

## Liturgy Practicum 2: Small Group Practice

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### **Requirement #1: Key Concepts**

#### **Question #1: Describe three differences between personal or domestic rituals and small-group rituals. (Minimum 150 words)**

First I want distinguish between personal and domestic rituals. In a personal ritual, the celebrant is the only person present. Since s/he is only performing the rite for him/herself and the Kindreds, far less verbalization is needed. Some sections of the liturgy, like the 2 Powers meditation and Re-creating the Sacred Center need not be verbalized at all, or only sub-vocally, as no one needs to hear what is being said other than the Kindreds and the celebrant. Emphasis here may be more on the internal processes rather than the external ones. In domestic rituals, there may be other family members present, so more verbalization is required (as in all small group rituals).

Isaac Bonewits, in his *Neopagan Rites: A Guide to Creating Public Rituals*, describes three aspects of intra-group familiarity that I believe fit in well here. They are knowledge, affection, and group identity (57).

Knowledge refers to what the liturgist knows about the other folks present at the rite. The better s/he knows them, the better s/he will be able to blend their energies into the whole (the group mind), putting the weak singer next to the strong one, say, or judging the length of any trance journeys or meditations based on their experience levels.

Affection plays a role because the more someone loves or trusts others, the lower their psychological barriers will be, thus enhancing that group mind.

Group identity is also important because in the case of a group of folks who don't know each other, the common bond of a single group identity (like, we are all ADF Druids) will likewise facilitate the group mind and the raising of *mana*, or energy.

In a personal or domestic ritual, everyone knows everyone else well, and there should be strong bonds of affection. The group identity of being a family is also a strong unifier, and taken together, such domestic rituals will take less effort than a small group ritual involving folks who do not have such strong bonds.

It is possible for a small group to become as close as members of a family, but in its initial stages, or if it is open to new people, these three aspects of intra-group familiarity may not be there. And it is for this reason that small group rituals require many additional skills than personal or domestic rituals might require.

#### **Question #2: Explain the importance of a shared worldview or cosmology within group ritual, and what can be done to help foster that shared cosmology. (Minimum 200 words)**

When people attend a ritual, they bring to it their past experiences, beliefs and expectations. If a group of folks come to a rite and have nothing in common, no shared beliefs at the very least,

even if only vaguely expressed, then the ritual will have no meaning for them. It will be perceived as odd, pointless, and even silly (Bonewits, *Neopagan Rites*, 59).

Another thing that should probably be thought about by a liturgist is who will be attending the rite. If everyone attending will be gay men, for instance, then rites dwelling on heterosexual relations might be somewhat offensive, ruining that group's unity (Bonewits, *Neopagan Rites*, 60).

Having a pre-ritual briefing is a great way of handling both of these problems. ADF liturgy and cosmology are quite distinct from that of most Neopagans, and conceptualize the cosmos in specific ways. Depending on the level of experience of your attendees, the briefing can be filled with more or less detail, enough to get everyone through the rite successfully. At the very least, a new group of folks should be told exactly what we are about (we give so that we may receive), and, in a general way, what will be happening in the rite. It isn't necessary, in my opinion, to give a blow-by-blow account of each step in the rite, as that will probably lead to boredom, but a general overview should be enough.

If the liturgist believes that what they will be doing in the ritual could be seen as controversial (such as the fact that ADF does not cast circles, which might alarm many Neopagans), then more time might need to be spent in explaining the why's and wherefore's of that part of our practice.

**Question #3: Explain how you can incorporate words, motion, dance, posture, music, and gesture in a public, small group ritual. How is including each one in a small group ritual different from how they are included in individual or domestic ritual? (Minimum 50 words per item, and minimum 150 words for comparison)**

Ritual is all about communication – between the People and the Kindreds, and among the People themselves. Therefore, all of these six items need to convey meaning or experience in some way.

### **Words**

This one is basic. While it may be possible to do an entire wordless ritual, using dance or mime, say, the use of words is the clearest and cleanest way to convey meaning. In instances where the ritualist is trying to take others along with him/her, the use of words can easily make this possible. And I include sign language here.

There are also many ways in which the voice can be used to express words, loudly for proclaiming, softly for intimacy, even in a sing-song voice to express the rhythms of nature that one wants to attune to (Serith, *Pagan Prayer*, 17).

### **Motion**

Serith postulates that motion is a form of prayer, understood by the Gods as well as words are (Serith, *Pagan Prayer*, 22). Changing positions in a rite can easily change the mood. Dropping to the floor to embrace the Earth Mother in a ritual shows an intimacy that would not be present through words alone. And words and motion go together well. Walking with intention to various parts of the ritual space to deliver different parts of a lore story to different groups of people can also be used to emphasize certain words, keep the pace of a rite up, and maintain interest (Thomas, "Well-Trained Ritualist", 13).

### **Dance**

Dance is probably the ultimate form of prayer in motion. Dance also expresses emotions, and every separate movement and position taken in a dance can have a specific meaning (Serith, *Pagan Prayer*, 24). Dance can also be effective in ramping up the energy, of bringing the

attendees into an ecstatic state useful for the working of magic, or even just for the mere joy of it all. A common form of dance I've seen in ritual is the Spiral Dance, where everyone holds hands and follows the leader making various shapes across the landscape, such as spirals.

## **Posture**

There are many postures used in modern religion, such as kneeling and prostration, which we don't see too often in Pagan rites, though both could be used. In my earlier example above for 'motion' of falling to the floor to embrace the Earth Mother, the actual kneeling with arms widespread across the ground would be a posture. Standing tall while addressing the Gods in an invocation is also a posture, indicating that we come to our Gods as beings worthy of respect. The *orans* (prayer) position, where the upper arms are parallel with the ground, bent at the elbows with the lower arms in a vertical position, palms facing forward, is an Indo-European way of approaching deity, expectant and respectful, waiting for the deity to come (Serith, *Pagan Prayer*, 19-21).

## **Music**

Music is uplifting and capable of taking us further into a group mind than words alone. Music and song bring an extra dimension to any rite, adding to its beauty. Music can be as simple as a single drum quietly pounding out a heartbeat, or a full band or orchestra. And music also includes chant and song. Adding notes to words makes it easier to learn those words. And melody can affect the mood of those words profoundly, as music is said to reach and touch the soul. Music by itself has the power to act as a prayer, such as in some of the great Christian musical works like Mozart's *Requiem* (Serith, *Pagan Prayer*, 26). We in the Pagan world have yet to find our own Mozart, but we do have many chants that we can add into various places in a rite to aid us in our work.

## **Gesture**

Under 'posture' above I mentioned the *orans* position. This is also a form of gesture, because it says that we are waiting, at rest. But from this position it is also possible to move the arms to say something else, such as when the ritualist might stretch out his/her arms in supplication, or point at someone or something while performing a lore play. When making offerings to the Fire or Well we have to use our arms, and these are gestures. What's important here is that, as with motion, all gestures should be intentional, not haphazard, so that they actually convey some meaning and not happen simply out of nervousness (Thomas, "Well-Trained Liturgist", 13).

## **Comparison**

Words are not all that important in solitary rites, though more so in domestic ones, since many of the concepts and prayers can be more internalized. But in small group rites they are essential, unless the attendees all know each other very, very well. Words are what bind the rite together, taking everyone who is attending along together on the journey of the rite, that everyone is able to add their personal energy and magic at the same time.

Motion might not even be necessary in a solitary or domestic rite, since only a small number of people will be standing or sitting together at the altar. In a small group rite, however, the Waters of Life may need to be carried to each person, the celebrant may wish to carry the offering to the Outdwellers, and offerings will need to be carried to the Fire and Well, which could easily exist on the ground rather than on a table. And in group rites I always drop to the ground to kiss it while calling on the Earth Mother, which is a dramatic type of motion.

Dance could easily be performed in a solitary or domestic rite, but might not be nearly as effective as a group dance in a small group rite. It's a question of scale and the amount of room available in which to move.

Posture is one thing, however, that could be the same in all kinds of rites. I always use the *orans* position when addressing the Kindreds, whether alone or in large groups. And I always face the Kindreds in an upright, proud posture, as I know that I am a being worthy of respect.

Music is something that many folks will not bother with in personal or domestic rites. It's a lot of bother and takes up time (though some people will include it anyway). In small group rites, music and chant really help to unify everyone and lift the energy of the rite, and is likely to be included, unless everyone is non-musical.

Gesture, like posture, may be something common to all rites, though the individual gestures may be smaller in size in personal or domestic rites than they tend to be in small group rites. Rather than drop to the ground when honoring the Earth Mother, I tend to kiss my hand and lay it on Her statue on my altar in personal rites. But since I am speaking to the Kindreds by myself, I don't need much gesture, unlike in a group rite where it is handy for making my spoken meanings more clear.

**Question #4: Explain why it is important to include physical offerings in ritual. (Minimum 200 words)**

In ADF we form relationships with the Kindreds based on the idea of reciprocity, as exemplified in the Proto-Indo-European root, *\*ghosti-*, which means, 'Someone with whom one has reciprocal duties of hospitality'. The Latin phrase, *do ut des* (I give so that you may give) is another way of saying this. Hospitality involves obligation, on both sides, and these relationships were integral parts of society in ancient times.

The exchange of gifts between the parties of such an exchange underlay the entire process. In the human world, the Patron, usually the richer of the two, would provide supplies, money or other needs, while the Client would provide political support, bear arms in the Patron's army, or render other services. And this idea also applied in the relationships between man and Gods. The people made offerings in hopes of receiving blessings in return.

