while Covenors are selecting and inscribing their runes. This will aid in raising energy for the magical working. Once selected, the Covenors can contemplate the meaning of their rune and impose their ritual intent on their selected stone.

### Sealing the spell

The Covenors gather around the altar and hold their rune stones above its surface. The Celebrant then intones:

“In the glow of this moonlit hours

I call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless these runes, and bless them true

For use in all the works we do

This spell is sealed

So mote it be!”

The Covenors reply with “So mote it be!”

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale. Since the Ivy Moon Esbat takes place at the same time of year as Lughnassadh, it makes sense to use apple cider, mulled cider, or apple wine as the sacred beverage. Likewise, cornbread makes an ideal choice for the sacred cakes.

Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

### Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response is “Hail and Farewell!” The candles are snuffed in sequence by the Handmaiden (or Waylander). Note that it is generally considered bad form to blow out the candles using one’s own breath. It is preferable to use a snuffer or to “wave” out the candles with a flick of one’s hand.

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for wheat and corn this year

We now fact autumn with hope, not fear

Thank you for the trees with apple and pear

When winter arrives, we won’t despair

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Lord of the Harvest, God of the Grain

Thank you for coming to us again

The time of harvest comes to the land

Its bounty reaped by caring hand

Your life you give to sustain us all

As summer passes on towards fall

Lord of the Harvest, we give thanks to thee

God of the Grain, Blessed be

Hail and farewell.

### Ivy

Spirit of Ivy, Vine of Power

We give you thanks for coming here

With leaf of green and tendrils sure

You cover old wounds with healing pure

Your vines climb towards the brighter day

You inspire us in the spirit’s way

Spirit of Ivy, we give thanks to thee

Vine of Power, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the verdant hills and peaks

And rejoice in summer’s warm but waning weeks

The harvest starts with corn and wheat

Packed away so we may eat

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the rivers, return to the streams

And to distant oceans where the life-force teems

Your blessings descend to us from the sky

It cools our skin and delights the eye

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the bonfires that brighten the night

Wood smoke and incense give us delight

Your blessings shine in candle light

The sun has set, but you grant us sight

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds of the summer sky

On gentle currents, the insects fly

We thank you for the fragrant breeze

That blows aloft through verdant trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May we aspire to be true to the Witches’ call

May we seek healing and justice and love for all

May we help the injured and defend the weak

May we be the blessing that others may seek”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

# A Rowan Moon Esbat

This moon ritual can take place anytime between November 29th and December 26th. Physically, a rowan tree is not particularly tall and a bit on the squat side. It produces clusters of orange-red berries that are quite pretty. Its leaves are small and somewhat oval-shaped (coming to a point at the end). One of many magical uses of this tree (and the use that will be called upon in this ritual) is protection from the enchantment and manipulation of others. Thinking of the rowan tree should include thoughts of freedom, self-actualization, and wisdom. The rune associated with the rowan tree is Laguz – a feminine rune that is keyed to water, and can represent both creation and destruction as well as cleansing and transformation. Astrologically, the rowan tree is associated with Sagittarius (a fire/masculine sign, interestingly enough). It’s worth noting that the rowan is also known as the “witch tree”.

Sadly, the month of December has become a time where witches (and, really, everyone) need protection from external manipulation and enchantment. It is at this year that we are told that we have to buy more than we can afford; we are told that we have to pretend to care for family members that have hurt us; we are told that only one religion’s holiday is worthy of respect. Culturally, the month of December has become a month of merchandizing, forced comradery, and externally-imposed conformity. And so, the magical working shall be in calling upon the power of the rowan tree to gird our minds against the emotional, financial, and spiritual blackmail so that we are able to celebrate the upcoming solstice holiday in the way it should be celebrated: in peace, love, kindness, and trust.

Given the time of year, the Celebrant(s) will want to make sure there is a bonfire and that participants are advised to dress warmly should this ritual be performed outdoors.

## Preparing Sacred Space

As this ritual takes place in the transitional time between late autumn and early winter (although it could theoretically be performed as late as December 26th), the altar cloth should have various shades of brown (representing dry, discarded leaves, shriveled flowers, fallow fields, and leafless trees). As with the Birch Esbat, the representation of deities should be seasonably appropriate, with the Goddess as a Crone and the God as a Lord of Darkness. For those new to Wicca and Paganism, the Celebrant may wish to remind the participants/Covenors that “Darkness” and “Light” are not moral value judgments equivalent to “Evil” and “Good”. Rather, Wicca is a religion of balance in which there are periods where there must be more darkness and times when there must be more light. This ritual will typically precede Yule and therefore the God has not yet been reborn and the Crone has not regained her youth and vitality.

For altar decoration, some of the trappings of late autumn include dried flowers, dried fruit (as the harvests have now been completed), dead leaves, and scented candles that exude the smell of kitchen spices. If you have access to rowan berries or a stick from a rowan tree, those items can also be placed on the altar.

### Standard Ritual Materials Needed

* Ritual tools: Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle.
* Altar dressing: incense holder (w/ incense), small red candle, tiny bowl of water, tiny bowl of salt.
* Candles: yellow (air), red (fire), blue (water), green (earth), gold (God), silver (Goddess), orange (Rowan Tree).
* Consumables: salt, water, incense, matches or lighter.
* Food: mulled cider (ale) and cranberry bread (cakes).

### Special Materials Needed

* A bonfire (for outdoor rituals) or a cauldron with tea lights lit inside.
* Flash paper and felt-tip pens
* A rod of rowan wood or a bowl of rowan berries (if available). This is symbolic and is placed on the altar.
* A bowl of red or orange marbles (this represents rowan berries for the magical working)
* A ceramic pen
* A deck of cards with the meaning of the runes (as a reference).

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response from the Covenors after each element is called is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, we call thee near

Cleanse this altar for the use of us here

Blow negative power away from this place

Let us instead have peace and grace

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, we call thee to us

Empower this altar for those that you trust

Burn away all negative power

Inspire our hearts for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, a blessing we ask

Empower this altar for our ritual task

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, please give us a boon

Strengthen this altar under the light of the moon

Ground out from this place all negative power

Expand our wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is cleansed

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

In the moonlit glow of this Esbat night

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

### Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant uses a want of incense. On the second pass, the Celebrant sprinkles a mixture of salt and water. On the third pass, the Celebrant uses an Athame. One Celebrant could walk all three passes. Alternatively, the Handmaiden/Waylander could walk the first pass, the Priest could walk the second pass, and the Priestess could walk the third pass.

*First iteration*

I call to Air, I call to Fire

The Circle forms by my desire

I call to Water, I call to Earth

May the circle hold love and mirth

*Second iteration*

With intent and will, the ward is cast

Against all outsiders may it last

With incense, salt, and ritual knife

The circle holds back intruders’ strife

*Third iteration*

I cast the circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

The Celebrant stomps his/her heel and declares “The Circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The invocation of elemental spirits and deities starts in the East and progresses clockwise. The ritual response is “Hail and welcome”. If a Handmaiden/Waylander is available, that person lights the appropriate candle for the elemental spirits and deities at the close of each call.

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we ask thee here

In dark of night, the winds blow and howl

We cover ourselves by cloak and cowl

Winter looms as autumn wanes

Castoff leaves blow down the lanes

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we ask thee here

Bonfires crackle in the chilly night

The amber flames cast a cheerful light

May the hearth logs burn and its fires churn

May the flames reveal what we must discern.

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we ask thee here

The lakes are black in the moon’s pale light

The frost encroaches, a hue of white

And beneath the ice, the streams still flow

Hidden from view, life teems below.

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we ask thee here

The craggy peaks are bereft of green

And in its place, a snowy sheen

The fields are fallow, its colors bland

But the winter festival is soon at hand

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Rowan Tree

Tree of protection, tree of might

We ask you here for the Esbat night

Gird our minds against incoming attack

Send unhelpful enchantments hurling back

Guard us for this ritual hour

In love and thanks, we seek thy power

Tree of protection, we give thanks to thee

Tree of might, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Lord of Shadow, God of Night

In love and thanks we ask thee here

In darkened skies and shadowy land

You rule this season with a loving hand

With your wisdom to guide us, we shall not fear

As we enter the coldest time of year

Lord of Shadow, we give thanks to thee

God of Night, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Wizened Goddess, Beloved Crone

In love and thanks we invite thee here

In brightest moonlight and starry sky

You survey the land with a kindly eye

Our hearts to tend, our spirits to guide

Through winter’s wrath, may our life abide

Wizened Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Beloved Crone, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Protective Meditation

In this meditation, we will contemplate the protective power of the rowan tree and call upon its magic to shield us from outside influence.

Close your eyes and arrange yourself in a comfortable position. Let your feet be in contact with the floor (or ground). Let your spine be straight. We will take three cleansing breathes.

Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place (this room, this field, etc). We are travelling to a different place entirely. You open your eyes and your vision is filled with the cool moonlight that illuminates the late-autumn sky. The haze of summer is long gone and the night is silent and still. The stars shine as white points against a backdrop of perfect, limitless black. Gone are the days of fragrant flowers. Now is the time of year when the delicate scent of wood smoke insinuates the air. Faraway, the brave hearths burn, filling homes with light and warmth. You think of that warmth as your exhalation makes thin trailers of steam in the chilly night air. And this night is surely chilly, but the air is dry and crisp. Your hands are cold but your bones do not ache.

You stand at the base of a rounded hill. The grass is dry and the ground is as hard as stone. Beneath the moon’s pale light, all color is rendered as shades of grey. Under the moon’s glow, you have such clarity of sight. You see leafless trees at the horizon and can make out every detail in their branches and twigs. You could count every blade of grass should you see fit. However, you instead turn your attention to a singular tree that stands atop the hill. It is not a difficult climb for the slope is gentle, and the exertion warms you.

The incline smooths into a flat plateau. The dead grass rustles as you walk towards the solitary rowan tree. It is squat and wide and leafless. But as you approach, you sense it awakening. You sense its awareness of your presence. And in the joining of its awareness, your perception changes.

You blink and now the tree appears as having ghostly translucent leaves of silver – a memory of summer, rendered in the monochromatic light of the moon. The rowan tree’s berries, usually reddish orange, are the color of charcoal. You reach out to touch the leaves and your hand passes through them. And yet, you feel a hint of texture, a memory of substance.

You touch the tree’s bark and the spirit of the tree communes with you. The rowan tree’s thoughts are wordless and it communicates in concepts. It wants to teach you. For you see at the same time how the tree stands before you in reality – leafless, dark, and slumbering – versus the idealized memory the tree has of itself at high summer – shining leaves and colorful berries.

*You can defend yourself from illusions,* the rowan seems to communicate in its wordless way. *You have the power to discern glamor from reality.*

A single grey berry manifests on the branch closest to your hand.

*Take it*, the rowan whispers.

The berry feels cold in your hand. Contained within this tiny gift is the power of insight – to see things as they really are, and to ward yourself against the snares and influences of others. You close your hand around the berry and offer your thanks to the rowan tree. You feel the tree’s acknowledgement and blessing.

You bow in respect and walk back down the hill. You take one final look out into the night. It is crystalline, perfect, and silent. All is as it should be.

We are ready to leave this place. You close your eyes.

Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

There are two magical workings possible for this ritual. Depending on the needs of the individual Covenor, the participant can empower a glass sphere (representing a rowan berry) or he/she can ignite a piece of flash paper with the name of the person he/she needs to be magically separated from. For instance, if a Covenor is frequently manipulated by a coworker or bad friend, that person’s name can be written on the paper and burned – and with the burning, the spiritual attachment is also severed. This working does not violate the Rede because it targets the *unhealthy attachment*, not the actual *person*.

For empowering a glass sphere, the Covenor draws an appropriate rune on a marble with a ceramic pen and then wills the intent of that rune into the sphere. It can then be carried in one’s pocket or purse until the next Esbat.

### Sealing the Spell

The Celebrant(s) and Covenors join hands in a circle around the altar (or bonfire). The Priest (or Priestess) declares:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

We call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless our intents, and bless them true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale.

#### Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

#### Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response is “Hail and Farewell!” The candles are snuffed in sequence by the Handmaiden (or Waylander).

### Goddess

Wizened Goddess, Beloved Crone

We give you thanks for coming here

The longest nights are almost here

With cloudless skies so dark and clear

Your love will guide us through the coldest season

With your gifts of love and hope and reason

Wizened Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Beloved Crone, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Lord of Shadow, God of Night

We give you thanks for coming here

Colors dim to shades of grey

The sun shines less in the shortened day

But we shall not fear the winter’s chill

The seasons turn as is your will

Lord of Shadow, we give thanks to thee

God of Night, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Rowan Tree

Tree of power, tree of might

Thank you for aiding our works this night

Thank you for your power to shield

Against the outside influence, you never yield

Your gift to us will gird our will

Against enchantments harsh and shrill

Tree of power, we give thanks to thee

Tree of might, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the peaks and crags so high

They withstand the centuries and challenge the sky

Return to the fields, now quiet and at rest

Its bounty harvested, and so we are blessed

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the quiet lakes so deep

Where life abides in silent sleep

Rain is replaced by snow so bright

A wondrous gift for our delight

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the hearthfires so bold and bright

We thank you for the gift of warmth and light

Return to the candles held proud and high

And to the sparks and embers that light the sky

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds, so grey and stark

That make brush stoke shapes against a sky so dark

Return to the wind, now chill and dry

Through leafless trees, a mournful sigh

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the light of faith guide us

May the God and Goddess bless us

May our bonds of friendship empower us

May our words and deeds honor us”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

# An Alder Moon Esbat

This moon ritual can take place between December 27th and January 23rd. Alder trees are very handy in reforestation projects and are good at stabilizing wet soil. They are also quick to arise after a forest fire. Alders are hardy plants that don’t require fertilizers. Depending on the species, an Alder can grow between 25’ tall and 80’ tall. From a magical perspective, the Alder corresponds to guidance, prophesy, protection, and foundations (the latter referencing the tree’s to stabilize loose wet soil). The Alder can also be called upon for increasing one’s creativity and leadership. The runic correspondence is Fehu (cattle, wealth, and material possessions). The astrological sign related to the Alder is Capricorn and its elemental correspondence is Water (likely due to the tree’s affinity with wetter climates). Crimson is a color associated with the Alder moon (which corresponds to the tree’s red-colored sap).

As this ritual takes place in late December or the first three weeks of January, there is little happening in the agricultural world. The land is frozen, the fields are fallow, the days are short, and the nights are frigid. Indeed, despite the fact that the days are growing longer, it is in fact the coldest time of the year. It is also a time of preparation and planning for the warmer days that are yet to come. And so this ritual will focus on the guidance, prophesy, and divination aspects of the Alder Tree.

*Depending on who is leading the ritual, the divination methods could be tarot, runes, scrying, or some other type. For a larger gathering, it may be useful if both the Priest and Priestess are involved in the divination. Likewise, the Clergy may find it useful to have drumming in the background.*

## Preparing Sacred Space

The altar for an Alder Moon Esbat can have a crimson or reddish-brown cloth (referencing hearth fires or the tree’s reddish sap). This moon ritual takes place shortly after the winter solstice, and thus deities representing new beginnings, guidance, or rebirth could be used. Likewise, deities associated with divination and guidance would be appropriate. In Wicca, the God exists as the newborn child of light and the Goddess is the young mother. Therefore, altar figurines could be used to represent a youthful God and Goddess.

### Standard Ritual Materials Needed

* Ritual tools: Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle.
* Altar dressing: incense holder (w/ incense), small red candle, tiny bowl of water, tiny bowl of salt.
* Candles: yellow (air), red (fire), blue (water), green (earth), gold (God), silver (Goddess), crimson (Alder Tree).
* Consumables: salt, water, incense, matches or lighter.
* Food: mulled cider (ale) and mini-scones (cakes).

### Special Ritual Materials Needed

* Tarot cards, runes, or whatever items that pertain to the preferred divination method for this ritual

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response from the Covenors after each element is called is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, we call to you this night

Charge up this altar with power and might

Blow negative power away from this place

Let us instead have peace and grace

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, we call you this night

Stoke up this altar with power and might

Burn away all negative power

Inspire our hearts for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we call you this night

Flow through this altar with power and might

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we call you this night

Fortify this altar with power and might

Ground out from this place all negative power

Expand our wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is charged

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

In the moonlit glow of this Esbat night

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

### Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant uses a want of incense. On the second pass, the Celebrant sprinkles a mixture of salt and water. On the third pass, the Celebrant uses an Athame. One Celebrant could walk all three passes. Alternatively, the Handmaiden/Waylander could walk the first pass, the Priest could walk the second pass, and the Priestess could walk the third pass.

*First iteration*

I call to Air, I call to Fire

The Circle forms by my desire

I call to Water, I call to Earth

May the circle hold love and mirth

*Second iteration*

With intent and will, the ward is cast

Against all outsiders may it last

With incense, salt, and ritual knife

The circle holds back intruders’ strife

*Third iteration*

I cast the circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

The Celebrant stomps his/her heel and declares “The Circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The invocation of elemental spirits and deities starts in the East and progresses clockwise. The ritual response is “Hail and welcome”. If a Handmaiden/Waylander is available, that person lights the appropriate candle for the elemental spirits and deities at the close of each call.

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Frigid wind bellows and gusts and whips

It numbs the skin and cracks the lips

Our breath makes wisps of trailers, grey

As we await the lengthening day

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Heathfires burn and cauldrons churn

Its warmth and light we surely yearn

You stand against winter’s frosty might

Your flames give radiance, heat, and delight

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

The lakes are solid and look like glass

The coldest month has come to pass

Streams are silent and ceased their flow

The fields are white with powdery snow

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

The frozen ground is hard and grey

As it awaits a warmer day

Though resting now in quiet peace

Life shall return with the day’s increase

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Alder

Tree of Oracles, Tree of Might

We ask you her this Esbat night

Let our minds perceive in a spiritual way

For our guidance, let your wisdom convey

With rune and tarot and mirror black

Help us see the future and any looming attack

Tree of Oracles, we give thanks to thee

Tree of Might, blessed be

Hail and welcome

### God

God of the Sun, Child of Light

In love and thanks we invite you here

Though born in the time of darkest night

Your return to life shall bring new light

Grow in strength, grow in power

Bring back the warmth and daylight’s hour

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Child of Light, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of life

In love and thanks we invite you here

From Crone to Mother, your youth returns

Dark nights fade as the season turns

Grow in warmth, grow in power

Let icescapes yield to fern and flower

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and welcome

## Guided Meditation

This meditation focuses on being open to divination and the power to interpret oracles. Place your body in a comfortable position, with you feet touching the floor, and close your eyes. We will take three cleansing breathes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place. We are travelling away from this room and have arrived at a completely different place. You open your eyes and find that you are standing in a frozen tundra late at night. An icy wind blows across a rolling field of thin snow and tall grass. It is winter, and the dead grass is gray and brittle. The snow is lighter and finer than talcum powder. All is silent except for the wind. You look above and see the stars shine coldly. Here, away from any nearby city, you see so many stars, so many more than you have ever seen before.

The plains stretch out before you. Your eyes adjust to night, and the brightness of the snow serves to amplify the meager starlight. And thus you can see. With the frigid wind blowing across your cheeks and hands, you realize that you will soon need shelter and warmth. And so you look to the sky and you remember your teachings about how you can navigate by night using only the stars. You spot Sirius, Canopus, and Arcturus. Now you can avoid walking in circles.

Your intuition draws you to the north. The rolling plain slopes upward and the wind kicks up, blowing fine particles of snow in your face. And yet, you start to smell the fain scent of burning wood from somewhere ahead. You look to the stars again to straighten your path. Your feet start to go numb, so you increase your pace. At the limits of your vision, you see a winter cabin and a few shacks at the top of the gently inclining slope. Smoke chuffs from the chimney of the main cabin and amber light radiates warmly from the windows. This is where you need to be.

You focus your will and command your body to overcome the looming hypothermia. You ignore the numbness and fatigue as you close the final distance between you and the shelter ahead. With some measure of desperation, you bang on the door with a numbed fist.

After a moment, a young mother cradling a newborn baby boy answers the door. The mother has neatly braded red hair and has eyes of hazel-green. The boy is wrapped up in a cozy blanket and he is wearing a tiny woven cap displaying an image of the rising sun. She bids you enter and quickly closes the heavy wooden door behind you. Inside, the cabin seems larger than possible compared to its external size. Here, you see a stone fireplace filled with burning logs that pop and crackle. It bravely holds back the might of winter. You see a stout, wooden table with sturdy, comfortable chairs. The kitchen, too, is lit with oil lamps that cheerfully flicker. The small house smells of cinnamon, brown sugar, and freshly baked cookies. It sparks a childhood memory from happier days. A wall hanging depicting the image of the alder tree proudly decorates the north wall. Near the door from which you entered, you spy a book shelf and a writing desk. The books are ancient tomes printed on thick, yellowing paper and run the gamut from agriculture to metallurgy to esoteric occult topics.

The young mother kisses her infant son on the forehead and places him in a crib near the fireplace. She bids you to sit at the table. The warmth from the fire thaws your hands and feet, and your extremities tingle like pin pricks as sensation returns.

“You’ll be wanting some tea and cookies,” your host declares warmly.

She brings you a plate of three decorative sugar cookies shaped like trees as well as a hot cup of spicy herbal tea. You warm your hands over the churning steam wafting from the brew. The cookies remind you of childhood holidays and the tea is energizing. You had been slumped a bit and now you sit up straight.

“Of course,” the mother says knowingly, “people don’t come all the way here for my cookies. Not that I’d mind if they did. You’ve come to have a question answered.”

And you realize that your host is correct.

The young mother opens her writing desk and withdraws a black mirror in which she places on the table before you. She tells you to gaze into the reflective black surface and consider what guidance you need.

“By starlight, by firelight, by lantern light, may you be blessed with second sight,” our host intones.

And so you look into the black mirror. For a few moments, the cabin, the firelight, and freezing night fade to the periphery and you plunge your will into the mirror.

What question do you ask? What answer do you see in your mind’s eye?

[Silence for a time]

Your consciousness returns to the welcoming cabin with the brave fireplace and the aromatic kitchen. The mirror is just a mirror and no longer a limitless portal. The young mother is pouring more hot tea into a wooden flask wrapped in leather and has more cookies wrapped in a cloth napkin. Near the fireplace, her infant son sleeps quietly. His crib blanket is emblazoned with a stylized image of the sun that matches his cloth cap.

“These should hold you over until you find your way back,” the mother assures.

You take the proffered gifts in gratitude and offer your thanks. The young mother opens the door for you and you step back out into the brisk, winter night. The flask of tea is warm and keeps your hands from going numb as you walk back to where you started. You look to the night sky and thank the stars for their guidance.

It is time to return to where you started. We are leaving the frozen tundra and the place of bright stars. You close your eyes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out.. breathe in… breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

The magical working for this ritual is divination. The Celebrant(s) may use his/her preferred divination method (such as tarot, runes, or scrying). For a larger gathering, it may be useful to have both the High Priest and High Priestess conduct the divination. Likewise, some ambient drumming would certainly be appropriate for this phase of the ritual.

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale. The Alder Moon Esbat takes place in the time of the year leading up to Imbolc. Therefore, any combination of cakes and ale suitable for Imbolc could also be used for this ritual.

#### Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

#### Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response is “Hail and Farewell!” The candles are snuffed in sequence by the Handmaiden (or Waylander).

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

Your youth restored, and your power grows

You shield us as the gale wind blows

The time of nurturing is soon at hand

Once ice and snow melt from the land

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

God of the Sun, Child of Light

We give you thanks for coming here

Dawn’s light shines on drifting snow

Your fledgling power shall surely grow

The gale winds howl and the days are cold

Soon you shall break winter’s hold

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Child of Light, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Alder Tree

Tree of Oracles, Tree of Might

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for the gift of insight

In seeking boon and avoiding blight

Thank you for your guiding ways

That shines a light through gloomy haze

Tree of Oracles, we give thanks thee

Tree of Might, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the peaks still frozen white

In the growing sun, they dazzle bright

Return to the land, still frozen and cold

As we await spring to take hold

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the seas, so brisk and cold

Its rhythmic power a wonder to behold

Return to the rivers, frozen and still

Until spring’s thaw comes with a burbling thrill

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the candles, return to the flame

Your light and heat we boldly proclaim

Return to the hearth that burns so bright

That keeps us warm on a winter’s night

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the skies of swirling dark

With clouds that churn with power stark

Return to the gales with chilling might

That sets the flurries aloft in flight

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the returning light guide us through the darkest time of year

May we walk forward together in faith and not fear

May we be worthy of the bright blessings that we have received

And may be a blessing to others in times of great need.”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

# http://ts4.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4941450860628151&pid=1.7&w=131&h=138&c=7&rs=1A Dedication Rite

A Dedication Rite is used when an individual wishes to make a former declaration of his/her intention to learn about and follow the Wiccan path. A Dedication Rite marks the beginning of the year-and-a-day of learning about the Wiccan faith before formal initiation takes place. Note that the Quarter Calls for this ritual imply a late-summer ritual (coinciding with the full moon that is closest to Lughnassadh Sabbat). If the dedication rite is to be at other times of year, substitute the Quarter Calls as appropriate.

## Preparing the Sacred Space

It is preferable that the ritual take place outdoors in a natural setting. The Celebrant shall place torches at the periphery of the sacred space at the proper cardinal directions. The space shall be purified with sage smoke and ritually swept with a broom. For a summer rite, decorate the altar with corn and grain. The beverage can be mead or mint tea, while the cakes can be corn muffins.

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

**Priestess:**

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

**Priest:**

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

**Priestess:**

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

It is preferable for there to be at least seven Covenors (priest, priestess, four initiates, and the Dedicant.) If there are four initiates, then the priestess shall assign quarter calls to the initiates. If there are only two initiates, then the priestess shall assign one member for air/water and another for earth/fire. The coven affirms the phrase “Hail and Welcome” at the end of each call.

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

By day, the wind blows through fields of grain

The time of harvest has come again

With dusk comes the cooling breeze

Blowing through pear and apple trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Braziers and torches, burning free

Give us light so we may see

The bonfire roars with amber light

The scent of wood gives us delight.

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks, we invite you here.

Thunderstorms gather, proud and dark

Lightning scatters with violent spark

The blessing of pure water from the sky

Feeds trees and crops so they do not die

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here.

The fertile ground aids the crops and trees

Blossoms, flowers, vines, and leaves

The harvest time is soon at hand

And so we thank the prosperous land

Guardian of the North we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

God of the Harvest, Lord of the Grain

In love and thanks, we invite you again.

Rye and barley, corn and wheat

Your life has grown the food we eat

Thank you for the light of the sun

Shining warmth on everyone

God of the harvest, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the grain, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

With love and thanks we invite you here

The fields are blessed with love and power

Waving grains, fruit and flower

As are our lives blessed by your love

As below, so above.

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

## A Harvest Meditation

Close your eyes and arrange your body in a comfortable position. Have your feet in contact with the ground and have your spine straight. Take three slow breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place. In your mind’s eye, you stand in a field of wheat that is ready for harvest. The sky is a perfect blue, so bright and clear, so limitless. The air buzzes with myriad insects. In the distance, you hear the calls of livestock and the sounds of harvesting machines that will soon gather the grains. Crows fly overhead and squawk. Their shadows pass over you briefly as they fly overhead. A faint breeze cools your skin and tousles the heads of wheat as if by an invisible hand. You feel the life energy of the crops. If flows up from the ground and into your body, through your feet and through your spine. Feel the energy of the earth empower you, sustain you. You are part of the ecology, part of this life.

Now look to the sky. The sun is past its zenith and now sinks towards the horizon. It slowly turns from yellow-white to orange-crimson. The sun, though still warm, no longer sears or scorches. Its power wanes, but much of it yet remains. You lift your hands to the setting sun. Draw into your being its energy, its warm colors. The sun’s light flows into your eyes and, in this place, the light does not burn your retinas. You can see the sun in its perfection. It empowers you. It sustains you.

Draw in the sunlight, and remember it. Remember this time, for soon autumn and winter will come. By the sun’s waning light, you have life and energy. All is as it should be.

We are leaving this place of harvesting. We are leaving this place of grains. Close your eyes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Blessing the Dedicant

In the Wiccan neo-pagan tradition, it is customary for a person new to the faith to take a year and a day to study, learn, and make deep consideration concerning her *(his)* spiritual path. The Wiccan path is not one to be undertaken as a lark. The Wiccan path is more than just magical practices; it is a lifelong dedication to the Goddess and God, to Nature, to wisdom, and to each other. It is a path of peace and a path of learning. The act of dedication begins a journey that never truly ends.

Why a “year and a day”? This period of study and contemplation allows the dedicant to observe all eight Sabbats, to experience with new vision the cycle of the seasons, the waxing and waning of life energy as spring turns to summer, then passes to autumn, and then to winter. It a time of self-discovery as well, where the dedicant can examine her *(his)* place in the ecology and in the spirit world.

*Note: If this service has both male and female Celebrants, the male (Priest) will bless the Dedicant’s head, hands, and feet while the female (Priestess) will bless the Dedicant’s heart and womb (if the Dedicant is female).*

**Celebrant**: “Is there one who seeks the Wiccan path?”

**Dedicant**: “I am here.”

**Celebrant**: “By what name shall you be known to this sacred circle?”

**Dedicant**: “I shall be known as *(name)*.”

**Celebrant**: “Then you shall be known as (name). It is your name of power, your name in magical workings, and your name within this sacred circle Are you ritually purified and accepting of the blessings of the gods?”

**Dedicant**: “I am.”

*At this point, the Celebrant anoints the Dedicant’s forehead, drawing an invoking pentacle.*

**Celebrant**: “You are a child of the gods, and I ask them to bless you. May your mind be blessed so that you may receive the wisdom of the gods. May your eyes be blessed with discerning the path ahead. May your lips be so blessed that your words carry honor and respect. May the peace and love of the Goddess and God be carried in your thoughts and flow through your lips.”

**Celebrant** **and Dedicant:** “So Mote It Be.”

*The Celebrant dabs a dot of anointing oil to the Dedicant’s chest.*

**Celebrant**: “You are a child of the gods and I ask them to bless you. May your heart be blessed, that you may love and be loved. May the love of the Goddess and God shine through you.”

**Celebrant and Dedicant:** “So Mote It Be.”

*The Celebrant anoints the Dedicant’s hands, drawing the invoking pentacle.*

**Celebrant**: “You are a child of the gods and I ask them to bless you. May your hands be blessed with the power to heal and the power to help. May they be empowered to bless others and do works of goodness and peace. May the power of the Goddess and God flow through your hands.”

**Celebrant and Dedicant:** “So Mote It Be.”

*If the Dedicant is female, the Celebrant makes the sign of the invoking Pentacle over the Dedicant’s abdominal region so as to bless her womb.*

**Celebrant:** “You are a child of the gods and I ask them to bless you. May your womb be blessed with the power to create life. Blessed are you, created in the image of the Goddess. May you be empowered to nurture and guide those who need you and depend upon your guidance. May the life-energy of the Goddess and God flow through you.”

**Celebrant and Dedicant:** “So Mote it Be.”

*The Celebrant anoints the Dedicant’s feet and draws the invoking Pentacle on each foot.*

**Celebrant:** “You are a child of the gods and I ask them to bless you. May your feet be blessed with the power to carry you along your path. May you feel connected to the Earth and to the Goddess. May the power of the Goddess and God flow through your feet.”

