

Gleichennacht 2006

A musical signal is given for beginning the ritual, and the folk process to the ritual area singing:

All: *We approach the sacred grove
With hearts and minds and flesh and bone
Join us now in ways of old
We have come home*

AT: *Wir sind hier die Goetter zu Ehren.* (Veer sind ear dee gaht-toor zoo eh-rehn)

All: *We are here to honor the gods.*

BC: *As we prepare for spring, the thawing of the ground and the green buds appearing remind us that the dark, cold winter is at an end and that which was dormant will now awaken. This was traditionally a time to prepare for the long days of work ahead in planting the year's crops to ensure a good harvest.*

Let us take this time to prepare ourselves for the coming year and all of the possibilities it holds, and let the growth around us inspire a renewal within as we shed our heavy clothing and once again feel the earth spring to life beneath our feet.

Honoring the Earth Mother

DA honors the Earth Mother: *O Earth Mother, our lives are nursed from your bounty. You are the food that nourishes us, the wealth that enriches us, even the very ground we walk on. O great mother, all joy and prosperity comes from you, and it is you who sustains us. Earth Mother, we honor you now to thank you for the bounty you bestow upon us.*

All sing **Earth Mother Chant** (1x):

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

DA offers corn meal in the offering bowl and says: *Earth Mother, accept our offering.*

All: *Earth Mother, accept our offering!*

Grove Attunement

(**AT** leads grove meditation.)

AT leads the folk in the **Unity Chant** (1x):

All: *We are one, in our grove,
upon the earth, within the sea, beneath the sky.
We are joined, to send our call,
to the honored dead, to the spirit folk, to the blessed gods.
We praise thee, in one voice, in our sacred grove.
We are one.*

Establishing the Sacred Grove: Fire, Well, and Tree

Fire

KB: *O sacred fire that consumes and transforms,
True and holy light of the Shining Ones,
Be blessed with our offering! O sacrificed and sacrificer,
Let holy flame warm our spirits and our lives.*

The Fire Maiden (**KB**) adds wood to the fire and makes an offering of incense.

KB: *I kindle the sacred fire in wisdom, love, and power.
Sacred fire, burn within us.*

All: *Sacred fire, burn with us.*

KB censens the site and the folk.

Well

BC: *O sacred waters that flow and swirl beneath all being,
Well of ancient wisdom, keeper of deep riches,
Be blessed with our offering! O great source of all,
Let us know the elder depths within ourselves.*

The Keeper of the Well (**BC**) pours waters from the Well to blessing cup, offers silver to Well.

BC: *In the depths flow the waters of wisdom.
Sacred waters flow within us.*

All: *Sacred waters, flow within us.*

BC asperges the site and the folk with a branch and water from the Well.

Tree

DQ: *O sacred pillar, boundary of all worlds,
Stand at the center of the sky,
Stand at the center of the sea,
Stand at the center of the land on which we dwell.
Let us be deepened in your depths,
Raised to your heights,
And strengthened in your strength.*

The Tender of the Tree (**DQ**) dresses & censes the world tree.

DQ: *From the depths to the heights spans the world tree.
Sacred tree, grow within us.*

All: *Sacred tree, grow within us.*

The consecration of the space is completed with:

AT: *The fire, the well, the sacred tree,*

All: *Flame and flow and grow in me!*

AT: *In land, sea and sky,*

All: *Below and on high!*

AT: *Thus is the sacred grove claimed and hallowed.*

All: *So Sei Es!* (“zo zye ess”)

AT: *By the cleansing of water and fire, let all ill turn away from me and mine.*

All: *So Sei Es!*

Opening the Gates Between the Worlds

AT: *See Yggdrasill, the cosmic tree, the axis of the universe that connects the nine realms. Now we call upon Heimdall, the gatekeeper, so we can connect to the realms and the shining ones. Watch the fire and Yggdrasill and see Bifrost, the rainbow bridge, manifest to us.*

Heimdall, shining one, guardian of beautiful Bifrost, son of nine waves and sounder of the ill fated horn, you who can hear the grass grow and even hear the wool growing on the sheep, we ask you father of all men to open the gates. You who teach us the runes and our Wyrð let us walk in your light so that we may journey and learn in safety. Leuchten uns hervor, Heimdall!

All: *Let the gates be opened!*

All: *We invoke you Heimdall, opener of every gate*

We invoke you Heimdall, opener of every gate

You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal our fate.

