

A Ritual for Yule 2005

Awen's Breath Grove, ADF

Preparation

The following are available on the altar

Earth Mother-Rhiannon - Oats

Fire/well/tree - Incense, silver item, copper coin

Manawydan Ap Llyr - Apple and/or whisky

Outdwellers - Beer, candle

Taliesin (awen) - Oil or beer

Ancestors - beer/ale

Nature Spirits -flowers

Gods - Alcohol and/or oil

Taliesin & Cerridwen - As appropriate -the copy of the retelling of the tale

The participant also fills the Well with fresh water- some from grove member's homes. The Yule Log (fire substitute) is set up. If necessary, offering bowls (for the hallows) are available as well. The presiding druid performs a short pre-ritual briefing to answer any questions, teach the chants, and put the group in ritual mode.

Gathering

**Presiding druid sounds a musical signal (chapel chime) thrice-three times, then says:
We come here to honor the gods.**

Offering to the Outdwellers - Jim

Druid pours a cup for the Outdwellers and takes it out of the ritual space, lights a candle, then says:

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

PD says: Brothers and sisters, you may enter the nemeton!

Song: Come Follow, Follow Me

Two druids cense and asperse the people as they enter the building

Honoring the Earth Mother - Meredith

Rhiannon, Queen of sovereignty, Lady of the hills and protectress of the land...
Great 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 radiant goddess, all joy and prosperity comes from you, and it is you who sustain us.
Rhiannon, We honor you now, and thank you for the bounty you bestow upon us.

druid makes an offering and says:

Earth Mother, accept our sacrifice.

ALL: Earth Mother, accept our sacrifice!

Bardic Inspiration - Birch

druid calls to Taliesin asking for the gift of poetic inspiration:

Taliesin, fount of Inspiration,
Maker of poetry, Maker of magic, Maker of song,
With you as my mentor I need fear no shyness,
With you as my mentor I need fear no dull thoughts,
With you as my mentor I need fear no empty words.
I am triple-blessed, O shining voice of the harp,
and I your child ask you to alight in my heart,
Alight in my head, and alight in my voice,
That I may give praise to the powers with good skill.

druid makes an offering and says:

Taliesin, accept our sacrifice.

ALL: Taliesin, accept our sacrifice!

Building of powers - Michael leads

ALL: Solid as the Tree, roots deep in the Mother
Ancient as the Land, strong as the Sea
Reaching for the Sky, the moon, the stars
Powers flow through me! (3 times)

Ritual Precedent from the Rebel's Chorus - The Shortest Day -Jim

So the shortest day came, and the year died, and everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white world came people . . . singing . . . dancing . . . to drive the dark away. They lighted candles in the winter trees . . . they hung their homes with evergreen . . . they burned beseeching fires all night long to keep the year alive. And when the new days sun blazed awake they shouted . . . reveling . . . through all across the ages you can hear them . . . echoing, behind us . . . listen . . . (pause) . . . All the long echoes sing the same delight - this shortest day . . . as promise wakens in the sleeping land they carol, feast, give thanks, and dearly love their friends . . . and hope - for peace - and so do we. So here, now - this year and every year - - WELCOME YULE!

All: WELCOME YULE!!

Establishing the Sacred Hallows of Fire, Well, and Tree

Sacred Fire - Don

I kindle the sacred fire,
Claiming this land and time as our own.
The sacred fire(or yule log) burns bright,
This is the center of the world,
Let none stand against us,
Let the world turn around us,
Let us have a good fire,
As we call the Kindred forth.

druid lights the sacred fire and places incense into it to hallow the space, then says:
I kindle the sacred fire in wisdom, love, and power. Sacred fire, burn within us.

ALL: Sacred fire, burn within us.

Sacred Well - Jim

I silver the sacred well,
From which five rivers of wisdom run,
Salmon swimming, hazel hanging high.
Bubbling brightly, source of the source,
This is the center of the world.
Let none stand against us,
Let the world turn around us,
Let the well be deep with wisdom,

As we call the Kindred forth.

druid silvers the well and pours a few drops of whisky into the water, then says:

In the depths flow the waters of wisdom. Sacred waters, flow within us.