And these offerings had to be 'of man'. The best sort of sacrifice one could make would be of oneself, but this would mean missing out on any blessings, so the concept of substitution was used, where things close to man would be given instead. In many instances, animals would be sacrificed and the inedible parts given to the Gods while the edible bits would be cooked up for the assembled people. In much of the ancient world, sacrificial meat was the only source of animal protein available. Other offerings would include weapons, precious metals or jewelry, textiles, slave chains, and the products of agriculture, from grains to wine.

Offerings of praise, song and dance need also to be included here, and in some modern situations, such as in prisons, these may be the only types of offering that are allowed. But for most of us, it is the act of giving, of throwing our gifts into the Fire where they can be transformed into something the Kindreds can use, of singing that praise song, of giving silver to the Well, that makes our piety real and sets the stage for mutual reciprocity between us and the Kindreds. We can then expect that blessings will flow to us from our Friends in the Otherworlds (Thomas, Nature of Sacrifice, 4-8)

**Requirement #2: Documenting domestic and small-group practice:**

**Question #1: Keep and submit for review a journal covering a period of not less than six months and not more than a year that documents your active participation as a**

***celebrant at six or more group rituals, including three observances of seasonal festivals. The text of individual prayers written by you should be provided as frequently as possible. Include an essay \* for each rite \* that involves the analysis and commentary on the ritual's structure, as well as a critical review of the performance of the rite.***

The following journal entries (in italics) are excerpts from specific entries written in my Journal book on the days indicated below. Prayers and invocations are included within the entries, with the exception of the Roman Pantheon Funeral, which is reprinted here in its entirety. Most of the writing in the funeral rite is mine, but some bits and concepts were Jenni Hunt's. Following this will be the analysis and critical review of the ritual (also not in italics).

## **25 February 2008**

### **Imbolc**

*For Imbolc I ended up going to Texas for Lesley Gary's mini-festival. Skip came as well. We did our usual round of workshops (I did my Cosmology one) and helped out with the Imbolc rite – well, we did most of it, to be honest. We were at a simple lodge in a park in the woods (staying in cabins) and we did the rite outside by the lodge and used the fireplace inside it for the Fire. It was actually kind of neat – I liked being able to sing, or speak an invocation while striding to the Fire – it was cool. And when I threw my whiskey into the fire, it just exploded due to the heat of the fireplace, which had been burning all day. Not only was there a fireball out of the front of the fireplace, but a blue ball of fire would leap out the top of the chimney, or so I'm told. Folks liked the rite.*

*I got to do the invocation to Brigit (Lesley was too nervous):*

*Bright Lady, Inspirer! We call to you now!*

*Lady of the Ewes, the time of season's birth approaches,  
Green begins to show again, the snows are finally gone.*

*Dip Your hand into the rivers  
That the ice might finally melt,  
Break the floes that block the Waters -  
Let Spring's flood of joy return!*

*Loose the fires within our bellies  
With Your inspiration bright!  
We sacrifice to You, great Lady,  
With our whiskey to the Fire.*

*Lady Brigit, accept our sacrifice!*

Skip Ellison, Mark Cantwell, and I pulled this ritual together since there wasn't much chance to learn the script that Lesley had written. We performed this rite Festival Style (meaning that we all took parts and split it up) and Lesley made the Kindred Offering to the Gods. When she did, she was totally taken aback by the wall of flame that greeting her whiskey, though she appeared not to react. It was the look on her face when she returned from the fireplace that gave her away.

We followed the Core Order of Ritual pretty closely, keeping it simple so that it would flow well and easily. We all played off of each other, as we've done for years, building on the energy and holding up the pace throughout. All in all, for a rite that got cobbled together at the last minute, I'd say it was actually quite moving and effective.

**1 June 2008**  
**Roman Pantheon Funeral**

*Today we held the memorial service for Judge Hunt, Jenni's father. We took my old funeral service, Romanized it, and used that. About 20 Grove members showed up. It was very nice. I forgot to cense and asperse everyone and ring the bell at the beginning, but the rest went well. It was nice being in the stone circle at sunset again – it was really magical. Ian and Amber and their kids had never been there before and were very impressed. So different from the church's rose garden. The offerings section was very, very emotional. Jenni held it together, mostly. No one else had much to say, since none of us knew the judge, but many spoke in support of Jenni. After the rite Jenni gathered up all the offerings and took them home – I think she intends to bury them out in the desert somewhere.*

**Memorial Service For Judge Hunt**

*(Roman Pantheon)*

-- Rev. Kirk Thomas and Rev. Jenni Hunt

*This service can be done either in the workings section of a full ADF ritual or may be done as a stand-alone liturgy. In case there are no Hallows present, all offerings may be reserved for disposal at a later date.*

*The Funeral Goods given the deceased should either be buried with the casket or urn, or may be poured on the ground or into a shaft. Again, these offerings may be reserved for disposal at a later date.*

**THE WELCOME**

*The Priest rings a bell, three times three.*

*Priest says:*

Children of the Earth, we are here to celebrate the life of **Judge William T. Hunt**. While this is a time of grief, it is also a celebration of Life!

**UNITING THE THREE WORLDS**

*Priest says:*

Children of the Earth, let us call the powers of Earth and Sky that they may join within us here.

**PRAYER:**

O waters of the earth, deep and dark,  
Arise, primeval powers, fill us now  
With all your wondrous possibilities,  
That through the Earth our Mother  
We may ground and join as one.

O fires of the sky, O blinding light!  
Descend and crystallize within us all  
That spark of order on which life depends,  
That through the Sky our Father  
We may shine and share as one.

You powers dark and light, you liquid fire,  
Conjoin and blend this mixture volatile  
That powers great will join within our selves,  
Connecting all the Worlds so

That the circle is complete.

### **DISSOLVING THE BARRIERS**

*All present say:*

O Muddy, who claimed him;  
Mercury who conveyed him;  
Charon who ferried him;  
And Dis Pater who welcomed him;  
O Powers of paths where the newly dead go,  
We pray to You now – hear our call!

Your magics are great, Your powers intense,  
We ask that you join Yours with ours.  
Let the barriers standing 'tween this world and Yours  
Dissolve in our hearts – hear our call!

With love and with joy, we humbly pray  
For our dear friend to join us here now.  
As our newest Ancestor to cross the divide  
We welcome you home – hear our call!

### **REMEMBRANCE AND OFFERINGS**

*Priest says:*

Newest Ancestor, **Judge William Hunt**, we welcome you here!  
And though we will miss you here in the Midworld,  
We take comfort in knowing that you are quite near,  
Just beyond the veil of the Worlds.

When the Veils are thin and the Gates open wide,  
We will welcome you here once again!  
One day we will pass to the Land of the Dead  
We hope that you'll welcome us, too.

*Priest says:*

Children of the Earth, this is also the time of the living!

We now call on her who has cared for Judge Hunt and who misses him,

To come forward and speak, sharing a memory of happy times.

And in days of old, offerings were made to the newly dead  
To accompany them on their way.

We invite her to bring up her Grave Goods and Offerings,  
That she may honor our new Ancestor.

*Jenni Hunt comes up, makes sacrifice and tells stories about her father.*

We invite all others to bring up Grave Goods for sacrifice, that we  
May make offering to our new Ancestor.

*The People come up one at a time, and leave an offering (such as silver or beer or other food) on the altar for later burial or disposal, or put it in the shaft or the Well or pour it on the ground.*

*After an offering is made, the person may speak for a time about the deceased. When each person is finished speaking, the Priest will say:*

**Fiat!** So be it!

## **INTERCESSION**

*When everyone who wishes to speak has spoken of the Dead, the Priest says:*

**Doting Muddy**, Grandmother of William, Matriarch,  
We make offering to You!

*The Priest offers Ballentine whiskey to the ground.*

We thank you for meeting William at his bedside,  
Remaining with him until he was ready,  
Offering him comfort, allaying his fears,  
Preparing his soul for its journey.

Doting Muddy, accept our sacrifice!

*All say:*

Doting Muddy, accept our sacrifice!

*The Priest says:*

**Fleet-footed Mercury!** Soul Carrier,  
We make offering to You!

*The Priest offers whiskey to the Fire.*

We thank You for conducting William and Muddy  
Through the Worlds to the shores of the River Styx!  
Offerings are made at the riverbank!  
For William has reached the Land of the Dead.

Fleet-footed Mercury, accept our sacrifice!

*All say:*

Fleet-footed Mercury, accept our sacrifice!

**Faceless Charon**, Dark Ferryman,  
We make offering to You!

*The Priest offers the Nova Roma coins to the Well.*

We thank you for conveying William and Muddy  
Across the dark river to the Underworld,  
Offerings are made to the Mouth of the Earth  
To pay for Your sacred duty.

Faceless Charon, accept our sacrifice!

*All say:*

Faceless Charon, accept our sacrifice!



**Somber Dis Pater**, Lord of the Dead,  
We make offering to You!

*The Priest offers wine to the ground and hematite to the Well.*

We thank you for accepting William among the Mighty Dead,  
That he might join his Ancestors  
And receive the sacrifices of the Living,  
And for opening the Doors of Dis that we may commune with him.

Somber Dis Pater, accept our sacrifice!

*All say:*  
Somber Dis Pater, accept our sacrifice!

### **THE CLOSING**

*Priest says:*  
Children of Earth, though grieving continues, now is the time to let go.

O Doting Muddy, Fleet-footed Mercury,  
Faceless Charon and Somber Dis Pater,  
We thank you for your aid.  
Departed Friend, our love and thanks go with you on your way.

Now look we deep within our hearts  
And closing Gates discern.  
We know that death is but a door  
And loved-ones will return!

*The Priest rings a bell three times three.*

*Priest says:*  
Walk with wisdom, Children of the Earth, this rite has ended.