**Celebrant and Dedicant:** “So Mote it Be.”

**Celebrant**: “Tonight, do you pledge your dedication to the Goddess and God? Do you ask them to walk beside you and guide you on your spiritual journey? Do pledge to honor them and to seek to grow in a closer relationship with them?”

**Dedicant:** “By my will, I do so pledge.”

**Celebrant and Dedicant:** “So Mote It Be.”

**Celebrant**: “Your journey begins. Blessed be.”

## Cakes and Ale

*If there are two Celebrants (Priest and Priestess), the Priest shall distribute the bread/cakes and the Priestess shall distribute the cup of wine/ale/juice. For this ritual, the* Dedicant *is served first.*

**Priest or Priestess:** “The celebration of bread and wine is not unique to Wicca. Many religions in many cultures have venerated the bounty of grain and vine. Bread and wine sustain the body and bring us together as a community. In the Wiccan tradition, these gifts also bring us in communion with the God and Goddess. And so we bring you these gifts so that we may be united with one another in spirit.”

**Priestess**: “With the cup, we are one.”

**Covener**: “Blessed be”

**Priest**: “We are one people, we share one bread.”

**Covener** “Blessed be.”

## Drumming and Chanting

A seasonally-appropriate chant will be used, as well as festive drumming.

## Releasing the Quarters

The elements and deities will be released in the opposite order in which they were invoked.

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for the grains of yellow and gold

Corn and wheat, as you foretold

Thank you for the fruit-laden trees

And blossoms, wax, honey, and bees

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Lord of the Harvest, God of the Grain

Thank you for coming to us again

The time of harvest is at hand

We reap the blessings of the land

Your life you give to sustain us all

As summer passes on towards fall

Lord of the Harvest, we give thanks to thee

God of the Grain, Blessed be

Hail and farewell.

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the verdant hills and fields

Take with you our thanks for its wondrous yields

The corn is ready, the fruit is ripe

The harvest comes with a sickle’s swipe

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the streams the feed our grain

And to the torrential summer rain

Your blessings descend to us from the sky

It cools our skin and delights the eye

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the Bonfires that brighten the night

Wood smoke and incense give us delight

Your blessings shine in candle light

The sun now sets, but you grant us sight

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds of the summer sky

Upon your currents, blossoms fly

We thank you for the fragrant breeze

That blows aloft through verdant trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

*The Celebrant traces the path of the circle in a counterclockwise (widdershins) direction, using a wand or Athame.*

**Celebrant**: The Circle, though open, remains unbroken.

**Celebrant and Coven:** Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

**Celebrant**: Blessed be!

# http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4858540828069497&pid=1.7&w=126&h=154&c=7&rs=1An Initiation Rite

An Initiation Rite is used when a Dedicant has completed at least a year and a day studying and contemplating the Wiccan path and has subsequently decided to formally become a Witch and Priestess (or Witch and Priest, as the case may be). While the Initiation Rite marks the end of the year-and-a-day period of learning about the Wiccan faith before formal initiation takes place, it is hardly the end of the learning process. As with other milestones in life, Initiation is merely one stop in a much longer journey. The Initiation Rite is not to be taken lightly or casually. From this point, the new Initiate is also clergy. This confers new responsibilities and duties that a Dedicant does not have. A Wiccan Priestess is both servant and leader in equal measure. And even when leading, a Priestess must take the needs of others into account. Those seeking Initiation in order to have power over others do so for the wrong reason. A Priestess serves the God and Goddess, the Coven or Circle, the community, the ecology, and the universe. This truth is why a seeker of the Wiccan faith must contemplate the Path for at least a year and a day before elevation as an Initiate is possible.

*Note: Although the text is written with feminine pronouns, it is assumed that the Celebrant will adjust the text accordingly for a male Initiate.*

## Preparing the Sacred Space

Weather permitting, it is preferable that the ritual take place outdoors in a natural setting. Likewise, it is preferable if the Initiation Rite can take place on a full moon night. The Celebrant shall place torches at the periphery of the sacred space at the proper cardinal directions. The space shall be purified with sage smoke and ritually swept with a broom. Decorate the altar as seasonally appropriate. For example, the altar for an Initiation occurring around the same time as Lughnasadh can be decorated with corn and grain. Likewise, choose a seasonally-appropriate cakes and ale (again, using a summer rite example, the beverage can be mead or mint tea, while the cakes can be corn muffins.)

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response from the Covenors after each element is called is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, we call to you this night

Charge up this altar with power and might

Blow negative power away from this place

Let us instead have peace and grace

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, we call you this night

Stoke up this altar with power and might

Burn away all negative power

Inspire our hearts for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we call you this night

Flow through this altar with power and might

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is charged

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we call you this night

Fortify this altar with power and might

Ground out from this place all negative power

Expand our wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is charged

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

In the moonlit glow of this Esbat night

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

**Priestess:**

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

**Priest:**

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

**Priestess:**

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

It is preferable for there to be at least seven Covenors (priest, priestess, four covenors, and the new initiate.) If there are four covenors, then the priestess shall assign quarter calls to the covenors. If there are only two covenors, then the priestess shall assign one member for air/water and another for earth/fire. The coven affirms the phrase “Hail and Welcome” at the end of each call. *(For a male initiate, substitute gender pronouns as appropriate.)*

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Bless this Initiate with clarity of thought

That she may remember all that’s thought

And within her may new ideas raise

For service, learning, help, and praise

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Grant the initiate passion bright

To rebuke injustice and serve the light

And within her may the motivation raise

To wholly live the Wiccan ways

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks, we invite you here.

Grant the Initiate compassion strong

To heal the wounded, to right the wrong

And within her heart may pure love raise

And shine on others through all her days

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here.

Grant the Initiate a strong resolve

Against which may all fear dissolve

And within her may new stability raise

To help guide others through troubled days

Guardian of the North we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Sky

In love and thanks, we invite you again.

Grant the Initiate courage now

Against all fear and furrowed brow

Discipline, Sacrifice, and Honor you teach

May these powers be within her reach

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sky, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

With love and thanks we invite you here

Grant the Initiate light and life

That she may quell injustice and strife

Wisdom, Love, and Peace you teach

May these powers be within her reach

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

## A Purifying Meditation

*The Celebrant leads the Covenors in a guided meditation. The blessings contained in the meditation are, of course, primarily directed at the new Initiate. This passage uses female pronouns. However, the pronouns may be changed depending on how the new initiate’s gender identification.*

**Celebrant leads:**

Close your eyes and arrange your body in a comfortable position. Have your feet in contact with the ground and have your spine straight. Take three slow breaths. Breath in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place, and now your awareness travels to a bright, shimmering desert. The dunes are dozens of feet high and the wind blows fine streamers of sand from the rounded peaks. Birds fly lazily overhead on the warm thermals that continuously rise from the land. The sky is cloudless and cerulean blue. You have a sensation of its height. Even from the ground, you sense the massive and formidable power of unseen wind currents in the upper atmosphere. Though you do not fly, you suspect that you could easily do so in this place -- for the wind whips around your feet and ruffles your clothes and tousles your hair. The wind is as a living thing. You could so easily ask it to carry you aloft into the brilliant blue sky.

Receive the gift of Air. Remember its power and let it guide you on days when your sails are becalmed and the way ahead is stalled.

You look up and see that the sun at its zenith in the middle of the sky. The sun is bright, yellow-white, and strong. In this place, you can look directly into the brightness of the sun and it does not burn your retinas. Instead, you see its shining perfection, a power, a life-giving energy that empowers you. The sun’s light is purifying, energizing, and cleansing. Feel it enter your body, purging negative energy, cleansing your mind and heart of fear, hate, spite, and malice.

Receive the gifts of light and fire. Remember this light and let it guide you when lesser lights have failed.

Now, set your eyes to the west. You climb the high dunes and as you do, you grow thirsty. In this place of sand and sun, the moisture quickly leeches from your body. The sweat evaporates from your skin as quickly as it is generated. But from atop the highest dune, you see a wide, sandy plane below and an oasis of green and blue within a distance you can easily walk.

Away from the dunes, you see that the desert is not a sterile wasteland at all, but actually teems with life. Cacti, hardy scrub, and sharp grasses dot the dry earth. Insects and scorpions crawl about on the sand. Snakes and lizards sun themselves on rocks. Birds perch on barrel cacti and make their nests in stunted shrubs. As you approach the oasis, the plant life changes color from grey-green to a deep verdant hue.

The oasis is a natural spring several hundred feet in diameter. At the center of the shallow lake, a jet of water a dozen feet high bubbles and gurgles. You touch your parched lips to the clear surface of the natural lake and drink deeply of the clean, pure water. You feel its coolness and purity wash toxins from your body. You stand and look into the lake. The water is as clear as glass. And you suspect that, in this place, the water has the power to reveal secrets to you that have thus far remained hidden. What does it reveal to you now? You contemplate this for a while. [Celebrant now pauses for a short time]

Receive the gift of water. Remember its clarity when the way ahead is obscured.

You walk around the edge of the lake and you feel called to a spot of sandy earth only a few feet from the lakeside. You have the feeling that you are supposed to dig here. And so you kneel down and dig into the earth your bare hands. The moist earth is cool to the touch – dark, natural, and wholesome. As you dig, you feel the earth draw the last of the negative energy from your body and spirit. You have a sense of how deep the ground actually is, and even further in the darkness below, you sense the vibrant, living, molten core of the planet. From deep within that core, an invisible force emanates that shields the whole planet from the excesses of the sun. And between Earth and Sun, there is a precious balance that allows life to thrive. You are part of that balance.

Your fingers scrape along the surface of a small metal box that had been buried in the sand. The box has an inscription upon it, and you realize that it is addressed to you. The box contains a gift. You receive an ornate silver compass on a sturdy, coarse-linked chain. The compass has a silver needle that points in the direction you wish to go. The dial is fitted with a topaz for the east, a ruby for the south, a sapphire for the west, and an emerald for the north. You understand that forces from deep within the earth empower the compass to guide you.

Receive the gift of Darkness and Earth, and remember their power when you have lost your way and need guidance.

You are ready to leave this place. You have received the gifts of light and dark, earth and air, fire and water. In time, you know you will learn to balance these forces in your life and help others to do the same. You are ready to become a Priestess.

We are leaving the wonder and splendor of the vast desert and the sacred oasis. We are leaving this place of open sky and shining sun. Close your eyes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Blessing the Initiate

*Note: The initiate’s title of “priestess” may be substituted for “priest” depending on the gender identity of the initiate. The same is true for pronoun use (he/she/they, etc).*

In the Wiccan neo-pagan tradition, it is customary for a person new to the faith to take a year and a day to study, learn, and make deep consideration concerning her spiritual path. This is often referred to as the Dedicant Year or the Seeker Year. Upon completion of a year and a day of study and contemplation, the Dedicant may choose to seek formal initiation. The rite of initiation confers upon the Dedicant the duties, responsibilities, and restrictions that come with being a Priestess. The Wiccan path is not one to be undertaken as a lark. The Wiccan path is more than just magical practices; it is a lifelong dedication to the Goddess and God, to Nature, to wisdom, and to each other. It is a path of peace and a path of learning. The act of Initiation continues and unending journey.

Why a “year and a day”? Upon completion of this period, the new Initiate has had the opportunity to study, observe, and participate in all eight Sabbats, as well as to experience with new vision the cycle of the seasons, the waxing and waning of life energy as spring turns to summer, then passes to autumn, and then to winter. This time gave the new Initiate the time to her place in the ecology and in the spirit world. This rite formalizes the Initiate’s commitment to serve the God and Goddess, the community, and the ecology.

*Note: If this service has both male and female Celebrants, the male (Priest) will present the Initiate’s cord and the female (Priestess) will present the Dedicant’s coven pentacle. The cord is typically woven from three colors, and should be of length equal to the Initiate’s height. For a Coven with three degrees, the suggested colors are: 1st degree (red, white, black), 2nd degree (blue, white, black), and 3rd degree (silver, white, black). For Circles or other configurations with only one degree of initiation, use the colors for 1st degree. Some covens may use other color combinations.*

**Celebrant/Priest** : “Is there one who seeks Initiation into the Wiccan path?”

**Initiate**: “I am here.”

**Celebrant/Priestess**: “By what name shall you be known to this sacred circle?”

**Initiate**: “I shall be known as *(name)*.”

**Celebrant/Priest**: “Then you shall be known as (name). It is your name of power, your name in magical workings, and your name within this sacred circle Are you ritually purified and accepting of the blessings of the gods?”

**Initiate**: “I am.”

*At this point, the Celebrant anoints the Initiate’s forehead, drawing an invoking pentacle.*

**Celebrant/Priestess**: “You are a child of the gods, and I ask them to bless you. I name you Witch. I name you Priestess. May the God and Goddess work through you in your thoughts, words, and deeds. I give you this pentacle as an outward symbol of your initiation [in coven name] [in circle name]. Receive it in perfect love and perfect trust.”

**Initiate:** “In perfect love and perfect trust, I receive this pentacle. So mote it be.”

*The Celebrant places the pentacle around the Initiate’s neck.*

**Celebrant/Priest**: “You are a child of the gods and I ask them to bless you. I name you Witch. I name you Priestess. May the God and Goddess work through you in your thoughts, words, and deeds. I give you this cord as an outward symbol of your initiation [in coven name] [in circle name]. I declare that you have achieved the rank of [1st degree, 2nd degree, 3rd degree] Initiate. Receive it in perfect love and perfect trust.”

**Initiate:** “In perfect love and perfect trust, I receive this cord. So mote it be.”

*The Celebrant ties the Initiate’s cord around her waist.*

**Celebrant/Priestess**: “No man or woman makes another a Witch. It is the God and Goddess that have done so. This ceremony affirms the truth that you already know. You are a Priestess, in service to the God and Goddess, to nature, and to your brothers and sisters [in coven name] [in circle name] [in the Craft]. Do you agree that this is so?”

**Initiate:** “I do. So mote it be.”

**Celebrant/Priest** (To Covenors): “Brothers and Sisters of [coven name] [circle name], what blessing would you give to [Initiate]?”

*Each Covenor in sequence greets the new Initiate and offers a blessing to the new Initiate. Examples of blessings include (but are not limited to), “dedication”, “wisdom”, “perseverance”, “compassion”, “patience”, etc. This can be done in conjunction with clasped hands or a friendly embrace if the initiate is comfortable with that level of physical contact.*

**Covenor**: “May the gods bless you with [blessing]”.

**Initiate**: “Blessed be”.

**Celebrant/Priestess**: “Tonight [or Today], you have formalized your dedication to the Goddess and God. You have asked them to walk beside you and guide you on your spiritual journey. You have pledged to honor them and to seek to grow in a closer relationship with them.”

**Initiate:** “I have.”

**Celebrant/Priest**: “Your journey as Priestess begins. Blessed be.”

### Welcoming and Gifting (optional)

At this point, if the Priest and Priestess (and/or other Coven members) have gifts (such as ritual tools, books, etc.) or individualized blessings to give to the new Initiate, this is the time to do so.

## Cakes & Ale

*As this ritual creates a new clergy person, the new initiate should fulfil the role of Priestess or Priest (as appropriate.*

#### Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

#### Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

## Optional: Drumming and Chanting

A seasonally-appropriate chant may be used, as well as festive drumming.

## Releasing the Quarters

The elements and deities will be released in the opposite order in which they were invoked.

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for the gifts that you bestow

May they flourish, may they grow

And may this Priestess serve you true

In her service, may love shine through

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Sky

Thank you for coming to us again

Thank you for the gifts you give

Courage, faith, and the will to live

May this Priestess serve in truth and trust

And fulfill her duties as she must.

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sky, Blessed be

Hail and farewell.

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the peaks and plains and hills

Thanks for enhancing all our wills

Return to the forests and verdant field

May your blessing have lasting yield.

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the streams and lakes and seas

Thanks for clarifying hidden mysteries

Return to the mist and rain and snow

May your blessings we always know

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the Bonfires that flicker at night

Thanks for passion to do what’s right

Return to the candles and braziers bright

May your blessings grant keen insight

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds, return to the sky

Thanks for the clarity of thought and eye

Return to the wind and gale and breeze

May your blessings grant us ease

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The newly-initiated clergy person declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the light of faith guide us

May the God and Goddess bless us

May our bonds of friendship empower us

May our words and deeds honor us

The circle, now upon, remains unbroken

Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!

[Optional]

For we are the witches

We are the wise

We are the children of light!”

## About this ritual

Scott Cunningham, in his epic guide “Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner” made it a point that Wicca would be a much smaller, less-accessible religion that would forever remain on the fringe if the Initiatory path was restricted to formalized Covens. He believed that humans do not create witches, but the gods do. After all, who initiated the first witch? Who elevated the first 3rd Degree High Priestess to the 3rd Degree? At some point, some person early in the history of the craft self-initiated. If that choice was valid then, it is valid now.

Therefore, this ritual can be used in a variety of ways. It can certainly be used in a formal Coven setting. It can be used in a non-coven (but still structured) venue such as an Open Circle). Finally – with a bit of editing and tweaking – this ritual could be adapted for use by a solitary practitioner for self-initiation.

Never let another person dictate the veracity of your claim on being a witch or a Wiccan. May the choice to initiate be the foundation for a lifetime of additional learning, exploration, and discovery. And, in all things, have words and deeds that affirm life, affirm love, affirm the Earth, affirm wisdom, and affirm human dignity. Do these five things and you will never fail to honor the Lord and Lady, and you will never fail to honor the religion of Wicca.

# http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4515699350045666&pid=1.7&w=109&h=151&c=7&rs=1A Handfastening Rite

*Note: Although this rite is written for a heterosexual Handfastening, it is easy to modify the pronouns for use in a same-sex Handfastening ritual.*

## Preparing the Sacred Space

The perimeter of the circle is marked by four torches placed at the cardinal directions. Flowing ribbons of the appropriate color are tied along the shafts of each torch. A wand of incense is lit alongside the four torches. The sacred space is swept with a broom made from natural materials. The guests/covenors are encouraged to wear cheerful colors (most Wiccan services have participants wearing black. But a Handfastening is very celebratory). However, guests/covenors shall *not* wear white. Each guest/covenor shall be purified with sage smoke. The altar preparations shall be seasonally appropriate.

## Overview

**Celebrant**: “The Sacred Rite of Handfastening is an affirmation of love and commitment between two people who seek to become a greater whole by joining their lives together. The promise of Handfastening is one of mutual love, mutual trust, mutual care for one another. From friendship is built trust, and upon trust is built love. And love is more than a mere emotion, it is a way of life, a state of being.

“The two people who will be joined today will will make promises that will strengthen each other's lives and teach each other's souls.

“ Is it your intent to be joined in the Rite of Handfastening?”

**Dedicants**: It is our intent.

**Celebrant**: Then let the Rite begin.

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

*Priestess*:

“Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers.”

*Covenors*:

“We come to the Circle, we answer the call!”

### Second Iteration

*Priest*:

“We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife.”

*Coverers*:

“We come to the Circle, we answer the call!”

### Third Iteration

*Priestess*:

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

*Covenors*:

“We come to the Circle, we answer the call!”

*Priest and Priestess:* “The Circle is cast!”

*Everyone*: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The Priest/Priestess/Celebrant shall choose four Covenors to Call the Quarters. After each Call, the selected covener shall light the torch that corresponds with the appropriate element. The coven responds to each Call with “Hail and Welcome!”

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks, we invite you here

Soft breezes alight upon cheek and eye

Blessings from wind and clouds and sky

And for the home they share in love

Bestow your blessings from above

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks, we invite you here.

The light from torches brightens the face

Flickering colors to bless this place

And for the home they soon shall share

Bless their hearth to warm the air

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks, we invite you here

The blessings of mist for lips and skin

Nourish their bodies and spirits within

And around the house shared by these two

May their trees and flowers be blessed with dew

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

The blessings of strength beneath our feet

From you grows the grain and wheat

And for the home where these two shall alight

Defend their shelter from the gales of night

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### God

God of the Grain, Lord of the Sun

In love and thanks we invite you here

You bring gifts of courage, strength, and power

Bless these two at the fastening hour

And for the home they share together

May it withstand all time and weather

God of the Grain, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sun, Blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

In love and thanks, we invite you here

You bring gifts of mercy, love, and peace

For these two, let those gifts increase

Bless the home they share in life

A peaceful sanctuary for man and wife\*

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, Blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

\* *For a same-sex Handfastening rite, substitute “A peaceful sanctuary free of strife”.*

## The Handfastening

The sacred rite of Handfastening is joining together of two as one. It is a union that is to be entered into both joyfully and seriously. It is to be entered into with both knowledge and love, trust and dedication, honestly and without reservation. The sacred union compels the dedicants to not only share joys and triumphs, but sorrows and failures. For in life, there is both happiness and sadness, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty. And even with the best intent, sometimes two who are beloved may wound one another through word or deed. And still, the path of life is more fulfilled journey when that journey is shared with one's beloved. May it be so for these two who are about to be joined.

*(For a same-sex Handfastening rite, modify “Bride” and “Groom” references as appropriate).*

*Note: If the service is being led by a Priest and Priestess, then the Priest shall recite cords one, three, and five, while the Priestess recites cords two, four, and six. If there is one Celebrant, that person shall recite all six cords.*

### First Cord

**Celebrant** (to dedicants): I bid you look into each other's eyes.

*A brief pause*

**Celebrant** (to groom): Will you cause your beloved pain?

**Groom**: I may

**Celebrant**: Is that your intent?

**Groom**: No

**Celebrant** (to bride): Will you cause your beloved pain?

**Bride**: I may

**Celebrant**: Is that your intent?

**Bride**: No

**Celebrant** (to both): Will you share each others' pain and seek to ease it?

**Dedicants**: We will

**Celebrant** (to both): And so the binding is made.

*Celebrant drapes the first cord across the dedicants' hands.*

### Second Cord

**Celebrant** (to Bride): Will you share your beloved's laughter?

**Bride**: Yes

**Celebrant** (to Groom): Will you share your beloved's laughter?

**Groom**: Yes

**Celebrant** (to both): Will you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?

**Dedicants**: We will

**Celebrant** (to both): And so the binding is made.

*Celebrant drapes the second cord across the dedicants' hands.*

### Third Cord

**Celebrant** (to Groom): Will you burden your beloved?

**Groom**: I may

**Celebrant**: Is that your intent?

**Groom**: No

**Celebrant** (to Bride): Will you burden your beloved?

**Bride**: I may

**Celebrant**: Is that your intent?

**Bride**: No

**Celebrant** (to both): Will you share each other's burdens so that your spirits may grow in this union?

**Dedicants**: We will

**Celebrant** (to both): And so the binding is made.

*Celebrant drapes the third cord across the dedicants' hands.*

### Fourth Cord

**Celebrant** (to Bride): Will you share your beloved's dreams?

**Bride**: Yes

**Celebrant** (to Groom): Will you share your beloved's dreams?

**Groom**: Yes

**Celebrant** (to both): Will you use your shared dreams to create new hopes and new realities?

**Dedicants**: We will

**Celebrant** (to both): And so the binding is made.

*Celebrant drapes the fourth cord across the dedicants' hands.*

### Fifth Cord

**Celebrant** (to Groom): Will you cause your beloved anger?

**Groom**: I may

**Celebrant**: Is that your intent?

**Groom**: No

**Celebrant** (to Bride): Will you cause your beloved anger?

**Bride**: I may

**Celebrant**: Is that your intent?

**Bride**: No

**Celebrant** (to both): Will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

**Dedicants**: We will.

**Celebrant** (to both): And so the binding is made.

*Celebrant drapes the fifth cord across the dedicants' hands.*

### Sixth Cord

**Celebrant** (to Bride): Will you honor your beloved?

**Bride**: Yes

**Celebrant** (to Groom): Will you honor your beloved?

**Groom**: Yes

**Celebrant** (to both): Will you always seek to be deserving of that honor?

**Dedicants**: We will

**Celebrant** (to both): And so the binding is made.

*Celebrant drapes the sixth cord across the dedicants' hands.*

### Binding

*If there is a Priest and Priestess present, the Priest will begin tying the knots while the Priestess recites the blessing. If there is only one Celebrant, that person shall recite the blessing while tying the knots.*

**Celebrant**: These knots are but symbols. It is the vows, and the intent behind the vows, that empower this binding. May the God grant you courage, will, and self-sacrifice for one another. May the Goddess grant you mercy, kindness, and nurturing for one another. May the vows made in love and faith withstand all external forces intent on harm and strife. So mote it be.

**Dedicants**: So mote it be

*The tied cords may now be placed on the altar*

**Celebrant**: These two are now as one. Blessed be.

**Covenors**: Blessed be

## Cakes and Ale

*If the ritual is led by a Priest and Priestess, the Priest shall serve the bread and the Priestess shall serve the wine. If there is only one Celebrant, that person shall serve both items. The bread and wine should be seasonally relevant (for example, cornbread and mead for a service that takes place around Lughnassadh).*

The sharing of bread and wine is a unifying rite that spans many religions and many cultures. It is a reminder of our relationship to the ecology as well as a reminder of our ties of friendship to one another. We share this bread and wine in honor of the sacrificial nature of the God and the life-sustaining nature of the Goddess.

Blessed be this bread, of corn and grain

Blessed be the God of the Harvest's rein

Blessed be this cup, of ale and wine

Blessed be the Goddess, of love divine

*The Celebrant serves the cakes to the newly married couple first and then to the other Covenors.*

**Celebrant**: We are one people, we share one bread. Blessed be.

**Covenor**: Blessed be.

*The Celebrant serves the wine/ale to the newly married couple first and then to the other covenors. For health/sanitary reasons, a covenor may choose to genuflect upon the cup instead of drinking directly from the cup.*

**Celebrant**: With this cup, we are one. Blessed be.

**Covenor**: Blessed be.

### Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental guardians are released in reverse order from how they were called. As each guardian is released, the corresponding torch is extinguished. Covenors repeat “Hail and Farewell” after each dismissal.

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, giver of life

We give you thanks for coming here

Your gift of peace we now embrace

As we prepare to depart this place

With wisdom, kindness, mercy, love

From Earth below to sky above

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### God

God of the Harvest, Lord of the Sun

We give you thanks for coming here

Your gift of courage we now embrace

As we prepare to depart this place

Sacrifice, Honor, and Duty you know

From sky above to Earth below

God of the Harvest, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Your gift of stability we now embrace

As we prepare to leave this place

Return to the hills and mountains bright

As we conclude the Handfastening Rite

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Your gift of prescience we now embrace

As we prepare to leave this place

Return to the rivers and seas so clear

As we conclude this day of cheer

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Your gift of passion we now embrace

As we prepare to leave this place

Return to the torches and hearths so warm

As we depart here, arm in arm

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Your gift of adaptation we now embrace

As we prepare to leave this place

Return to the clouds, and sky so blue

As we affirm love between these two

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

God and Goddess, bright angels, kind spirits, we thank you. Stay if you wish, go if you must, but know that you are welcome!

*The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the Circle in a counterclockwise (widdershins) direction, wand in hand, starting from the east.*

**Celebrant**: The circle, though open, remains unbroken.

**Celebrant** and Covenors: Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!

**Celebrant**: This rite is concluded.

# http://ts4.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4594288689547159&pid=1.7&w=220&h=153&c=7&rs=1A Funeral Rite

While Wicca tends to be a celebratory religion that emphasizes life, nature, and joy, the reality of death cannot be overlooked. Sometimes death is unexpected – the result of an accident or an act of violence. Sometimes death is a blessing that comes at the end of a long illness. While death physically separates us from the people we love, the cycle of life continues and therefore death is merely one spoke in the endless turning of the Great Wheel.

It is important to make allowances for the absence of the body of the deceased. Wicca is still a minority faith and there is still great prejudice against witches by practitioners of the dominant faiths. Therefore, it is possible that the family of the deceased may insist on a religious service in keeping with their faith – despite the fact that the deceased had pagan affiliation. Therefore the service may take place without the body of the deceased and on a different day as the funeral held by the deceased’s family.

On the other hand, the Celebrant(s) should take into consideration that the family members of the deceased, while not pagan, is fully accepting of the religious identity of the deceased. In that event, a Celebrant should be prepared to allow the non-pagan into sacred space for the purpose of honoring the dead. The non-pagan family member should be given a brief overview concerning proper etiquette and when to say ritual responses (such as “hail and welcome” and “so mote it be”). While it is generally preferable for only Wiccans and Pagans to be included into sacred space, a funeral rite is an understandable exception to this guideline. A funeral is as much a service for the living as it is for the dead, and a Celebrant’s primary duty in this matter is to encourage the start of the healing process for those feeling the sting of loss.

# Esbat Rituals

While Sabbats are “solar” holidays that follow the course of the sun (solstices, equinoxes, and the midpoints inbetween), Esbats follow the course of the moon. Specifically, an Esbat service is a celebration of the full moon. There are thirteen full moon services in a year. This is partly where the “Year and a Day” figure comes from for initiations.

This guide has numerous examples of possible Esbat services. Esbats tend to be less formal that Sabbats.

Unlike Sabbats, which are on the same days each year, the dates for Esbats change from year to year because the lunar cycle is 28 days but the calendar months typically have 30 or 31 days. There are many free applications for cell phones that will display the dates of all the full moons for a given year.

When planning an Esbat service, many magical traditions allow for the service to be scheduled up to two days before or two days after the actual full moon.

# An Ecology Rite

While primarily used for spring, the purpose of the Ecology Rite is to direct healing energy toward areas of the world affected by ecological contamination (such as an oil spill, uncontrolled fire, etc.) As this ritual directs a lot of energy from the participants, it is critical that the Covenors complete a proper grounding after the ritual is concluded.

## Materials needed

Aside from the standard altar items, the only special materials this ritual requires is flash paper and a felt tip pen. An elemental representation should be added to the altar if the Celebrant chooses to use the optional “elemental king” calls.

## Altar Blessing

As this ritual has the intent of cleansing nature, there are many appropriate choices in altar cloths. For example, for cleansing a body of water, an altar cloth with a nautical or seaside theme would be good. For helping the land recover from a forest fire or an oil spill, a forest theme would work.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

And in its passing, a place to pray

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

*Celebrant stomps his/her foot.*

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The elements and deities are called in sequence, starting from the east and in a clockwise order. The appropriate candle is lit after each call. If there is a Handmaiden present, then the candles are lit by the Handmaiden.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Your power rises against soot and smoke

You free us from its bitter yoke

Clear the way for things that fly

Restore to us the cerulean sky

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Your power rises against filth and sludge

And against broken hulks that will not budge

Burn away the taint man made

And from the ash new leaf and shade

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

You rise against the oily tide

Dilute the poison far and wide

Disperse the ruin man has made

And restore life to the fragile glade

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks, we invite you here

You rise against poison that befouls the land

And against the tar that spoils the sand

Draw back the oil that escaped the crust

In your power, we surely trust

Guardian of the Earth, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Lord of the Sun, God of the Sky

In love and thanks, we invite you here

Your light shines down upon the coast and sea

Sunlight to restore life as it should be

Empower the creatures of water and sky

That they may endure, not wither and die.