ALL: Sacred waters, flow within us.

Sacred Tree - Jack

I tend the sacred tree,

Towering high, spreading wide

Strength of the skies, the thunder and the silver-wheel,

From this nemeton to the heavens, star-reaching bile,

This is the center of the world.

Let none stand against us,

Let the world turn around us,

Let the tree be tall and strong,

As we call the Kindred forth.

druid blesses and censes the bile, then says:

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

ALL: Sacred tree, grow within us.

Opening the Gates between the Worlds - Michael

Presiding druid prepares an offering for the gatekeeper and says:

Manawydan Ap Llyr, I speak your name!

Gatekeeper, god with no lands, your children call you . . . Into the past, through the mists, over the border between our worlds, our words go flying straight to you.

Manawydan, we speak your name . . . Trickster and teacher, your people call to you

Out of the past, through the mists, over the border between our worlds,

Travel the trackway straight to us. Magician most skilled, hear our words. Mist-shrouded companion of Bran across the silver-maned waves, you who are also known as both Mann and Mannannan . . . Manawydan Ap Llyr, accept our offering and open the gates between our realm and yours.

druid makes an offering and says:

Manawydan, accept my sacrifice. **(start manawyddan chant)**

druid says:

Let the fire open as a gate, let the well open as a gate, let the tree open as a gate between the worlds, and let Manawydan Ap Llyr walk with us. **(stop chant)** Bydded y

pyrth ar agor . . . Let the gates be open!
ALL: Let the gates be open!

Honoring and Inviting the Three Kindreds

ANCESTORS - Meredith

Great ancestors, you who have come before,
A child of the Earth calls out to you.
You whose blood flows in our veins,
You who we hold close to our hearts and thoughts,
You who were heroes of the ancient world,
We offer you welcome.
Honored Ones, you who reside in the house of Donn,
We remember you, and will not forget, for it is you who gave us life.
O Ancestors of blood and heart, I call you forth!
druid makes an offering and says:
Ancestors, accept our sacrifice.
ALL: Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!

NATURE SPIRITS - James

Great nature spirits, you who frolic in the wild world,
A child of the Earth calls out to you.
You who change shapes with the wind,
You who pass between the worlds as we walk this realm,
You who for whom day is night, and night is day,
We offer you welcome.
Noble Ones, who reside in the hills, and streams and forests of the land, or travel
through the air
We honor you, for you are the spirits of the earth, and sea and sky.
O Spirits of the natural world, I call you forth!

druid makes an offering and says:
Nature spirits, accept our sacrifice.
ALL: Nature spirits, accept our sacrifice!

SHINING ONES - Jack

Shining Ones, you who are mightiest in all things,
A child of the Earth calls out to you.
You who are the people who keep the sacred treasures of the isles

You who keep among you the Horn of Bran, the Sword of Rhydderch, and the
Cauldron of Diwrnach the Giant,
You who safeguard the Coat of Padarn the Red, and the Crock and Dish of
Rhygenydd . . . We offer you welcome.
Mighty Ones, you who rule this world and the other,
We praise you, for it is you who provide sustenance and guidance in our lives.
O Shining ones of magic and might, I call you forth!
druid makes an offering and says:
Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice.
All: Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice!!

General Praise Offerings to the Kindreds - Michael

PD says:

We have called the Kindreds here tonight and it is right to give them honor and
praise . . . **(time allowed for praise offerings at well, fire and tree). When all are
finished, PD says:**

Shining Ones, Noble Ones, and Mighty Ones, We have given you praise and honor,
and we pray to you as we offer up these sacrifices. Accept them, open our hearts,
and our minds and give to us of your blessings.

The Bardic Story for the Occasion (Main Offering)

(JAMES) In times past there lived in Penllyn a man of gentle lineage, named Tegid Voel, and
his dwelling was in the midst of the lake Tegid, and his wife was called Cerridwen. And there
was born to him of his wife a fine son named Morvran and also a daughter named Creirwy, the
fairest maiden in the world was she; and they had a brother, the most ill-favored child in the
world, Morfran. Now Cerridwen his mother thought that he was not likely to be admitted
among men of noble birth, by reason of his ugliness, unless he had some exalted merits or
knowledge, for it was in the beginning of Arthur's time and of the Round Table.