Technically, a funeral has the body present, and since we didn't have the Judge with us, this would have really been a Memorial Service. Most of this rite is my work, though it was Jenni's idea to have 4 Spirits to offer to instead of my usual 2, which worked out really well. I'm going to have to add this in to my Celtic version somehow. Also, she filled me in on the Roman bits to make sure that we didn't get too far afield (the 'O Doting Muddy, Fleet-footed Mercury, Faceless Charon and Somber Dis Pater' bits were hers).

I really liked how this rite flowed. We had to use scripts, since it was done on short notice, but that didn't seem to mar the flow much (I'm pretty good with using a script and still sounding spontaneous). This rite does not follow the COoR, but it does contain some elements, such as the Opening, a sort of Re-creation of the Sacred Center (where I got to use my Two Powers prayer) and even a Gate Opening (called, 'Dissolving the Barriers'). We then remembered the new Ancestor, making offerings to him, and also offered to Spirits who aided him on his way, which was the main purpose of the rite. Since the Judge had been dead for some time we decided to thank the Spirits for aiding him already, when normally I would have called on Them to aid him on his way. It's a distinction that I'm ok with, even though there's the entire issue of time at the Sacred Center being all times, making that distinction possibly unnecessary.

While this ritual (in both its Celtic and Roman forms) has not been used very much, I think that it has good possibilities in it for future rites of this nature. While I sure don't want to have to do funerals (considering folks have to die first), I want to be prepared. And this is a good start.

## **22 June 2008 Midsummer**

*Yesterday was our Midsummer ritual and the high temperature was around 107°. Ugh. First, in the morning, Nora, Nan, Jeremy and I joined Greg of the MCC Church in weeding the rose garden, where we hold our rites. I got there at 5:45 am. It still needs some work but it's looking better. Then I went to breakfast with Nora and Jeremy, and then home. I met Nora at the storage building at 3pm and we loaded up and went to the church. The swamp cooler in the Cerf Building only blew hot air, which made things more difficult. But we set up outside for the rite and Amber Solis and Julie set up for the potluck inside.*

*We changed our Hallows this time. We had a tall column with a Taranis mask on top, then in front of that a shorter column with a fire pot for the Sacred Fire, and our Well (including the Grove's copy of the Gundestrup Cauldron) in front of that. To one side we had our sacrificial wreath hanging on a pole. We also had our big sacrificial fire across the Nemeton from the columns. The rite went well, with lots of folks participating. Jenni did Earth Mother, Nan did the Two Powers meditation, we sang 'The Portal Song' while Amber silvered the Well, Julian gave oil to the Fire, and Ian smudged the column. Bert invoked the Ancestors, someone else the Nature Spirits, and Ian's wife Amber, the Gods. I was Orator, Julian Sacrificer, Mark Seer and Andrea Warrior.*

*As Julian was relating the new lore about Taranis and Artio (and Gareth was playing his harp to accompany her), the winds started to rise, like before a storm. And it kept up through the rest of the rite, making fire offerings hard to do without sparks flying everywhere. My two bottles of whiskey for Taranis ended up going to the ground.*

*The Omen was a bit scary – Blackthorn, Furze and Birch (I think the Furze should be Gorse) – trouble and negativity, collecting things to you, and new beginnings. Past, Present and Future.*

*We also danced around the Fire after sharing the Waters of Life, brought out the wreath and set it ablaze, then putting it out by dowsing it in water, and I shot a Super Soaker into the air to simulate falling rain. Fun!*

I ended up writing and performing the Invocation to Artio (since Julian did the one to Taranis). It was tied to Julian's lore, where Taranis gets badly stung while stealing honey, hence the bees.

### **Invocation to Artio**

Goddess Artio, Lady of the Land, we call to You!

The bees, the bear, the honey-flaked Goddess  
Stand astride the world with fertility waiting  
Upon the clouds' bounteous blessings.

Bear Mother! Hear our call!

Our Fire awaits, our Well would receive  
Your swelling and beautiful presence  
As we would welcome You here.

Bear Mother! Hear our call!

As the Earth receives honey that  
Drips from the pregnant hive,  
So join us here and prepare to receive  
The rains of our midsummer storms.

Bear Mother! Hear our call!

Bear Mother Artio, accept our sacrifice!

In addition, I wrote or adapted prayers to Sucellos as Guardian and to the Deae Matres as Earth Mother. I also wrote the Statement of Purpose for the rite:

**Invocation to Sucellos**  
**As Guardian**

Mighty Sucellos, Good Striker,  
We summon you, O First Ancestor,  
To act as Guardian of our rite.

Your mighty club, O Great One,  
Dispatches all who dare oppose you.

Champion of the Gods,  
Guardian,  
Sucellos, accept our sacrifice!

**DEAE MATRES**

**Orator says:**

O Goddesses of the warm, moist Earth,  
Deae Matres, we call unto you! O Mothers,  
Unfold Your arms and hold us in Your safe embrace  
That we might know Your love.

Deae Matres, we show You honor!

**The People kneel and kiss the Earth.**

**Orator says:**

Offerings we make to You, O Greatest of Them All.  
We offer Barley, a grain of ancient Gaul.  
We also offer Fruit to You, a portion of all you give to us.  
We offer you Milk, as you give to us from the moment of our birth.

Deae Matres, accept our sacrifice!

**Orator places the offerings in the Offering Bowl.**

**The People say:**

Deae Matres, accept our sacrifice!

**PURPOSE AND PRECEDENT**

**Orator says:**

We gather here to celebrate beneath the Summer Triangle to honor Taranos, the Lord of Thunder, the Bringer of Storms and to ask him to bring a prosperous season of rain.

**Sacrificer says:**

As our ancestors did, so do we now. We also honor the Goddess Artaion, the bear mother, as we stand beneath Ursa Major and Arcturus. We ask that she may aid in the task of bring bounteous rains.

**Seer says:**

The heat of summer is here! The Land is dry and parched. We will call on Taranos & Artaion to bring the Monsoon, that the drought may stand aside and the land become green once again.

**Orator says:**

So let us join together as one folk to make our offerings in joy and reverence!  
*Buetid Ita!* (Boo AY' tid - EE' ta) So be it!

**The People:**

*Buetid Ita!* (Boo AY' tid - EE' ta) So be it!

**10 September 2008**

**Priest Consecration at Between the Worlds**

*Tonight, however, was our ADF Consecration Rite for Robb. I did the entire thing (using a Norse hearth culture!) so I could keep a full rite as short as possible. Tomorrow will be our full ADF rite where we share out parts in honor of the Daghdha.*

*So I did my usual offering to the Outdwellers to start:*

*Ancient Spirits, dark or light,  
You who care not for our ways,  
Outdwellers, we know Your might,  
Your forbearance we'll repay!*

*Sacred ground where You can stay  
We do now establish here.  
We ask you kindly to stay away  
And in return, here, have a beer!*

*I then poured the offering and went back to the assembled people (about 20 in all) where Robb and I censed and aspersed everyone, asking each person if they 'released ill will.' When all were purified, Robb and I sang, "Come We Now as a People" as we walked to the Fire, and then Robb censes the Well as I aspersed the Fire, chanting, "By the might of the Waters and the Light of the Fire, this Grove is made whole and holy." We then did the same together to the Tree.*

*I rang the bell and then offered to the Earth Mother, holding my hand upon the ground:*

*O Goddess of the warm, moist earth,  
O Holy Mother Nerthus!  
O Mother Earth, unfold Your arms  
That in Your warm embrace  
We'll know Your endless love.*

*Earth Mother, we show you honor!*

*(everyone kissed the ground here)*

*Offerings we make to You,  
O greatest of them all!  
We offer grains used to make beer to You!*

*Earth Mother, accept our sacrifice!*

*I then called on Braggi, asking Him for inspiration:*

*O golden-tongued Braggi!  
Let inspiration flow from You to us,  
That golden words will fill our mouths  
So we may work this rite in beauty.  
Braggi, accept our sacrifice!*

*Then I offered oil to the Fire for Him.*

*I then did a quick Two Powers meditation, leaving out the tree metaphor, but bringing the Powers into us all.*

*I knelt at the Well, swirling the waters inside with my hand, saying:*

*Waters of this cauldron, I now connect you to all the wells and springs of the Midworld,  
that you may flow with the blessings of the Underworld.  
Sacred Waters 'neath our feet,  
Unformed Powers of the deep,  
Fountain upwards now to fill us,  
Sacred Well, flow within us!*

*I then offered silver to the Well.*

*At the Fire, I poured oil while saying:*

*O Fire in this place, I connect you to the stars, sun, moon and all the fires of the Heavens!  
Sacred Fire, light of Heaven,  
Power of our transformation,  
Create order out of chaos.  
Sacred Fire, burn within us!*

*Next I went to the World Tree (a branch we had poked into the hard ground) and censed and aspersed it as I said:*

*Great Tree, you stand in the Midworld with your roots reaching to the Underworld and your  
branches lifting high to the Heavens.  
Sacred Tree that joins together  
Might of Chaos and of Order,  
Magic-maker, strong and ageless,  
Sacred Tree, grow within us!*

*I then called on the Gatekeeper, Sleipnir! Saying:*

*Great steed –  
Loki born –  
Ettin bred –  
Odin steed –  
You travel through the Worlds  
At Your Master's bidding –*

*One-Eye rides you!*

*We pray you come to aid us here  
That we may share Your magic –  
We open the Gates to the Otherworlds and  
Ask You to aid and guard our Gates.*

*Sleipnir, accept our sacrifice!*

*I then poured whiskey into the Fire. I then began chanting, "Open the Gates! Open the Gates!" and the attendees joined in with me. I circled about, taking the staff I had borrowed and started my counter-clockwise spin –*