Lord of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sky, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of Life

In love and thanks we invite you here

Your power rises to help fish and bird

Their pleas for aid shan't go unheard

Yours is the power to sustain all life

Even in times of ruin and strife

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, Blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## [Optional: Calling Elemental Kings]

Should the Celebrant desire to invoke elemental kings (as a means of enhancing the focus of the Circle of Power), a candle of appropriate color should be lit between the God and Goddess candles. The King invoked depends on the nature of the magical working. For example, the King of Undines would be called for purifying a body of water while King of Sylphs could be called for purifying the atmosphere.

### King of Sylphs

Lord of the Sylphs we call unto thee

Grant to the skies renewed purity

Banish the swirling black ash of mankind’s disaster

Bring back fresh wind, for you are its master

Lord of the Sylphs, please hear our call

Your power can challenge pollution’s grey pall

Hail and Welcome!

### King of Undines

Lord of the Undines we call unto thee

Grant the wide seas new purity

Banish the black slicks of mankind’s disaster

Bring back clean water, for you are its master

Lord of the Undines, please hear our call

Your power can challenge pollution’s grey pall

Hail and Welcome!

### King of Salamanders

Lord of the Salamanders we call unto thee

With a controlled blaze you bring new purity

Contain the flames from mankind’s disaster

Of helpful blaze, you are its master

Lord of Salamanders, please hear our call

You power can rein in the conflagrations’ enthrall

Hail and Welcome!

### King of Gnomes

Lord of the Gnomes we call unto thee

Grant the green Earth new purity

Banish the toxins of mankind’s disaster

Replace it with expanses of new blooming pasture

Lord of the Gnomes, please hear our call

Your power can challenge pollution’s grey pall

Hail and Welcome!

## Meditation

This meditation will focus on directing regenerative energy to an area of the world where nature has been injured [name area of concern]. To prepare yourself for meditating, relax your body, sit with your spine straight, and make sure your feet are in contact with the ground. Close your eyes and let the distractions of the day fall away. Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out...

In your mind's eye, we are traveling away from this place. You stand at the land's end between earth and sea. It is late summer and sun shines with the amber radiance of late afternoon. The salt air blows warmly across the clear eater as the high tide begins to recede. You taste salt on your lips as the breakers cast fine white spray into the air. Gulls fly overhead, casting angular shadows upon the beige-white sand. The tide water feels cold as it washes over your feet, giving you a tingle of surprise. The sand is cool and gritty. Small crabs skitter across the beach before being carried back to sea by the foaming breakers.

The sea is vast and blue and clear. You feel dwarfed by its vastness, its power, and its wonder.

All is as it should be.

Look to the sun. Its light is strong and bright, and yet you can look directly at the sun without it burning your eyes. Draw energy from the sun into your body. Let its purifying light fill you with power -- to effect change for the better. Draw its light into you, knowing that sunlight has the power to break down poisons and to shatter molecular bonds of manmade toxins. When you can draw no more, turn your gaze to the sea.

As the sun begins to set, the sea reflects myriad reflections on its surface -- sky blue and crimson from the sun. Beneath the surface, you feel the cool, steady rhythms of the waves and the cycling of the tides. Below the surface, the water is clear and you can see into the darkness below. The sea is deep but you are not afraid. From the water comes life. It supports you. You feel one with its energy. It is an ancient force, much older than humanity. There is power here. Draw some of its energy into your being. Visualize the purity of the water and its power to heal injury and dilute toxins.

We are leaving this place now. Remember what you have seen. Close your eyes in this other place and relax your body. Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out...

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## The Magical Working

The meditation exercise had the purpose of drawing energy for the magical working. For this rite, the covenors will use flash paper to symbolize the purifying power of the sun to burn away and neutralize poisons and toxins in the water and on the shores. Power words like "renewal", "clean", and "purify" are valid choices of words to write on the flash paper. When each person has empowered their intent upon the paper, it is burned in the cauldron so as to release the focused energy at the target location.

## Chanting and Drumming

The Celebrant will lead the coven in an appropriate set of seasonal chants.

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the vines above, to the grapes and to the wine. Blessed be the Goddess for this gift.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the stalks above, to the grain and to the bread. Blessed be the God for this gift.”

### The Sharing

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the covenors in sequence. Alternatively, if each covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the covenor’s cups. Depending on the Coven’s magical tradition, the response could be amended to “Thou Art God” and “Thou Art Goddess”.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the covenors in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Elements and Deities

The deities and elements are released in the opposite order in which they were called. The Handmaiden (if present) extinguishes the candles as the entities are released.

### [Optional: Releasing the Elemental Kings]

If this ritual employed one or more Elemental Kings, they should be released at this time in the order they were called.

### King of Gnomes

Lord of the Gnomes we give thanks to thee

For aiding our goal of Earth’s purity

Crystals and rock, dirt and soil

Your power aided our magical toil

Return to your realm in thanks and peace

We bid you safe journey and timely release

Hail and farewell!

### King of Undines

Lord of the Undines we give thanks to thee

For aiding our goal of Water’s purity

Oceans and tides, rivers and seas

Your power was felt, you answered our pleas

Return to your realm in thanks and peace

We bid you safe journey and timely release

Hail and farewell!

### King of Salamanders

Lord of the Salamanders we give thanks to thee

For aiding our goal of Fire’s purity

Hearths and bonfires, torches and flame

Your power cleanses we mightily proclaim

Return to your realm in thanks and peace

We bid you safe journey and timely release

Hail and farewell!

### King of Sylphs

Lord of the Sylphs we give thanks to thee

For aiding our goal of Air’s purity

Windstorm and breezes, gust and gale

Your power was manifefest, the working won’t fail

Return to your realm in thanks and peace

We bid you safe journey and timely release

Hail and farewell!

### Goddess

Mother Goddess, Giver of life

We give you thanks for coming here

We thank you for your healing power

For fish and bird, fern and flower

We thank you for abiding love

As below, so above.

Mother Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### God

God of the Sun, Lord of the Sky

We give you thanks for coming here

We thank you for the healing sun

That shines its rays upon everyone

Light to light, and power to power

Thank you, god of tree and flower.

God of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the sky, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to mountains, return to the fields

Let life be restored, with increased yields

Return to the oak and birch and holly

Protected from man's greed and folly

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Return to the frozen lakes and streams

Beneath, the life force slumbers and dreams

Return to the wondrous drifts of snow

They shimmer in sunlight with a sparkling glow

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the torches, return to the flame

Your power and warmth we do acclaim

We thank you for your amber light

Purifying contamination day and night

Guardian of the South, I give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Gail and farewell!

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the wind, return to the sky

Thank you for supporting the things that fly

We feel your force through flowers and trees

You cool the brow and give us ease.

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the circle in widdershins (counterclockwise) order, starting in the east.

**Priest:** May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none!

**Priestess**: The circle, though open, remains unbroken. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!

# An Autumn Rite

This ritual is designed for a full-moon service that occurs in autumn.

### Materials needed:

* Flash paper
* A small cauldron with several candles (preferably tea lights) lit in the interior.
* An assortment of yarn in varying colors
* Scissors
* An assortment of felt-tip pens.

## Preparing Sacred Space

The sacred space is purified with sage smoke. For an outdoor ritual, there should be four torches lit at the cardinal directions. For an indoor ritual, place four pillar candles on stands at the appropriate points along the circle. Additionally, an indoor ritual space should be swept with a broom (this is not needed for an outdoor ritual since leaves and debris are natural to this setting). The altar should be decorated as seasonably appropriate (black, orange, yellow, brown). Possible altar dressings include small gourds, colored leaved from deciduous trees, or dried flowers.

### Celebrant’s ritual briefing:

“It is the season of the year when the Goddess is as the wise and loving Crone, ready to accept those who have died into her loving embrace to await the rest and regeneration to come. And yet, tonight is the full moon, where the Goddess is in the fullness of her power. Tonight, we can celebrate the time of rest that autumn brings, and recognize the active power that the loving Goddess exudes in every season – of birth, growth, death, rest, and rebirth. Blessed be the Mother Goddess!

“In tonight’s ritual, we will think of the waxing, fullness, and waning aspects of the Goddess and think of Her presence in our lives in all three aspects. In the waxing, we shall call to us that which builds, edifies, and sustains. In the fullness, we celebrate what has been fulfilled in our lives and the lives of those we love. In the waning, we will ritually burn away that which makes us stumble or that which we have no use. The Goddess is ever loving and ever present, both within and without. Blessed be the Mother Goddess.”

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven (or circle) is in attendance. As this ritually ideally takes place in October or November, the altar cloth should have patterns of brown, gold, orange, and red. Decorative items might include apples or gourds.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Blow away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Negative power will burn to dust

Illuminate us all with love and trust.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Let negative power be washed away

Let purer insight now hold sway

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant shall walk the perimeter of the circle once with incense, once with salt, and once with a wand or Athame. Alternatively, the circle can be cast using chimes, incense, and a wand or Athame.

### First Iteration

1. **Priestess (or Handmaiden/Waylander):**
2. "Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay
3. Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way
4. Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers
5. Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."
6. **Covenors:**
7. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

1. **Priest:**
2. "We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song
3. We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong
4. We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life
5. We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."
6. **Coverers:**
7. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

1. **Priestess:**
2. We remember the fire, the well, and the tree
3. We remember the call that all must be free
4. We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,
5. We remember the charge to love all and harm none
7. **Covenors**:
8. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"
9. **Celebrants (in unison):** "The circle is cast!"
10. **Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

If there is both a Priest and Priestess present, then the Priest shall call for the God and the Priestess shall call for the Goddess. Otherwise, for a ritual with one Celebrant, he/she shall call for both God and Goddess. For a gathering with at least four other Covenors, the Celebrant may assign the Calls to coven members. The ritual response for calls to spirits and deities is “Hail and welcome!”

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

Gentle spirits, we invite you here

In Autumn’s gale and darkening sky

We remember why things have to die

What has gone shall return once more

When spring’s breeze next comes to shore

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

Warm spirits we invite you here

Though the sun’s power is on the wane

The hearth and torch warms us again

The nights are cool and darkness falls

Candle lanterns light our halls

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

Cool spirits we invite you here

With snow and sleet and mist and rain

You bring life to the earth again

Though lakes will freeze and streams grow thin

The thaw will come, spring will begin

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

Calm spirits we invite you here

The ground is cold, and sleeps in peace

Awaiting the time of spring’s increase

Bless you, Earth, for this year’s food

And all the pretty trees that stood

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### The God

Lord of the Hunt, God of Shadow

In love and thanks, we invite you here

You ride the sky with red-eared hounds

To bring the lost to the sacred grounds

Lord of Summerland, you bring us peace

When time has come to have release

Lord of the Hunt, we give thanks to thee

God of Shadow, Blessed Be

Hail and Welcome!

### The Goddess

Mother Goddess, Beloved Crone

In love and thanks, we invite you here

Though this is the darkest time of year

With your gentle love, we shall not fear

A time of rest to reflect our deeds

A time to think of others’ needs

Beloved Crone, we give thanks to thee

Mother Goddess, Blessed Be.

Hail and Welcome!

## An Autumn Meditation

The Celebrant leads the Coven in a guided meditation. For this exercise, participants should place their bodies in a comfortable, relaxed position, with backs straight and their feet touching the floor or ground.

Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place. This room… this building… we are leaving it behind…

[Silence]

You open your eyes and look out upon a quiet farm, at night. The sky is black and cloudless. The stars are cold points of distant light that faintly flicker. There are so many stars. Here, beyond the occluding veil of light pollution from the city, you see the sky as it really is. The sky is vast, limitless, and you feel so small under its canopy of darkness and the speckling of points of faraway light.

Although the city lies far away from here, the moon shines down from directly above you – white, cold, and pale. It is a steady light. It is a light that gives you energy. There is part of your spirit that has longed to stand here, to feel the light that does not burn, to feel the coolness of the night in autumn.

The warmth of summer is gone. The insects – once a nocturnal cacophony – have dwindled to a slow, rhythmic chirp. The night is otherwise silent. In the moon’s silver light, red becomes grey, and yellow is white. The fields have been harvested and only dried stumps of corn stick up from the dry soil, row upon row until the gloom of night obscures your vision. The air is dry and you smell a faint whiff of burning wood.

You notice a flickering orange glow that seems to emanate from the other side of the darkened barn. You carefully walk around to explore. When you turn the corner, you see a heavy-set woman with black hair mixed with grey, and she wears black overalls and black gloves. She looks to be late middle-age and well-acquainted with hard work. Beside her, a bonfire cheerfully hisses and pops. Its warmth contrasts against the coolness of the night. You rub your hands together reflexively – you had not realized how cold they had become. The woman in black beckons you forward with a friendly wave of her muscular hand and a worldly smile. You notice a pile of discarded junk next to the bonfire.

“Old regrets, who needs them?” The farmer says plainly as she tosses an old magazine into the flames. As the cover burns, you make out the title as “College Daze – 2002 Bad Choices Edition.”

“And apologizing to the dead?” The woman in black continues, “After a while, you just have to move on.” She burns a “to do” list of activities to do with a sick mother.

“The thing about burning this junk is that is cleans up the yard and makes light and heat at the same time,” the farmer advised. “You should try it sometime.”

You spend a few moments thinking about old losses, old failures, old guilts, old wounds, and old anger. What in your life are you ready to be rid of? What light might come from burning that which weighs down your spirit?

[Silence for a time]

In your hand is the manifestation of what you want to burn. It may be a catalogue of past failures, a list of old scores unsettled, or the picture of that person who wounded you. But you are ready to be rid of its spiritual weight. You through it into the fire and it papers flash with amber light. You see its luminous ashes carried up into the night sky and seen no more. You are free of it.

“You should do this more often,” the farmer advises and gives you a knowing wink.

You nod respectfully and walk away from the bonfire and back into the vast expanse of fallow fields. The coolness returns and faint dry breeze caresses your cheeks. It is time to return. And so, you close your eyes.

Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

And when you are ready, open your eyes.

## The Magical Working

*The Ritual of Waxing Moon, Fullness, and Waning*

On this night of power, we can call upon the loving Goddess in all three aspects. Through Her, we call positive things to us, celebrate what has been accomplished, and cast things away that hinder us.

[Note: For time constraints, it is perfectly acceptable to do just the “burning away of detritus”. ]

### The Waxing Moon: Bind to us that which is positive

This part of the ritual will require several lengths of yarn or string, which shall be given to the Covenors.

The term “Cord of Life” is one for which we are all familiar. But there are many kinds of cords in our lives. There are the ties to each other that give us comfort and reassurance. There are the ties of husband to wife, and lover to lover, that join souls together. Tonight, we can ritually take a new cord and bind to us something positive, something good that we can take into the New Year. Take the cord and, say aloud something positive you wish to bind to your life, then tie it into a knot as you see fit. If you feel uncomfortable saying aloud what you wish to bind, simply say it as a whisper for only you and the Goddess to hear. Keep the knotted cord with you until we meet again.

*Note: covenors may choose to weave different colored strands together to enhance the magical working. For instance, a covenor may braid white and blue together for protection.*

### The Fullness of the Moon: Gift of thanks to the Goddess

In this time of year where we can also think of positive things we’ve completed. It’s good to remember those things we’ve accomplished and thank the Goddess and God for their blessings this year. At this time of year, the harvests are completed and we can see in full the fruits of our labors for this year. Having completed works of goodness, truth, and love is a positive and worthy offering to the Mother Goddess. Say aloud or (offer silently to your higher power) one positive accomplishment you’ve brought to completion or are in the process of working through.

### The Waning Moon: Burning of Debris

This ritual will require a small cauldron with a few lit candles inside. The lit candles will set pieces of flash paper on fire (which will leave no ash or litter behind).

The power of the waning moon is in banishment and decrease. The dark time is a time of endings as well as time when things are about to begin again. So tonight, think of a bad habit, a flaw, or some failing you’ve had this year and think of it burning away. Have no regret or judgment or guilt but instead simply let the negative thing go. This is also a time to make a good end to something you wish gone from your life. Write on the flash paper something that which is debris in your life then toss it into the cauldron to be consumed. Let the bad energy, bad habits, bad thoughts go from you and return no more.

## Ritual Drumming

This ritual will require percussion instruments such as drums, bells, tambourines, and rattles. The congregants may choose instruments as they wish.

Visualize the power of the spell/prayer the positive energy into the universe. Think of making us all stronger in our unity and in our love. Contemplate again that the Goddess is both Crone and mother concurrently as well as the contrast between the season and the moon cycle.

Recommended chants for this ritual are “Hoof and Horn” and “The Earth is Our Mother”.

Release the positive energy into the universe with a loud and final beat of the drums or a loud Huzzah!

## Cakes and Ale

Since the time of ancient days, the chalice has been a symbol of community and unity. As we pass the chalice, you may either take a sip from the cup or raise it above you head in thanks. Then pass it on, saying either of the two ritual responses. Likewise, bread has represented life and sustenance in many religions and cultures throughout the world. It is a sustaining and unifying symbol. A suggestion for the bread and beverage is pumpkin loaf and apple cider.

The Priestess reverently holds the Chalice and the Priest hold his Athame above the Chalice.

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the earth below

From the fertile earth the seeds do grow

From seeds to vine, from grape to wine

Blessings on this gift so fine.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the earth below

From the fertile soil, the wheat doth grow

From seeds to stalk, from grain to bread

With this gift we all are fed.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the Covenor in sequence. Alternatively, if each Covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the Covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art goddess”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the Covenor in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art god”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The spirits and deities are released in the opposite order in which they were invited. The ritual response is “Hail and farewell!”

### The Goddess

Mother Goddess, Beloved Crone

We thank you for coming here.

Kind mother, you’ve taught us not to fear

For in light and dark, you love us dear

From life to life, from turn to turn

You guide our spirits to seek and learn

Beloved Crone, we give thanks to thee

Mother Goddess, Blessed Be

Hail and Farewell!

### The God

Lord of the Hunt, God of the Shadow

We thank you for coming here

Lord of Summerland, thou art kind

To wayward spirits left behind

You search the world to bring them home

Just as we must someday come

Lord of the Hunt, we give thanks to thee

God of Shadow, Blessed Be

Hail and Farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We thank you for being with us

Return to rest, return to peace

And we will wait for spring’s increase

Thank you for your presence here

In our thoughts we hold you dear

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, Blessed Be

Hail and Farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We thank you for being with us

Return to the storms, return to the sea

And know that we are grateful to thee

Beyond the winter’s ice and snow

Spring’s rain will come, life will grow

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed Be

Hail and Farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of fire

We thank you for being with us

Return to the hearth and candle flame

As we await spring to reclaim

The sun is weak, the sky is dim

But soon its light will wax again

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of fire, Blessed Be

Hail and Farewell!

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We thank you for being with us

Return to the sky, the autumn gale

And to the clouds and light so pale

And though the winds are dry and cold

Spring’s breeze shall come, life shall take hold

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, Blessed Be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the light of faith guide us

May the God and Goddess bless us

May our bonds of friendship empower us

May our words and deeds honor us

The circle, now upon, remains unbroken

Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!

[Optional]

For we are the witches

We are the wise

We are the children of light!”

# A Diana Ritual

The Festival of Torches (also called Nemoralia) is a Roman celebration that honors the goddess Diana. This festival was typically held on August 13th each year. To honor Diana, celebrants would dance and sing along a lakeside with torches. They would weave flowers in their hair and tie ribbons to trees. While most people know Diana as a hunter Goddess, she actually is a diverse deity with many roles. She is a goddess sought after by women seeking an easy childbirth. She is a defender of the working classes (called “plebeians” in Rome). She is a protector of mothers and children. Thus, she has both warrior and nurturing aspects. She is good at hunting and tracking.

Of course, the next Sabbat is Mabon and heavily features apples. The magical correspondences with apple include feminine power, Gaia, making choices, and the Goddess. Apples have a long-standing tradition of magical power. If you cut an apple horizontally through the core, you will see a five-pointed star. Apple blossoms can be ground up and made into incense for healing. Apples offered to the dead at Samhain represent immortality. Apples given to a lover represent fidelity (with both people each eating half the apple). A new garden can be blessed with apple cider. For these reasons and more, apples are considered a magical powerhouse when it comes to fruit.

## Preparing Sacred Space

The idea altar cloth is one in which apple trees or baskets of apples are depicted on the cloth. Alternatively, a pleasing pattern of red and green is also appropriate. A small bowl of apples can be placed on the altar for decoration. If desired (and time permitting), the Celebrant can use an apple corer to turn four apples into candle holders and then placed at the Quarters. The symbols for Air, Fire, Water, and Earth can be carved into the apples.

### Standard Ritual Materials Needed

* Ritual tools: Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle.
* Altar dressing: incense holder (w/ incense), small red candle, tiny bowl of water, tiny bowl of salt.
* Candles: yellow (air), red (fire), blue (water), green (earth), gold (God), silver (Goddess).
* Consumables: salt, water, incense, matches or lighter.
* Food: apple cider (ale), apple-shaped cookies (cakes)

### Special Ritual Materials Needed

* A shallow tray filled with water
* Flat candles that can float on water
* Gold spell candles

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, please hear our call

Empower this altar for the use of us all

Blow aside all negative power

Let us have peace for this ritual hour

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, please hear our plea

Endow this altar with renewed energy

Burn away all negative power

Inspire us for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we call unto thee

Imbue this altar with renewed purity

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we call upon thee

Imbue this altar with renewed stability

Ground out from this place all negative power

Grant us wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is cleansed

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!” The Celebrant stomps his/her foot when declaring “So mote it be!”

In the moonlit glow of this Esbat night

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

### Casting the Circle

The Celebrant walks the circle three times, clockwise, starting in the east. On the first pass, the Celebrant uses a want of incense. On the second pass, the Celebrant sprinkles a mixture of salt and water. On the third pass, the Celebrant uses an Athame. One Celebrant could walk all three passes. Alternatively, the Handmaiden/Waylander could walk the first pass, the Priest could walk the second pass, and the Priestess could walk the third pass.

*First iteration (Handmaiden or Waylander)*

I call to Air, I call to Fire

The Circle forms by my desire

I call to Water, I call to Earth

May the circle hold love and mirth

*Second iteration (Priest)*

With intent and will, the ward is cast

Against all outsiders may it last

With incense, salt, and ritual knife

The circle holds back intruders’ strife

*Third iteration (Priestess)*

I cast the circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be

The Celebrant stomps his/her heel and declares “The Circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The invocation of elemental spirits and deities starts in the East and progresses clockwise. The ritual response is “Hail and welcome”. If a Handmaiden/Waylander is available, that person lights the appropriate candle for the elemental spirits and deities at the close of each call.

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

With a rush of wind in the summer sky

Storm clouds churn and blossoms fly

The days are hot, the sun is bright

Your refreshing breeze gives us delight

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks, we invite you here

By day, the sun’s light is bold and strong

The summer days are hot and long

By night, the bonfires burn with radiant cheer

In celebration of the warmest time of year

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Storm clouds rumble and heavy rain tumbles

From a churning sky of charcoal grey

But the crops grow green with a rain-dew sheen

As the Wheel turns toward the harvest day

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

In this greenest, vibrant time of year

The trees and crops we so hold dear

The fertile Earth blesses us with fruit and grain

Aided by sun and wind and rain

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Apollo

Hail to Apollo, Lord of the Sun

In love and thanks we invite you here

In summer’s peak, you rule the brightest days

With sweltering heat and shining rays

We thank you for the gift of light

Shimmering, warming, ever-bright

Mighty Apollo, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Diana

Hail to Diana, Divine Protector

In love and thanks, we invite you here

You protect the weak with arrow and bow

You guard women and children from the enemy’s blow

You stand for the worker and for the oppressed

With your weapons and armor, you are valiantly dressed

Goddess Diana, we give thanks to thee

Divine Protector, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Dianic Reading

Our Bard reads a tale of the Goddess Diana.

## A Lakeside Meditation

Place yourself in a comfortable position and let your feet be in contact with the floor. Close your eyes. We are leaving this place and traveling to somewhere else entirely. Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…

You open your eyes and find yourself standing along a lakeside at night. The full moon hangs silently overhead and shines with a thin, cool radiance. The lake is utterly still and appears like a flat, black mirror. Torches stand proudly at regular intervals around the circumference of the lake. Think trailers of smoke waft lazily into the calm, starry sky. You hear the sounds of crickets and other insects buzzing and chirping in an endless rhythm. You breath in the night air and it is warm and moist. It feels laden with the power of life.

Beyond the lake’s edge, flowering trees stand like sentinels. But in the moon’s pale light, green is black and yellow is white. Only the torches have color – vibrant amber and orange. They flicker and flutter cheerfully, occasionally spitting tiny embers that get carried upward upon the thermals they create. Their light reflects nearly perfectly upon the lake’s unmoving surface.

Near the water’s edge, you find a small collection of paper boats and silver candles. You pick up a candle and imagine what wish you would like carried out into the still water. Is it a wish of protection for yourself, or perhaps another? Is it wish for more courage? Perhaps it is a wish for more of a nurturing spirit. Maybe what you seek is the warrior’s path, or the hunter’s path? Alternatively, perhaps you are called upon to walk the path of the preserver and protector. You think carefully about your request before the gods and the Universe. What is it that you seek?

[Silence for a time]

You light your silver candle and place it in one of the paper boats. With a gentle push, the tiny boat slowly drifts out to the center of the lake, leaving behind a trail of nearly imperceptible ripples. The paper catches fire and you see bits of fiery ash soar into the night sky. You feel the energy of your intent being released into the Universe.

You stand up again and take a last look at the still, silent lake and offer your gratitude. Remember this place. Remember that the power is yours to walk either the warrior’s path or the protector’s path. Both are honorable and both require duty and honor.

Now… close your eyes, for we are leaving this place. We are leaving the realm of the silent lake and valiant torches. We are returning to where we began. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

Because this ritual calls upon both Diana and Apollo, there are a couple of options for spellcraft that both involve candle magic. For Diana, the Covenors can light a small floating candle and set it in the tray of water. Once they tap the candle so that it drifts towards the center, the Covenor can send a request to the Universe for some aspect that Diana represents (warrior, protector, nurturer). For those wishing a blessing from Apollo, the Covenor can take a gold candle and imbue it with magical intent for an aspect pertaining to the Roman Sun God – such as healing, personal illumination, guidance, etc.

When all of the candles have been imbued with energy, the Covenors return to the altar (or wherever the tray of candles are placed). The Celebrant issues a final blessing for the candles:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

We call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless these candles, and bless them true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

The Celebrant stomps his/her foot and the Covenors respond with “So mote it be!”

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale. For this ritual, the beverage should be apple cider or sparkling cider and the cakes can be cookies in the shape of apples.

Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response is “Hail and Farewell!” The candles are snuffed in sequence by the Handmaiden (or Waylander).

### Diana

Hail to Diana, Divine Protector

We give you thanks for coming here

Your nurturing hand guides our path

And shields us from the oppressors’ wrath

You are warrior, protector, and hunter strong

You ward the defenseless and right the wrong

Goddess Diana, we give thanks to thee

Divine Protector, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Apollo

Hail to Apollo, God of the Sun

We give you thanks for coming here

With shining sun and healing light

Your power sets injured bodies right

In the height of summer, you rule the day

With shimmering heat and shining ray

Mighty Apollo, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the forests of emerald green

Where the leaves still drip with a rainy sheen

Return to croplands full of grains so tall

Let the harvests be ready as we move towards fall

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the surf and choppy seas

Go with our thanks for hearing our pleas

Return to rivers with churning flow

And to ancient aquifers far below

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the realm of shimmering sun

Your heat and light sustains everyone

Return to the bonfires, amber and bight

Your presence lights this festival night

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to clouds and swirling sky

As majestic shapes go whirling by

We thank you for summer’s mighty breeze

That blows through croplands, plains, and trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the wind fill our sails when the seas are becalmed.

May the light of faith guide us when lesser lights have failed

May we have second sight when the way ahead is murky

May we have sure footing when the path is uneven

And may we become the blessing that others seek.”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

[Optional]

For we are the witches

We are the wise

We are the children of light!”

# A picture containing bird, animal Description automatically generatedAn Apollo Rite

Apollo is one of the twelve major Greek Gods. He is the son of Leto and Zeus. While Apollo is primarily known as a sun God, his portfolio also includes archery, prophesy, music, and healing. With regard to healing, early forms of the Hippocratic Oath did, in fact, require physicians to promise before Apollo that they would never intentionally harm a patient under their care. Therefore, in addition to celebrating Apollo as a bright god flying a flaming chariot during times of warm, sunny weather, practitioners can call upon Apollo for help with setting goals (archery), obtaining wisdom (prophesy), asking for inspiration (music), and help with health (healing). It’s worth noting that Apollo’s sister is Artemis – who is also an archer in addition to being a hunter. Therefore, this ritual will call upon Apollo’s and Artemis’ skills with a bow for helping us set realistic targets and for helping us obtain our goals.

Special materials needed: Tiger’s Eye stones. These represent courage, protection, energy, and divination.

*Ritual note: As Apollo and Artemis are brother and sister (and not lovers or consorts), we will consider the phrase “As the athame is to the god, so the chalice is to the goddess, and together they are one” to mean that the deities are joined in purpose and affirmation. They will not be said to be “united” in the typical Wiccan sense of the word.*

## Preparing Sacred Space

The idea altar cloth is one in which the sun or an archery scene is depicted. Alternatively, a pleasing pattern of yellow and white is also appropriate. If arrowheads or a small replica of a bow and arrow are available, they would make perfect décor for the altar. A representation of the laurel tree would also be welcome on an Altar to Apollo.

### Standard Ritual Materials Needed

* Ritual tools: Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle.
* Altar dressing: incense holder (w/ incense), small red candle, tiny bowl of water, tiny bowl of salt.
* Candles: yellow (air), red (fire), blue (water), green (earth), gold (God), silver (Goddess).
* Consumables: salt, water, incense, matches or lighter.
* Food: nectar (ale), animal-shaped cookies (cakes)

## Special materials needed

* Tiger’s Eye stones. These represent courage, protection, energy, and divination.

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, we reverently ask

Empower this altar for our ritual task

Your winds shall blow negativity away

Good energy we need, good blessings to stay

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, we humbly ask

Endow this altar for our ritual task

Burn away the Outsider’s power

Let your light guide us for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we respectfully ask

Imbue this altar for our ritual task

Wash away all corruptive power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we kindly ask

Strengthen this altar for our ritual task

Ground out from this place all negative power

Grant us wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is cleansed

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!” The Celebrant stomps his/her foot when declaring “So mote it be!”

By the sun’s last glow, and the moon’s pale light

May this altar serve what’s good and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a personal wand or fire wand. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess shall issue a Gathering Call.

### First Iteration

**Priestess:**

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

**Priest:**

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

**Priestess:**

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to elemental spirits and deities start in the east and progress in a clockwise fashion. The appropriate candle is lit after each call.

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Let the warm breeze flow, let the gale winds blow

We see your wonder from here below

Let the blossoms lift, aside birds so swift

We thank you for your sustaining gift

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Let the bonfires burn, let the cookfires churn

Your gifts to us, we’ll never spurn

Let passion burn bright, with creative delight

Inspire us in what we sing and write

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Let the beakers crash, let the thunderstorms lash

We thank you for the salt-spray splash

Let our vision be clear, both far and near

May we divine the truth and to reject baseless fear

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

Let the orchards thrive, let the bees arrive

Your gifts of food helps keep us alive

Let the stone peaks soar, let the dark caves roar

Your rocky wonders we all adore

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and Welcome

### Apollo/God

Hail to Apollo, God of the Sun

In love and thanks, we invite you here

Your music inspires and your light shall guide

Your blessings are felt both far and wide

You bless with faithful with healing hands

While the sun illuminates all of the lands

Shining Apollo, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Artemis/Goddess

Hail to Artemis, Hunter divine

In love and thanks, we invite you here

Your bow is silver in the moon’s white light

You are true of aim, and purpose right

You stand for women and children in strife

Your weapon guards both their purpose and life

Goddess Artemis, we give thanks to thee

Divine Hunter, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Sun and Moon Meditation

Place your body in a comfortable seated position, or on the floor as you are comfortable. Have your feet in contact with the floor. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…

We are leaving this place. We are travelling to different place entirely.