So she resolved, according to the arts of the books of the Fferyllt, to boil a cauldron of
Inspiration and Science for her son, that his reception might be honorable because of his
knowledge of the mysteries of the future state of the world. Then she began to boil the
cauldron, which from the beginning of its boiling might not cease to boil for a year and a day,
until three blessed drops were obtained of the grace of Inspiration.

(JIM) And she put Gwion Bach, the son of Gwreang of Llanfair, in to stir the cauldron, and
a blind man named Morda to kindle the fire beneath it, and she charged them that they should

not suffer it to cease boiling for the space of a year and a day. And she herself, according to the books of the astronomers, and in planetary hours, gathered every day of all charm-bearing herbs. And one day, towards the end of the year, as Cerridwen was culling plants and making incantations, it chanced that three drops of the charmed liquor flew out of the cauldron and fell upon the finger of Gwion Bach. And by reason of their great heat he put his finger to his mouth, and the instant he put those marvel-working drops into his mouth, he foresaw everything that was to come, and perceived that his chief care must be to guard against the wiles of Cerridwen, for vast was her skill. And in very great fear he fled towards his own land. And the cauldron burst in two, because all the liquor within it except the three charm-bearing drops was poisonous, so that the horses of Gwyddno Garanhir were poisoned by the water of the stream into which the liquor of the cauldron ran.

Thereupon came in Cerridwen and saw all the toil of the whole year lost. And she seized a billet of wood and struck the blind Morda on the head until one of his eyes fell out upon his cheek. And he said, "Wrongfully hast thou disfigured me, for I am innocent. Thy loss was not because of me." "Thou speakest truth," said Cerridwen, "it was Gwion Bach who robbed me."

(RANDI) And she went forth after him, running. And he saw her, and changed himself into a hare and fled. But she changed herself into a greyhound and turned him. And he ran towards a river, and became a fish. And she in the form of an otter-bitch chased him under the water, until he was fain to turn himself into a bird of the air. She, as a hawk, followed him and gave him no rest in the sky. And just as she was about to stoop upon him, and he was in fear of death, he espied a heap of winnowed wheat on the floor of a barn, and he dropped among the wheat, and turned himself into one of the grains. Then she transformed herself into a high-crested black hen, and went to the wheat and scratched it with her feet, and found him out and swallowed him. And, as the story says, she bore him nine months, and when she was delivered of him, she could not find it in her heart to kill him, by reason of his beauty. So she wrapped him in a leathern bag, and cast him into the sea to the mercy of God.

(JACK) And at that time the weir of Gwyddno was on the strand, near to his own castle, and the value of an hundred pounds of salmon was taken in that weir every Yule eve. And in those days Gwyddno had an only son named Elphin, the most hapless of youths. And it grieved his father sore, for he thought that he was born in an evil hour. And by the advice of his council, his father had granted him the drawing of the weir that year, to see if good luck would ever befall him.

And when Elphin went to look, there was nothing in the weir. But as he turned back he perceived the leathern bag upon a pole of the weir. Then said one of the weir-ward unto Elphin, "Thou wast never unlucky until to-night, and now thou hast destroyed the virtues of the weir, which always yielded the value of an hundred pounds every Yule eve, and tonight

there is nothing but this leathern skin within it." "How now," said Elphin, "there may be therein the value of an hundred pounds." Well, they took up the leathern bag, and he who opened it saw the forehead of the boy, and said to Elphin, "Behold a radiant brow!"