*And then disaster struck.*

*Just as happened at Desert Magic, the uneven ground and darkness caused me to lose control, but this time I whacked the World Tree, sending it flying and then trampled it underfoot.*

*Disaster! Robb told me later that at this point he just said 'Hello!' to his Patron, Loki. What was I thinking.*

*People are polite, so no one laughed (though I could feel some horror). So I said, "Let the Gates be Open, even if I whacked the fucking tree!" and got a laugh, which broke the tension. Duir, bless him, quickly and unobtrusively stood the Tree back up and I re-censed and aspersed it.*

*And I continued with the rite as though nothing had happened. I had just danced with Loki, Robb's Patron. And we all knew it. So I acknowledged it.*

*I ad-libbed the invocations to the Three Kindreds, called for the praise offering that a couple of folks had requested, and then I called Robb up. I poured a sacrifice to the Ancient Wise, saying,*

*I call upon the Ancient Wise –  
Those spirits ancient and new  
Who guide us here today.  
Patrons of the Clergy Order,  
Patrons who watch and guide us  
As Priests,  
As an Order of Priests,  
And as a church of Pagans called Ar nDriaocht Fein.*

*Look kindly, we pray, on our newest Dedicant Priest here.  
Guide him, grant him wisdom, and protect his heart.*

*Ancient Wise, accept our sacrifice!*

*I then approached Robb and whispered the charm in his ears, circling him, asking him if it was his will that he undertake this responsibility, until he responded,*

*"It is." And I said,*

*"Be it so!"*

*And then I introduced him to the folk and called on him to make his offerings to those Spirit Allies who would support him in his new vocation. When this was done, he spoke the oath,*

*"I, Robert Lewis,  
Pledge to love the land, to serve the folk, and to honor the Gods.  
To this I pledge my hands, my heart and my head.  
I also dedicate myself to continue my endeavors in the program of study of Ar nDriaocht Fein."*

*I then handed him the knife, saying, "Take this knife and make your last sacrifice of the evening."*

*Robb cut off some of his hair (not easy as his hair is very short) and gave it to the Fire.*

*I then took his hand and proclaimed him ADF's newest Dedicant Priest, the Rev. Robert Lewis!*

*Holding hands, we made the Prayer of Sacrifice, ending with,*

*May our piety increase Your magic,  
May our courage increase Your power,  
And may our fertile spirits show the world Your abundance.*

*Robb, as his first duty as a consecrated Dedicant Priest, then hallowed the Waters of Life as soon as the Omen was taken by Alaric.*

*The Omen was in Anglo-Saxon runes, and came up as:*

*Hail, Horse, Birch*

*This indicated a transformational journey leading to a new beginning. A tricky but good omen indeed!*

*After we drank of the Waters and thanked the Beings, I made another offering to Loki, saying:*

*"Just let me get through this, OK?"*

*And then I closed the Gates. We thanked the Earth Mother and closed the rite.*

*This rite was a classic example of how to handle a screw-up in ritual. Denial would have been pointless, and the built up negative energy needed to be dissipated. Making a joke was probably the best thing to do. I was humiliated, but the rite did not suffer, really, and folks said afterwards that they got a lot out of it. Sigh.*

Well, I guess the critical review of the rite came through pretty clearly in my journal entry. There was a massive screw-up that I got past, and then the rite went very well from then on. The rite's structure was pretty much standard Core Order, with the consecration taking place as part of the final offerings, so that Robb could make his personal offerings to his Patron and Spirit Allies.

**12 September 2008**  
**Daghda Rite at Between the Worlds**

*Tonight was the ADF ritual here at Between the Worlds. Robb led it even though it was Irish in honor of the Daghdha. We did let Dave call the Ancestors, but Robb, Alaric and I split up the rest.*

*I led the group in the Two Powers using my three prayers, and then later offered to Brigit for inspiration by singing "Lady Brigit".*

*Robb also had me aid in re-creating the Cosmos by censuring and aspersing the Tree. This was my penance for last night! <grin> Robb called on Manannan mac Lir and opened the Gates (they weren't letting me anywhere near them), Alaric offered to the Gods, Robb to the Nature Spirits, and Dave read a full page long typed invocation to the Ancestors. I really need to talk to him about it. I guess it's something that he's learned in his Grove.*

*After general Praise Offerings I made our sacrifice to the Daghdha. I opened by intoning His name and then went on speaking from there:*

*Dagda! (intoned)*

*Lord of Appetite!  
Lord of Feasts!  
Father of Fire and Love,  
Male Sex Incarnate!  
We call upon You now!*

*Daghdha Mor, the Good God,  
Truth Harper, Sleep Harper,  
Life slayer, Life restorer,  
Cauldron bearer bringing endless food,  
Please join us in our rite!*

*Slake Your thirst with whiskey, Lord,  
We offer it to You!*

*(Pour whiskey on the Fire)*

*Daghdha Mor, accept our sacrifice!*

*I then asked the folks to close their eyes, saying:*

*Close your eyes, Children of Earth, for He is coming!  
See him as he approaches – fully 60 feet high with a huge belly and a massive dick so large it drags upon the ground, making furrows where He has been!*

*Hear Him as He laughs! Feel the air vibrate as He slaps His belly!*

*And He's smiling at us – and there's a lustful twinkle in His eye – I think He likes what He sees here – this group of handsome men!*

*Daghdha Mor, we welcome You!*

*And then I started to sing that song that Meredith sang for the Daghdha and the Morrighan once at an SSG Samhain rite:*

*Here He comes, Morrighan,  
Take that big Daghdha man,  
Ride that swell all though the night! (ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom, ba)*



*(and I repeat it three times, hips swaying in the breeze)*

*Good energy!*

*After more praise offerings just for the Daghdha, I took the Omen. Using my Druid Animal Oracle disks I pulled:*

*Ancestors/Past – Horse (sovereignty, travel)*

*Nature Spirits/Present – Swan (love, soul, beauty)*

*Deities/Future – Goose (parenthood, productive power)*

*We have traveled to Between the Worlds where we all have come together in fraternal friendship (and some love and sex for some!), which will restore us so that when we leave here we will be refreshed, ready to face the world.*

*Or something like that.*

*At this point it began to rain, and we hurried through the Thank you's and closed the rite.*

We followed the standard Core Order of Ritual for this rite, doing it Festival Style, each taking parts (though we did limit it to four celebrants). Doing ritual here is always different – we have the use of a massive circle surrounded by small stones, with a fire in the middle. It's also always very dark, though they do give us four torches and we do have the fire. And we process in from the road, which isn't far, thankfully.

We've actually had a few men join ADF because of our rites here, and that's amazing considering how Wiccan most of the guys are. That must say something about how well we do them, I guess. I think the rite went well (at least there were no disasters) and I felt particularly good about the visualization and invocation I did for the Daghdha – I think most of the guys really got to see Him clearly. And the sexual energy we had certainly helped that part of the rite, not to mention being quite appropriate.

## **20 September 2008 Alban Elfed (Autumn Equinox)**

Sonoran Sunrise Grove did two rituals at the Tucson Area Wiccan Pagan Network's (TAWN) Fallfest, which included SSG's Alban Elfed rite (done for the festival there) as well as a Children's Ritual. We had decided it was too much work to do both their main rite and a separate one of our own.

*For the main ritual, however, I was to be the Seer. We made a ritual space in the field by our booth area using a tree growing there for focus. We had 125 people attend! My job was to lead the Two Powers meditation, call on the Gatekeeper, call on the Gods, call on Branwen as one of the deities of the occasion and then pull the Omen. For the workings section we had a special altar set up to Bendigeidfran and the people were invited to come up, take a pinch of bread to offer to Him, and then get to draw a piece of wood with an ADF Virtue on it (as a Free Pagan Prize, as Emerald puts it). I drew Fertility. Well, I guess that means I'm going to be productive! <grin>*

*For the Two Powers meditation, I interspersed my 3-part prayer through it, as noted in my entry for August 30, 2008.*

*<here is that entry below>*

*I wrote three prayer pieces to be used at various places in the Two Powers meditation. After leading everyone in relaxing and then imagining the Waters of the Earth filling our bodies, I said:*

*"Oh Waters of the Earth, deep and dark,  
Arise, primeval powers –  
Fill us now with all your wondrous possibilities!  
That through the Earth, our Mother,  
We may ground and join as one."*

*Then, after leading the folks to fill themselves with the light of the heavens, I said:*

*"O Fires of the Sky, Oh brilliant light!  
Descend and crystallize within us now  
That spark of Order on which life depends,  
That through the Sky, our Father,  
We may shine and share as one."*

*Then, after leading the folks in mixing the two powers within themselves, I said:*

*"You Powers dark and light, you liquid fire,  
Conjoin and bend this mixture volatile  
That powers great may merge within ourselves,  
Connecting all the Worlds,  
So that the Axis is complete."*

*For the Gatekeeper we did the module I wrote years ago for the Grove. The prayers were:*

*Mighty God of In-Between,  
Guiding Souls to Summerland,  
Opener of Gates unseen,  
Let our consciousness expand.*

*Manawydan, aid us here!  
Boundaries shall disappear!*

*Keeper of the Sacred Gates,  
Use your strong and holy powers,  
Let our voices resonate,  
Join Your magic here with ours!*

*Manawydan, aid us here!  
Boundaries shall disappear!*

*Manawydan, aid us here!  
Boundaries shall disappear!*

*Manawydan, we've called thrice –  
Please accept our sacrifice!*

*All this was done to a strong and steady rhythm.*

*For my prayer to the Gods in the Kindreds Offering section, I winged it (as I only found out I was to do it when the time came). But I remember it and it went something much like this:*