You open your eyes and find yourself on a wide, windswept grassy plane. A circle of colorful pennants marks the boundary of an archery field and make fluttering sounds in the gentle breeze. The sun looms redly on the horizon and the sky is lit with pastel shades of pink and purple as night approaches. Two archers – a man and a woman – stand in the middle of the field and are aiming at targets two-hundred feet away. You approach and they turn to greet you.

The man is dressed in yellow and white, and he has short-cropped blonde hair and blue eyes. His eyes remind you of the color of the sky at midsummer. His bow is inlaid with gold lettering in an ancient language.

“The bow is different than a club,” the young man remarks, and places the golden longbow in your welcoming hands. The wood is smooth and lovingly polished. It feels warm to the touch. Its energy passes through your skin, into your hands, and into the core of your inner self.

“A club smashes indiscriminately. With a bow, you have precision,” he continues. “Lots of things require precision to achieve – like removing a disease, removing an obstacle, or discerning the truth. What goal brought you here?”

You consider the blonde man’s question as you hold the bow tightly. What is it that you want to accomplish? Do you seek insight into better health? Inspiration for a new project? The ability to discern truth from falsehood? You spend a few moments gathering your thoughts as you knock an arrow and draw the bow.

--- silence for a time ---

You let loose the arrow at your target, carrying with it your magical intention. The arrow alights with brilliant amber flame that reminds you of the fullness of the sun at noon. Your arrow strikes the target true and both are consumed in fire. Sparks and embers gently and slowly fly into the darkening sky just as the last visible trace of the sun sinks below the horizon line far in the distance.

“Now that it’s night, you’ll want to talk to my sister,” the young man says.

The young woman identified as the sister appears to be athletic, nimble, and accustomed to outdoor living. She has calloused fingers, intelligent eyes the color of moonlit slate, and raven hair. She wears a silver circlet across her brow. Like her brother, she wields a sturdy-looking, lovingly-maintained bow. Unlike her brother’s bow, this weapon is inlaid with silver.

“A bow is different than a shield,” the young woman advises. “A shield is used for defense but leaves your foe intact. But sometimes the only way to truly protect yourself and others is to eliminate the threat itself.”

She hands you her bow. It feels cold to the touch, and yet you feel a thrill of living energy pass through the surface of the polished wood, into your hands, through your bones, and into the core of your being. Your senses sharpen, and you can see every blade of grass in the silver-white moonlight. You feel even the slightest touch of wind on your skin. The hairs on your arms tingle with the energy conferred by this bow. It glows with a persistent, silver light nearly matches the moon’s cool radiance.

What threat do you need negated? What danger do you need removed? What obstacle blocks your path. You carefully consider this as you ready an arrow and draw back the bow.

--- silence for a time ---

With a hunter’s instinct, you let loose the silver-tipped arrow. It flares brightly as it arches across the distance between yourself and the target. With a solid thump, the arrow strikes the target in it center and catches alight with white, consuming flame that sends silver-colored sparks into the night sky.

The moon is at the zenith now and its pale light has stripped the color from your sight. You hand the bow back to the raven-haired hunter. Warmth returns to your hands after the bow is passed back to its rightful owner.

“Remember your choices,” the man advises. “First, do no harm. And if you can help, do help.”

“And remember that your choices have consequences,” the woman confirms. “The path of justice is rarely the easiest road to follow.”

You bow respectfully to the brother and sister. Then you slowly turn away and walk towards the line of trees in the far distance – away from the pennants and the archers.

We are leaving this place and returning to where we started. You close your eyes. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… and breathe out.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

The magical working will involve empowering tiger’s eye crystals. These stones are associated with healing from the sun, increasing personal power, and assistance in reaching personal targets.

When the stones are empowered with the Covenors’ ritual intent, the High Priest (or High Priestess) blesses the stones and seals the spell:

“By the waning sun and the moon’s bright light

Empower these stones for good and right

By Apollo’s might and Artemis’ power

We receive their blessing this ritual hour

Apollo and Artemis, we give thanks to thee

The spell is sealed, so mote it be!”

## Cakes & Ale

If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the cakes and ale. If there is both a Priest and Priestess, the Priest blesses the cakes and the Priestess blesses the ale. For this ritual, the beverage should be apple cider or sparkling cider and the cakes can be cookies in the shape of apples.

Ale

The Priestess lifts up the bottle (or carafe, pitcher, or flask) and declares:

“From the moon’s glow to the Earth below

To roots from which the vines doth grow

From vine to grape, from grape to wine

We thank you for this gift so fine

Blessed be.”

Cakes

The Priest lifts up the tray of cakes reverently and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the Earth below

From planted seeds, the stalks doth grow

From stalks to grain, from grain to bread

This gift from you shall keep us fed

Blessed be.”

The Priest and Priestess ritually unite the Athame and Chalice

Priest (holding the Athame above the Chalice): “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess (holding the Chalice): “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both in unison (dipping the point of the Athame into the Chalice): “And together, they are one. So mote it be.”

The Priestess dispenses the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”.

The Priest dispenses the cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response is “Hail and Farewell!” The candles are snuffed in sequence by the Handmaiden (or Waylander).

### Artemis

Hail to Artemis, Divine Hunter

We give you thanks for coming here

Your nurturing hand guides our path

And shields us from the oppressors’ wrath

You are warrior, protector, and hunter strong

You ward the defenseless and right the wrong

Goddess Artemis, we give thanks to thee

Divine Hunter, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Apollo

Hail to Apollo, God of the Sun

We give you thanks for coming here

With shining sun and healing light

Your power sets injured bodies right

In the height of summer, you rule the day

With shimmering heat and shining ray

Mighty Apollo, we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the mountains, of green and grey

And too verdant fields where summer holds sway

Return to the caverns and places below

To those secret places we rarely go

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the oceans, so blue and deep

Where life abounds in your watery keep

Return to the lakes, return to the rivers

Where your sustaining power always delivers

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the torches, return to the flame

Your transforming power we always acclaim

Return to the bonfire’s radiant light

That brightens our circle on a dark, starry night

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds that churn white and grey

The patterns are beautiful to view by the day

Return to the gusts and the soft summer breeze

That warmly blows past the flowers and trees

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the wind fill our sails when the seas are still

May the light of faith guide us and bolster our will

May we have second sight when the way ahead is hidden

May we have sure footing when obstacles come unbidden

May you receive these gifts, and give back in return

May we have wisdom to teach, and the desire to learn.”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

[Optional]

For we are the witches

We are the wise

We are the children of light!”

# A Danu Rite

## Overview

As Danu is the Celtic goddess of water, she is a good deity to call upon for workings involving the enchantment or purification of water. It would be optimal to do this ritual on a full moon. This ritual can be performed indoors or outdoors. Some magical traditions call only a Goddess for Esbats. Therefore, this ritual could optionally be used without the Mannanan calls.

## Materials Needed

The standard ritual items include: candles of yellow, red, blue, green, and silver; Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle; incense, salt; chimes or a broom; appropriate food and beverage for Cakes & Ale; an altar cloth; altar representations for the four elements (incense, candle, shot glass of water, and a crystal).

The specific items needed for the magical working include: perhaps a quart of spring water from a “live” water source (i.e. not a soda machine); rosewater; sea salt; smaller containers to place the consecrated holy water.

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. For this ritual, a blue altar cloth would be appropriate. Alternatively, an altar cloth with an ocean or nautical theme would also work.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Let negative power be cast away

Let good intent now hold sway

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are let at the beginning of each invocation. If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!”

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here.

Clouds race through a dark, swirling sky

Brisk winds blow, leaves and petals fly

Grant us the clarity of word and thought

Let us retain all we’ve been taught.

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Candles and torches flicker at night

They make a warm and cheerful sight

Grant us creativity and passion true

For all our workings that we must do

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Oceans turn and storm clouds churn

Tides retreat and then return

Grant us intuition and second sight

Let us see in dark and light

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and welcome

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

In mountain range and woodland plain

May the spirit of life never wane

Grant us stability and grounding this night

So we may have focus for this rite

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Hail to Mannanan, God of Sea

In love and thanks we invite you here

From shore to sea and depths below

Hear our call, let blessings flow

From abyssal trench to rolling tides

Through water all known life abides.

Beloved Mannanan, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sea, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Beloved Danu, Goddess of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

From water springs forth the power of life

That sacred gift wards off death and strife

From snow and sleet, mists and rains

It grants life to the verdant plains

Beloved Danu, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Water Meditation

The covenors should take a seated position with their feet in contact with the floor. Alternatively, if this is an outdoor ritual, the covenors can sit on the ground.

The Celebrant leads the meditation:

*Place yourself in a comfortable position with your feet in contact with the ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*We are leaving this place. Close your mind to this room (or this field). We are travelling to another place.*

*You open your eyes and you find yourself standing along a shoreline at midnight. The moon’s light is cool, pure, and empowering. The sea is calm, with only the smallest of waves gently lapping against the coarse, wet sand. The salt air is invigorating. Tiny crabs skitter along the boundary between sea and sand. It is calm here. You walk a few feet into the water and find it both cold and exhilarating.*

*In the moon’s pure light, the ocean is somehow black and clear at the same time. A handful of jellyfish bob and glide through the water, their bioluminescence making them seem like pale blue ghosts. The ocean is full of life. You sense it for you are part of this life. Though the sea is not your home, it welcomes you at its edge. We can never be fully removed from the sea from which all life first formed. We are here for a reason.*

*The sea is full of power. It is ancient and eternal. Draw some of its power into you. Remember the purity of water. Remember its ability to sustain life. Draw what you need but not more than that.*

*[Silence for a time]*

*Close your eyes to this place of moon and sea and sand. Remember the coolness of the water and the starkness of the moon. Remember the fragile solitude and the ancient, quiet power.*

*Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*When you are ready, open your eyes.*

## Magical Working

As Danu is a goddess of water, calling upon Danu for enchanting vials of holy water is a good choice of deity for this type of magical working. Each covenor will be given a small container for the holy water. The ingredients to be put in each container are: several ounces of spring water from a live source (i.e., not a bottle of factory water from a soda machine), one teaspoon of rosewater, and three teaspoons of sea salt.

Once the ingredients are mixed in, the covenors raise their bottles of holy water to the sky and meditate for a brief period on imbuing the containers with spiritual energy. The Celebrant then declares the following invocation:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

I call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless this water, bless it true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. For instance, a ritual for Mabon might involve apple cider and some sort of fruit loaf. Lughnassadh might have cornbread while Samhain might have pumpkin bread served. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the vines above, to the grapes and to the wine. Blessed be the Goddess for this gift.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the stalks above, to the grain and to the bread. Blessed be the God for this gift.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the covenors in sequence. Alternatively, if each covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the covenors in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The Goddess and the elemental spirits are release in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response from the covenors is “Hail and farewell”. If Handmaiden or Waylander is present, that person shall extinguish the candles in sequence.

### Goddess

Beloved Danu, Goddess of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for empowering this sacred rite

For workings of power, workings of might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Danu, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Beloved Mannanan, God of the Sea

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for blessing our work this night

May we use our gifts to do what is right

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Mannanan, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sea, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to mountains, return to the hills

We give you thanks for enhancing our wills

Return to the forest, and desert, and plain

Thanks for answering our need again!

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the churning seas of might

Thank you for the gift of second sight

Return to the drops of morning dew

That give the fields their verdant hue

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the torch and candle bright

Thank you for holding back the dark of night

Return to the hearth and bonfire bold

Warmth and light have taken hold

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the clouds so stark grey sky

Its swirling patterns enchant the eye

Thank you for the bracing winds of night

That loft the leaves and spread delight

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant releases the circle by tracing the perimeter of the sacred space with his/her Athame, starting in the east and going widdershins (counterclockwise).

Celebrant (Priest): “May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

Celebrant (Priestess): “The Circle, though open remains unbroken.”

Celebrants and Covenors: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# A Lupercalia Rite

## Overview

Lupercalia is an odd sort of holiday. It is theoretically a Roman holiday, but its roots date back so far that the Romans didn’t precisely know what it celebrated either. The root word of Lupercallia is “Luper”, which relates to wolves. One such reference is to a sentient she-wolf named Lupa, who raised the orphans Romulus and Remus. Roman men also used to celebrate Lupercallia by running through the streets naked. We’re not going to do that tonight. Of course, the overarching theme of Lupercalia is one of fertility – and that is a concept that can take on many forms. There is the fertility of child-bearing, of course. But there is also the fertility of ideas. There is the fertility of creativity. There is the fertility of new beginnings. So tonight, our magical working will focus on new beginnings, new growth, new ideas, and new vitality.

## Materials Needed

* Exfoliating scrub: ½ cup sesame oil; 1 cup sugar; ½ teaspoon vanilla extract; 1 teaspoon coconut oil
* A small container or zip-lock bag for each covenor for the exfoliating scrub.
* A green spell candle for all Covenors
* Anointing oil for the spell candles

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual can be used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. Items required for this ritual are: an Athame, a small white candle, a cone of incense, a small bowl of water, a small bowl of salt, and matches/lighter.

## East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

## South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

## West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

And in its passing, a place to pray

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

## North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

## Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are let at the beginning of each invocation. If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!”

### East/Air

Hail to the Guardian of the East

Hail to the Spirit of Air

Be welcome at this circle cast

Amid winter’s chill and Arctic blast

With swirling clouds a sight to see

The changing shapes, a mystery

Guardian of the East, we call to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Hail to the Guardian of the South

Hail to the Spirit of Fire

Be welcome at this circle here

The lights and candles banish fear

With braziers warm and torches bright

They ward of chill and hold back the night

Guardian of the South, we call to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Hail to the Guardian of the West

Hail to the Spirit of Water

Be welcome at this circle made

Ice and snow bejewel the glade

With lakes still frozen and covered with snow

The life abides deep below

Guardian of the West, we call to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### North/Earth

Hail to the Guardian of the North

Hail to the Spirit of Earth

Be welcome at this circle invoked

Amidst the rolling hills snow-cloaked

The land shall awaken from winter’s sleep

Flowers to bloom, vines to creep

Guardian of the North, we call to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God (Pan)

Hail to Pan, minstrel god of fertility and fun

We beckon thee forward to a world of the returning sun

May your pipes dispel the dreariness of winter’s grey sky

Click up your hooves and let the tunes fly

God of reveling, of wine and good cheer

We welcome your presence with a willing ear

Beloved God Pan, we give thanks to thee

God of Fertility, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess (Persephone)

Hail to Persephone, goddess of dark and light

We beckon thee forward to a world growing bright

The Wheel of the Year turns from winter to spring

And with it your place in the realm of the living

Bless this gathering with new hope and new life

May you banish the shadows, the darkness, and strife

Goddess Persephone, we give thanks to thee

Queen of Spring, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## Guided Meditation: From Winter to Spring

The guided meditation will be envisioning the transition from winter to spring. With this transition, the land becomes fertile as it shakes off winter’s icy grasp. Put yourself in a comfortable position, with your feet touching the ground or floor. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

We are leaving this place, this building, this circle. We are travelling to a different place.

You open your eyes to a dense forest in winter. The trees are high, black, and leafless. The sky swirls and churns with grey and black. The bitter, biting wind drives white drifts of snow around the rocks and trunks of dormant trees. You hear no birds calling nor insects buzzing – only the mournful sound of the wind whispering through leafless branches.

Thin flurries pelt your face. It is bracingly cold and you wish you had a fire. Your hands and feet ache with cold. The sky holds no hint of mercy. You wonder where the sun has gone and you wonder how long winter has lasted.

A final gale blows across the rolling drifts, covering your heavy coat with a thin layer of powdered snow. And with its passing, all becomes silent. And in this silence, you feel the delicate balance of the seasons subtly shift. It is a time of transition of forces. Here, in the forest, you greet the silence without fear. You think for a moment about the days ahead. What do you see?

[Silence for a time]

You look to the sky and the swirling clouds begin to dissipate. The grey recedes and the sky opens to a bright, cerulean blue. And then the sun shines. It’s warm, yellow-white light banishes the bitter chill. Sensation returns to your hands and feet. With the return of the light – real light and not the wan grey of the winter sky – the snow begins to melt. Now the silence is replaced with the sounds of rivulets of fresh, clean water running from the melting snow. It pools around your boots. The frozen forest floor becomes a muddy field. But, then, the beginnings of life are often messy.

Though the trees remain leafless, you feel their awakening. The life force beneath the surface of the muddy ground is gathering, intensifying, preparing for the new growth and new fertility that will soon unfold.

What do you want to grow in your life? What kind of fertility do you need?

[Silence for a time]

A warmer breeze blows. Trailers of steam rise off the melting snow. You know there may still be cold days ahead, but the worst of winter is behind us. Soon the forest shall be returned to its verdant splendor. The gathering of life energy has already begun. Carry this knowledge, this hope, and this energy with you in the weeks that remain until the spring equinox. May it sustain you through the remnant of winter’s grasp.

Now… close your eyes to this place for it is time to return to the circle. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Magical Working

There are two magical workings for this ritual. The first is blessing an exfoliating scrub that will symbolically rub away the lingering detritus of the long, dreary winter. The second magical working will be an undertaking of candle magic for which the intent is to start new growth and new fertility in some part of our lives.

The Celebrant mixes the components of the exfoliating scrub while the covenors focus their ritual intent on empowering the mixture with banishing properties. The Covenors each get a zip-lock bag of scrub.

The Celebrant then declares: “May negative thought and negative energy be repealed. By my will, this spell is sealed.”

For the second part of the magical working, each covenor receives a green spell candle. Each candle is anointed with oil and the covernors spend a brief period imbuing the candles with their ritual intent.

The Celebrant then declares: “May we experience positive growth, new beginnings, and new ideas. May the lights of these candles burn away the cobwebs and dust of winter. So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the vines above, to the grapes and to the wine. Blessed be the Goddess for this gift.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the stalks above, to the grain and to the bread. Blessed be the God for this gift.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the covenors in sequence. Alternatively, if each covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the covenors in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they were called. If a handmaiden/waylander is present, that person extinguishes the candles as the spirits/deities are released.

### Goddess (Persephone)

Great Goddess Persephone, from winter to spring

We give thanks to for the change of season you bring

From darkness to light, from frost to dew

Your life force returns, your strength shall renew

Thank you for blessing this circle tonight

Stay if you wish, or depart in delight

Goddess Persephone, we give thanks to thee

Queen of Spring, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God (Pan)

Festive God Pan, what great revels you bring

With joyful pipes to play, and anthems to ring

From boredom to action, and misery to joy

The renewal of life is ready to deploy

Thank you for blessing this circle tonight

Stay if you wish, or depart in delight

Great God Pan, we give thanks to thee

God of Fertility, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the mountains and peaks rising high

Winter’s grip weakens; spring’s blessing is neigh

Return to pale meadows, so stark and cold

Soon spring’s greenery is bound to take hold

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Return to the frozen streams and lakes

And we shall celebrate when the life force awakes

Return to the retreating drifts of snow

As they melt, the flowers shall grow

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the torches and candles bright

We give you thanks for the gift of sight

Return to the flaming hearth so brave

We await spring’s warmth, its light we crave

Guardian of the South we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here.

Return to the skies of churning grey

As we await the warming day

Return to the gales, so brisk and cold

As winter retreats, spring warmth takes hold

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant walks the perimeter of the circle in a widdershins (counter-clockwise) direction, starting in the east.

**Priest**: “May all spirits attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

**Priestess**: “The circle, though open, remains unbroken.”

**Celebrants and Covenors**: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# A Brigit Rite (as Healer)

## Overview

The Goddess Brigit is considered to be a “triple deity” in Celtic cosmology. Her portfolio includes aspects of healing, blacksmithing, and poetry. She is also considered to be a “fire” deity. Fire purifies, disinfects, and cauterizes (healing). Fire also transforms and removes impurities (blacksmithing). Fire inspires and is associated with creativity (poetry). Therefore, Brigit is a very versatile deity to call upon for a variety of magical workings. This particular ritual focuses on Brigit as a healer deity. Lugh, another Celtic deity, is invoked for this ritual as Lugh is a god of light and crafting, thus there is suitable overlap in purpose.

As healing is a serious working, this ritual calls upon Archangels instead of just Guardians. However, if your Wiccan tradition does not utilize Archangels in rituals, feel free to modify the quarter calls to suit your particular magical tradition.

## Materials Needed

The standard ritual items include: candles of yellow, red, blue, green, and silver; Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle; incense, salt; chimes or a broom; appropriate food and beverage for Cakes & Ale; an altar cloth; altar representations for the four elements (incense, a tiny white candle, shot glass of water, and a crystal).

The specific items needed for the magical working include: a vial of holy water; several small amethyst crystals; two red candles; three gold candles. Holy water is useful in consecrating items. Amethyst is a stone associated with healing. The red candle shall be used to represent charging the crystals, as the Covenors will pass their crystals through the candle flame.

The Altar should also have five small candles arranged in a Pentacle shape, to represent both Brigit and Lugh. Also, the correspondences are as follows:

Spirit – Gold – Lugh – Healing

Air – Red – Brigit – Vitality

Earth – Gold – Lugh – Growth

Fire – Red – Brigit – Power

Water – Gold – Lugh – Success

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. For this ritual, the celebrant has several choices in altar cloths. As blue is a color associated with healing, an altar cloth of that color would be appropriate. Alternatively, an altar cloth with a “life” theme (such as butterflies or flowers) would also work, as Imbolc celebrates the first stiffings of life before Spring’s return. Of course, a fire-themed altar cloth would also be suitable for a deity associated with fire. Or, as this rite invokes Lugh, an altar cloth with a sun motif would be appropriate.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

And in its passing, love holds sway

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are lit at the beginning of each invocation. If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!” Depending on your Coven’s tradition, the directional invocations can be assigned to particular Covenors, or they can be read by the Waylander/Handmaiden. The term “Outsiders” here indicates negative spiritual entities, not actual human being.

### East/Air

Hail to Raphael, Archangel of Air

Blessings to the Guardian of the East

In love and thanks we invite thee here

Banish the negative, cast out all fear

Grant us the clarity of word and thought

Let us retain all we’ve been taught.

And in the realm of spirit we ask

Helps us work a healing task.

Guardian of East, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Hail to Michael, Archangel of Fire

Blessings to the Guardian of the South

In gratitude and thanks we invite thee here

May your warmth and light thus appear

Grant us creativity and passion true

For works of healing we gather to do

And in the realm of spirit, we pray

May your sword hold all Outsiders at bay

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Hail to Gabriel, Archangel of Water

Blessings to the Guardian of the West

In peace and thanks we invite you here

May uncertainty turn to insight clear

Grant us intuition and second sight

Let us see in dark and light

And in the realm of spirit we ask thee now

May your cool waters quench the fevered brow

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Water, Blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### North/Earth

Hail to Uriel, Archangel of Earth

Blessings to the Guardian of the North

In truth and thanks we invite you here

Ground out distractions that would interfere

Grant us stability of purpose this night

So we may have focus for this rite

And in the realm of spirit, we pray

For the Earth to show a healing way

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Beloved Lugh, God of Light

In love and thanks we invite you here

Lord of light and forging power

Join us for this sacred hour

By brilliant flame and cleansing sun

Disease and woe shall be undone!

Beloved Lugh, we give thanks to thee

God of Light, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Beloved Brigit, Goddess of Healing

In love and thanks we invite you here

From fire comes forth a cleansing power

Against disease it shall devour

With cleansing flame and purest light

Sterilize all illness, devour all blight!

Beloved Brigit, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Fire Meditation

The Covenors should take a seated position with their feet in contact with the floor. Alternatively, if this is an outdoor ritual, the Covenors can sit on the ground.

The Celebrant leads the meditation:

*Place yourself in a comfortable position with your feet in contact with the ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*We are leaving this place. Close your mind to this room (or this field). We are travelling to another place.*

*You open your eyes and find yourself sitting around a large bonfire in a wide clearing. It is a chilly night in early spring. The air is crisp and the smoke from the bonfire is enticing. The burning logs crackle and pop. Orange sparks fly into the night sky. For the first time since winter’s end, you hear the sounds of insects buzzing and chirping at the periphery of the forest.*

*Overhead, the full moon shines down. It contrasts with the raging bonfire. The moon’s light is steady, cool, and pale while the bonfire is warm, dynamic, and vibrant. It is good to have contrast and balance. It seems proper here.*

*A faint breeze blows. You inch closer to the fire for warmth against the chill of this night. You look into the flames and admire their beauty. The patterns within the conflagration change and adapt with each touch of wind. There is power here. There is heat to draw from, energy to draw from. You reach out your hand towards the fire. The heat is intense but you stop just short of burning yourself.*

*There is a secret to fire. It gives life and takes life. It illuminates and consumes. It can transform and it can destroy. But there is another secret to fire – it cleanses. Look into the fire, feel its warmth upon your hands and cheeks. Envision its power to burn away sickness and disease. Fire is life. Fire is sacred. Fire cleanses. Draw upon this power.*

*[Silence for a time]*

*You feel energized. Your hands tingle with power. Your cheeks are warm and ruddy. Remember this place, remember the sacred fire. Use its power to do good.*

*We are ready to leave this place. Close your eyes, for we are returning to where we started.*

*Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*When you are ready, open your eyes.*

## Magical Working

As Brigit is a Goddess of both healing and fire, the purpose of the magical working will be to consecrate amethyst crystals for use in future healing spells. The stones will first be anointed with holy water in order to prepare them for enchantment. The next step will be for each Covenor to imbue the stones with his/her will. The final step will be for each Covenor to pass his/her stone through the flame of a red candle (representing the blessing of Brigit) or gold candle (representing the blessing of Lugh) or both. When this is accomplished, the Celebrant seals the spell with the following invocation:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

I call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless these stones, bless them true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, an appropriate beverage is milk while the cakes should be made from oats. The Celebrant should feel free to make substitutions as lactose intolerance is a relatively common phenomenon. If there is only one Celebrant, that person blesses both the beverage and cakes. If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess blesses the milk and the Priest blesses the oat cakes.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the earth below

From the fertile earth the seeds do grow

From seeds to vine, from grape to wine

Blessings on this gift so fine.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the earth below

From the fertile soil, the wheat doth grow

From seeds to stalk, from grain to bread

With this gift we all are fed.”

### The Great Rite

With the ritual food blessed, the Celebrant (or Priest and Priestess) symbolically represent the Great Rite by joining the Athame and Chalice.

**For one Celebrant:**

The Celebrant picks up the Chalice in her left hand and the Athame in her right hand and declares: “As the Athame is the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. And together, they are one. So mote it be!”

The Covenors respond with “So mote it be!”

**For two Celebrants:**

The Priestess hold the Chalice and the Priest holds the Athame.

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Priest: “And together”

Priestess: “They are one.”

In unison: “So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence. Alternatively, if each Covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the Covenor’s cups.

**Celebrant/Priestess:** “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be” or “Thou art Goddess”

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

**Celebrant/Priest:** “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

**Covenor:** “Blessed be” or “Thou art God”

## Releasing the Quarters

The Goddess and the elemental spirits are release in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response from the Covenors is “Hail and farewell”. If Handmaiden or Waylander is present, that person shall extinguish the candles in sequence. The person who called in the invocation shall also speak the release.

### Goddess

Beloved Brigit, Goddess of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for empowering this sacred rite

For workings of healing, workings of might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Brigit, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Beloved Lugh, God of Light

We give you thanks for coming here

Thanks for blessing this healing rite

Against all illness your shine your light

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Lugh, we give thanks to thee

God of Light, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Hail to Uriel, Archangel of Earth

Blessings to the Guardian of the North

We give you thanks for coming to our sacred rite

For grounding out all Outsiders’ might

And for standing watch, for standing true

For supporting the healing works we do

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Hail to Gabriel, Archangel of Water

Blessings to the Guardian of the West

Thank you for blessing our healing rite

Your tides roll back the Outsiders’ might

Return to your realm, so deep and blue

Our gratitude and praise, we give to you.

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### South/Fire

Hail to Michael, Archangel of Fire

Blessings to the Guardian of the South

We give you thanks for coming here

Your flaming sword dispels both cold and fear

Thank you for holding back the dark of night

And for giving us radiance for our rite

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### East/Air

Hail to Raphael, Archangel of Air

Blessings to the Guardian of the East

We give you thanks for coming here

And empowering our purpose, true and clear

Return to your realm, of sky so bright

Thank you for your aid this night

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“Sun and Moon to this place of power

Health and courage to grow and flower

Brigit’s fire, and Lugh’s bright light

Shall purge away the sickness and blight

Candle flame, of gold and red

Shall shine against all bane and dread

Receive the blessings, and blessings to give

Radiant light, and the power to live.

Blessed be.”

**Celebrants:** “This rite has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

# A Brigit Rite – As Blacksmith

## Overview

The Goddess Brigit is considered to be a “triple deity” in Celtic cosmology. Her portfolio includes aspects of healing, blacksmithing, and poetry. She is also considered to be a fire deity. Fire purifies, disinfects, and cauterizes (healing). Fire also transforms and removes impurities (blacksmithing). Fire inspires and is associated with creativity (poetry). Therefore, Brigit is a very versatile deity to call upon for a variety of magical workings. This particular ritual focuses on Brigit as a blacksmithing deity.

As only a single, female deity is called in this ritual, this Brigit Rite is ideally suited for an Esbat service.

There are many aspects to the role of blacksmiths. These crafters of metal know about transforming raw ore into pure metal, they know about repairing broken objects, and they are often artists who use metal to create works that are both functional and beautiful. Blacksmiths understand the mysteries of fire. In this ritual, we shall call upon Brigit to aid us in repairing some broken aspect of our lives.

## Materials Needed

The standard ritual items include: candles of yellow, red, blue, green, and silver; Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle; incense, salt; chimes or a broom; appropriate food and beverage for Cakes & Ale; an altar cloth; altar representations for the four elements (incense, candle, shot glass of water, and a crystal).

The specific items needed for the magical working include: a household object (such as a cup, dish, or vase) that has been accidently broken but in which all the pieces are accounted for; a tube of super glue.

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. For this ritual, the celebrant has several choices in altar cloths. As orange and black are colors associated with blacksmithing, an altar cloth featuring those colors would be appropriate. Alternatively, an altar cloth with a symbol of the forge would also work. Of course, a fire-themed altar cloth would also be suitable for a deity associated with fire.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

And in its passing, love holds sway

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are let at the beginning of each invocation. If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!”

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Let the bellows blow, let the coals now glow

May the power of Air make it so!

Breath of life, breath of change

Add your power to the forge’s range!