"Taliesin be he called," said Elphin. And he lifted the boy in his arms, and placed him behind him. And he made his horse amble gently, that before had been trotting, and he carried him as softly as if he had been sitting in the easiest chair in the world. And presently the boy made a Consolation and praise to Elphin, and foretold honor to Elphin; and the Consolation was as you may now hear:--

(Elizabeth)

"Fair Elphin, cease to lament!
Let no one be dissatisfied with his own,
To despair will bring no advantage.
No man sees what supports him;
The prayer of Cynllo will not be in vain;
The Gods will not violate their promise.
Never in Gwyddno's weir
Was there such good luck as this night.
Fair Elphin, dry thy cheeks!
Being too sad will not avail.
Although thou thinkest thou hast no gain,
Too much grief will bring thee no good;
Nor doubt the miracles of the Mighty Ones:
Although I am but little, I am highly gifted.
From seas, and from mountains,
And from the depths of rivers,
The Gods bring wealth to the fortunate man.
Elphin of lively qualities,
Thy resolution is unmanly;
Thou must not be over sorrowful:
Better to trust than to forbode ill.
Weak and small as I am,
On the foaming beach of the ocean,
In the day of trouble I shall be
Of more service to thee than three hundred salmon.
Elphin of notable qualities,
Be not displeased at thy misfortune;
Although reclined thus weak in my bag,

There lies a virtue in my tongue.
While I continue thy protector
Thou hast not much to fear;
None shall be able to harm thee."

And this was the first poem that Taliesin ever sang, being to console Elphin in his grief for the produce of the weir.

A copy of the story, hand bound and illuminated is offered (placed under) the Yule log, for later burning

PD says: On behalf of the people gathered here to honor you tonight, we return these words - we replace these magical herbs - this story which inspires us - these plants which enchant us - that our efforts may please the Gods, and that Taliesin and Cerridwen might bestow their wisdoms on others in these times!

Omen for the Blessings

PD: Having offered to the gods, let us see how our offerings have been received. . . **MEREDITH takes the omen, interprets it, and MICHAEL records it.**

Receiving the Blessings of the Gods and Spirits

JACK raises the blessing cup high and says: Ancient and Mighty Ones, we have praised you and received your guidance. We pray you honor us in turn, for you have taught us that a gift calls for a gift. Hallow these waters and give to us of your power and inspiration and vitality. Shining Ones, give us the waters!

All: shining ones give us the waters!

JAMES: We thirst for the waters of wisdom, of bounty, of rebirth, from the well of knowledge, from the spring of plenty, the fountain of renewal. Hear us now... Shining Ones, give us the waters!

All: Shining Ones give us the waters!

JIM: We open our hearts to the great ones blessings. We stand in pride, honor and friendship with all the powers of the worlds. Hear us now and answer us... Shining Ones, give us the Waters of Life!

All: Shining Ones give us the Waters of Life!!

Druid 1,2&3: Ar ydwr bywyd yma! Behold the Waters of Life!

The cup is passed among the people

Thanking the Kindreds and Spirits

PD says: (Michael)

We have called upon the Kindreds and they have answered! With joy in our hearts we carry their magic 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.

(Thank you by person which welcomed them)

Cerridwen, Diolch i ti . . . We thank you
Taliesin, Diolch i ti . . . We thank you
Manawydan Ap Llyr, Diolch i ti . . . We thank you
Shining Ones, Diolch i chi . . . We thank you
Nature Spirits, Diolch i chi . . . We thank you
Ancestors, Diolch i chi . . . We thank you
Taliesin, once again, Diolch i ti . . . We thank you
Rhiannon, Diolch i ti . . . We thank you

Closing the Gates and Ending the Rite - Michael

P druid says: let us reach down and place our hands on Mother Earth, giving her the winter gift of our love and excess energy. . .

I now return all those blessings left unused **(empties cup into tree)**

Now by the keeper of the gates and by my magic, I end what I began.

Let the fire be but flame,

Let the well be but water, and let the tree be but that which ties earth to the heavens

Let all be as it was before.

Manawydan Ap Llyr - Bydded y pyrth ar gau! . . . let the gates be closed!

We have done as our ancestors have done, and as our children will do, and the Kindreds have answered. Now, let us end as we began . . . **(3x3 chimes)** Go now, children of the Earth, in peace and blessings. The ritual is at a close. Bydded vel "Deck The Halls" is sung.