*Gods and Goddesses of Elder Days,  
You Gods of all our Peoples,  
You Gods of the House of Dôn,  
You Gods of the House of Llyr and the House of Pwyll,  
All you Gods, our Patrons,  
We call upon You now!*

*Join us at our rite,  
Meet us by our Fire,  
And share with us the joy of this special day.*

*Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice!*

*When this was done, I did as I always do and invited everyone to close their eyes and see, feel and hear our Gods and Goddesses join us. Then it was time to offer to the Deities of the Occasion, and I called on Bendigeidfran's sister, Branwen:*

*White Raven  
Peace Maker  
Poor Gwern's Weeping Mother  
We call upon You now!*

*Starling Tamer  
Bearer of Woes  
Only You know the wading mountain!  
Please join us in our rite!*

*Offerings we make to You –  
Incense to the Fire.  
Great Branwen, accept our sacrifice!*

*I then again invited the people to close their eyes and see Her approaching, 40 feet tall, with shimmering white dress and glowing, golden hair, and to hear Her soft footfall on the grass and to feel Her love radiating out from Her.*

*It was actually quite lovely. I forgot to mention that Gareth told the tale while playing his harp, which was also quite nice. I think I would have made it a bit shorter (he told the entire Branch) but he wrote it well and performed it well and the harp playing was lovely.*

*For the Omen, I pulled:*

*Ancestors – Seal (love, longing)  
Nature Spirits – Stag (pride, independence)  
Gods – Eagle (courage, intelligence, renewal)*

*Out of longing for change, through pride in who we are, comes renewal.*

*I see this for the Grove and for me as being similar. For the Grove, the new PG, established through pride and a need for independence, will aid us in renewal by giving us the relief valve we've needed. For me, my need to found the monastery will be met by leaving Arizona and finding renewal in Washington.*

*In structure, this rite was like so many of my rites, following the Core Order of Ritual in a clear manner. Nothing new here. But while I believe that this ritual was a success (the folks attending*

sure seemed to think so), it is clear to me, looking back, that it's time to write new material. So much of what I do I've been doing for a long time. I need to pray to Brigit and to my bardic ancestor for inspiration and guidance in this. I'll never be a good poet, but at least I hope I can learn to become an adequate one.

**Question #2: Write and lead at least one group High Day ritual. Submit both your script for that ritual and an evaluation of the ritual in terms of structure (how the ritual flowed) and function (what was accomplished). Include evaluations of the ritual from two other attendees (include contact information for the attendees providing the evaluations. Their evaluations just be at least 125 words in length and include a description of what they thought went well and what improvements could be made, as well as whether or not they believe the ritual accomplished its purpose).**

The ritual I am submitting is my Samhain ritual here at Trout Lake Abbey, performed on the evening of October 31, 2009. First I shall include the script of the rite, followed by my evaluation of it, and then the two other evaluations written by attendees to the rite.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Samhain 2009 Trout Lake Abbey**

### **Initiating the Rite**

#### **Processional:**

Chant, *Come We Now as a People*, is sung while walking to the Outdwellers area before the bridge to the Sacred Precinct.

Come we now as a People  
To gather at the Sacred Well.  
Come we now as a People  
To gather in the warmth and the light of the flame.  
*(repeat as necessary)*  
*(By Ian Corrigan)*

#### **Outdwellers:**

Just before the bridge, the Orator offers to the Outdwellers:

Children of Earth, please look away as we offer to those  
who are not aligned with our ways.

Ancient Spirits, dark or light  
You who care not for our ways  
Outdwellers, we know Your might!  
Your forbearance we'll repay.

Sacred ground where You can stay  
We do now establish here.  
We ask You kindly to stay away  
And in return, here, have some beer!

*(Beer is poured on the ground)*

*Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (BEE-uh SHAY Ow-LEE) So be it!

### **Purification**

Children of Earth, there are also Outdwellers within ourselves,  
Those feelings of negativity that need to be let go.  
Come forward and be purified.  
You will be asked if you release ill will.  
Please respond that you do.

The Orator and one volunteer cense and asperge the company, asking the question about ill will.  
All proceed to the chairs surrounding the firepit.

The Orator and volunteer circle the Fire, censing and asperging the Fire, the Well, and the ritual area, saying three times:

By the might of the Waters  
And the light of the Fire  
This Grove is made whole and holy!

### **Musical Signal**

The Orator rings the bell three times, saying:

Ancestors!

The Orator rings the bell three times, saying:

Spirits of the Land!

The Orator rings the bell three times, saying:

Shining Ones!  
We will meet You in the Sacred Center  
When we open the ways to the Otherworlds.  
*Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (BEE-uh SHAY Ow-LEE) So be it!

### **Honoring the Earth Mother**

The Orator kneels and places his hands upon the ground, saying:

O Goddess of the warm, moist Earth,  
O holy Mother Danu!  
O Mother Earth, unfold Your arms that in Your warm embrace  
We'll know Your endless love.  
Earth Mother, we show You honor!

All kiss the ground.

Offerings we make to You  
O greatest of them all!  
We offer oats, the grain of ancient Eire,  
And corn, the fruit of this new land.  
Earth Mother Danu, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers oats and corn meal to the ground.

**Building the Fire:**

Orator lights the Fire, saying:

We build our Fire upon Your bosom,  
Re-claiming this place as our own.

While the Fire kindles, all sing the *Earth Mother* chant:

Earth Mother, we honor Your body  
Earth Mother, we honor Your bones.  
Earth Mother, we sing to Your Spirit  
Earth Mother, we sing to Your stones!  
(*Anonymous*)

Orator says:

Now let us pray with a good fire!

**Statement of Purpose**

Orator says:

Children of Earth, we come together here at the Feast of Samhain,  
The Hinge of the Year, when veils between the Worlds are thin,  
And the Otherworlds grow close.

The days grow shorter and the nights grow longer,  
Winter approaches, and summer is ending.  
Let us honor the Final Harvest.

We shall call upon The Daghdá, the Good God this evening.  
We shall also call upon The Morrighan, Lady of Ravens.  
These Two are Life and Death.

We shall also call upon our Sacred Dead,  
That we may know and see Them once again!

So let us join together as one Folk  
And make our sacrifices in joy and reverence.

*Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (BEE-uh SHAY Ow-LEE) So be it!

**Re-Creating the Cosmos**

**The Well:**

The Orator goes to the Well and stirs the water with his hand, saying:

Sacred Well!  
I connect you to all the Wells of all the World,  
That you may connect with the Waters of the Earth,

The Waters of the Underworld,  
The Powers of Potential!

Sacred Waters 'neath our feet  
Unformed Powers of the Deep  
Fountain upwards now to fill us!  
Sacred Well, flow within us!

The Orator offers silver to the Well.

### **The Fire:**

The Orator offers oil to the Fire, dripping it on the flames in a clockwise motion, saying:

Sacred Fire!  
I connect you to the stars in the Heavens,  
That you may connect with the Fires of the Skies,  
The Shining Home of the Gods,  
The Powers of Order!

Sacred Fire, light of Heaven,  
Power of our transformation,  
Create Order out of Chaos,  
Sacred Fire, burn within us!

### **The Mountain:**

The Orator faces the Great Mountain in the North, holding burning sage and a bowl of Holy Water, saying:

Sacred Mountain!  
You are the Axis Mundi, the joiner of Worlds,  
You dwell in the Midworld but reach high and low!  
Let Your roots grow down into the Underworld!  
Let Your summit reach high to the Heavens!

Axis Mundi, joining all,  
Digging Deep and standing tall,  
Carry prayers with success,  
Axis Mundi, grow within us!

### **The Attunement and Two Powers:**

The Orator says:

Children of Earth, sit comfortably and close your eyes.  
The fire is warm upon our faces and we can feel a slight breeze.  
And we can see all the tension that has built up inside us.

And breathe for a moment. In, out, in, out. Breathe. Breathe.

Now feel all the tension in your head just release and drop down  
Through your body and down into the Earth.  
See it break up into fragments. Hear the muscles as they release.

Feel the tension in your neck and shoulders release and flow down, down, down.  
It just slips down into the Earth our Mother. Don't worry, She can take it.

Now feel the tension in your back and chest also release, sliding down into the Earth.

The tension in your lower back and stomach now releases, like light flowing from the sun.  
See it flow, feel it drop through you, down, down, down into the Earth.

Now feel the tension in your hips and legs release, flowing down,  
Leaving you calm and relaxed.

Children of Earth, send your mind's eye down deep into the Earth,  
Past the soil, past the rock, deep, deep, deep,  
Until you come upon the Waters of the Earth,  
Flowing dark and cold beneath us.

Deep beneath us, see the waters rise up, coming up through the Earth  
Like a fountain.  
Hear the waters as they approach. Feel their coolness as they reach your feet.

*O Waters of the Earth, deep and dark,  
Arise, primeval powers,  
Fill us now with all your wondrous possibilities  
That through the Earth our Mother  
We may ground and join as one.*

See the Waters as they fill your body,  
Rising up and filling the Cauldron of your Loins.

The Waters overflow and rise up higher in your body now,  
Filling and overflowing the Cauldron of your Heart.

Now see the waters completely fill your body,  
Filling and overflowing the Cauldron of your Mind.

Hold your hands out, palms up, Children of Earth.

See the Waters of Potential as they fill you from your feet  
And flow out of the palms of your hands, and back into the Earth,  
Creating a full circuit.

Now cast your minds eye up into the Heavens!  
There you will see a star, a moon, a sun, directly over your head.  
And as you breathe, you see a column of light descend  
Towards you out of the Heavens,  
And it bathes your head in warmth.