Guardian of East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Fire to change to ore to steel

Transform our dreams, make them real

Fire to burn the dross from gold

The alchemist’s path, the ways of old

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Water to quench the steel’s red glow

To set the pattern, to make it show

Water to make the forged dream real

At crafting’s end, the spell to seal

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

From the Earth comes forth stone and ore

With which we craft by way of lore

Gold and silver, iron and steel

Help us to make our dreams turn real

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Beloved Brigit, Goddess of Blacksmithing

In love and thanks we invite you here

From fire comes forth to transform and change

And empowers the stove, and forge, and range

Help us to repair our broken things

May we see what your blessing brings

Beloved Brigit, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Blacksmithing, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Fire Meditation

The covenors should take a seated position with their feet in contact with the floor. Alternatively, if this is an outdoor ritual, the covenors can sit on the ground.

The Celebrant leads the meditation:

*Place yourself in a comfortable position with your feet in contact with the ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*We are leaving this place. Close your mind to this room (or this field). We are travelling to another place.*

*You open your eyes and find yourself standing at the edge of a small village at night. It is high summer here. Fireflies flitter lazily in the faint summer breeze. The trees in the distance sparkle with tiny points of light. The moon is full and shines down with its cool, steady glow. The smell of freshly cut grass wafts in the air. It is a peaceful night.*

*You turn and walk into the village. It is late and the streets are vacant. This place is no modern city, for you see no cars, no power lines, and no street lights. Perhaps we have come to a different time as well as a different place. Or perhaps this village never embraced the trappings and traps of the technological age. As you walk down the narrow, cobblestone lane, you feel drawn to a large stone building at the opposite edge of the town. It is a sturdy, squat building with a thick steel door, narrow windows, and a wide chimney. It is a blacksmith’s shop.*

*To your surprise, you are easily able to pull the door open by way of a heavy, metal ring as wide as your hand. A blast of heat rolls out from the opening and you smell the strong odor of a coal fire. The coals are dim, but you stir them to life with a few strenuous pulls on the great bellows.*

*You look around the workshop and see all manner of broken items awaiting repair. There is a broken shield, a broken sword, a broken shovel, and many other items. You look at these objects carefully and think about what item calls to you to be made whole. What is it in your life that is broken? What item here represents that which is in need of repair?*

*[Silence for a time]*

*You pick up the tools of the craftsman – the hammer and tongs, and heat your chosen item in the forge until it glows a brilliant orange. With the power of the hammer and anvil, you join together the broken pieces of the object. With each blow, the seams are sealed and the damage is smoothed over. Again and again you swing the hammer. Sparks fly and sweat drips into your eyes. You taste salt and smoke on your lips. Your arms begin to ache, but your satisfaction grows with each blow. This is an honest exertion. With a final swing, you hammer out the last imperfection in the item that had once been in pieces. You quench it in a bucket of water with a satisfying hiss and a puff of steam. Tomorrow, you know, will be the time of polishing and buffing. But for now, you have accomplished what you have set out to do.*

*With a feeling of accomplishment, you let the coals decay from bright orange to dim red. You turn to the door and emerge into the fragrant night air. The sky is full of stars. A silent breeze cools you brow. You close the door to the blacksmith’s shop.*

*We are ready to leave this place. Remember the power you drew upon here. Remember the power you wielded to fix the broken things in your life – to transform through fire, will, and effort. Close your eyes to this place, for we are returning to where we started.*

*Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*When you are ready, open your eyes.*

## Magical Working

As Brigit is a Goddess of both blacksmithing and fire, the purpose of the magical working will be to repair this [broken object] and by doing so it shall symbolize for us something in our lives that is broken and in need of repair. As this [object] is repaired by our will and effort, the magic gathered here will have an in-kind effect of that which we need repaired in body, mind, and spirit. This is the principle of sympathy in magical workings: like affects like, like produces like.

The covenors assist the Celebrant in repairing the [object] with super glue or some other suitable adhesive. When the object is made whole, the Celebrant seals the spell with the following invocation:

When this is accomplished, the Celebrant seals the spell with the following invocation:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

I call upon the Goddess’ power

By will completed and word thus spoken

Make whole for us that which is broken

So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. For instance, a ritual for Mabon might involve apple cider and some sort of fruit loaf. Lughnassadh might have cornbread while Samhain might have pumpkin bread served. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the vines above, to the grapes and to the wine. Blessed be the Goddess for this gift.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the stalks above, to the grain and to the bread. Blessed be the God for this gift.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the covenors in sequence. Alternatively, if each covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the covenors in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The Goddess and the elemental spirits are release in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response from the covenors is “Hail and farewell”. If Handmaiden or Waylander is present, that person shall extinguish the candles in sequence.

### Goddess

Beloved Brigit, Goddess of Blacksmithing

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for empowering this sacred rite

For workings of power, workings of might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Brigit, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Blacksmithing, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the stone, return to the ore

We thank you for the metal lore

Return to mountains, return to the hills

Go with our thanks for honing our skills

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the rivers, return to the streams

Thank you for helping us craft our dreams

Return to the seas and oceans blue

Thank you for blessing the works we do

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the forge and furnace bright

Your energy helped our crafting tonight

Return to the torch and candle flame

Your creative power we do acclaim

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the sky so bright and blue

Thank you for inspiring the works we do

Return to the wind, return to gust

Go with our gratitude and with our trust

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant releases the circle by tracing the perimeter of the sacred space with his/her Athame, starting in the east and going widdershins (counterclockwise).

Celebrant (Priest): “May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

Celebrant (Priestess): “The Circle, though open remains unbroken.”

Celebrants and Covenors: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# A Brigit Rite – As Poet

## Overview

The Goddess Brigit is considered to be a “triple deity” in Celtic cosmology. Her portfolio includes aspects of healing, blacksmithing, and poetry. She is also considered to be a “fire” deity. Fire purifies, disinfects, and cauterizes (healing). Fire also transforms and removes impurities (blacksmithing). Fire inspires and is associated with creativity (poetry). Therefore, Brigit is a very versatile deity to call upon for a variety of magical workings. This particular ritual focuses on Brigit as a poet deity.

If only a single, female deity is called in this ritual, then this Brigit Rite is ideally suited for an Esbat service. For other kinds of services, this ritual can be modified with the addition of a male deity (Lugh is used in this text) and/or ancestors.

The Goddess Brigit is considered to be a “triple deity” in Celtic cosmology. Her portfolio includes aspects of healing, blacksmithing, and poetry. She is also considered to be a “fire” deity. Fire purifies, disinfects, and cauterizes (healing). Fire also transforms and removes impurities (blacksmithing). Fire inspires and is associated with creativity (poetry). Therefore, Brigit is a very versatile deity to call upon for a variety of magical workings. This particular ritual focuses on Brigit as a poet deity.

As only a single, female deity is called in this ritual, this Brigit Rite is ideally suited for an Esbat service. For other kinds of services, this ritual can be modified with the addition of a male deity and/or ancestors.

## Materials Needed

The standard ritual items include: candles of yellow, red, blue, green, and silver; Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle; incense, salt; chimes or a broom; appropriate food and beverage for Cakes & Ale; an altar cloth; altar representations for the four elements (incense, candle, shot glass of water, and a crystal).

The specific items needed for the magical working include: A collection of moonstone crystals (a stone associated with wisdom and inspiration); a red candle that shall be used to represent charging the crystals (as the Covenors will pass their crystals through the candle flame.)

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. For this ritual, the celebrant has several choices in altar cloths. As violet is a color associated with mental energy, an altar cloth of that color would be appropriate. Alternatively, an altar cloth with a “literary” theme (such as scrolls, or a quote from a famous poet) would also work. Of course, a fire-themed altar cloth would also be suitable for a deity associated with fire.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with renewed energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

A cleansing tide shall guide the way

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, its power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

*Clergy stomps feet once.*

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

As this ritual can be used at any time of year, the quarter calls are general in nature instead of seasonally specific. Feel free to substitute the general calls with seasonally-specific quarter calls if desired or more appropriate. The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are let at the beginning of each invocation. If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!”

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

Grant us the clarity of word and thought

Let us retain all we’ve been taught.

And in the realm of spirit, too

Be with us in the work we do

Guardian of East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

Grant us creativity and passion true

For all our workings that we must do

And in the realm of spirit, we pray

May your light hold unwelcome spirits at bay

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

Grant us intuition and second sight

So we may see in dark and light

Let the shroud of doubt disappear

And uncertainty turn to insight clear

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, Blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

Grant us stability of purpose this night

So we may have focus for this rite

Ground out distractions that would interfere

Our will is sharp, our purpose is clear

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Beloved Lugh, God of Song

In love and thanks we invite you here

Lord of song and forging power

Join us for this revel hour

Be with us for joyful word and rhyme

We invite you for this ritual time

Beloved Lugh, we give thanks to thee

God of Song, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Goddess

Beloved Brigit, Goddess of Poetry

In love and thanks we invite you here

From fire comes forth a creative power

Against static thought it shall devour

With inspiring flames and brightest light

Banish the boredom, bring in delight

Beloved Brigit, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Poetry, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

## A Fire Meditation

The Covenors should take a seated position with their feet in contact with the floor. Alternatively, if this is an outdoor ritual, the Covenors can sit on the ground.

The Celebrant leads the meditation:

*Place yourself in a comfortable position with your feet in contact with the ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*We are leaving this place. Close your mind to this room (or this field). We are travelling to another place.*

*You open your eyes and find yourself sitting around a large bonfire in a wide clearing. It is a chilly night in early spring. The air is crisp and the smoke from the bonfire is enticing. The burning logs crackle and pop. Orange sparks fly into the night sky. For the first time since winter’s end, you hear the sounds of insects buzzing and chirping at the periphery of the forest.*

*Overhead, the full moon shines down. It contrasts with the raging bonfire. The moon’s light is steady, cool, and pale while the bonfire is warm, dynamic, and vibrant. It is good to have contrast and balance. It seems proper here.*

*A faint breeze blows. You inch closer to the fire for warmth against the chill of this night. You look into the flames and admire their beauty. The patterns within the conflagration change and adapt with each touch of wind. There is power here. There is heat to draw from, energy to draw from. You reach out your hand towards the fire. The heat is intense but you stop just short of burning yourself.*

*There is a secret to fire. It gives life and takes life. It illuminates and consumes. It can transform and it can destroy. But there is another secret to fire – it inspires. Look into the fire, feel its warmth upon your hands and cheeks. Envision its power to illuminate and energize dormant parts of your mind. Fire is life. Fire is sacred. Fire transforms and changes. Draw upon this power to transform.*

*[Silence for a time]*

*You feel energized. Your hands tingle with power. Your cheeks are warm and ruddy. Remember this place, remember the sacred fire. Use its power to do good.*

*We are ready to leave this place. Close your eyes, for we are returning to where we started.*

*Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*When you are ready, open your eyes.*

## Poetry Readings

In this part of the service, we honor Brigit as Poet by having each Covenor read a short poem. It can be a work that the Covenor has written, or it can be a poem written by someone else that the Covenor finds particularly meaningful.

## Magical Working

As Brigit is a Goddess of both poetry and fire, the purpose of the magical working will be to consecrate moonstone crystals for use in aiding inspiration. The stones will first be charged by having each Covenor imbue the stones with his/her will. The next step will be for each Covenor to pass his/her stone through the flame of a red candle (representing the blessing of Brigit). When this is accomplished, the Celebrant seals the spell with the following invocation:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

I call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless these stones, bless them true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. For instance, a ritual for Mabon might involve apple cider and some sort of fruit loaf. Lughnassadh might have cornbread while Samhain might have pumpkin bread served. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the earth below

From the fertile earth the seeds do grow

From seeds to vine, from grape to wine

Blessings on this gift so fine.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the earth below

From the fertile soil, the wheat doth grow

From seeds to stalk, from grain to bread

With this gift we all are fed.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the Covenor in sequence. Alternatively, if each Covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the Covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art goddess”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the Covenor in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art god”.

## Releasing the Quarters

The Goddess and the elemental spirits are release in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response from the Covenor is “Hail and farewell”. If Handmaiden or Waylander is present, that person shall extinguish the candles in sequence.

### Goddess

Beloved Brigit, Goddess of Poetry

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for empowering this sacred rite

For workings of power, workings of might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Brigit, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Poetry, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Beloved Lugh, God of Song

We give you thanks for coming here

Thanks for inspiring this sacred rite

For workings of joyful words so bright

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Lugh, we give thanks to thee

God of Song, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here.

We give you thanks for coming to our sacred rite

For grounding out all Outsiders’ might

And for standing watch, for standing true

For supporting the ritual works we do

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for coming to this ritual space

And for blessing the works that just took place

And for standing watch this sacred night

For supporting the works we do for right

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

We give you thanks for coming here

Your flaming warmth dispels both cold and fear

Thank you for holding back the dark of night

And for giving us radiance for our rite

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

We celebrate your presence here

And for empowering our purpose, true and clear

Thank you for standing guard for this sacred rite

And for blessing the workings we did this night

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

Celebrant (Handmaiden):

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

Celebrant (Priest):

“Sun and Moon to this place of power

Health and courage to grow and flower

Brigit’s fire, and Lugh’s bright light

Shall guide us to draw and sculpt and write

Candle flame, of gold and red

Shall shine against all bane and dread

Receive the blessings, and blessings to give

Radiant light, and the power to live.

Blessed be.”

Celebrant (Priestess): “The Circle, though open remains unbroken.”

Celebrants and Covenors: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# A World Tree Rite

## Overview

There are several cultures that recognize and honor the concept of the World Tree. In Norse mythology, it is called Yggdrasil; in Celtic culture, it is called Bile; In Siberian culture, the great tree is called Samoyeds. In fact, there are numerous other religions and mythologies that reference a realms-spanning tree whose roots and limbs span this world and the many other dimensions of existence. This ritual celebrates the World Tree and celebrates the interconnectedness of life and spirit that the World Tree represents.

Unlike the traditional eight Sabbats, this is a seasonally-independent rite that can be conducted at any time of year. It can also be used as an Esbat service.

## Materials Needed

The standard ritual items include: candles of yellow, red, blue, green, silver, and gold; a rainbow candle can represent the World Tree on the altar; Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle; incense, salt; chimes or a broom; appropriate food and beverage for Cakes & Ale; an altar cloth; altar representations for the four elements (incense, candle, shot glass of water, and a crystal).

The specific items needed for the magical working include: A small potted tree; a collection of colored stones that can represent various spell intents; a small bag of potting soil.

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. For this ritual, the celebrant has several choices in altar cloths. A rainbow-colored altar cloth would be suitable as it would reference the realms-spanning nature of the World Tree. Likewise, a tree-themed altar cloth would be appropriate. Finally, an altar cloth with a “cosmic” theme would be more than suitable.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

And in its passing, love holds sway

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

As this ritual can be used at any time of year, the quarter calls are general in nature instead of seasonally specific. The Celebrant should feel free to substitute the general calls with seasonally-specific quarter calls if desired or deemed more appropriate. The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are let at the beginning of each invocation. This ritual also includes a candle for the World Tree (rainbow colored). If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!” Also, note that the World tree is “honored” but not specifically “called”.

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

In love and thanks we invite you here

We look up to the cerulean sky

With windy gale as clouds roll by

We give thanks for the refreshing breeze

That lofts the blossoms and stirs the trees

Guardian of the East we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks we invite you here

We look to the dancing of the brave hearth’s flame

Weaving, ever changing, and never the same

We give you thanks for your warming powers

And for the gift of light in the darker hours

Guardian of the South we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

We look to power of the ocean’s great tides

Beneath its surface, wondrous life abides

With turquois seas and gulf streams blue

The power of life is carried through

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we invite you here

We look to the power of the mountains stark peaks

Whose snow-capped crags feed lakes and creeks

Your foundations reach down to the Earth’s living core

Our source of power, our source of lore.

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Lord of the Sun, God of the Skies

In love and thanks we invite you here

We give you thanks for the sun’s bright light

For streaming energy and giving us sight

In summer’s heat, and winter’s chill

You stand with us, as is your will

Lord of the Sun, we give thanks to thee

God of the Skies, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Goddess of the Earth, Giver of Life

In love and thanks we invite you here

We thank you for the Wheel of the Year

The changing seasons, we face without fear

You grant us life so our souls can learn

From life to life, from turn to turn

Goddess of the Earth, we give thanks to thee

Giver of Life, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### World Tree

Hail to the World Tree

Blessings to the Conduit to the Planes

We affirm your life and dignity

Roots and branches, toward infinity

Angels and Spirits through the realms go

Worlds above and worlds below

Blessings upon the World Tree

For your majesty, we give praise to thee

### A Tree Meditation

The Covenors should take a seated position with their feet in contact with the floor. Alternatively, if this is an outdoor ritual, the Covenors can sit on the ground.

The Celebrant leads the meditation:

Place yourself in a comfortable position with your feet in contact with the floor. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out…

*We are leaving this place. Close your mind to this room (or this field or this circle). For we are travelling to another place. You open your eyes and you find yourself standing in a grassy plain that stretches uninterrupted as far as the eye can see. The sky is brighter, bluer than you have ever seen before. And the sun shines down like a white-hot gemstone in the sky. The scent of wildflowers is carried on the wind, and butterflies and other insects fly above the tops of the grasses that gently bob and sway in the gentle breeze. There is so much energy here. You sense that everything is more potent in this place. The sky arches higher. The horizon is farther away. The seasons here do not change. What you see is how this place is. You feel the power of continuity.*

*And still, you feel drawn to an even greater power. There is no directional clues in the limitless grasslands, but you decide to call the direction you travel “north”. And so you walk, with the wind in your face cooling your brow. Your skin tingles with the freshness and purity of the air. And as you walk, you see a tree in the distance at the limits of the horizon. And now your will propels you. You are not running, and yet the distance shrinks. The grasses blue on your right and left. Distances fold before you, somehow. And that sense of ancient power intensifies. It is the tree in the distance that is shrinking both time and space between itself and you.*

*And now you stand before it. The tree is tall, ancient, and towers above you. Its leaves provide the only shade you’ve seen in the grassland plain. The tree shimmers with power and its form subtly shifts before your eyes. Is it an oak? A pine? A sycamore? You cannot say. For it changes. Perhaps it is being what it is expected to be. Perhaps its true form cannot be fully grasped by finite minds.*

*What you do grasp, however, is the sensation that the tree’s power extends far beneath the surface of this grassland and its branches stretch farther into the sky than what it appears to be. The tree is a nexus of power that connects unseen realms. You understand this somehow. And so, without fear or trepidation, you place your palms against the ancient, wide trunk.*

*Without hearing words in the usual sense, the tree imprints upon your mind the question, “What world shall you see?”*

*You take a moment to gather your thoughts. What answer do you give? What realm does the tree show you? Where does it take you? What do you see?*

*[Silence for a time.]*

*The tree returns you to the limitless grasslands. The crystalline sun shines whitely in the perfect sky. Butterflies flutter along the breeze and the grasses gently bob and sway. You thank the tree for the journey it provided. You understand that, through it, many such journeys are possible – as many as there are worlds in the Cosmos.*

*But, for now, it is time to return to the world to which you are most familiar. You step away and close your eyes. We are leaving this place and returning once more to the circle. Remember this place, remember what you have seen, and remember the power of the World Tree.*

*Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… and breathe out… When you are ready, open your eyes.*

## Magical Working

As the World Tree is an entity that spans across all known (and unknown) realms of existence, it shall be used to carry spiritual intent through the universe to the being that needs to receive that intent. Each Covenor can select a stone of appropriate color – for example, green for health, brown for material needs, white for protection, and yellow for vitality. Each Covenor spends a period of time imbuing the stone with magical intent and then is placed in the pot containing the small tree that represents the World Tree for this ritual. Once the last stone is placed in the pot, the Celebrant scoops a thin layer of potting soil into the pot in order cover the stones.

When this is accomplished, the Celebrant seals the spell with the following invocation:

“In the glow of the moonlit hour

I call upon the Goddess’ power

Bless these tree, bless it true

For use in all the works we do

So mote it be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. For instance, a ritual for Mabon might involve apple cider and some sort of fruit loaf. Lughnassadh might have cornbread while Samhain might have pumpkin bread served. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the vines above, to the grapes and to the wine. Blessed be the Goddess for this gift.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the stalks above, to the grain and to the bread. Blessed be the God for this gift.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the Covenor in sequence. Alternatively, if each Covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the Covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the Covenor in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The Goddess and the elemental spirits are release in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response from the Covenor is “Hail and farewell”. If Handmaiden or Waylander is present, that person shall extinguish the candles in sequence.

### World Tree

Blessings to the World Tree

Honor to the Conduit of Realms

Thank you spanning the worlds of dark and light

From the place we stand to realms beyond sight

Realms of earth, and sky, and churning see

To realms where gods and angels stand free

Blessings to the World Tree, may you ever stand

The mighty conduit from land to land

### Goddess

Beloved Goddess, Giver of Life

We give you thanks for coming here.

We thank you for body, spirit, and mind

And the gift of life, and truth to find

The seasons change as do our lives

Our bodies change, our souls survive

Beloved Goddess, we give thanks to thee

Giver of life, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Beloved God, Lord of the Sun

We give you thanks for coming here

Across desert plane and verdant glade

Your light empowers all that’s made

Thank you for the energy to live and grow

From Sky above to Earth below

God of the Sky we give thanks to thee

Lord of the Sun, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

### North/Earth

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to mountain peaks so high

Your jagged beauty pleases the eye

Return to the hills and rolling plain

Thank you for guarding this circle again

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the oceans and churning tides

To places of beauty where life abides

Return to the streams with water clear

Thank you for guarding the circle here

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### South/Fire

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the forges of light and heat

Your power makes tools and machines complete

Return to the candles and torches bright

Thank you for guarding the circle tonight

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### East/Air

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We give you thanks for coming here

Return to the sky and clouds bold and dark

The ever-changing beauty, grey and stark

Return to the breezes and mighty gale

Thank you for guarding this circle and answering our hail.

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant releases the circle by tracing the perimeter of the sacred space with his/her Athame, starting in the east and going widdershins (counterclockwise).

Celebrant (Priest): “May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

Celebrant (Priestess): “The Circle, though open remains unbroken.”

Celebrants and Covenors: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# A Manannan Rite

By Indigo

## Overview

The God Mannanan is an important deity in Celtic mythology. In the legends of Mannanan, he is a generous god that has given gifts to many other younger deities. He was thought to have given gifts of apples (made of red gold), a cup of truth, a breastplate of imperviousness, a girdle of flight, and swords of wounding to various gods and men. He is also a gatekeeper god, who is the guardian of the Blessed Isle and Mag Mell. He is associated with the Cauldron of Regeneration. As Mannanan has strong ties to the Otherworld (Summerland, Land of Youth), he is a good deity to call upon at Samhain or at times of endings (or new beginnings following an ending). Mannanan would be a good Celtic deity to call for funeral rituals. Mannanan also has strong associations with the sea and therefore could be called with Danu for a water-related ritual.

The purpose of this ritual is to ask Mannanan to carry messages, wishes, and prayers to the ancestors. Therefore, the theme of this ritual is such that it is wholly appropriate for autumn.

## Materials Needed

Candles: Yellow, Blue, Red, Green, Gold, Silver, and Black. A needfire candle and a tiny red candle to represent the element of fire are also needed.

Altar Cloth: Black or a scene of a starry night. An altar cloth with an autumnal scene would also be appropriate.

Standard ritual items: Athame, wand, chalice, pentacle; shot glass of water; shot glass of salt; suitable consumables for Cakes & Ale

Elemental representations for the altar: shot glass of water, a polished stone, incense, and a tiny red candle.

## Gathering Call (Optional)

The Gathering Call is optional if used for an autumnal Esbat service. It should, however, be implemented if used for a High Rite like Samhain. If liturgically appropriate, the Celebrant(s) recite the Gathering Call as a way of formally starting the Sabbat. If there is only one clergy member, that person reads all three iterations. If there are both male and female clergy, the iterations are read as indicated. If there are both male and female clergy as well as a Handmaiden/Waylander, then the Handmaiden/Waylander shall read the first iteration, the priest shall read the second iteration, and the priestess shall read the final iteration.

### First Iteration

1. **Priestess (or Handmaiden/Waylander):**
2. "Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay
3. Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way
4. Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers
5. Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."
6. **Covenors:**
7. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

1. **Priest:**
2. "We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song
3. We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong
4. We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life
5. We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."
6. **Coverers:**
7. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

1. **Priestess:**
2. We remember the fire, the well, and the tree
3. We remember the call that all must be free
4. We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,
5. We remember the charge to love all and harm none
7. **Covenors**:
8. "We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"
9. **Celebrants (in unison):** "The ritual begins!"
10. **Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Altar Blessing

The altar consecration ritual is used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. For this ritual, the celebrant has several choices in altar cloths. As black is a color associated with Ancestors and divination, a black altar cloth would be appropriate. An altar cloth featuring an autumnal scene or a night sky would also be appropriate for this kind of ritual – particularly if it is being conducted on or near Samhain. Alternatively, an altar cloth featuring pathways, a gate, or doors would be appropriate for a ritual invoking a Gatekeeper deity.

### East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

Let second sight guide our way

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

### North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

### Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

## Casting the Circle

The Celebrant first cleanses the sacred space with chimes or a broom. The Celebrant then casts the circle by walking the perimeter three times, starting from the east. The first iteration uses incense, the second uses sea salt, and the third iteration employs an Athame.

First iteration:

I cast this circle with air and fire

May its power hold my desire

I cast this circle with water and earth

May it contain both love and mirth

Second iteration:

I cast this circle to ward and shield

May it hold fast and never yield

I cast this circle with will and word

And with the blessing of the Lady and Lord

Third iteration:

I cast this circle with power and love

From Earth below to Sky above

With shining sun and glittering sea

God and Goddess blessed be.

The circle is cast. So mote it be!”

Covenors: “So mote it be!”

## Calling the Quarters

The calls to deities and elemental spirits starts in the east and continues clockwise. The appropriate candles are let at the beginning of each invocation. If this ritual has a Handmaiden or a Waylander, that person shall light the candles. The ritual response to each invocation is “Hail and welcome!”

### East/Air

Hail to Raphael, Archangel of Air

Blessings to the Guardian of the East

An autumnal wind blows through the night

Dead leaves rustle, aloft in flight

Ravens perch on dormant trees

Their feathers ruffled by the crisp night breeze

Guardian of East, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### South/Fire

Hail to Michael, Archangel of Fire

Blessings to the Guardian of the South

The hearth fires shine its warming light

It grants us heat, it grants us sight

And grant us fire of passion true

A spark of creativity for the works we do

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### West/Water

Hail to Gabriel, Archangel of Water

Blessings to the Guardian of the West

Grey mists shroud the morning plains

Dark skies pour down cooling rains

Lakes are quiet, streams go still

The season turns by nature’s will

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Water, Blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### North/Earth

Hail to Uriel, Archangel of Earth

Blessings to the Guardian of the North

High mountain peaks stand proud and stark

A jagged ridge against the looming dark

The harvests are done, the corn and the wheat

The land shall rest, the circle is complete

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God

Hail to Mannanan, God of Sea

In love and thanks we invite you here

From land to sea, from sea to isle

You power to guide is without rival

You guide the souls to the places of rest

We look to the seas, we look to the West

Beloved Mannanan, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sea, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess

Hail to Danu, Goddess of Water

In love and thanks we invite you here

From sea to sky, from sky to storms

From storm to sea, the circle forms

And in-kind the soul travels from life to life

With times of rest between times of strife

Beloved Danu, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Water, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Ancestors

Beloved Ancestors, we call unto thee

Grant us insight for what your blessings shall be

We honor your deeds from long in the past

We thank you for courage and blessings that last

We build our future upon what has gone before

Your deeds and your words are remembered in lore

Be with us this evening as we honor the ways of old

Your presence is felt from beyond the Veil’s fold

Hail and welcome!

## A Sea Meditation

The Covenors should take a seated position with their feet in contact with the floor. Alternatively, if this is an outdoor ritual, the Covenors can sit on the ground.

The Celebrant leads the meditation:

*Place yourself in a comfortable position with your feet in contact with the ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in… breathe out… breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*When you open our eyes, you realize it is midnight and the full moon hangs high overhead. You are standing at the sea’s edge. It is late autumn and the salt air is cool and a faint breeze accompanies the waves that gently lap against the sand. It was too cold for swimming. But out to see you see the faint glow of jellyfish that slowly pulse and flex their way silently in the cold, dark sea. Ghost crabs – named for their pale color – skitter about the beach in the moonlight, proving they are not ghosts but very much alive.*

*The sea is vast and the horizon is barely discernable – dark against dark. But you know the reason why you came. The tide is rolling out, pulling away from the beach. You have a sealed bottle and a piece of thick vellum. You have a message to write that could be carried across the sea. Whom shall you write to? Where is the message going? In the glow of the full moon, you write you write your message with a heavy, old-fashioned ink pen.*

*[Silence for a time]*

*You roll the paper up into a tight spindle and push it into the heavy, glass bottle. You seal the bottle with a spongy cork and hurl it into the sea. With a splash, you see the bottle bob upon the waves and slowly vanish from sight as it is carried away by the tide.*

*[Silence, briefly]*

*We are ready to leave this place. Close your eyes, for we are returning to where we started.*

*Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out…*

*When you are ready, open your eyes.*

## Magical Working

This ritual calls for a caldron lined with lit tea lights as well as a piece of flash paper for each Covenor. The participants each write a brief message, prayer, or blessing for a friend or loved on who has passed into the next realm. Each Covenor can either say the message aloud or remain silent. The message is then placed into the cauldron where the flash paper is burned.

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant shall choose a seasonally appropriate food and beverage. As this ritual is ideally suited for autumn (and could, in fact, be used as a Samhain rite), appropriate beverages could include spiced cider, pomegranate juice, or apple wine. Pumpkin bread or pomegranate cookies could be used for cakes in this rite. If there are two Celebrants, the Priest shares the cakes while the Priestess shares the ale.

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the vines above, to the grapes and to the wine. Blessed be the Goddess for this gift.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the blessed Earth, to the seeds below, to the stalks above, to the grain and to the bread. Blessed be the God for this gift.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the Covenors in sequence. Alternatively, if each Covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the Covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the Covenors in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be.”

## Releasing the Quarters

The Goddess and the elemental spirits are release in the reverse order in which they were called. The ritual response from the Covenors is “Hail and farewell”. If Handmaiden or Waylander is present, that person shall extinguish the candles in sequence.

### Ancestors

Spirit of the Ancestors, we thank you this night

You gave us the courage to do what is right

Return to the realms that lie past the Veil

You’ve taught us that wisdom and courage prevail

Thank you for the guidance and knowledge from the past

Your form the foundation for our culture to last

Return to your realms in peace, you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Goddess

Beloved Danu, Goddess of Water

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for empowering this sacred rite

For workings of power, workings of might

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Danu, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God

Beloved Mannanan, God of the Sea

We give you thanks for coming here

Thank you for hearing our petitions this night

For letting us remember our ancestors’ light

Stay if you wish, go if you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Beloved Mannanan, we give thanks to thee

God of the Sea, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### North/Earth

Hail to Uriel, Archangel of Earth

Blessings to the Guardian of the North

We give you thanks for coming to this autumn rite

For warding us from all Outsiders’ might

And for standing watch, for standing true

For supporting the ritual works we do

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### West/Water

Hail to Gabriel, Archangel of Water

Blessings to the Guardian of the West

Thank you for coming to this circle blessed

May our ancestors be honored in the West

Thank you for standing watch this sacred night

For supporting the works we do for right

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### South/Fire

Hail to Michael, Archangel of Fire

Blessings to the Guardian of the South

We give you thanks for coming here

Your flaming sword dispels both cold and fear

Thank you for holding back any spirits dark

With weapons holy, you light the spark

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell

### East/Air

Hail to Raphael, Archangel of Air

Blessings to the Guardian of the East

We give you thanks for aiding us this night

The crisp autumn air gives us delight

The circle secured by your love and power

And so we shared this sacred hour

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Archangel of Air, blessed be

Hail and Farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Celebrant releases the circle by tracing the perimeter of the sacred space with his/her Athame, starting in the east and going widdershins (counterclockwise).