You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal our fate. (1x)

AT makes an offering of oil to Heimdall and says: *Heimdall, accept our offering.*

All: *Heimdall, accept our offering!*

Outdwellers Appeasement

Outside of the ritual space, **DQ** gives soda to the **Outdwellers**, saying:

DQ: *You who come from the outer dark,
You who stood against the gods and man,
You who are cold of heart and cruel of mind,
Take this and trouble not our work.*

Bardic Inspiration

AT invokes **Saga**, goddess of poetic inspiration:

AT: *Saga... all hear the ancient one come
Saga... help us see the harvest
Saga... guide us to the table
Saga... sing us tales of wonder
Remind us that we are able
To drain the cup yet drink again
Golden seer of eternal light
Fire us with your beloved presence
Your song is our own... Saga*

AT makes an offering of oil to Saga and says: *Saga, accept our offering.*

All: *Saga, accept our offering!*

Honoring and Inviting the Three Kindreds

Ancestors

DQ: *Hear us, Old Ones, our ancestors and kin,
You whose blood flows in our veins.
From you we spring and with you we will grow in health.
Ancestors, remember us as we remember you.*

DQ makes an offering of bread to the ancestors and says: *Ancestors, accept our offering!*

All: *Ancestors, accept our offering!*

All sing **Mothers and Fathers of Old** (1x):

*From far beyond this mortal plane, 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*

Nature Spirits

KB: *Hear us, Spirits of the Land,
You of stone and stream, of beast and herb and tree.
From you we learn to live in harmony with our world, and ourselves.
Nature spirits, aid us as we aid you.*

KB makes an offering of bird seed to nature spirits and says: *Nature spirits, accept our offering!*

All: *Nature spirits, accept our offering!*

All sing **Fur and Feather** (1x):

*Fur and feather and scale and skin,
Different without but the same within.
Many of body but one of soul,
Through all creatures are the gods made whole.*

Gods

BC: *Hear us, Shining Ones of eld, you who uphold the worlds.
You who guide us and protect us, O patrons and matrons,
In you we grow in wisdom, strength, and purity.
Honor us as we honor you.*

BC makes an offering of oil to the gods and says: *Gods and goddesses, accept our offering!*

All: *Gods and goddesses, accept our offering!*

All sing **Hail All the Gods** (1x):

*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.*

Meditation: Re-centering and Merging

(**AT** leads meditation.)

Ritual Purpose, Key Offerings

DA: *Gleichennacht is the time when the warmth of spring begins to quicken in the ground and in ourselves. At Imbolc we chose a journey to make through the year, and now we begin making preparations for the first steps on that journey. As a liminal space, this time is ripe with magic and potential, for the seeds that we nurture now will grow strong in the year to come. For these reasons we now honor Nerthus, the Earth Mother, keeper of treasures buried deep and bringer of treasures yet unknown.*

(Optional, if time allows: **AT** tells a story about Nerthus)

Honoring Nerthus

AT: *Nerthus, Earth Mother,
Njord-sister, Freya-mother, Vanir-matron,
You who are the world that upholds and supports us all,
You who are the rivers and oceans around us,
You who hold all the known and forgotten treasures of the world,
We offer you welcome.
Great Nerthus, as the warmth of spring flows in the ground,
As the nature spirits awaken all around,
And as the greatness of the Earth grows once again,
We ask that you accept our offerings and grant us a bounty in return.*

AT offers bread, gemstones, and coins to Nerthus and says: *Nerthus, accept our offering!*

All: *Nerthus, accept our offering!*

Praise Offerings

DA: *We have called the Kindreds here today and it is right to give them praise: A round for the ancestors, a round for the nature spirits, and a round for the gods. Have the Folk brought praise?*

All: *They have.*

DA: *So Sei Es!* (“zo zye es”)

(**DA** conducts three rounds of praise offerings: Ancestors, Nature Spirits, and Gods.)

DA: *Shining Ones, Noble Ones, and Mighty Ones, we have given you praise and honor! A gift calls for a gift, and we pray to you as we offer up these sacrifices. Accept them, open our hearts, and give to us of your blessings.*

All: *Let our voices arise on the Fire,
Let our voices resound in the Deep.
May the spirits accept what we offer,
As we honor the old ways we keep. (1x)*

An Omen for the Blessings is Taken and Shared

AT: *Now with the Kindreds duly praised let us seek an omen for the blessings of return.*

All: *A sacred grove, and all is hallowed,
Gifts, given and received,
The seer's eye turns into shadow,
The will of the gods revealed.*

- 1. Begin song**
- 2. Omen/cups**
- 3. End song**
- 4. Share omen**

After one verse, **AT** takes the omen and **DQ** distributes individual blessing cups, while the folk continue singing. **AT** joins in for last verse, then reveals the omen to the folk.