*O Fires of the Sky,  
O brilliant light!  
Descend and crystallize within us now  
That spark of Order on which life depends,  
That through the Sky, our Father,  
We may shine and share as one.*

As you breathe, Children of Earth,



The column of light fills the Cauldron of your Mind,  
Warming the Waters within, with a sparkling energy.

Breathe deeper, and the light descends more deeply within you,  
Warming the Waters in the Cauldron of your Heart.

Breathe some more, and the light completely fills you,  
Warming the Waters in the Cauldron of your Loins  
And all the Waters within.

See the light, the Power of the Heavens, as it enters your head  
And leaves again through the palms of your hands,  
Flowing back up into the Heavens,  
Making another full circuit.

*You Powers dark and light,  
You liquid Fire,  
Conjoin and blend this mixture volatile  
That Powers great will blend within ourselves,  
Connecting all the Worlds,  
So that the Axis is complete.*

(pause)

Children of Earth, when you are ready, open your eyes.

### **Opening the Gates**

#### **The Gatekeeper Invocation:**

The Orator takes whiskey to the Fire and says:

Manannan mac Lir!  
We call to You, great Lord, we pray that You will join us here!

Lord of the Gates, Lord of Wisdom,  
Ride your sea chariot and come to us,  
Aid us in opening the Gates to the Otherworlds,  
Take us with You to the Lands of the Dead!

Manannan mac Lir, accept our sacrifice!

Orator pours whiskey on the Fire. All sing the Gatekeeper song:

Gatekeeper, open the Portals  
Between the Gods and Mortals!  
Power freely flows  
As our magic grows!  
*(By Sue Parker)*

#### **Opening the Gates:**

The Orator leads the People in chanting:

Open the Gates! Open the Gates! Open the Gates!

...while moving counter-clockwise around the circle, and then spinning in place counterclockwise, ending with:

Let the Well open as a Gate!  
Let the Fire open as a Gate!  
Let the Mountain connect the Worlds!  
*Osclaítear na cómhla breac!* (OS-kluh-tir Na Kove-la-breck)  
Let the Gates be open!

The Orator pauses for a moment and then says:

Children of Earth,  
We are now woven into the fabric of the Otherworlds.  
The Kindreds can hear our thoughts  
And know our hearts,  
So let there be only truth here.

### **Inviting the Three Kindreds**

The Orator says:

Let us now honor and sacrifice to our Kindreds, the Shining, Noble and Ancient Ones.

### **The Shining Ones:**

The Orator says:

Who calls to the Gods and Goddesses of Elder Days?

A volunteer invokes the Deities with either their own invocation or they may use the one below. If there are no volunteers, the Orator will do the invocation.

The Children of Earth call out to the Gods and Goddesses of all our Peoples!

We call to you in the Heavens, shining in the skies!  
We call to you in the Midworld, striding across the land!  
We call to you in the Underworld, guiding and guarding our Dead.

Shining Ones, come to us, we pray!

Let our love bring you to our Fire!  
Let our devotion bring you to our Well!  
Join us, that we may give to You as You give to all.  
Let there be peace between us,  
And let all prosper in our warm friendship.

Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice!

Whiskey is offered to the Fire.

Everyone sings "*Hail All the Gods*"

Hail all the Gods!  
Hail all the Goddesses!

Hail all the Holy Ones  
We dwell together!

Powers of the sky,  
Powers of the sacred earth,  
Powers of the Underworld,  
We dwell together.

Hail all the Gods!  
Hail all the Goddesses!  
Hail all the Gods and Goddesses!

Hail all the Gods!  
Hail all the Goddesses!  
Hail all the Holy Ones  
We dwell together!

*(Words: First verse, Paul Maurice; Second verse, Richard Mac Kelly; Bridge section, Gwynne Green. Music: Paul Maurice, Sean Miller, and Gail Williams)*

Orator says:

Close your eyes, Children of Earth.  
See the Gods and Goddesses, fully 60 feet tall,  
As they come and join us here!  
Hear their laughter on the wind and feel their heavy footfalls  
As they walk upon the ground.

Shining Ones, we welcome you.

### **The Land Spirits:**

The Orator says:

Who calls to the Spirits of the Land?

A volunteer invokes the Deities with either their own invocation or they may use the one below. If there are no volunteers, the Orator will do the invocation.

The Children of Earth call out to all those Spirits who share this world with us.

We call to the Spirits of Motion – You who crawl, who run, who swim, who fly.

We call to the Spirits of Place – You Trees, You Rock, You Plants.

We call to the Spirits under the Mound – You cousins of the Gods,  
You mightiest spirits of the Midworld.

We call to our Spirit Allies – You who aid us in our work.

Noble Ones! Come to us, we pray!

Let the Waters of the Earth our Mother rise up and guide You with its gurgling voice, and quench  
Your thirst.

Let the Light of the Heavens, burning in our Fire, guide You with its glow, and give you warmth.

Join us, and renew the old bargain,  
Let there be peace between us,  
And let all prosper in our warm friendship.

Land Spirits, accept our sacrifice!

Seeds and grains are offered to the ground.

Everyone sings, "*Nature Spirits Call*"

Fur and feather and scale and skin,  
All ye Spirits are welcomed in.  
Leaf and stone and fairy, too,  
May we seal our pact with you!

It's the stream of life that flows through us all.  
The babbling brook is Nature's call,  
Interweaved through the web of life are we.  
Come back to the Sacred Tree!  
(By Nora Ford)

Orator says:

Close your eyes, Children of Earth.  
See the Land Spirits as they approach,  
Their strange faces turning our way.  
Hear them as they crawl, swim and fly to us here.  
Feel the wonder in their hearts.

Land Spirits, we welcome you.

### **The Ancestors:**

The Orator takes pork, beer and apples to the Fire, saying:

The Children of Earth call out to our human kin who came before.

We call to our Ancestors of blood – without you we would not be here.  
You are our parents and grandparents from all generations.

We all to our Ancestors of heart – you whom we have loved and lost,  
And whom we hold dear in our lives.

We call to the Ancient Wise – you Mighty Dead of fame and skill  
Who smile upon us and aid our ways!

Mightly Ones! Come to us we pray!

Rise through the Waters of the Earth our Mother and join us at the Well.  
Bask once again in the heat of our Fire as in elder days.  
Join us, and whisper true wisdom in our ears, that we may shape our lives.  
Let there be peace between us,  
And let all prosper in our warm friendship.

We offer you Pork, the food of the Gods!

Pork is offered to the Fire.

We offer you Beer, the drink of heroes!

Beer is poured out by the Well.

And we offer you apples, the fruit of Tir na nOg, the Isles of Youth,  
The place of rest and recovery between lives.

Apples are thrown in the Fire and beyond the circle's boundary.

Children of Earth, let us now remember all those dear to us who have died this year.

Let me start by remembering all of our warriors who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan,  
And all the innocent dead.

Orator says:

Warriors, we remember you.

The People respond:

Warriors, we remember you.

Orator says:

Does anyone else have someone that they wish to remember this night?

Everyone is invited to call out a name. As each name is called, everyone responds with,

*"Name, we remember you."*

When all the People have finished naming names, the Orator says:

Ancestors! Accept our Sacrifices!

Everyone sings "Mothers and Fathers of Old"

From far beyond this mortal plain,  
Mothers and Fathers of Old,  
We pray that you return again,  
Mothers and Fathers of Old,

To share with us the mysteries  
And secrets long untold  
Of the ancient ways we seek to reclaim,  
Mothers and Fathers of Old!  
*(Words by Sable)*

Orator says:

Close your eyes, Children of Earth.  
See our Ancestors, all whom we have called,  
As they come to the Well.  
Hear their whispers and feel the love that they have for us.

Ancestors, we welcome you!

## Key Offerings

### **The Lore:**

Orator says:

Children of Earth, long ago, when the Gods ruled in Ireland,  
A great war was about to be fought. The enemies of the Gods,  
The Fomoiré, wished to rule Ireland once again, and take it from the Gods.

The Good God, the Daghdá, went to spy on the Fomoiré,  
And after many adventures there, where he ate so much his belly grew vast,  
He returned to Tara, the home of the Gods,  
To prepare for the battle.

On the way, however, he spied a woman at a ford of the river Unius.  
A woman washing blood off of armor at the ford.  
She was washing the blood off the armor of those about to die in coming battle!  
And the Daghdá felt lust for her.

Life, lust and appetite met there with war, death and destruction.  
A fitting couple, wouldn't you say?  
And Morrighan lusted for Daghdá as well.  
And they coupled at that ford.

An ally of the Gods was found that day.  
An ally strong and wild.  
In satisfaction of their ride she promised him there  
That she would fight on the side of the Gods.

And in time the battle was won.

This ends the tale of the Daghdá and the Washer at the Ford.

Orator says:

Let us now invite our other, special guests!

### **Morrighan:**

Orator says:

Great Morrighan! Hear our call!

Dark Lady,  
Fearsome Bird of Death,  
Spell Caster!

Battle Crow,  
Washer at the Ford,  
We call upon You now!

Transforming Goddess who burns away the Old  
That we may be reborn,

Fly to us in Raven form  
And join us by our Fire.

Prophetess!  
Slake Your thirst with whiskey –  
We offer it to You!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

O Phantom Queen, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

The People say:

O Phantom Queen, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire and says:

Children of Earth, close you eyes.  
See Her as She approaches!  
Her jet black hair cascading down her shoulders,  
A bloody sword in her hand,  
A severed head hanging from her belt.

But she is not frowning at us. Rather, she looks intrigued.  
Our hair stands on end, her smile is terrible,  
But she is pleased to be asked.

(pause)

Morrighan, we welcome you.

### **The Daghdha:**

Orator says:

Good God Daghdha! Hear our call!