Celebrant (Priest): “May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

Celebrant (Priestess): “The Circle, though open remains unbroken.”

Celebrants and Covenors: “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

# An Altar Consecration

For more formal rites, the altar consecration ritual can be used prior to the circle casting. This ritual prepares the altar for use in a magical working in which a full coven is in attendance. Items required for this ritual are: an Athame, a small white candle, a cone of incense, a small bowl of water, a small bowl of salt, and matches/lighter.

## East/Air

*The Celebrant lights an incense cone at the east side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the incense smoke.*

“Spirit of Air, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Cast away all negative power

So we may have this peaceful hour.

Spirit of Air, blessings to thee

This altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

## South/Fire

*The Celebrant lights a white candle at the south side of the altar and then passes his/her Athame through the candle flame three times.*

“Spirit of fire, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Negative power must now decrease

So we may have this rite in peace.

Spirit of Fire, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

## West/Water

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of water (set at the west side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Water, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be cast away

And in its passing, a place to pray

Spirit of Water, blessings to thee

The altar is cleaned. So mote it be.”

## North/Earth

*The Celebrant dips his/her Athame into a small bowl of salt (set at the north side of the altar) three times.*

“Spirit of Earth, we ask of thee

Imbue this altar with energy

Let negative power be pushed aside

Let peace and light hereby reside

Spirit of Earth, blessings to thee

The altar is cleansed. So mote it be.”

## Sealing the Altar

*The Celebrant then takes three pinches of salt and sequentially stirs salt into the water with his/her finger.*

“For Body, for mind, for spirit. Blessed be.”

*The Celebrant then takes his/her Athame and places the tip into the water. The Celebrant then holds the Athame and bowl aloft.*

“As the Athame is to the God, so the Chalice is to the Goddess. Together, they are one. Blessed be.”

The Celebrant taps each side of the altar (East, South, West, and North) with the handle of his/her Athame.

“With positive thought and word and deed

The altar is set to work our need

And with negative energy hereby repealed

The altar is ready, it’s power sealed.

So mote it be!”

# A Community Protection Rite

## Overview

The purpose of this rite is to protect a community from harm from external forces. A suitable scenario would be in defending a neighborhood from invasion, riot, or civil unrest. As this ritual can be conducted at any time of year, this rite employs general Quarter Calls instead of season-specific Calls. However, the Celebrant(s) should feel free to substitute the Quarter Calls for seasonally-specific invocations if desired.

This ritual calls upon Shango (Orisha of Thunder) and Oshun (Orisha of Streams). Both deities include drumming, music, love, joy, and revels in their spiritual portfolios. Clergy and Covenors should wear red and white attire for this ritual as those are the preferred colors of Shango and Oshun.

## Materials Needed

The standard ritual items include: candles of yellow, red, blue, green, and silver; Athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle; incense, salt; chimes or a broom; appropriate food and beverage for Cakes & Ale; an altar cloth; altar representations for the four elements (incense, candle, shot glass of water, and a crystal).

The specific items needed for this ritual are:

* A glass of dry wine; a plate of mangoes and bananas (offering to Shango)
* A glass of sherry; a piece of cake (offering to Oshun)
* Representations of the Orishas (small drum for Shango, clear crystal for Oshun)

## Cleansing Sacred Space

The Celebrant can cleanse sacred space in one of two ways. He/she can ring chimes in the cardinal directions; he/she can sweep the space with a broom/besom starting in the center and sweeping outward to the periphery (again, in the cardinal directions). Once completed, the Celebrant may smudge the sacred space with sage or other appropriate incense.

## The Witches Gather

The Celebrant draws his/her Athame and points in the direction of the altar and declares “Witches, draw your blades!”

The Covenors respond in kind and answer, “To the Goddess!”

The Celebrant then says:

“As above, so below

God and Goddess, we love you so

As within, so without

We serve in faith and not in doubt

As the universe, so the soul

We children of light shall work our role

In love and trust, in hope and joy

Our witches’ skills we shall employ

So mote it be!”

Covenors:

“So mote it be!”

## Blessing the Cauldron

Celebrant lights a small candle (tea light) and declares:

“I light this spark of sacred fire

May it empower my desire

Let the candle burn, let the cauldron churn

Let the wheel of magic turn

From darkness to light

From obscurity to sight

We bless the cauldron for this rite

So mote it be!

Covenors:

“So mote it be!”

## Altar Blessing

The altar should have a lit incense stick (or incense cone) on the East direction, a lit red tea light to the South, a small bowl of water to the West (or shot glass of water), and a small bowl of salt (or shot glass of salt) in the direction of North. The ritual response is “so mote it be”.

### Air

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the incense smoke three times.

“Spirit of Air, please hear our call

Empower this altar for the use of us all

Blow aside all negative power

Let us have peace for this ritual hour

Spirit of Air, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Fire

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and waves it through the flame of the small red candle three times.

“Spirit of Fire, please hear our plea

Endow this altar with renewed energy

Burn away all negative power

Inspire us for this ritual hour

Spirit of Fire, we give thanks to thee

The Altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Water

The Celebrant takes his her Athame and stirs the water in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Water, we call unto thee

Imbue this altar with renewed purity

Wash away all negative power

Grant us insight for this ritual hour

Spirit of Water, we give thanks to thee

This altar is cleansed

So mote it be.”

### Earth

The Celebrant takes his/her Athame and stirs the salt in the bowl three times.

“Spirit of Earth, we call upon thee

Imbue this altar with renewed stability

Ground out from this place all negative power

Grant us wisdom for this ritual hour.

Spirit of Earth, we give thanks to thee

The altar is cleansed

So mote it be.

### Blessing the Chalice and Athame

The Celebrant sprinkles three pinches of salt into the small bowl of water, saying, “For the mind, for the body, and for the spirit.” The Celebrant then stirs the saltwater with his/her Athame.

If there are two Celebrants, the Priestess holds the chalice and the Priest holds the Athame. The Priest dips the blade of the Athame into the Chalice as the Celebrants say the following:

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God…

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess…”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

Both: “Blessed be!”

Covenors: “Blessed be!”

### Sealing the Altar

The Celebrant taps the four sides of the altar with the hilt of his/her Athame, starting in the East. The ritual response is “So mote it be!”

By the moonlit glow or sun’s strong light

May this altar serve what’s true and right

By my word and by my will

This altar is sealed against powers ill

So mote it be!

## Casting the Circle

If a Priest and Priestess are present, the Priestess shall cast the first and third iteration while the Priest shall cast the second iteration. If there is only one celebrant, that person shall cast all three iterations. If there is a Handmaiden/Waylander and a Priest and Priestess, the Handmaiden/Waylander recites the first iteration, the Priest recites the second, and the Priestess recites the third. The circle casting shall start at the east and be drawn clockwise. The circle shall begin with the invoking of a protective Pentacle. The first circle iteration will use a wand of incense, the second shall use a bowl of salt, and the third shall use a wand or Athame. While the circles are being cast, the Priest/Priestess/Handmaiden/Waylander shall issue the Gathering Calls.

### First Iteration

"Come shapers, come craftsmen, come molders of clay

Come artists, come singers, come teachers of the way

Come warriors, come hearth-keepers, come healers

Come wise ones, come mystics, come fortune-dealers."

**Covenors:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Second Iteration

"We are shapers of dreams, crafters of song

We are teachers of lore, righters of wrong

We are seekers of truth, affirmers of life

We are guardians of peace, soothers of strife."

**Coverers:**

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

### Third Iteration

We remember the fire, the well, and the tree

We remember the call that all must be free

We remember the Lady, and the Lord of the Sun,

We remember the charge to love all and harm none

**Covenors**:

"We come to the Circle, we answer the call!"

**Priest and Priestess:** "The Circle is cast!"

**Coven**: "So mote it be!"

## Calling Elemental Spirits and Orishas

If this ritual employs a Waylander or Handmaiden, that person shall light the candles as the appropriate elemental spirit and Orisha is called. The element-specific invoking pentacle is drawn in the air with an Athame at the end of each invocation.

### Air/East

Hail to the Guardian of the East

Blessings to the Spirit of Air

In love and thanks, we call thee here

To banish all negativity and fear

Grant us clarity of word and thought

So we may employ all we’ve been taught

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Fire/South

Hail to the Guardian of the South

Blessings to the Spirit of Fire

In love and thanks, we welcome thee here

Let creativity flow, let doubt disappear

May passion for justice inspire this rite

Let oppression yield to righteous might

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Water/West

Hail to the Guardian of the West

Blessings to the Spirit of Water

In love and thanks, we invite thee here

May occlusion yield, may our vision be clear

Let our eyes be open to the path of right

May our perception have second sight

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and Welcome!

### Earth/North

Hail to the Guardian of the North

Blessings to the Spirit of Earth

In love and thanks we welcome thee here

May our footing be sure, our pathway clear

Ground out distractions from the sacred right

May our will be sharp, our focus be tight

Guardian of the Earth, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### God (Shango)

Hail to Shango, Orisha of Thunder

Blessings to the God of Drums

We call thee for help against invaders foul

Those who come with cudgel and cowl

Let your thunder roar at those we abhor

Let your drum beat guide them to the nearest door

Orisha of Thunder, we give thanks to thee

God of Drums, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Goddess (Oshun)

Hail to Oshun, Orisha of Water

Blessings to the Goddess of Love

We call thee for help against those guided by hate

Let your love protect us from an unkind fate

Let your water rail against our enemy’s wail

May the current cause the invaders to fail

Orisha of Water, we give thanks to thee

Goddess of Love, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

### Ancestors

Beloved Ancestors, we call unto thee

Grant us insight for what your blessings shall be

We honor your deeds from long in the past

We thank you for courage and blessings that last

We build our future upon what has gone before

Your deeds and your words are remembered in lore

Be with us this evening as we honor the ways of old

Your presence is felt from beyond the Veil’s fold

Hail and welcome!

## Guided Meditation

Place your body in a comfortable position with your feet planted to the floor or ground. Close your eyes. Take three cleansing breaths. Breathe in. . . Breathe out. . . Breathe in. . . Breathe out. . . Breathe in. . . and breathe out. . .

We are leaving this place. We are leaving this room [or field, or clearing] and travelling to another place. You open your eyes to another land entirely. You look out and see a land of tall grasses and squat trees. Insects chirp and buzz as the sun approaches the western horizon. The sky is deep blue, cloudless, and nearly the color of cobalt. This is a land that is clean, untainted by pollution. A condor flies lazily in the sky. A faint breeze blows, carrying with it a hunt of wildflowers.

You walk a well-worn path towards a clearing with a campfire burning cheerfully. As the sun sets, the heat of the day quickly dissipates and a crisp, cool wind picks up. A dark-skinned, powerfully built man dressed in red and white is cooking plantains and cornbread over the fire. He sees your approach and lights four torches – one at each cardinal direction. He beckons you to sit down near the fire as the night air continues to cool.

The man’s eyes are bright with intelligence and mirth. He pulls two drums out from his pack. They are old, lovingly crafted, and are painted with red and white sigils whose meaning is hard to understand. He hands one drum to you and says, “Let us play for a time.”

You start with a slow rhythm, and the dark man nods appreciatively as he gradually guides the tempo faster. There is power in music. With each beat of the drum, you feel energy called to this place. Your hands tingle with it. Power calls to power. Music gives life to the spirit, expression to the soul. You drum faster and faster, with ever-increasing complexity.

“Feel the power,” the dark man declares with a grin. “What shall you do with it?”

You think about that as your drumming rises in speed and intensity. You think of the community you want to protect. You think of the loved ones you would have shielded.

And, for a time, you drum. Your hands tingle with power. And the cool night is nearly crystalline.

[Silence for a time]

The dark man thumps the drum hard as the tempo hits a final crescendo. A shockwave ripples out across the night. And for just one moment, the savanna is silent. The stars are steady and do not twinkle. The moon hangs overhead with its stark radiance. The dark man claps his hands and laughs joyfully.

“Not bad, young one,” he affirms.

And the sounds of the night return – the insects, the birds, and a hyena in the distance.

You both stand and face each other in friendship, both knowing that it is time to part ways.

“Always remember to laugh,” the dark man advises.

You walk away from the campfire into the starry night. You close your eyes, for you are ready to leave this place and return to where you started.

Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… Breathe out… Breathe in… and breathe out…

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Bardic Reading

The Coven Bard will read a tale of Shango and/or Oshun

## Magical Working

Celebrant: “In the Yourba magical tradition, Orishas do not demand that their followers beg, scrape, or grovel. Orishas understand that humans have dignity. And therefore, we may simply ask the Orishas for aid. However, it is disrespectful to ask a boon and offer nothing by way of thanks. Therefore, we will offer gifts to Shango and Oshun in thanks for their help.”

The Celebrant places the plates of food and the sacred beverages for the Orishas on the altar. The Covenors then start drumming in order to empower the offerings, keeping in mind their thanks to the Orishas and good will.

When the drumming is completed, the Priest and Priestess bless the offerings and lift them up (symbolizing that the food now belongs to the Orishas). The Handmaiden/Waylander then cuts a door in the Circle so that the Priest and Priestess can bring the offerings outside. The dry wine is flung into the sky (as Shango is a thunder god) and the sherry is poured reverently into the earth (or into a stream, if one is handy). The food is presumably eaten by the creatures of the forest (who are always under the care of the gods). The Celebrants then return to the Circle and the Handmaiden/Waylander seals the door.

Celebrant: “Blessed Orishas, Shango and Oshun, we offer you a gift for a gift. And so we ask in love: please protect this community from invaders who would come to destroy. Protect your witches from those who bring hate. Protect the faithful from those who have forgotten the faith. Though we are not your children by blood, we serve the Earth, we serve the Craft, we serve the Peace, and we serve in love. Thank you, Shango. Thank you Oshun. Blessed be!”

## Cakes and Ale

For Cakes and Ale, the Celebrant can choose either the leftover dry wine or sweet sherry (since there Shango and Oshun will not have been offered two full bottles of spirits). Likewise, there Celebrant can use the leftover cake for the “cakes” (as Oshun received a slice first and there will be most of a whole cake remaining). It is also recommended that a non-alcoholic beverage be available for Covenors who cannot tolerate alcohol.

The Priestess reverently holds the Chalice and the Priest hold his Athame above the Chalice.

Priest: “As the Athame is to the God.”

Priestess: “So the Chalice is to the Goddess.”

Both: “And together, they are one.”

### Blessing the Ale

The Celebrant (Priestess) reverently lifts the bottle containing the beverage to the sky and declares:

“From the moon’s light to the earth below

From the fertile earth the seeds do grow

From seeds to vine, from grape to wine

Blessings on this gift so fine.”

### Blessing the Cakes

The Celebrant (Priest) reverently lifts the tray containing the cakes to the sky and declares:

“From the sun’s light to the earth below

From the fertile soil, the wheat doth grow

From seeds to stalk, from grain to bread

With this gift we all are fed.”

The Celebrant (Priestess) passes the cup containing the ale to each of the Covenor in sequence. Alternatively, if each Covenor has their own cup, she can pour from the main chalice into each of the Covenor’s cups.

Celebrant/Priestess: “Drink from the cup of wisdom. May you never thirst.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art goddess”.

The Celebrant (Priest) passes out the ritual cakes to each of the Covenor in sequence.

Celebrant/Priest: “Eat of the bread of life. May you never hunger.”

Covenor: “Blessed be” or “Thou art god”.

## Releasing the Elemental Spirits and Deities

The deities and elemental spirits are released in the reverse order in which they are called. The Handmaiden/Waylander extinguishes the appropriate candle at the end of each Call. Likewise, the banishing Pentacle is drawn with each release. The liturgical response is “Hail and farewell!”

### Ancestors

Spirit of the Ancestors, we thank you this night

You gave us the courage to do what is right

Return to the realms that lie past the Veil

You’ve taught us that wisdom and courage prevail

Thank you for the guidance and knowledge from the past

Your form the foundation for our culture to last

Return to your realms in peace, you must

In perfect love and perfect trust

Hail and farewell!

### Goddess (Oshun)

Beloved Oshun, Orisha of Water

We thank you for your presence here

Return to the crystalline rivers and streams

Where the waters run and blessed life teems

Return to the dance, with the tempo so bright

We thank you for the boons you gave us this night

Beloved Oshun, we give thanks to thee

Orisha of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### God (Shango)

Beloved Shango, Orisha of Thunder

We thank you for your presence here

Return to the sky, with thunder and storm

Against our enemies, we engage potent reform

Return to the revels, with drumming and joy

Your powerful blessings we gladly employ

Beloved Shango, we give thanks to thee

Orisha of Thunder, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Earth/North

Guardian of the North, Spirit of Earth

We thank you for your presence here

Return to the mountains and peaks so high

Your jagged projections challenge the sky

Return to the plains and valleys below

With trees to be planted and crops to sow

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Earth, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Water/West

Guardian of the West, Spirit of Water

We thank you for your presence here

Return to the seas, return to the tides

Where mysteries hide and life abides

Return to the rivers and lakes so clear

Wherever you manifest, life will appear

Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Water, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Fire/South

Guardian of the South, Spirit of Fire

We thank you for your presence here

Return to the candles and torches bright

We thank you for the passion to work this rite

Return to the bonfires with light and heat

With your energy bestowed, this right is complete

Guardian of the South, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Fire, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

### Air/East

Guardian of the East, Spirit of Air

We thank you for your presence here

Return to the sky with clouds so bright

The shifting patterns inspire delight

With storms and wind, with gust and gale

Those who would hurt us shall not prevail.

Guardian of the East, we give thanks to thee

Spirit of Air, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

The Priestess walks the perimeter of the circle, counterclockwise, with Athame in hand and declares:

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and seen no more

This room (area | field | clearing) is now as it was before

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“May the light of faith guide us

May the God and Goddess bless us

May our bonds of friendship empower us

May our better natures never fail us

For we are the witches

We are the wise

We are the children of light!”

# A House Cleansing Rite

The purpose of this ritual is to purge negative energy from a home and surrounding grounds. This ritual might be needed when moving in to a new residence where the energy signature of the prior residents were negative or unknown. This ritual could also be used if the current dweller believes that negative energy has gradually infiltrated the home. Likewise, this ritual can be used after a psychic attack against the home or if a visitor has brought negative energy into the house.

## Materials needed

* A silver pen (available at craft stores). This is the type of pen that can write on glass or ceramic.
* Four clear glass discs (for Isa runes)
* Four torches
* Four flowing ribbons (to be tied around the torches; yellow, red, blue, green)
* A green glass disc (for the Fehu rune)
* Several yellow glass discs (for the Sowilo rune)
* Four small mirrors, glued to wooden spikes
* 12 hematite stones
* 12 clear quartz stones
* A sage stick
* A pouch of black salt
* A vial of holy water

## Imposing the perimeter

This ritual will involve erecting a defensive perimeter in the form of three concentric circles. The outer two circles will magically face away from the home while the inner ring is directed towards the home.

The outermost perimeter will have the Isa discs driven into the ground, corresponding to the compass directions. The purpose of this line of defense is to ground out incoming negative energy. From a magical correspondence perspective, Isa both slows down a process and can block a process. Isa is an impediment. Therefore, the magical intent here is to create a ring of defense that slows/impedes/blocks negative intent before it gets to the home. This outer ring will be fortified by a dozen hematite stones (a silvery-black stone that absorbs negative energy.

For the middle perimeter, the Priest/Priestess will drive stakes into the ground. These wooden sticks will have small mirrors mounted that will be faced away from the home and will also correspond to the compass directions. The purpose of this defensive ring is to reflect back to the sender any ill intent that is not ground out by the first defensive perimeter.

For the interior perimeter, the Priest/Priestess will place torches at each of the compass directions. These torches will have colorful ribbons attached that correspond to the appropriate magical direction. The Priest/Priestess will invoke the appropriate archangel at each compass point. Additionally, the Priest/Priestess set out the dozen quartz stones along the circle perimeter. Quarts (particularly clear quartz) is a magically defensive stone suitable for wards.

### Casting the Outer Circle

Starting in the east and working clockwise, the Priest/Priestess faces away from the house and blesses each Isa disc in turn. Hematite stones are laid along the perimeter, spaced evenly.

**East**

The Isa stone now faces east

May it halt any spirit beast

Impede the magic balefully sent

Hold it fast until its power is spent

A guard and ward we make of thee

A stone of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**South**

The Isa stone now faces south

So hear this enchantment from my mouth

Slow down all workings of ill intent

From bitter souls and honor bent

A guard and ward we make of thee

A stone of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**West**

The Isa stone now faces west

Defend the home of those we blessed

Ground out workings of harm and guile

Suppress all magic that could defile

A ward and guard we make of thee

A stone of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**North**

The Isa stone now faces north

May it protect the home this day henceforth

Impede intent of wreck and woe

Halt negative powers and stop its flow

A ward and guard we make of thee

A stone of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**Sealing the Circle**

The ring is set, the circle wrought

Negative intent shall be for naught

Let family, friend and ally true

Go unrestricted and pass on through

So mote it be!

### Casting the Middle Circle

For the middle circle, the Priest/Priestess shall stake into the ground four mirrors at the compass points that face outward. As with the outer ring, the Priest/Priestess starts in the east and progresses clockwise.

**East**

Mirror, I call upon your reflective might

Face the east, repel the blight

May harmful intent to the sender return

Three times thus, the caster burn

A reflective ward, we make of thee

A disc of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**South**

Mirror, I call upon your reflective ways

Face the south, repel malaise

May wicked spells to sender go back

Thrice as potent as the first attack

A reflective ward, we make of thee

A disc of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**West**

Mirror, I call upon your reflective power

Face the west, repel the glower

May baneful spells reflect to the source

Three-fold more as it returns on course

A reflective ward, we make of thee

A disc of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be

**North**

Mirror, I call upon your reflective use

Face the north, repel abuse

May issued curses to the sender go

Three-fold shall the punishment flow

A reflective ward, we make of thee

A disc of power, thou shall thus be

So mote it be!

**Sealing the Circle**

The ring is set, the circle wrought

Negative intent shall be for naught

Let family, friend and ally true

Go unrestricted and pass on through

So mote it be!

### Casting the Inner Circle

For the middle circle, the Priest/Priestess shall stake into the ground (and light in sequence) four torches. These torches should have colorful ribbons that correspond to the appropriate direction (yellow for east, red for south, etc.). As with the first to circles, the Priest/Priestess starts in the east and progresses clockwise.

**East**

Hail to Raphael, Archangel of Air

Welcome, Guardian of the East

We ask thee here to aid this rite

Blow all negativity from our sight

And help to seal this hearth and home

Against all harmful spirits that may nearby roam

Archangel Raphael, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the East, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

**Fire**

Hail to Michael, Archangel of Fire

Welcome, Guardian of the South

We ask thee here to guard this place

Turn trespassed land to sacred space

Cast darkling spirits away from here

May your blazing sword fill them with fear

Archangel Michael, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the South, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

**West**

Hail to Gabriel, Archangel of Water

Welcome, Guardian of the West

We ask thee here to safeguard this homestead true

Wash away negativity with your waters blue

May your tides rise against those of ill intent

Push them away, may their power be spent.

Archangel Gabriel, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the West, blessed be

Hail and welcome!

**North**

Hail to Uriel, Archangel of Earth

Welcome, Guardian of the North

We ask thee here to protect this Keep

Sweep aside malevolent spirits that burrow and creep

Cleanse the ground and grass and stone

Make unwanted spirits leave this place alone

Archangel Uriel, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the North, we give thanks to thee

Hail and welcome!

**Sealing the Circle**

The ring is set, the circle wrought

Negative intent shall be for naught

Let family, friend and ally true

Go unrestricted and pass on through

So mote it be!

## Preparing the House

For blessing the home, the Priest/Priestess can hang a Fehu rune on the front door of the home and the Sowilo rune in all of the windows. Inside the home, the Priest/Priestess shall purify each room in the house with sage smoke and holy water. The Priest/Priestess shall sprinkle a pinch of black salt in corners of each room.

As each room is purified, the Priest/Priestess seals the intent by intoning:

Floor and ceiling / wall and door / negative energy we abjure

Floor and ceiling / wall and door / negative energy we abjure

Floor and ceiling / wall and door / negative energy we abjure

Thrice spoken, once fulfilled: So mote it be!

## Performing the Banishing Ritual of the Pentacle

Once all the rooms are purified, the Priest/Priestess shall perform the Banishing Ritual of the Pentacle as a means of casting out any remaining negative energy or harmful spirits.

**Cabbalistic Cross**

Celebrant faces east, Athame in hand

Touch your Athame to forehead, imagine white light descending from the heavens, intone the word “Ateh”. This word means “Thou art”. Imagine a sphere of white light above your head.

Touch your Athame to middle of your solar plexus, and intone “Malkuth”. This word means “Kingdom”. Imagine a column of light connecting the sphere of light above your head to an identical sphere of light below your feet.

Touch your Athame to your right shoulder and intone “Ve-Gedurah”. This word means “and power”. Imagine a sphere of white light next to your right shoulder.

Touch your Athame to your left shoulder and intone “Ve-Gedulah”. This word means “and glory”. Imagine a column of light connecting the sphere next to your right shoulder to an identical sphere to your left shoulder.

Clasp hands together and intone “Le-Olahm”. This word means “forever”. Imagine a cross of light that extends through your body.

Clasp Athame between both hands and point upward, then intone “Amen”.

**Banishing Pentagrams**

*East*: Draw a banishing Earth Pentagram in the air and then bring the point of the dagger to the center of the star. Intone “YHVH” (“Yahd Hey Vau Hey”)

*South:* Without dropping then dagger, continue tracing a circle outward until you are in the South position. Again, draw a banishing Earth Pentagram and then bring the point of the dagger to the center, then intone “ADNI” (“Ah Doh Neye”).

*West:* Without dropping then dagger, continue tracing a circle outward until you are in the West position. Draw a banishing Earth Pentagram and then bring the point of the dagger to the center, then intone “AHIH” (“Eh Yeh”).

*North:* Without dropping then dagger, continue tracing a circle outward until you are in the North position. Then draw a banishing Earth Pentagram and then bring the point of the dagger to the center, then intone “AGLA” (“Ah Gah Lah”).

Continue tracing the circle until you once again face east. Then bring point the dagger to the same spot in the center of the east Pentagram.

**Invoke Archangels**

Celebrant raises his/her arms to make the shape of a cross

Before me, Raphael

Behind me, Gabriel

At my right hand, Michael

At my left hand, Uriel

About me flames the Pentagrams

And in the column shines the six-rayed star

[Repeat to say three times]

*Celebrant stomps foot*

May spirits unwanted, cast out be

Return to your realms, we command of thee

Shades of evil, we do abjure

Begone from us, return no more

But peaceful beings are welcome here

If sent in love and hope and cheer

Spirits good and angels bright

Are welcome here both day and night

So mote it be!

**Sealing the Intent**

This house is cleansed

So mote it be!

## Releasing the Archangels

The torches, mirrors, and Isa discs can remain in place for as long as the homeowner wishes. However, the torches will be extinguished as the Archangels are released.

**North**

Hail to Uriel, Archangel of Earth

Blessings to the Guardian of the North

We give you thanks for coming here

To bring stability and banish fear

Return now to your peaks and hills

Thanks for routing curses and ills

Archangel of Earth, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the North, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

**West**

Hail to Gabriel, Archangel of Water

Blessings to the Guardian of the West

Thank you for helping our sacred right

For the gift of perception and second sight

Return now to the streams and tides

The negative is banished, joy abides

Archangel of Water, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the West, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

**South**

Hail to Michael, Archangel of Fire

Blessings to the Guardian of the South

You stood by us with flame and steel

You banished the darkness with power real

Return now to the sacred fire

Your inspiration to us shall not expire

Archangel of Fire, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the South, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

**East**

Hail to Raphael, Archangel of Air

Blessings to the Guardian of the East

Thank you for aiding this cleansing rite

Against malevolent spirits you helped us fight

Return now to the skies above

Remember our gratitude, praise, and love

Archangel of Air, we give thanks to thee

Guardian of the East, blessed be

Hail and farewell!

## Releasing the Circle

Only the inner circle is released. The two outward-facing warding perimeters will remain in-place.

The Priestess walks the circle counterclockwise, Athame in hand, starting from the east.

“At the close of this ritual hour

We call to this blade the Circle’s power

We shant forget, not ever in haste

Lest the power summoned go to waste

The Circle is lifted and hereby released

This home is safe, a place of peace

So mote it be!”

The Handmaiden declares:

“May all beings attracted to our light return to your realms in peace, harming none.”

The Priest declares:

“Sun and Moon to this place of power

Love and joy to grow and flower

Brigit’s fire, and Lugh’s bright light

Shall repel all darkling spirits’ blight

Candle flame, of gold and red

Shall shine against all bane and dread

Receive the blessings, and blessings to give

Radiant light, and the power to live.

Blessed be.”

**Celebrants:** “This working has ended.”

**Celebrants and Covenors:** “Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Huzzah!”

## A Hearthfire Blessing

This blessing may be used for informal gatherings around a bonfire or large fireplace.

The sun soon sets, it’s light must wane

And so we ignite the hearthfire’s flame

May it burn brightly this evening and then through night

And grant us comfort, illumination, and delight

By Lugh and Brigit and the brightest powers

May our joy and feasting last for hours!

By my will, so mote it be!

# A Basic Introduction to Wicca

The curriculum is for individuals interested in learning the basics of the Wiccan belief system, its history, its holidays, its tools, and the rudiments of crafting a ritual. This curriculum is geared towards non-initiates as those already initiated into a coven or those already self-initiated will have already had similar education on these topics.

## Part One: What Wicca is and what Wicca isn't

Because of inconsistent portrayal of the Wiccan religion by Hollywood and the Religious Right, perhaps the best starting point is stating what Wicca is not.