AT: *These are the blessings of the gods. So sei es!*

All: *So sei es!*

Induction, Receiving the Blessings

DQ: *Children of earth, we call for the blessing of the Ancient Ones.
Together we cry...*

All: *Shining Ones, give us the waters!*

DQ: *We join our hearts, that each of us be blessed. Together we call...*

1. Induction

All: *Shining Ones, give us the waters!*

DQ: *And as we are blessed, let all the worlds be blessed.
Together we pray...*

All: *Shining Ones, give us the waters!*

DQ pours water from the Well into the blessing cup and says:

We draw water from the well of wisdom, pouring the ale of inspiration.

2. Pour

DQ holds the blessing cup aloft and says:

O Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, we have given to you, and now we ask you to bless us in turn, as a gift calls for a gift. Hallow these waters, O holy powers. Grant us the blessing we seek. Let the wisdom, love and power of the Gods, Dead and Nature Spirits flow in this cup of Blessing. Seih den Lebenswassern da! (“zye den laybensvahsurn dah”)

All: *Behold, the Waters of Life!*

3. Blessing

The waters are passed and drunk, and as this happens the folk sing (as often as necessary):

*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.*

4. Sharing

Workings

AT: *Now with the blessings of the gods flowing in us, let us turn to the Work at hand. Are there two present who seek to join our grove, to be honored as kin and welcome among the Folk?*

EM and BO: *There are.*

AT: *Are there any Folk who have good cause to object to this oath of joining? (pause)*

AT: *Are you both members of Ár nDraíocht Féin?*

EM and BO: *We are.*

AT: *Are you aware of our ways and willing to swear an oath to the Folk?*

EM and BO: *We are.*

AT: *Do you swear to honor & support the members of the Grove as your true friends & family?*

EM and BO: *We do.*

AT: *Do you swear to uphold the laws and customs of the Grove as your own?*

EM and BO: *We do.*

AT: *Do you swear to protect and aid the members of the Grove in their times of need?*

EM and BO: *We do.*

AT: *Then join your waters with ours and repeat after me: (EM & BO pour waters into Well)*

We swear these things (repeat)

to the Folk and the Kindreds, (repeat)

by all we hold sacred. (repeat)

And if we break these oaths (repeat)

may the sky fall down and crush us, (repeat)

may the earth open up and swallow us, (repeat)

and may the sea rise up and drown us. (repeat)

AT: *Now by Fire, by Well, by Tree,*

By Land, By Sky, By Sea

By Gods, By Dead, By Sidhe,

In the presence of the Gods and Spirits,

On behalf of our Folk, our Tribe, and our Family,

I welcome you to Ocean's Tide Protogrove, ADF!

All: *Brian and Erin, we welcome you among the Folk!*

Thanking the Kindreds

KB: *We have called upon the Kindreds and they have answered us! With joy in our hearts let us carry the magic from our sacred grove into our lives and work. Each time we offer to the powers they become stronger and more aware of our needs and worship. So as we prepare to depart let us give thanks to those who have aided us.*

KB: *Nerthus, Wir danken Sie!* (“veer dahn-ken zee”)
All: *Nerthus, we thank you!*

KB: *Gods and Goddesses, Wir danken Sie!*
All: *Gods and Goddesses, we thank you!*

KB: *Nature Spirits, Wir danken Sie!*
All: *Nature Spirits, we thank you!*

KB: *Ancestors, Wir danken Sie!*
All: *Ancestors, we thank you!*

KB: *Saga, Wir danken Sie!*
All: *Saga, we thank you!*

KB: *Heimdall, Wir danken Sie!*
All: *Heimdall, we thank you!*

KB: *Earth Mother, Wir danken Sie.*
All: *Earth Mother, we thank you!*

Closing the Gates

BC: *Now by the keeper of the gates and by our magic we end what we began.*
Let the Fire be flame, (gesture to Fire)
Let the Well be water, (gesture to Well)
Let all be as it was before.
Lassen die Toren zumachen! (lahs’-en dee tohr’-en zoo-mack’-en)

All: *Let the gates be closed!*

Affirmation of Continuity, Ending the Rite

AT: *We have done as our ancestors did and as our children will do and the Gods have answered! Let us go out into the world secure in the knowledge that our offerings have pleased the gods and that we go forth under their protection. The ritual is at a close. So Sei Es!*

All: *So Sei Es!* (“zo zye ess”)

Recessional

The musical signal is given to signal the end of the rite.

All sing while recessing away from the ritual area:

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 your lover until we meet again.

(grove waters recombined)