Most learned Daghdha,  
Great of appetite and of Lore,  
We call upon you now!

Cauldron-keeper, Great Club wielder,  
Holder of the Harp of Seasons,  
Come join us by our fire!

Druid God, Your wisdom great  
And fertile ways  
Protect and grow the Folk!

Sky Father, War Father, Fertile Father,  
Come celebrate tonight.  
Great Father!  
Slake Your thirst with whiskey –

We offer it to You.

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

And when the Rite is over, we will grieve to see You go.  
Great God Daghdha, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

The People say:

Great God Dagda, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire then says:

Children of Earth, close your eyes.  
See him as he approaches!  
He's grand and happy, his dick dragging upon the ground.  
He can hear the sound he makes as he slaps his belly and laughs!  
You can feel the ground tremble under his feet as he walks!

He's happy and pleased to see us!  
Daghdha Mor, we welcome you!

The Orator then sings:

Here he comes, Morrighan,  
Take that big Daghdha man,  
Ride that swell all through the night!  
Ba-dum Ba-dum Ba-dum Ba

*(repeat as needed)*  
*(By Elizabeth McDonald)*

### **Praise Offerings**

The Orator invites the attendees to take the wreath and make any offerings of praise or gifts they wish to make to the Ancestors, the Morrighan, or the Daghdha.

### **Prayer of Sacrifice**

When all have finished their offerings, the Orator takes the wreath to the Fire and says:

Oh Great Morrighan! O Holy Daghdha!  
O Mighty Ancestors!

We have made our sacrifices to you all!  
We have filled this wreath with our love and our praise.

The Orator throws the wreath on the fire, and adds oil to the offering, saying:

Mighty Kindreds!  
Morrighan, Daghdha, Ancestors!

Let our piety increase Your magic!



Let our courage increase Your power!  
And let our fertile spirits show the world Your abundance!

All sing the "*Sacrifice Song*":

Let our voices arise on the Fire!  
Let our voices resound in the Deep!  
Let the Kindreds accept what we offer  
As we honor the Old Ways we keep!  
(By Anthony Thompson and Ian Corrigan)

### **Piacular Sacrifice:**

Orator takes oil to the fire and says:

If out of ignorance or faulty memory,  
If we for any reason have offended You,  
O Kindreds of our People,  
Hear us now.

Accept this offering in recompense  
And know that our hearts  
And our intents are pure.

### **The Omen**

The Orator says:

Now let us see what wisdom and blessings the Kindreds  
Offer us in return for our sacrifices.

The Orator takes the omen bag and mixes the wooden disks with his fingers, singing softly:

Ancient symbols, speaking to me,  
Ancient symbols, speaking through me,  
It's your wisdom we're receiving,  
Words unspoken, whispered now.  
(By Nora Ford)

The Orator pulls three disks and pronounces the Omen.

### **Calling for the Blessing**

Orator takes the Blessing Cup in his hands and says:

Children of Earth, now the flow of sacrifice turns, and it is time for us to receive.

Great Morrighan! Holy Daghdha! Mighty Kindreds!  
We have made our sacrifices to You, and now we call for Your blessings, in return!  
We ask You!  
Give us the Waters of Life!

The People say:

Give us the Waters of Life!

### **Hallowing the Blessing**

The Orator circles his hand over the cup, saying:

Kindreds! We call on You to hallow these Waters with the powers of (first omen stick)!  
Fill these Waters with the powers of (second omen stick)!  
Infuse these Waters with the powers of (third omen stick)!

Orator raised the cup high, saying:

Mighty Kindreds! Hallow these Waters!  
Bless our lives with magic, power and abundance  
As we drink of your blessings!

Orator slowly lowers the cup, exhaling loudly as he does so, and says:

Behold, the Waters of Life.

### **Affirming the Blessings**

Children of Earth, this cup contains the blessings of the Kindreds for us to drink.  
Is it our wish that this be so?

The People say:

It is!

Orator says:

Then be it so!

The cup is passed to the People while everyone sings, "*Pour the Waters*".

Pour the Waters, Raise the Cup,  
Drink your share of wisdom deep.  
Strength and love now fill us up  
As the Elder Ways we keep.  
*(by Ian Corrigan)*

### **The Working**

Trance Journey To Visit the Isles of the Dead  
A Celtic Trance by Rev. Kirk Thomas

The Orator passes a basket of apples to the People attending. These are to be held during the trance working and may be eaten afterwards or taken home for the home altar.

The following is to be read out loud by someone not taking the journey, or into a recorder for playback at a later time. A *pause* lasts about 3 beats, based on the speed of the reading. A *long pause* lasts about twice as long as a pause. There is also one very long pause of at least a minute in duration. Read this gently, slowly and deliberately.

Orator says:

First of all, make yourself comfortable. Loosen your clothes and either sit or lie down, and close your eyes.

***(long pause)***

Now, I want you to breathe slowly and evenly. Breathe in – breathe out. Breathe in – breathe out.

***(pause)***

And while you are breathing, imagine all the tension in your body flowing down and out, into the floor.

***(pause)***

Feel the tension in your head and neck flow down and out. Let Mother Earth absorb it all – She can take it.

***(pause)***

As you continue to breathe slowly and evenly,

***(pause)***

Feel the tension in your shoulders drain away, down and away. And now the tension in your chest and stomach and back just drains away, down through the floor into the earth.

***(pause)***

Feel the tension in your hips drain away,

***(pause)***

and the tension in your legs and in your feet drains away, down, down, deep into the earth below us.

***(pause)***

And while you are breathing, in your mind's eye, you are aware of a mist coming out of your mouth as you exhale.

***(pause)***

And as you breathe, this mist grows thicker and thicker, until you are completely surrounded by the mist. This mist is warm and bright, and glows gently.

***(pause)***

Now you can feel yourself floating in the mist, gently floating, with no sense of movement or of direction. Let yourself float for a while, gently enveloped by the warm mist.

***(long pause)***

Now, as you float in the mist, you can just feel ground beneath you, and you can hear the sounds of the sea, of waves gently breaking upon a beach.

***(pause)***

And as you listen, you are aware that the mist starts to thin, and as it thins you can see that it is a warm, sunny day, with blue sky filled with the sounds of seagulls, calling to and fro.

***(long pause)***

Looking out over the sea, you can see a fog bank out over the water, and then, out of the fog bank, you see a small, round boat approaching the shore. And on this boat there is a man.

***(pause)***

As the boat comes closer, you can just make out the figure. He is dressed in a blue robe, and he has long, white hair and a white beard. There is a small bag tied to his waist, and you can just make out his face. He is young, and very good looking. And he seems very tall.

***(pause)***

You suddenly realize that this is Manannan mac Lir, God of the Gateway to the Otherworlds, and he is coming to meet you.

***(pause)***

The boat approaches the shore, effortlessly, with no visible means of propulsion, and it comes to rest on the beach. The God looks at you with a smile and extends his hand.

***(pause)***

You slowly approach the boat and take his hand. With his help, you manage to get up into the boat.

***(pause)***

You find yourself standing in the prow of the boat, with the God behind you. And then you can feel the boat move backward, keel scraping on sand, as it then floats freely on the water once again.

***(pause)***

The boat turns around, and you are heading out to sea, towards the fog bank ahead.

***(long pause)***

The fog is cold and darker than you thought it would be, but the boat goes on, slapping the waves as it moves.

***(pause)***

And then just as suddenly, the boat breaks out of the fog and is filled with bright sunshine, the sun in your eyes directly in front of you. The boat moves faster and faster over the waves, and you can feel the ocean spray on your face and the wind in your hair.

***(pause)***

The sun is sinking towards the horizon ahead of you, and you can just make out a few islands in the distance. The one you are heading for is larger than the others, and has a mountain at its center. As you approach, you can see waves breaking on the beach, and trees beyond.

**(long pause)**

And you realize that these are the Isles of the Blest, the land of the Holy Dead.

**(pause)**

The boat comes to rest on the sand, and you see a path leading through the trees and up on to the mountain. You turn around and see the God staring at you. He gestures with his hand towards the path, and you know you must go there.

**(pause)**

You climb out of the boat .....

**(pause)**

...and walk across the sand, feeling the hot sand beneath your feet, hearing it crunch as you walk. You look back, and see the God standing in the small, round boat. He gently gestures to the path once again.

**(pause)**

You turn back to the path and begin the climb through the trees, hearing them gently sighing in the wind as you go.

**(pause)**

Beyond the trees, the path starts up the slope, and you climb, going higher and higher.

**(long pause)**

Now you stop and look back. You can just make out the boat on the beach, the God still standing in it, watching you. Beyond the beach you can just make out the fog bank far to the east.

**(pause)**

And you return to your climb.

**(long pause)**

You are now at the top of the hill, and before you there is a small meadow surrounded by trees on three sides. And in this meadow there is someone standing with their back to you.

**(pause)**

Could this be one of your sacred Dead, an ancestor of heart or blood standing there? You approach, and stop a few feet away from the person.

**(pause)**

And then the person turns around and faces you.

***(long pause)***

And the two of you begin to speak with one another.

***(very long pause – this should be for a minute or two in length)***

You suddenly realize that the light is starting to get dim, and the person smiles at you and turns to go. You look back towards the path behind you, and then when you turn back towards the person you met, you realize that they have gone.

***(pause)***

So you turn around and head back down the path, more quickly than when you climbed it.

***(long pause)***

You find yourself on the beach, and the boat is ahead of you. The God is still there, and he gestures to you to join him.

***(pause)***

You climb on the boat, and no sooner are you onboard than the boat pulls away from the beach, turns around, and heads back toward the fogbank, now glowing orange in the light of the setting sun behind you.