1. **Wicca is not Satanism.** Of course, you all already know that or else you would not be reading this curriculum. It's worth getting that common accusation out of the way at the very beginning. The Wiccan cosmology doesn't actually have a “devil” or a “Satan”, or any other kind of anti-deity. Wicca is a nature religion with nature gods. Wiccans do not sacrifice humans or animals. Many (but not all) Wiccans are vegetarians.
2. **Wicca is not an “anything goes” religion.** Contrary to the accusations of the Religious Right, Wiccans do actually have a moral code. This code is based on the Wiccan Rede. While the rules are not as delineated as the 600+ moral laws in Leviticus, they are also not mutually contradictory, nor do they require adherents to commit illegal acts in the name of the faith.
3. **Wicca is not a dogmatic religion.** Being a fairly new religion, Wicca is dynamic and adaptive. How the religion is practiced today is different than how it was practiced in the 1950s. Like nature itself, the religion is evolutionary. Wicca does not have a book that is equivalent to the Bible or Koran. Instead, it is based on a brief set of principles. Wicca does not claim to know how the world was created, nor does it claim to know how the world will end (or even if it will end). The Wiccan faith is not at odds with science or reason. It is important to know that covens may have official dogma but the actual Wiccan religion has very little dogma.
4. **Wicca is not a hierarchical religion.** While some Wiccan groups organize as three-tier covens, that is the maximum extent to which Wicca is organized. There is no such thing as a Wiccan “pope” or a Wiccan “caliph”. The religion has no one single person who sets Wiccan policy. In addition to covens, there are also group settings called “open circles”. In addition to covens and open circles, many Wiccans prefer to be solitary practitioners.
5. **Wicca is not a patriarchal religion.** In some ways, the reverse is actually true. While the majority of the Wiccan traditions (the word “tradition” has a meaning in Wicca similar to the word “denominations” in Christianity) give equal footing to males and females, there are covens that permit only females. The Dianic tradition is an example of an all-female branch of Wicca. In most open circles, males and females enjoy complete equality. In most coven settings, there is a slight deference to female religious leaders.
6. **Male Wiccans are not called Warlocks.** The word “Warlock” means “oath breaker”. Both male and female Wiccans are called Witches. In a coven setting the male and female leaders are called “High Priest” and “High Priestess”, respectively, not “High Warlock” and “High Witch”.
7. **Not all Witches are Wiccan.** However, many Wiccans identify as Witches. Wicca is a nature religion that uses witchcraft as a tool; witchcraft is not the central focus of the religion. Moreover, you do not need to be a Wiccan to practice ceremonial magic. Even the Catholic Church practices a limited form of ceremonial magic!
8. **Not all Pagans are Wiccan.** However, all Wiccans are Pagan. Of course, the correct term for Pagans living in the 21st century is “Neopagan”. ADF Druidism is another example of a Neopagan faith, as is Asatru.

Now that we've gotten that out of the way, we can start talking about what Wicca is.

1. **Wicca is an Earth-based religion.** The term “Earth-based”, of course, means that the primary focus of Wicca is on the ecology and the mysteries of birth, growth, life, decline, and death. If you aren't interested in recycling and conservation, Wicca is not the religion for you.
2. **Wicca is a decentralized religion.** The largest group setting in Wicca is the open circle. There are no such thing as “diocese” in Wicca. There are no Wiccan “megachurches”. Some Wiccans practice their faith as solitaries.
3. **Wicca is both a very old religion and a very new religion at the same time.** Wicca is very old in that the concepts of the faith (ecology, following the seasons, magical practices, etc.) are very ancient concepts. “Goddess” religions predate the Abrahamic faiths by thousands of years. Wicca is also a very new religion. The basis for the modern practice of Wicca began in the early 1950s in England. When the anti-witchcraft laws were struck from the penal code, Gerald Gardner published a book called “Witchcraft Today”, which was one of the earliest mainstream texts on the subject of modern Wicca.
4. **Wiccans believe in magic.** That being said, “magic” means something different to Wiccans than it means to a Hollywood movie director. There is no sharp dividing line between “natural” and “spiritual” in Wicca. One blends easily into the other. Most Wiccans shun the use of the word “supernatural”, as we believe that magical and spiritual are completely part of nature.
5. **Wiccans believe in a higher power.** Traditionally, this higher power is thought of as the Goddess and God. They are two aspects of a universal creative intelligence. Wicca is essentially a duotheistic faith (contrast that with the Christian trinitarianism, Islamic monotheism, and Druidic polytheism). Conceptualization of the deity varies from believer to believer. While many Wiccans are duotheistic, some are pantheistic, while others are polytheistic.
6. **Wicca is an initiatory faith.** You can certainly follow the Wiccan faith as an eclectic Neopagan without being an initiate. However, Wicca has historically been an initiatory religion. Seekers need not despair that they might not ever become “true” Wiccans for lack of an available third-degree High Priestess. Many contemporary Wiccans are actually self-initiated practitioners. It is the God and Goddess that make one a Witch (or Wiccan, or Initiate), not a man or a woman. A self-initiation ritual is just as valid as an initiation performed by a third degree High Priestess of an established coven. Titles like “High Priest of Grand Pubah Coven” may look good on a business card, but it doesn't make you any more (or less) faithful and dedicated than a self-initiate that has done similar years of independent study and spellcraft. I’ve met very dedicated practitioners of the Craft that are not initiated at all and I’ve met Third Degree clergy that are as false as any Christian Televangelist.
7. **Wicca is a belief system recognized by the Federal government.** Like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, the leader of a Wiccan house of worship can apply for (and receive) 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Likewise, Wiccans may serve openly in the military. A religiously-motivated crime against a Wiccan practitioner would be treated as a hate crime, just as it would be against a member of any other religion.
8. **Wicca is a non-evangelistic religion.** Wicca holds that this faith is merely one valid spiritual path amongst *many* valid spiritual paths. Wicca does not claim to be the “one true religion”. Because of this belief, Wiccans do not actively recruit new members, nor are there Wiccan missionaries. We do, however, teach anyone interested in the faith. We teach for free. Despite being non-evangelistic, Wicca is one of the fastest growing religions in the United States. In raw numbers, only Mormonism and Islam are growing faster than Wicca. By percentage of change, however, Wicca is actually the fastest-growing religion in the United States. Wicca is also experiencing very rapid growth in Canada and England.

### Brief History of Modern Wicca

Prior to the 1950s, the history of Wicca is both murky and fragmentary. Until the early 1950s, most Christian-dominated nations had laws on the books forbidding the practice of witchcraft. However, when these laws were repealed, the practice of the Craft was able to be taken out of the shadows.

Some important dates in Wiccan history are as follows:

* **1939**. Gerald Gardner, a British civil servant who helped popularize modern Wicca, is initiated into the New Forest Coven.
* **1954**. Gerald Gardner publishes “Witchcraft Today”. He and Doreen Valiente co-found Gardnerian Wicca.
* **1958**. Charles Cardell coins the term “Wicca” and “Wiccens” (later refined to “Wiccans”) in *Light* magazine.
* **1963**. Alex Sanders, an Englishman and Gardnerian initiate, founds Alexandrian Wicca. This tradition also included ceremonial magic and concepts from the Qabalah. He noted for publicly differentiating Wicca from Satanism. One of the key reforms of Alexandrian Wicca when compared to Gardnerian Wicca was the acceptance of homosexuality as normal and natural. *(Science has subsequently proven than over 1,500 animal species have some percentage of homosexuality in their numbers, thus homosexuality is actually natural because it occurs in nature.)*
* **1968**. Gavin and Yvonne Frost co-found the Church and School of Wicca. In 1972, this became the first Federally-recognized Wiccan church.
* **1971**. A Hungarian-American named Zsuzsanna Budapest founds Dianic Wicca. This tradition focuses almost exclusively on the Goddess. Most Dianic covens are all-female and some are all-lesbian. Zsuzsanna Budapest published all of her rituals so that any woman could practice them. Dianic Wicca was heavily influenced by the feminist movement. Like Seax-Wicca, Dianic Wicca does not require adherents to be formally initiated by a coven leader, but instead allows for self-initiation.
* **1972**. Mary Nesnick founds Algard Wicca – a fusion of Alexandrian and Gardnerian Wiccan concepts.
* **1973**. Raymond Buckland founds Seax-Wicca. This tradition was created as a non-initiatory form of Wicca and it was not organized into covens. Buckland published all of his works in a book called “The Tree” so that anyone could practice them. Seax-Wicca used Freya and Woden as representatives of the Goddess and God.
* **1979**. Starhawk writes “The Spiral Dance” an important and best-selling book about the Wiccan faith.
* **1986**. In the USA, the court case of Dettmer v. Landon established that Wicca was a religion, and therefore should be treated as such under the eyes of the law.
* **1988**. Scott Cunningham writes “Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner”. It was the highest selling book on Wicca ever written. It was geared specifically for solitaries and included a self-initiation rite.
* **1995**. United States vs. Phillips. The military recognized a pagan's Book of Shadows as a sacred text, positionally equivalent to a Christian's Bible.
* **2007**. The Pentacle was added to the list of 38 other religious symbols recognized by the military for use as burial markers.

Sources: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Wicca>

<http://www.tylwythteg.com/caselaw.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/23/AR2007042302073.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Cunningham>

### Cult Awareness

No religious instruction would be complete without inclusion of cult awareness. While the Religious Right and Hollywood often portray Wicca as a “cult”, the religion of Wicca fails to meet the criteria of a cult by *every* rational measure. However, human beings are fallible and therefore ANY religious leader can theoretically turn even the most benign spiritual practice into something oppressive and sinister. When looking to join a religious community (whether it is Wiccan, Christian, Islamic, or any other practice) be extremely wary of groups that concern themselves more with physical/psychological dominion over the adherents than they do with legitimate spiritual growth and religious study.

* **Mandated Exclusion.** Think long and hard before joining a coven, church, or temple in which the leader demands that the adherents forever forsake worship at other venues.
* **Us versus Them**. While this phenomenon is more common in Abrahamic religions, it's worth noting that religious settings where the leadership cultivates an atmosphere of “us versus them” are generally not healthy atmospheres for spiritual growth.
* **Spiritual Blackmail.** Be wary of covens (or other religious organizations) that demand magically-potent talismans from adherents (such as hair, fingernail clippings, blood, etc.) Typically, such talismans are used for retribution against the adherent by the religious leader should the adherent leave the organization. While this is contrary to the intent of the Rede (and most other religions' ethics), human beings are fallible and there will always be religious leaders who are in it for the power.
* **Sexual Blackmail.** Run, don't walk, away from any coven (or other religious organization) that requires adherents to have sex with the religious leader.
* **“End Times” Doomsayers.** While this phenomenon is more common to the Abrahamic faiths, it is advisable to not become a member of a religious community that is organized around the idea that the world is about to end. Groups with a specific date in mind for the “end of the world” should be *absolutely* avoided without exception.
* **Social Isolation.** Religious groups in which the leader demands that adherents cut ties to friends and family members outside the faith should be avoided. Likewise, religious groups that demand that adherents live together communally should be avoided.
* **Micromanaging.** Religious communities where the leader decides for the adherents mundane things like what books can be read, what foods may be eaten, what studies may be attended, etc., should be avoided. Likewise, run – don't walk – away from any religious community that places the duties to the group above the adherent's duties to one's family. Your needs of your family should always come first. Always.
* **Infallible Leaders.** Human beings are fallible and will always eventually make mistakes. Religious communities in which the leader (or leaders) cannot be questioned and/or are considered infallible should be avoided. (As an aside, the Neopagan faith ADF Druidism actually incorporates the Doctrine of Druidic Fallibility into their core beliefs!) Some organized covens believe in infallible leaders, and this fact must be taken into consideration by a prospective initiate candidate.
* **Stockpiling of Weapons.** This is more common to Abrahamic faiths than Neopagan faiths, but it's worth noting that religious communities that stockpile massive amounts of firearms and ammunition are likely to be dangerous.

## Part Two: Wiccan core beliefs, including the Wiccan Rede

While the phrase “an it harm none, do as thou will” may sound familiar to those with even a passing knowledge of neopaganism, the Wiccan Rede is actually a much longer document. The term “Rede” is a middle-English word for “advice”. Thus, the term “Wiccan Rede” means “Advice for Wiccans”. This poem is attributable to Dorien Valiente, an important leader in the early neopagan movement.

***B****ide within the Law you must, in perfect Love and perfect Trust.  
Live you must and let to live, fairly take and fairly give.   
  
For tread the Circle thrice about to keep unwelcome spirits out.  
To bind the spell well every time, let the spell be said in rhyme.   
  
Light of eye and soft of touch, speak you little, listen much.  
Honor the Old Ones in deed and name,  
let love and light be our guides again.   
  
Deosil go by the waxing moon, chanting out the joyful tune.  
Widdershins go when the moon doth wane,  
and the werewolf howls by the dread wolfsbane.   
  
When the Lady's moon is new, kiss the hand to Her times two.  
When the moon rides at Her peak then your heart's desire seek.   
  
Heed the North winds mighty gale, lock the door and trim the sail.  
When the Wind blows from the East, expect the new and set the feast.   
  
When the wind comes from the South, love will kiss you on the mouth.  
When the wind whispers from the West, all hearts will find peace and rest.   
  
Nine woods in the Cauldron go, burn them fast and burn them slow.  
Birch in the fire goes to represent what the Lady knows.   
  
Oak in the forest towers with might, in the fire it brings the God's  
insight.   Rowan is a tree of power causing life and magick to flower.   
  
Willows at the waterside stand ready to help us to the Summerland.  
Hawthorn is burned to purify and to draw faerie to your eye.   
  
Hazel-the tree of wisdom and learning adds its strength to the bright fire burning.  
White are the flowers of Apple tree that brings us fruits of fertility.   
  
Grapes grow upon the vine giving us both joy and wine.  
Fir does mark the evergreen to represent immortality seen.   
  
Elder is the Lady's tree burn it not or cursed you'll be.  
Four times the Major Sabbats mark in the light and in the dark.   
  
As the old year starts to wane the new begins, it's now Samhain.  
When the time for Imbolc shows watch for flowers through the snows.   
  
When the wheel begins to turn soon the Beltane fires will burn.  
As the wheel turns to Lamas night power is brought to magick rite.   
  
Four times the Minor Sabbats fall use the Sun to mark them all.  
When the wheel has turned to Yule light the log the Horned One rules.   
  
In the spring, when night equals day time for Ostara to come our way.  
When the Sun has reached it's height time for Oak and Holly to fight.   
  
Harvesting comes to one and all when the Autumn Equinox does fall.  
Heed the flower, bush, and tree by the Lady blessed you'll be.   
  
Where the rippling waters go cast a stone, the truth you'll know.  
When you have and hold a need, harken not to others greed.   
  
With a fool no season spend or be counted as his friend.  
Merry Meet and Merry Part bright the cheeks and warm the heart.   
  
Mind the Three-fold Laws you should three times bad and three times good.  
When misfortune is enow wear the star upon your brow.   
  
Be true in love this you must do unless your love is false to you.   
  
These Eight words the Rede fulfill:   
  
"An Ye Harm None, Do What Ye Will"*

The Wiccan Rede is a poem that describes the system of morality, how to declare sacred space for a ritual, the list of Wiccan holidays, some basic magical correspondences, and advice on interpersonal relationships. It packs a lot of insight into just two pages.

The statute “An it harm none, do what ye will” has more restrictions on personal behavior than one might initially suspect. For example, murder, rape, robbery, and theft, all cause harm to people. Within the context of the Rede, Wiccans are not supposed to harm themselves either. Thus, drug and alcohol abuse are contrary to the Rede. Likewise, the command to “fairly take and fairly give” is advice to not hoard wealth but instead be charitable to those in need. “Live and let live” is prohibition against harming others over disagreements (particularly religious disagreements).

Many Neopagans are also familiar with a concept called the Three-fold Law. This refers to the return of karmic energy to the person. If you direct your will at harming others, you will receive a three-fold return on the intent. If you live your life as a blessing to others, that positive energy will return to you three-fold.

You may notice that the concept of “do not harm” bears more than a passing resemblance to other religions' “do not sin”. The majority of the world's religions are essentially seeking the same thing in their adherents: peace, love, charitable behavior, honesty, honor, joy, and discipline. Where Wicca differs is the benchmark used. “Sin” is an arbitrary term that comes from a book written by another human being. “Harm” is a universal concept that transcends all religions. Within the context of religion, you cannot always be certain if you've sinned, but you always know when you've intentionally hurt someone.

So, actions like murder, rape, theft, and adultery qualify as both “sin” in most religions and “harm” in Wicca. Sadly, some actions performed by other religions are not considered a “sin” but are certainly harmful to humanity (such as witch burning, terrorism, etc.). Likewise, some religions hold as “sinful” activities that do not cause harm to anyone (fornication, homosexuality, drinking in moderation, etc.) Because Wicca does not use a lengthy set of “do and don't” rules, it requires the adherent to consciously evaluate each situation on its own merits. Wicca is a religion for contemplative, empathic people. It is not a religion for everyone, nor does it claim to be.

While there is no Wiccan “Bible”, many Wiccans agree on a set of theological principles. These principles are more instructive rather than being “thou shalt not” commands.

1. **Deity has polarity.** The Wiccan concept of deity is envisioned as God and Goddess. Both are equal in rank and are mutually complementary. This balance of deific power is also referred to as the “divine masculine” and “divine feminine”. The dual nature of deity is seen reflected in the Earth's ecology in the cycling of day and night, summer and winter, birth and death. One cannot exist without the other. Likewise, in Wicca, darkness does not equate “evil”, nor does light equate “good”. Both are halves of a complete whole. The polarity of deity reflects this reality.
2. **Deity is immanent.** That doesn't mean “deity is coming soon”, but rather that deity is omnipresent. Wiccans generally believe that the spirit of the divine is part of all living things. The divine is also in the air, rocks, seas, sands, sun, and moon. Contrast that with, say, Islam and Christianity. In Islam, deity is transcendent, meaning that Muslims believe that deity exists in a specific place (their religion’s place of afterlife) instead of being everywhere at once. Christianity combines the idea that deity is immanent and transcendent at the same time. YHVH (the Father God) and Jesus are thought to live in heaven while the Holy Spirit is thought to have omnipresence. By virtue of deity being immanent, we can directly experience communion with deity. In Wicca, there is no sharp dividing line between humanity and deity. Instead, we are part of deity and deity is part of us.
3. **The Earth is sacred.** Because the Earth is the source of life as we know it, the Earth is also sacred. Because deity is immanent (omnipresent), the living Earth is therefore an extension and reflection of deity. The Earth is where we are born, and the Earth is where we are received when we die. The Earth is a vast source of energy from which we draw. Care for the Earth's ecology is something important to most Wiccans.
4. **Psychic power exists.** Many Wiccans believe that we are all born with some degree of psychic gifts. With time and dedication, our innate psychic abilities can aid us with intuition, divination, as well as in recognizing patterns in nature.
5. **Magic is real.** Wiccans believe that magic is real and that magic works. Wiccans often spell the word as “magick” within the context of ritual, so as to differentiate its use from stage magic. Unlike the Hollywood portrayal of magic, the practice of the Craft involves attuning one's self with the underlying patterns of energy that suffuse nature and the universe as a whole. Magic is a tool for empowerment and personal growth. Other religions have magical practices that they simply do not refer to as “magical”. Praying the Rosary is a common form of focusing ritual intent in Catholicism. Buddhists focus ritual intent through the use of chants. The Unitarians have an annual service called “Flower Communion” which essentially uses flowers as a conduit for magical energy.
6. **Reincarnation is real.** Wiccans tend to live life in the present and not necessarily worry about the afterlife. Reincarnation, however, is a very common Wiccan belief. Wicca is not a religion of straight lines with specific beginnings and specific ends. We see in nature that life and death is cyclical. We come from the Earth, and to the Earth we return. Inbetween incarnations, many Wiccans believe in a period of rest in the spirit world. This place is sometimes referred to as the “otherworld”, “underworld”, or “Summerland”. Many Wiccans believe that it takes numerous lifetimes to teach the soul everything that it must learn. It generally is not useful, however, to contemplate past lives – for a logical reason. If your soul learned the lessons it was to learn in a prior life, then you needn't worry about facing those same challenges in this life. If your soul did not learn the lessons it was to learn in a prior life, then it is likely that you are facing those challenges in this life.
7. **Sex is sacred.** The physical joining of two people is a sacred act. Sex between two mutually loving, consenting adults is an act that brings joy and wonder, not shame and guilt. Sex is a gift from the God and Goddess, not something “sinful” or “dirty”. Sex is natural and something to be enjoyed.

Source: “Wicca for Beginners”, Thea Sabin.

## Part Three: Wiccan Sabbats and Esbats

There are two basic types of formal worship services. The first is called a Sabbat and the second is called an Esbat. There are eight Sabbats throughout the Wiccan liturgical calendar. Sabbats follow the cycle of the sun. There are two equinox Sabbats (Ostara and Mabon), two solstices (Yule and Litha), and four cross-quarter days (Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnassadh, and Samhain). The liturgical calendar starts (and ends) with Samhain (October 31). Esbats follow the cycle of the moon. Esbats are generally held at the time of the full moon. There are thirteen full moon events throughout the year. You may encounter variations in the spellings of some holidays, depending on the particular tradition. For example, “Lughnassadh” may be spelled “Lunasa”.

### The Eight Sabbats (the Wheel of the Year)

Rather than being arranged in a linear calendar, the Wiccan liturgical year is organized as a circle called the Wheel of the Year. The dates given may vary somewhat depending on the particular observances of the Coven or tradition. For some traditions, the holidays may differ by approximately one week. For example, some traditions may recognize Samhain on November 7th instead of October 31st.

* **Samhain (October 31)**. This Sabbat honors the dead. It is both the end of the prior year and the beginning of the new year. It is a time of personal reflection. It is a time to assess the accomplishments and failures of the prior year. Although the holiday takes place in mid-autumn, the word “Samhain” means “Summer's End”. It is the final harvest of the three yearly harvests. The God is considered to be in the aspect of the Lord of Death. The Goddess is a wizened crone. Common altar colors: orange, yellow, black and brown (with gourds and pumpkins)
* **Yule (December 21).** This Sabbat recognizes the longest night of the year. It is the day in which the aspect of the God is as a newborn light. In pagan folklore, the Holly King reigns over the waning half of the year, while the Oak King rules the waxing half. So it is at Yule that the Oak King gains the advantage for the next six months, thereby allowing spring to return. Traditionally, the burning of the yule log symbolized the return of light and heat. Common altar colors: white, green, and red (with holly berries and evergreen twigs).
* **Imbolc (February 1).** The word 'Imbolc” means “in the belly” or “in the womb” because lambs are typically born at this time of year. The days are longer, but it is light without heat. It is a time when we can first glimpse the impending Spring that has not yet arrived. Many neopagans use this time to revere the goddess Brigit, the patron deity of healing, blacksmithing, and poetry. Imbolc is a good time for self-purification. From a ritual perspective, the God and Goddess are said to have regained their youth. This is also a good time to have candles blessed for ritual use. This holiday is also called Candlemass. Imbolc is the earliest fertility holiday in the Wiccan liturgical calendar. Common altar colors: red, yellow, and orange.
* **Ostara (March 21).**  The word “Ostara” refers to the goddess Ostare, a fertility deity. At this time of year, the green begins to return to the land as seeds germinate and trees sprout new leaves. It is a time of balance, where the night and day are of equal length. This is the second of the three fertility holidays. At this time, the God is considered once again to be the Lord of Light (as opposed to the Lord of Shadow).The common Christian tradition of dying hard-boiled eggs for Easter is actually derived from the pre-Christian use of eggs as a fertility symbol. Neopagans, too, also dye eggs for Ostara. Common alter colors: pastels (with tulips).
* **Beltane (May 1).** Positionally opposite of Samhain of the Wheel of the Year, Beltane is the third fertility holiday in the Wiccan liturgical calendar. From a ritual perspective, the Goddess and God are said to be mated on this day. Beltane also features the Maypole Dance (which, of course, is a phallic symbol). As the Maypole wreath descends the pole, it is used to symbolize the sexual union of the Goddess and God and thus affirm life and fertility for the growing season. Historically, it was at this time when cattle were driven through the Beltane fire so as to rid the animals of parasites in their fur. Some traditions have two celebrants be designated as the May King and May Queen in honor of the God and Goddess. Common altar colors: red and white (w/ marigolds).
* **Litha (June 21).** Positionally opposite of Yule on the Wheel of the Year, Litha celebrates the longest day of the year. It is the time of year when the God, in the aspect of the Lord of Light, is at the height of his power. Litha is often considered a “lesser” Sabbat, as is not used for divination (like Samhain) or procreation (like Beltane). It is a time for dancing, parties, and bonfires. It is also a time for telling the tale of the Oak King and Holly King, for the balance of the sun's power goes from waxing to waning, and the Holly King is said to rule from this day until Yule. Common altar colors: red, orange, and yellow (plus sun symbol).
* **Lughnaddash (August 1).** The word “Lughnassadh” stems from “Lugh”, the Celtic god of sun and corn. This Sabbat is also called “Lammas” and is much easier to spell! Neopagans often create corn dolls at this time of year. It is the first of the three harvests (this one being corn and grain). The God is a sacrificial being, and it is said that the God gives his life so that the crops may be harvested. Sacrificial deities are certainly not unique to Wicca; they are also found in Christian and Egyptian theologies as well. Common altar colors: yellow and gold (with corn symbol).
* **Mabon (September 21)**. Positionally opposite of Ostara on the Wheel of the Year, Mabon is the second of the three harvests (apples and other fruit). Like Ostara, the forces of light and dark are in balance. From this day, until Ostara, the God takes on the aspect of the Lord of Shadow. Common altar colors: red and brown (with apple symbol).

As can be seen, the Wiccan liturgical calendar (also called the Wheel of the Year) is a cyclical and balanced progression. There are three fertility holidays and three harvest holidays. There are two solstice holidays and two equinox holidays. It tells the story of life: birth, growth, degeneration, and death. And like nature, death is merely a pause in-between new growth and new life. We can extrapolate the Wheel of the Year into our own lives. We are born, we grow, we mature, we wither, and we die. But, like the all cyclical things, life begins from death. We are reborn from death. Death serves life, life serves death. Neither are to be feared. Both are to be honored.

Source: Personal teaching from this author's first teacher.

### Moon Rituals (Esbats)

Although there are twelve months in the Gregorian calendar, the full moon actually occurs thirteen times in a year, due to the 28-day lunar cycle compared to the Gregorian months of 28-31 days each. Most Wiccan traditions consider a year-and-a-day to be the minimum period for a seeker to study and contemplate Wicca before being formally initiated into the faith (or formal self-initiating one's self). Thirteen full moons is a year and a day (coincidentally, so is the progression of the eight Sabbats).

Esbats are shorter religious services that often focus on a magical working. Esbats are held at night. The moon phase plays a crucial role in the ritual intent of the magical working.

* **Waning Moon:** Rituals for banishing or decreasing energy are optimal during the waning moon. Examples: banishing an illness; decreasing a bad habit; attenuating a vice.
* **Waxing Moon:** Rituals for beckoning or increasing energy are optimal during the waxing moon. Examples: increasing luck; improving a healthy habit; stoking creativity.
* **Full Moon:** Rituals for beckoning or banishing may be used. Magical workings are the most powerful during a full moon.
* **New Moon:** Magical rituals are generally not performed during this period.

Of course, there is a traditional connection between the full moon and the forest in Celtic mythology. Each of the full moons corresponds to a type of tree. This correspondence can be useful when planning an Esbat service. The “tree calendar” starts with the first full moon that follows Samhain. Of course, not all of the “trees” on the list are actually trees; vine and ivy are included in Celtic Tree calendar.

* **Birch** (11/1 to 11/28): Beginnings
* **Rowan** (11/29 to 12/26): Protection
* **Alder** (12/27 to 1/23): Guidance
* **Willow** (1/24 to 2/20): Feminine Principle
* **Ash** (2/21 to 3/20): World Tree, “As above, so below”
* **Hawthorne** (3/21 to 4/17): Cleansing
* **Oak** (4/18 to 5/15): Strength
* **Holly** (5/16 to 6/12): Justice, bringing opposites together
* **Hazel** (6/13 to 7/10): Intuition, wisdom.
* **Apple** (shares month with hazel tree): Choices; female lineage
* **Vine** (7/11 to 8/7): Prophesy
* **Ivy** (8/8 to 9/4): Labyrinth into inner knowing
* **Reed** (9/5 to 10/2): Direct action
* **Blackthorn** (shares month with reed): Negation; crone
* **Elder** (10/3 to 10/30): Renewal.

Note that no tree is assigned for Samhain (October 31).

Of course, the Celtic Tree calendar can be consulted when choosing the materials to make one's wand.

Source: “The Healing Power of Trees”, Sharlyn Hidalgo

## Part Four: Ritual Tools

Like most religions, Wicca employs an assortment of tools associated with rituals and services. Some, like the chalice, are common to many religions, while others, like the Athame, are unique to Wicca. The primary purpose of religious tools is to help the celebrant/witch focus ritual intent for a service or magical working. It is certainly possible to conduct a ritual without tools, just as it is perfectly possible to add a long column of numbers without a calculator. Most Wiccans do not purchase all of their tools at once. Moreover, not all Wiccans own every tool. It is preferable to hand-make one's tools if possible (obviously very few Wiccans make a cauldron or Athame by hand unless they happen to be blacksmiths in their spare time!) Receiving a tool as a gift is very acceptable. It is also acceptable to purchase one's tools as long as one doesn't haggle on the price (haggling devalues the item).

### Essential Tools

The Athame, wand, pentacle, and chalice are four tools that every Wiccan should own. Each of the tools represents an element (air, earth, water, and fire). Two of the tools represent the masculine and two represent the feminine.

* **Athame**. The Athame is a knife with a black handle. Unlike the horror movies concerning witchcraft, the Athame is never, ever used to cut flesh. An Athame that touches blood must be deconsecrated and destroyed. The ritual knife is used to draw the boundary of the magic circle for rituals. The Athame is a masculine object and represents the element of air.
* **Wand**. There are two kinds of wands: “personal” and “fire”. It is not necessary to own both. A fire wand can be of any length, while a personal wand is cut to the exact length from one's elbow crease to the top of one's middle finger. Wands are typically made of wood, although some contemporary practitioners may use other materials. Wands should be pointed on one end (typically with a crystal point mounted to the tip) and rounded on the other end. A wand may also be used to draw a magic circle. The wand is a masculine tool and represents fire.
* **Pentacle.** This is an inscribed five-pointed star. A pentacle is typically fashioned from stone, ceramic, or metal. This tool represents the element of earth and is considered to be a feminine symbol. (Note, however, that the pentacle when worn as a holy symbol represents air, earth, water, fire, and spirit.)
* **Chalice.** This can be a cup fashioned from nearly every material, but Is typically made from metal, glass, or ceramic. The chalice represents the element of water and is considered a feminine symbol.

Wicca also employs certain expendable materials during rituals: candles of various colors, incense of various scents, and sea salt. Note, also, that if you encounter a tri-blade dagger with a black handle -- that is NOT an Athame; that tool is called a ferbo (blade used for Satanic rites) and should not be used.

### Additional Ritual Tools

Beyond the four basic ritual tools, there are other instruments that are useful in conducting a religious service. Again, not every Wiccan owns all of these tools. Some, like the cauldron and circlet, are used primarily for group settings as opposed to solitary services.