***(long pause)***

The fog is as cold as before, but the boat is going so fast that it seems like only moments before it breaks clear of the fog...

***(pause)***

...and you see the beach ahead of you, growing dim in the dying light of day.

***(pause)***

The boat comes to rest on the sand, and you get out, turning back to face the God, and to give him your thanks.

***(long pause)***

As you watch, the boat with Manannan mac Lir pulls away from the sand, turns around, and heads for the fog bank, quickly disappearing into it.

***(long pause)***

You are suddenly very tired, and you lie down on the sand and as you breathe, you see a mist begin to surround you, and thicken deeply.

***(pause)***

And once again you are gently floating in the warm mist, floating in comfort and in silence.

***(long pause)***

And now you feel the floor underneath you once again. The mist begins to clear, and you are once again where you started.

**(pause)**

Take a moment to get your bearings, and then open your eyes.

**(pause)**

Welcome home!

### **Thanking the Beings**

Orator says:

Children of Earth, as we prepare to depart, let us give thanks to those who have aided us.

Manannan mac Lir! You have taken us to see our Sacred Dead, a great honor!  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank you!

Mighty Daghdha, Good God, You bring life and good times to us all!  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Dread Morrighan, transformation is what You bring,  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Mighty Ancestors! We remember You, we long for You, and we welcome You wisdom.  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agaibh!* (GUR uh MAH-gev) We thank you!

Spirits of this Land! We hold the old bargain, bringing prosperity to the Land.  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agaibh!* (GUR uh MAH-gev) We thank you!

Shining and Chthonic Ones! You brighten our lives with blessings and joy!  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agaibh!* (GUR uh MAH-gev) We thank you!

Lady Brigit, once again You have graced us with words of beauty.  
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Manannan mac Lir! You have joined Your magic with ours to open the Gates to the Otherworlds.  
We ask You once again to aid us as we close these Gates! And for all Your aide we say,  
*Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

### **Closing the Gates**

The Orator leads the People in chanting:

Close the Gates! Close the Gates! Close the Gates!

...while moving clockwise around the circle, and then spinning in place clockwise, ending with:

Let the Fire be flame!  
Let the Well be water!  
Let the Mountain return to the Midworld!  
*Dúntar na cómhla breac!* (DOON-tar Na Kove-la-breck)

Let the Gates be closed!

The People say:

Let the Gates be closed!

The Orator says:

Children of Earth, we are safely back in the Midworld once again.

### **Thanking the Earth Mother**

The Orator kneels and puts his palms upon the ground, saying:

Earth Mother, without you we could not live. Teach us the ways we must live  
In order to heal You and keep you safe.  
For upholding the World and granting us Your blessings, we say,  
*Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

### **Closing the Rite**

The Orator says:

Let us all stand and hold hands in a circle around our Fire.

The Orator rings the bell three times three, and then says:

May the Blessings of the Gods, our Ancestors, and the Spirits of the Land be upon us all.  
Walk with wisdom, Children of Earth, this rite is ended!

All sing, "Walk With Wisdom":

Walk with wisdom, from this hallowed place.  
Walk not in sorrow, our roots shall `ere embrace!  
May strength be your brother, and honor be your friend,  
And luck be you lover, until we meet again!  
*(Words and Music by Sable)*

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### **Analysis:**

The structure of this rite is standard Core Order, and I have attempted to divide it up according to each of the 18 steps of the COoR. In some cases, these steps were subdivided down into small segments, but each is in its proper place.

The ritual flowed very, very well, in my opinion, and based on the comments of the attendees, I would say they all thought so, too. It was brought to my attention that since there were so few people attending, we could have gone in rounds for the personal offerings for our own Sacred Dead, and this is a good idea. This was the first time I'd performed this rite for such a small group – in Tucson I usually had 50-100 people attending. And the structure of this part was based on that experience.

We were also aided by the weather, I have to say. It was chilly so that the large fire I was able to make was quite welcome. And the sun set beautifully in a partially cloudy sky, followed by the



immediate rising of the full moon on the opposite horizon, both lending an extra magical quality to the rite.

My main purpose for my Samhain rites is to allow the attendees a chance to honor their own Dead and to take us all on a journey to meet with them. The journey portion went well, I feel, and everyone had a good opportunity to meet with loved ones who had already crossed over.

What follows are copies of the two e-mails I received from attendees to the rite, with their evaluations of it.

\*\*\*\*\*

Your Name: Kozen Sampson

Your E-mail address: [kozen1@embargmail.com](mailto:kozen1@embargmail.com)

The critiques must be at least 125 words in total length, answering the following questions:

1. Give a description of what you thought went well in the rite.

The rite was conducted on a brisk/blustery Fall day. Prior to beginning the songs were reviewed and sung through once. The ritual itself was briefly explained and various individuals review their roles in the ritual. The group processed to the site of the rite and went through an out-dweller offering then purification ritual. The ritual site was well prepared, chair placed around the fire, and offerings etc. neatly arranged. The ritualist, Rev. Kirk Thomas, guided everyone through their roles and also provided role model behavior for the offerings. It was a small but quite moving ritual

2. What improvements in the rite could have been made?

Move the event to Arizona where it is warmer - laughing. Other than the blustery day and the directionally challenged smoke from the fire, I could not find any faults.

3. Did the ritual accomplish its purpose?

YES. Everyone there seemed to experience a deepening of their faith and a sense of the celtic beginning winter seasonal change that Samhain includes.

\*\*\*\*\*

Rory Bowman, [bowman@pobox.com](mailto:bowman@pobox.com)

ADF #1068, Pagan since 1984, semi-active

Kirk's Samhain ritual at Trout Lake Abbey was my second Samhain ritual this year, probably my tenth public Samhain and my twentieth since officially "becoming Pagan" on summer solstice of 1984. It was my fourth experience this year with an ADF rite and went well in my liturgical judgement. I was one of six ADF members in attendance, including three others currently in my ADF dedicant program study group. The purpose of the ritual as I understood it was to provide a place to remember and honor the dead within an ADF structure and Kirk did a masterful job of staging the ritual, structuring it and providing appropriate points of participation for all involved. Emotionally, it was satisfying but less wrenching than private and Reclaiming Samhains I have attended, but that is generally true of all unrehearsed, public rituals.

Kirk did a superb job in staging the ritual, choosing an outdoor setting at sundown with a significant central fire. Kirk's pre-ritual briefing was thorough and complete, and I found it especially useful that he seems to have chosen a fairly consistent Trout Lake Abbey "hymnal," allowing those who attend to come back to about nine (short, consistent and doable) songs well-interspersed within the ritual. Everyone who wished to have a part was given one, and the preview of hymns (spoken, hummed, sung twice) was terrific, making sure that everyone knew

the gist of each hymn. (This is not always my experience in public ritual.)

After the briefing the processional went off exactly on time, with Kirk's rhyming offering to the outdwellers before others had the opportunity to perform the cleansing and set up for the welcomings of earth mother, gatekeepers and kindred. Others each had a chance to welcome in kindred, which did a lot to establish a sense of ownership among those attending, and Kirk's visualizations during the invocations and welcomings of Morrigan and Mananna were lively and very evocative.

The decision to stage the ritual outside was also well-executed, and this was the second outdoor ritual I've attended at Trout Lake. I almost always prefer outdoor ritual to other types, and Kirk uses the setting very effectively. At equinox, Klickitat (Mount Adams) served as our world-tree, and the size of this Samhain fire was absolutely perfect, providing lots of drama at the beginning as evening fell and then collapsing down to the perfect embered size for remembrances and offerings. How he arranged for a full moon and a moonrise through clouds, I am not certain, but he worked each of these elements into the ritual narrative and tempo in a way that really worked for me.

In any Samhain rite, it is difficult to gauge the depth and reserve of the sorrow and memory present among participants, and if there were one small suggestion I might make for improvement it would probably be around the time of remembering and offering. Some of the best public Samhains I have attended have often included what in teaching we used to call an "advance organizer," such as inviting each participant to remember three people they have lost and then to descend from the third to the most dear, either at one go or in a series of descending rounds. This can be a trick to pull off but I think that for Samhain any katabasis which encourages more than one round to deepen successively is useful. With the fire and the wind and the cold, I can see the ritualist's caution about going on for too long, but it is my judgement that Kirk had taken the entire group far enough in (and in front of a large enough fire) for that to have been possible. With a larger group one might want to use more of a call-and-response "what is remembered lives" technique, but in a group as small as this one, more intimate deepening would have done well. Kirk made an excellent use of call-and-response at numerous times during this ritual ("kindred, accept our sacrifice," etc), and that also contributed greatly to the sense that it was *\*our\** ritual and not a staged performance piece. As ever, he also did a good job of giving each participant the appropriate cue and degree of encouragement and support.

Kirk has a custom of using an offering ring during the sacrifice portion, and of providing a small ghosti gift at the close of each ritual before the recessional, both of which I find resonant and charming. The choice of apples as the parting gift for Samhain was a good one, and in general this custom has added to each of Kirk's rituals I've had the pleasure to attend.

As noted, this was my second Samhain ritual this year, the previous having been an indoors Reclaiming Samhain the night before. The two were a good contrast between eclectic Wiccan custom and ADF's public style, and interesting to see. Although usually I end up doing a private Samhain rite as well, this year I felt that I had done enough honoring of the dead with these two rituals so yes, I believe it did serve its purpose. In the presence of a significant sacrificial fire, I also feel that I got a better feel for the long-term value of ADF structure. The participatory aspects and opportunities in this Samhain were a good example of what Ross Nichols once meant when he asserted that "ritual is poetry in the world of acts."

Overall, I feel that this ritual was well conceived, well staged, well-managed and effective.

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