* **Broom**. As one might imagine, the broom is used to sweep the floor where a ritual is to take place. Symbolically, the broom also sweeps away any residual negative energy prior to a magic circle being cast. A broom used for this purpose should be made from natural materials (such as wood and corn fibers) and not artificial materials (such as metal and plastic).
* **Boline**. This is a white-handled knife used to cut herbs, flowers, vegetables, etc.
* **Book of Shadows.** Most Wiccans maintain a book of spells they've developed, rituals they've written, religious poetry, and spiritual insights. A Book of Shadows need not be a $200 tome with a big silver pentacle emblazoned on the front. Moreover, if one runs out of room in one's Book of Shadows, it is perfectly acceptable to start another. A Book of Shadows should be sturdy and have high quality paper so that the book can withstand being opened and closed numerous times. Feel free to avoid the gaudy, flat black books that have “BOOK OF SHADOWS” written in 48-point faux-calligraphy text on the front.
* **Bowls**. For a magical working, a small bowl of water and sea salt is often placed on the altar.
* **Candle snuffer.** For those who don't excel at waving out a candle, snuffers come in handy when it's time to close a ritual.
* **Cauldron.** This is an iron, three-legged pot used for certain aspects of spellcraft (such as boiling/burning items). Cauldrons come in many sizes, from coffee-mug size to gas-grill size. Cauldrons are usually made from cast iron and are black in color.
* **Censer**. This is a tool that holds a large quantity of burning incense.
* **Circlet**. These are silver or gold chains worn about the head for ritual use. A High Priest would wear a gold circlet while a High Priestess would wear a silver circlet.
* **Cord**. This is a rope worn about the waist. It is typically a tri-color length of cord that is three times the height of the witch/celebrant. In a traditional three-tier coven, the colors in the cord may be used to denote rank within the religious group.
* **Finger chimes.** Like the broom, finger chimes can be used for cleansing the ritual space of negative energy.
* **Mortar & Pestle.** As seen in drug store windows, the mortar and pestle is used to grind herbs, nuts, berries, and incense into a fine powder or paste.
* **Robe**. Wiccan robes are generally black, loose-fitting, and made from natural fibers. Black essentially contains every color.

## Part Five: Constructing a Ritual

Like every religion, Wicca has a basic format for conducting worship. A Wiccan ritual generally adheres to the following progression: Purification of ritual space; setting up the altar; casting the circle; calling the quarters and invoking deities; drumming/chanting/raising energy; magical working; cakes and ale; releasing energy; releasing the quarters and bidding farewell to the deities; releasing the circle.

Additionally, it is recommended that a celebrant/witch be ritually clean prior to conducting a ritual or worship service. This typically involves taking a bath and meditating to set one's mind on the ritual intent of the service. (Besides, it's generally not good to show of for a worship service not smelling good!)

### Purification of Ritual Space

Of course, it's always best if the space used for rituals is not cluttered or littered with detritus. For an outdoor ritual, the broom is used to sweep dead leaves or other debris. For an indoor ritual, the broom can be used to symbolically sweep residual negative energy from the floor. Alternatively, the celebrant/witch can ring finger chimes in the four directions. The smoke from a burning sage stick may also be used for ritual purification.

### Setting Up the Altar

An altar need not be huge or particularly ornate. As most Wiccans do not have the luxury of having a permanent house of worship (like Christians, Jews, and Muslims often do), Wiccan altars tend to be portable.

The altar should be first covered with a cloth whose color is appropriate for the season (for example: black for Samhain, yellow for Litha). Six candles are placed on the altar and represent the elements and deities: east/yellow/air, south/red/fire, west/blue/water, north/green/earth, god/gold, goddess/silver. Alternatively, the god/goddess candles can be black/white or black/red, depending the season and tradition. The element candles are placed in the appropriate directions while the “god” candle is placed center/right and the “goddess” candle is placed center/left. The pentacle, a small incense burner, chalice, bowl of water and bowl of sea salt should be placed on the altar.

### Casting the Circle

The act of casting a circle creates an intermediate space between the physical world and the spiritual world. This buffer zone is often referred to as “ritual space” or “sacred space” because it occupies to realms of existence concurrently. Of course, the most critical tool is the focused, directed will of the celebrant/witch. Without the application of will, nothing can be accomplished in the spirit world.

Although a magic circle is typically 18' in diameter, the size can be modified to fit the ritual setting. To cast the circle, the celebrant/witch walks the periphery of the circle (clockwise, starting from the east) while holding lit incense. The second pass uses a bowl of sea salt. On the third pass, the celebrant/witch traces the boundary of sacred space using a wand or Athame. Once the circle has been walked three times, the celebrant/witch declares “The circle is cast!”

### Calling the Quarters and Invoking Deities

Spirits and deities aren't commanded in Wicca, they are invited. The elemental spirits stand as guardians at the four cardinal directions of the circle. Inviting the elemental spirits is referred to as “Calling the Quarters” because each of the four elements corresponds to one-quarter of the circle. The quarter calls are usually accomplished through a spoken invocation in rhyme. As each invocation is spoken, the celebrant and attendees face the appropriate direction. Once spoken, the corresponding candle on the altar is lit and the celebrant/witch draws an invoking pentacle in the air with a wand or Athame. The progression is East, South, West, North, God, and Goddess.

Quarter calls should be seasonally appropriate and set to rhyme. Thus, a Water quarter call for Samhain might read as follows:

*Hail to the Guardian of the West*

*Blessings to the Spirit of Water*

*We invite thee to stand watch with us this night*

*And guard us for this sacred rite*

*We thank thee for the autumn rain*

*That cools the air at summer's wane.*

*Blue seas turn to cold slate gray*

*Color drains from the fading day*

*Guardian of the West, we give thanks to thee*

*Spirit of Water, Blessed Be*

*Hail and Welcome!*

### Raising Energy

Wicca, like many religions, recognizes the importance of raising spiritual energy for the purpose of completing ritual intent. We can see examples of raising energy within the context of ritual in Christianity (singing hymns), Islam (spoken prayers in unison), and Shamanism (drumming). Wicca also uses these methods. Depending on the season and ritual intent, the “raising energy” component of the worship service may include singing, dancing, drumming, chanting, or meditating.

### Magical Working

The focal point of a Wiccan ritual is the magical working. The focus of the working varies depending on the season. For instance, the magical working for a Samhain rite usually involves divination or communion with the dead. The magical working for Imbolc usually involves healing. If the rite is a waning moon service, the ritual intent could involve a banishing. Likewise, the magical working could be used for initiation or dedication of someone new to the faith. There are parallels in other faiths. For example, the focus of magical working in Christianity involves consecrating the elements of the Eucharist, holy baptism, confirmation (initiation) and healing.

### Cakes and Ale

Once the magical working is completed, the celebrant/witch leads the congregants in sharing cakes and ale. This concept is found in many religions. The selection of cakes depends on the season. For example, cakes for Lughnassadh would involve corn while cakes for Mabon would involve a fruit bread of some sort.

### Releasing Energy

If the celebrant/witch deems that there is too much residual, unspent magical energy leftover from the magical working, he/she may lead a grounding exercise. Effective grounding techniques include: touching the ground with one's hands (works best outdoors when one can touch real dirt), performing a calming meditation, observing a minute of contemplative silence, saying an “ohm”, and visualizing the unspent energy returning to the universe.

### Releasing the Quarters and Bidding Farewell to the Deities

At this point in the ritual, it is time to bid farewell to the elemental spirits and the deities. The progression essentially follows the reverse of the progression used in calling the quarters. The releasing is performed in this order: Goddess, God, Earth, West, Fire, and Air. As each release is announced, the corresponding candle is snuffed and the celebrant/witch draws a banishing pentacle in the air with a wand or Athame.

### Releasing the Circle

To release the magic circle and dismiss the sacred space, the celebrant/witch walks the periphery of the circle counter-clockwise, starting from the east. Once done, he/she declares, “The circle is open, but never broken. Merry meet, merry part, merry meet again!”

Most covens and open circles have a potluck feast that follows a ritual. The altar can be packed up at this time as well. For examples of complete rituals, please visit [http://www.turningcircle.org](http://www.turningcircle.org/) and click the link for “resources”.

*Source: Turning Circle online library of rituals used for high rites*

## Part Six: Guided Meditation

Meditation is a discipline in the Wiccan faith. Meditation helps focus the mind, sharpens the will, and revitalizes the body. A common form of meditation used in an open circle or coven setting is a guided meditation. In a guided meditation, a leader will assist the attendees in visualizing a calming or revitalizing scenario. A guided meditation usually begins with the attendees assuming a comfortable seated position, closing their eyes, and taking several deep and cleansing breaths.

An example of a guided meditation:

*Put your body in a comfortable position, whether sitting or standing. Make sure your feet touch the ground and your spine is straight. Close your eyes and breathe in... breathe out... breathe in... breathe out... breathe in... breathe out...*

*(Silence for a time)*

*In your mind's eye, we're traveling away from this place. It is night and the sky is full of stars. You stand in a small clearing within a dense evergreen forest. The full moon shines down from above and you feel its cool, silver radiance against your skin. You inhale, and you can smell the familiar musty scent of pine and decaying leaves. It is natural and undisturbed. The air is clear and when you look to the night sky, you can see so many stars. A faint wind blows, cool and dry. It is refreshing and makes you feel more alert but it does not make you shiver.*

*Look to the full moon. It is bright and cool. Draw its energy into your body. Its cooling light quenches the smoldering anger, fear, and sadness you might have. It is a healing light. Feel the light on your hands. Feel the pale rays on your fingertips, across your palms and to your wrists. Let the energy flow to your shoulders. The energy from the moon cools the smoldering embers of fear and hate and anger. The silver energy flows to your heart now. And from your heart it travels down through your torso to your legs and feet, and travels up through your neck to your crown.*

*Embrace the moonlight. Know that you are loved by the Goddess. She who gives us life did so because she loves us. We are made in love, to be loved, and to love others. Nothing can ever change that. In all our lives before, in this life now, and in all the lives to come, we are made in love, made to learn, and made to affirm life. She who loves us shall always love us.*

*The silver moonlight has neutralized the negative energy from your body, mind, and spirit. Now let unused power flow from your body, through your feet, into the earth. It is good to give back what is unused. For it is our path to fairly take and fairly give.*

We are traveling away from the evergreen forest, away from the clearing. We are returning to this place, to our bodies. Breathe in... breathe out... breathe in... breathe out... When you are ready, open your eyes.

*Source: Personal practices of the author*

## Part Seven: Introduction to Spellcraft

Ceremonial magic is common to many religions – whether they call it “magic” or not. Wicca readily acknowledges the practice for what it is. The use of magic involves the practitioner using his/her will to attune with the natural flow of energy that flows through the universe. Magic doesn't work like in “Buffy the Vampire Slayer”. It is a subtle practice. Magic can't make you levitate across the Grand Canyon, but it can make you more perceptive, more insightful, and more in tune with the universe.

While magic primarily involves the application of will, the concept of “correspondences” play a vital role in Wiccan spellcraft (and in ceremonial magic in general). Just as using a calculator makes processing mathematics faster and more reliable, the use of correspondences aids in the practice of magic.

What are correspondences? They are colors, crystals, herbs, scents that correspond to certain magical properties (such as luck, healing, protection, banishing, etc.)

This lesson offers a very basic overview of magical correspondences. There are entire books written on the subject as well as teachers that instruct specifically on this topic. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, so here is a single step!

### Color Correspondences

The use of candle magic is common to many religions, including Wicca. For a magical working that involves candles, the color of the candle used often aids in the focus of the ritual. You will note that there is some overlap in the uses of color. For example, both olive green and black both correspond to personal identity.

* White. Protection
* Grey: Wisdom
* Blue. Healing; peace
* Yellow. Positive change; vigor; sustained health; communication; travel; mental health.
* Red. Courage; strength; transformation; willpower
* Purple. Change of fortune; protection; justice
* Green. Relationships; motherhood; fertility
* Indigo. Karma; release; endurance; coming to terms with the limitations of an illness
* Silver. Protection of home (in conjunction with full moon); emotional stability
* Orange. Success; vitality
* Gold. Male health issues; transformation; willpower
* Green (Olive). Practical matters and personal identity
* Black. Practical matters and personal identity

*Source: “The Art of Wiccan Healing: A Practical Guide”, Sally Morningstar.*

### Material Correspondences

This is just a sample of material correspondences. As stated before, there are entire books written just on this subject.

* Flowers: Clarity, mental calm, ease fear, ease apathy
* Flame: Transformation, courage, altruistic ideals, passion
* Rock Crystal: Boundaries, trust, perception, ease insomnia
* Shiny Coins: Material concerns, luck, protection against psychic attack, grounding, realism

*Source: “The Art of Wiccan Healing: A Practical Guide”, Sally Morningstar.*

### Tree Correspondences

See the reference for Esbats. When using wood in conjunction with a magical working, the way the wood is collected makes a karmic difference in the outcome of the working. It is preferable if the wood used has already been cast off from the tree (like a dead twig or a fallen branch). If you must cut a branch from a live tree, you should first attempt to commune with the tree and let it know what you need and what you are about to do. If you feel that the tree has granted you permission to take a branch, take only what you need and not more. If you feel that the tree has not granted you permission to take a branch, do not inflict violence against the tree. Find the materials you need elsewhere.

### Mineral Correspondences

The use of stones and crystals in magical workings is likely to be one of the first forms of spellcraft. As in candle magic, there is a certain amount of overlap in magical correspondence. This is useful, as the overlap permits some measure of material substitution when planning a working. As always, stones and minerals may serve as valuable tools, but the will and intent required for a magical working comes from within, not from without. This list is, of course, not comprehensive. For the sake of brevity, stones that are very rare and very expensive are not included (most Wiccans will be unlikely to purchase a $5,000 stone for a magical working, no matter how dedicated the witch in question might be!) For a magical working involving healing or luck, there are numerous stones to choose from. You may also notice that certain colors of stones have similar properties.

* Agate: strength, courage, healing, gardening, longevity
* Alum: Protection
* Amazonite: Gambling, success
* Amber: Luck, healing, strength, beauty, love
* Amethyst: Protection from thieves, overcoming alcoholism, dreaming, courage, happiness
* Aquamarine: Cleansing, purification, alertness of mind
* Aventurine: Gambling, luck, eyesight, money
* Azurite: Divination, healing, psychism
* Beryl: anti-gossip, love energy, healing
* Bloodstone: Cessation of bleeding, legal success, business success, agricultural success, power
* Calcite: Spiritual centering, cleansing, peace, protection
* Carnelian: Sexual energy, eloquence, courage, protection, peace
* Cat's Eye: Gambling, wealth, protection
* Citrine: Protection from nightmares
* Coal: Money
* Coral: Regulation of menstrual cycle
* Crystal Quartz: Protection, Healing (Most Wiccans own some quartz)
* Flint: Divination
* Fluorite: Mental powers
* Garnet: Repel insects
* Geode: Fertility, childbirth, meditation
* Hematite: Grounding, protection, healing (draws negative energy away from user)
* Jasper: Rain ceremonies
* Jet: Protection from nightmares, luck, divination
* Kunzite: Grounding, relaxation
* Malachite: Protection while traveling.
* Marble: Protection, personal success
* Mica: Divination
* Moonstone: Sleep, gardening, dieting, resolving problems in relationships
* Obsidian: Grounding, centering
* Olivine: Attracts money
* Onyx: Protection during battle and combat
* Pumice: Banishing
* Salt: Purification, grounding, protection, money. Salt is often used in ritual bathing.
* Selenite: Reconciliation
* Serpentine: Regulates lactation
* Sunstone: Energy, health, sexuality
* Tiger's Eye: Wealth, money, protection during combat
* Turquoise: Guards resting places of the dead. Protection from hostile magic.

*Source: “Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem, and Metal Magic”, Scott Cunningham.*

### Putting It Together

With the basic knowledge of magical correspondences, you should have a rudimentary ability to undertake a magical working. One of the more common magical workings in Wicca is healing. This sample working features a spoken component (in rhyme, spoken thrice), candle magic, and the use of stones.

Materials needed: light blue candle, an agate.

Set up the altar and call the elemental spirits and deities as outlined in this tutotial.

For the magical working, place a light blue candle on the alter and light it. Hold the agate stone in your hand. Stare into the flame while visualizing the desired healing effect for the person in need. Try to not blink. Keep your eyes focused on the candle flame and your will focused on the recipient of the magical working. When you are no longer able to maintain concentration (or when the blue candle has burned out, whichever happens first), speak the words of the spell:

*“Heart and lung, blood and bone, healing comes from love alone*

*Heart and lung, blood and bone, healing comes from love alone*

*Heart and lung, blood and bone, healing comes from love alone*

*Thrice spoken, once fulfilled.*

*So Mote It Be!”*

It's important to note that using a magical working for healing should be used **in conjunction with** proper medical care, and never **instead of** proper medical care.

## Part Eight: Divination

Divination plays a key role in many world religions, including Wicca. To that end, there are several tools that are useful in focusing one's will and intent to working of divination. It is not required that a Wiccan own all of these tools. Over time, one may discover a talent for one form divination while not having much skill with other forms. This is to be expected.

**Tarot cards.** A deck of tarot cards consists of 21 major arcana cards and four suits of fourteen minor arcana cards. The minor arcana suits include wands, pentacles, cups, and swords. This is one of the most common tools used by Wiccans in foretelling the future. While the Ryder deck was the original form of tarot, there are now dozens of varieties of tarot that can be chosen from. Typical divination involve a single-card reading, a three-card reading, and a Celtic Cross reading.

**Oracle cards.** Thematically similar to tarot, a deck of oracle cards is generally displays a selection of totems or guides. Types of oracle decks include (but are not limited to) animal spirits, angels, ascended beings, fairy creatures, pantheons of deities, and nature spirits.

**Pendulum.** This useful divination tool is often used to perform divination in which the answer is a “yes” or a “no”. Additionally, a pendulum may be used to find lost objects.

**Numerology.** This form of divination “mathematizes” names for the purpose of gaining insight. Numerology is a common practice in many religions (and particularly in certain forms of Judaism).

**Runes.** These are stones or sticks that have been engraved with Norse or Ogham letters. A rune reading can be performed using a single stone pulled from a bag or several stones may be laid out in sequence (similar to a three-card reading in a tarot divination). Runes can be made from wood, metal or stone, although stone is quite common. In addition to being a useful divination tool in Wicca, the ADF Druid neopagan religion also employs rune readings as part of their worship services.

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| --- | --- |
| [http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4617816528848712&pid=1.7&w=112&h=149&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=fehu+rune&view=detail&id=6FA3A6FD6BAEBD783AC87DC5434C8D4AD2925A46) | **Fehu.** This rune refers to cattle. In the Norse culture, cattle was a measure of wealth and therefore this rune denotes financial gain. Wealth can become a mixed blessing, however, as the hoarding of wealth can cause strife and envy amongst one’s friends and family. Fehu can also refer to productivity and fertility. It is best to be very specific as to what kind of wealth or fertility is being asked for when doing spellwork with this rune. |
| [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4800588835784129&pid=1.7&w=92&h=148&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=uruzrune&view=detail&id=8C908B88A822A71C1A0F5FCE71412B1184FD1706) | **Uruz**. This rune can refer to physical resources becoming available or increased spiritual energy. This is a rune of change – but it indicates slow alteration over time, not rapid change. In spellwork, this rune can augment the power of other runes. |
| [http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4617816528848722&pid=1.7&w=117&h=151&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=thurisaz+rune&view=detail&id=6FA3A6FD6BAEBD783AC8357679ADD343033AF824) | **Thurisaz.** This rune literally means “Thor’s rune”. This rune represents potency, pure action, and projected/applied power. Given that Thor is a god of lightning, it is easy to understand the power associated with this rune. This is a very powerful rune that can be used for harm or healing – and must be used carefully in spellwork. |
| [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4910162017976613&pid=1.7&w=108&h=146&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=ansuzrune&view=detail&id=DD2ECC8F03B18E83A4F9C735699F90E46432FB2D) | **Ansuz**. This rune literally means “Odin’s Rune”. It is a rune that also relates to communication and wisdom. The ansuz rune is associated with poetry, song, and creativity with words. In spellwork, this rune can aid with improving communication between partners or lovers. It can also be used for assistance with communing with deity. |
| [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4720719624603021&pid=1.7&w=61&h=108&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=raidho+rune&view=detail&id=7251388369CEC8E3704C472E883D72E5236B19BA) | **Raidho**. This rune means “cart” and primarily relates to travel. It can reference physical travel or it can reference a spiritual path. It can also indicate cyclical patterns (as indicated by a wheel). Raidho can also indicate control of one’s ego. Ritually, Raidho can refer to travel between worlds. In spellwork, this rune can be used to determining the correct direction, safeguarding luggage, and blessing a car (or other conveyance). |
| [http://ts4.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4724980221937367&pid=1.7&w=93&h=97&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=kenaz+rune&view=detail&id=18F782CB41E4D2D5CB3119009FDE4A89080B2819) | **Kenaz**. This rune means “torch”. Kenaz also refers to lighting one’s home .It also refers to creation’s fire. This rune is useful in healing rituals as well as for calling upon inspiration. |
| [http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4617816528848710&pid=1.7&w=106&h=145&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=gebo+rune&view=detail&id=6FA3A6FD6BAEBD783AC85887C2809EABB21F6EFC) | **Gebo**. This rune means “gift”. It is also refers to the power that unites gift with giver. Gebo can also refer to fulfilled contracts. Additionally, Gebo serves as a luck rune. Gebo can refer to a gift of spirit as well as a material gift. The Norse valued generosity but also thought it was foolish to be too generous. |
| [http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4617816528848726&pid=1.7&w=107&h=145&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=wunjo+rune&view=detail&id=6FA3A6FD6BAEBD783AC8517BC736282BF89504C5) | **Wunjo**. This rune refers to joy, happiness, and bliss. Wunjo may also refer to success in work, family relationships, and romantic partnerships. Another interpretation is that wunjo refers to the power that comes from realizing one’s true will. |
| [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4844208492840353&pid=1.7&w=113&h=149&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=hagalaz+rune&view=detail&id=9250999AF44F085504C86E59F6687ABC300188A7) | **Hagalaz**. This rune means “hail” and is considered a cold rune. It can indicate disaster (as hail can be destructive) but it can also be used in healing (as cold negates fever). Hagalaz is an interesting rune as it can be used for both protection and destruction, depending on the context of the spellwork. |
| [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.5025168366831457&pid=1.7&w=151&h=149&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=naudhiz+rune&view=detail&id=1463C1363B6AA69083630C56BAB7EDF2268C6E17&first=125) | **Naudhiz**. This rune means “need”. It is also a rune that implies friction. It is both trouble and deliverance; it may indicate that the constraints one faces now may become helpful later. |
| [http://ts4.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4905699545319271&pid=1.7&w=89&h=153&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=isa+rune&view=detail&id=5733FE2D51268BCA6A289F89C1B641DBEDFBF292) | **Isa**. This rune translates as “ice”. This rune indicates stasis, lack of motion, and inertia. If can also indicate serenity. Although Isa can imply an obstruction, this rune can also be used in spellwork that requires shielding (as shields obstruct things). Additionally, Isa can be used to reduce the power of other runes should a moderating force be desired. |
| [http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4905699545319273&pid=1.7&w=135&h=146&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=jera+rune&view=detail&id=5733FE2D51268BCA6A28050FD4C47CA661DAA568) | **Jera**. This rune means “year”. Jera also refers to the natural cycles of the year – fallow, planting, growing, and harvesting. It also refers to a return in-kind for one’s deeds (both good and bad). In spellwork, Jera is useful for encouraging natural healing and balance within the body. |
| [http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4991508731986812&pid=1.7&w=122&h=145&c=7&rs=1](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=eihwaz+rune&view=detail&id=90F4F552A54BE44CC4B1A178FB139A8AECF52726) | **Eihwaz.** This rune means “yew tree”. It also refers to the World Tree (Yggdrasil) that connects the nine realms. This rune can serve as a connection between opposites. It can also represent paradox and astral travel. |
| http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4519466052354350&pid=1.7&w=151&h=151&c=7&rs=1 | **Perthro.** This rune means “lot” or “game piece”. This rune refers to fate. It can also refer to something hidden being revealed. Perthro also refers to forces manifesting that are already set in motion. |
| http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4966881352352610&pid=1.7&w=103&h=150&c=7&rs=1 | **Elhaz.** This rune means “elk”. Elhaz is another “protection” rune. In spellwork, this rune can be used for sanctifying sacred space as well as for general protection. It also refers to the possibility of hidden personal resources suddenly becoming available and usable. |
| http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4775514821887085&pid=1.7&w=103&h=142&c=7&rs=1 | **Sowilo.** This rune means “sun”. This rune refers to the will to achieve victory and the power to overcome evil. Sowilo also refers to renewed personal development after a period of stagnation. Sowilo also refers to honor, achievement, life-force, clarification, and guiding principles. Like Elhaz, Sowilo can be used for hallowing purposes. |
| http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4517168271656662&pid=1.7&w=150&h=149&c=7&rs=1 | **Tiwaz.** This is Tyr’s rune, a symbol of justice and the victorious victim. This rune may indicate a legal problem or a situation in which one must fight for one’s rights. It is also a rune that indicates spiritual warfare or honorable, judicial combat. |
| http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4632621281838216&pid=1.7&w=156&h=151&c=7&rs=1 | **Berkano.** This rune means “birch tree”. It also refers to rebirth and the Earth Mother (in both bright and dark aspects). This is a feminine rune that can indicate a nurturing relationship between mother and child. It can refer to protection at birth and peace in death. |
| http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4617816535729926&pid=1.7&w=99&h=140&c=7&rs=1 | **Ehwaz.** This rune means “horse”. This rune also indicates the link between mankind and deity. This rune indicates an increased capacity in physical or spiritual realms. It is also indicative of teamwork and loyalty. This rune may also indicate travel (physical or astral). Ehwaz may also indicate that one is on the right track. |
| http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4909569322910816&pid=1.7&w=110&h=147&c=7&rs=1 | **Mannaz.** This rune means “man”. This rune refers to both the positive and negative aspects of the human condition as well as referring to the human potential for reason, memory, and mercy. This rune may indicate the need to tap into the collective unconsciousness. Mannaz may also indicate the need to fulfill one’s potential. |
| http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4704720871424000&pid=1.7&w=116&h=151&c=7&rs=1 | **Laguz.** This rune means “lake”. This is a feminine rune that is indicative of the power of water – something that can be both life-giving or destructive, depending on the context. This rune indicates energy manifesting from previously hidden sources. It can also refer to the transition between life and death, or the transition from the otherworld to life (in the instance of being born. ) This is a rune quite useful to midwives. |
| http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4844208506602932&pid=1.7&w=100&h=149&c=7&rs=1 | **Ingwaz.** This rune means “Yngvi”, an honorific title equivalent to “lord”. This rune is the masculine counterpart to the Berkano rune. This rune signifies a resting period between the cycle of decline and renewed growth. It marks an ending that leads to a new beginning. This is also a male fertility rune as well as representing creative power. |
| http://ts1.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4617816535729928&pid=1.7&w=108&h=146&c=7&rs=1 | **Dagaz.** This rune means “day”. This rune refers to dawn’s light. It also represents slow, gradual growth (as opposed to overnight success). In spellwork, this rune can increase the power of other runes when cast as sunrise or sunset. This rune can also represent to “turning point” where bad fortune recedes and sunnier days resume. |
| http://ts3.mm.bing.net/th?id=H.4813396426818158&pid=1.7&w=116&h=151&c=7&rs=1 | **Othala.** This rune means “ancestral property”. This rune also refers to a stronghold or a sacred enclosure. This is a kinship rune that represents loyalty between family members. In the modern day, this can also refer to one’s spiritual inheritance (as some practitioners feel called to follow pantheons not consistent with their genetic bloodlines). |
|  | **Blank.** Should you receive a set of runes with a blank tile, you may save it for later use in the event that you lose one of the 24 standard runes. There is no historical record of “blank” runes being used for divination. |

**Scrying mirror / scrying bowl.** These are used to gain insight into events that may be taking place in other locations. Also, like the pendulum, a scrying device can help locate missing items.

*Source:* [*http://www.paganspath.com/meta/divinationtools.htm*](http://www.paganspath.com/meta/divinationtools.htm)

**Ouija boards.** It's worth noting that the use of a Ouija board is *not* a recommended tool for divination. This instrument can have the effect of inviting unnamed spirits that are not necessarily beneficial and may not be easily dismissed.

## Further Reading and Study

For the seeker new to the faith, there are numerous resources available for helping one's self grow in faith, knowledge, and power.

### Recommended Books

*“Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner”*, Scott Cunningham. This should absolutely be the first book any seeker reads. This book covers the topics of Wiccan theology, meditation exercises, visualization techniques, introductory spellcraft, altar preparations, and (very importantly) how to conduct a self-initiation ritual.

*“Wicca for Beginners”*, Thea Sabin. This book covers the topics of meditation, raising and directing energy, communing with deity, and how to celebrate the eight Sabbats.

*“Drawing Down the Moon”*, Margret Alder. This book covers the history of Wicca in America, particularly how it coincided with the advent of the feminist movement of the 1970s.

*“Crafting Wiccan Traditions”,* Raven Grimassi. This book is a useful guide for setting up a coven or open circle, as well as how to construct meaningful rituals for non-solitary worship services.

### Recommended Online Resources

**Magicka School.** [Http://magickaschool.com](http://magickaschool.com/). This is an online Wicca school. First year study is free and second year study is approximately $55 (35.99 in British Pounds). Magicka School also has a free tarot class.

**Witchvox.** [Http://www.witchvox.com](http://www.witchvox.com/). This website is useful for locating pagan events and pagan worship groups (covens, open circles, groves, etc.) Members also regularly contribute articles on various magical and spiritual topics.

**Turning Circle.** [Http://www.turningcircle.org](http://www.turningcircle.org/). This website is a useful resource for accessing ready-made rituals for all eight Sabbats. Turning Circle holds services on the first and third Friday of every month and is located at the Owen Brown Inferfaith Center in Columbia, Maryland. Turning Circle is an open, inclusive, pagan affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia.

## Author’s Last Word

If you’re observant, life teaches you lessons. I’ve learned from a lot of people. From some, I’ve learned by example. From others, I’ve learned what *not* to do based on what they have done. Some people have chosen to offer the hand of friendship while some have stabbed me squarely between the shoulder blades. Some have been bright beacons of wisdom and knowledge while others have been phony charlatans.

**Who do I count as the wise, the good, and the just?**

Doug (Valentine) – my loving spouse. There is no one I would rather spend my life with.

Aleta – my first Wicca teacher. She was a fine example of an eclectic, eccentric, witty, nutty, fun person , and full of life. I learned a lot from her.

Iris – my second Wicca teacher. She had a depth of empathy possessed by very few. She helped me through a very dark period in my life and stood by me when many walked away.

Dana Fillhart – You kept me from being homeless in 1997. I won’t ever forget that.

Gail Knoph – You fed me when I was hungry. You bought me medicine when I was penniless. I won’t ever forget that.

Nancy Stavely and Joan Gavigan – Although they are Christian and straight, they were great examples of interfaith tolerance and open-minded spirituality.

Mav and Phoenix – the other two Coordinators at Turning Circle. Their alternative takes on Paganism taught me quite a bit. I will always be grateful to Mav for initiating me.

Sajana – One of my best friends who later became a Coordinator when Mav retired from that position.

Matt Hannum, Joel Tyler, Jeff Sylvester – good friends without whom my life would be less colorful, less vibrant, and less complete.

Doris McInnes– A special friend whom I suspect was my mother in a prior life.

**Whom do I count as toxic, harmful, and cruel?**

Skye Warrior – an oath-breaker, liar, coward, and betrayer. He is possibly the worst example of a Wiccan I have ever encountered. There is no aspect of the Rede he didn’t break. He went out of his way to hurt me despite the fact that I only ever showed him kindness and loyalty. I will never forgive him.

Alan and Lisa – We were friends for five years. They turned their backs on me just because Skye told them to do so. I will never forgive them.

My father – an abusive, greedy, arrogant sociopath. He took pleasure in hurting me. He showered me with derision. He was a homophobe who never accepted me. I will never forgive him.

So I have been blessed with many more friends than enemies.