

# Oakstone Protogrove, ADF

## PRE-RITUAL PREPARATION

### Site Set-Up

- set up altars, banners, clergy chairs, etc.
- ensure all items required for ritual are present and placed in appropriate locations (use the ritual organizer's checklist)
- participants may set up seats before and after claiming and hallowing ritual
- place pamphlets and ritual scripts for participants to take as needed

### Claiming and Hallowing Ritual

- two clergy perform the ritual while the third greets attendees, answers questions, oversees and/or organizes food, donations, sign-in, etc.
- ritual performed according to Oak Stone Protogrove, ADF Claiming and Hallowing script
- ritual will not be required once Oak Stone has found permanent ritual space

### Bard Teaches New Chants

- can be done concurrently with claiming and hallowing ritual if Bard is not participating

### Ritualist Welcomes Folk and Introduces Clergy

- officially welcomes all to the rite
- explains purpose of the rite
- introduces those taking on the three main roles

### Seer Explains Creating the Sacred Centre, Opening, and Closing the Gates

- explains purpose of creating Sacred Centre
- explains purpose of opening and closing the gates
- explains purpose of Outdwellers' offering
- if there are no newcomers at the rite, any or all of this briefing may be abbreviated or skipped

### Ritualist Explains Praise Offerings and Determines Order/Limit

- explains when and how to offer praise offerings
- makes a list of all who wish to offer, and what will be offered
- determines order/limit, reads it aloud, and hands it to the Bard

### Seer Leads Short Centering Meditation

- leads brief meditation/visualization either specific to occasion, or awareness of natural space
- ends with statement encouraging participants to think on traveling from mundane life toward the sacred as they process

## CENTERING MEDITATION

**SEER:** Let us breathe deeply,  
  
Become aware of the Earth below us,  
The Sky above us, and  
The Trees around us.

We stand together,  
Gathered as equals,  
In the eye of the fire,  
Between past and future.

Breathe out your daily stresses,  
Breathe in the sense of sacred time,  
Breathe out your cares and tension,  
Breathe in the sense of sacred space.

As you walk the path of the Old Ways,  
From here to the Sacred Grove,  
Be mindful,  
This is more than treading along a path,  
It is a journey from the mundane into the sacred.

## PROCESSION

*Bard creates a rhythmic drum beat and leads the folk in song as they process to, and then past, the Outdwellers' altar.*

We Approach the Sacred Grove  
(by: Sean Miller)

We approach the Sacred Grove,  
With hearts and minds, and flesh and bone,  
Join us now in ways of old,  
We have come home.

## PURIFICATION

*Bard brings chant down to a whisper (if not silence), and maintains the beat at a much quieter level.*

**RITUALIST:** Outdwellers!  
Spirits and energies inimical to our workings!  
Outdwellers!  
You who would fight against the deities!  
Trouble not our rite!

*Ritualist offers ale to the Outdwellers.*

**SEER:** You, who dwell in darkness  
And rage against the light,  
We recognize you and your powers  
And bid you stay away this night!

*Seer offers ale to the Outdwellers.*

**RITUALIST:** Trouble not our rite!

**SEER:** Trouble not our rite!

**ALL:** Trouble not our rite!

*Ritualist and Seer take up places on either side of the entrance to the Sacred Precinct as the Bard renews the chant and leads the procession through.*

*Ritualist takes up a bowl of water and asperses each person as they pass by, saying:*

**RITUALIST:** May you be purified and blessed.

*Seer lights incense and censes each person as they pass by, saying:*

**SEER:** May you be purified and blessed.

*Ritualist and Seer asperse and cense each other, leaving the water and incense outside the Sacred Precinct, and join the end of the procession.*

*Bard leads the folk, chanting, in a sunwise circuit three times around the interior of the Sacred Precinct.*

*Chant continues until all are standing, facing inwards, and the **clergy** raise and lower their staves to indicate the end.*

**RITUALIST:** Please remain standing as we honour, and offer to, Mother Earth.

## HONOURING THE EARTH MOTHER

*Ritualist moves to the altar.*

**RITUALIST:** Earth Mother,  
Whose bounty and generosity supports us all,  
Accept from us this offering!

*Ritualist offers oats to the offering bowl.*

**RITUALIST:** Earth Mother, accept our offering!

**ALL:** Earth Mother, accept our offering!

**RITUALIST:** Earth Mother,  
Who gives freely of Herself to support Her children,  
Accept from us this offering!

*Ritualist offers flour to the offering bowl.*

**RITUALIST:** Earth Mother, accept our offering!

**ALL:** Earth Mother, accept our offering!

**RITUALIST:** In the name of hospitality, we welcome all those who would sit in comfort to take their seats at this time. For those who prefer to stand, be also welcome at this rite.

*Ritualist and Seer sit while Bard moves to stand by the altar.*

## BARDIC INSPIRATION

**BARD:** Spirits of inspiration!  
Givers of Awen, Imbas, and Soul Fire,  
Look kindly upon us,  
And share your gifts that our offerings may be worthy,  
In the eyes of the Kindreds and Deities!

We beseech you,  
To silver our tongues,  
To sweeten our voices,  
And to open our ears and spirits,  
To the beauty of this rite!

Spirits of inspiration!  
Aid us in our worship,  
Help us find the Awen within!

**BARD:** Awen!

*Bard leads a series a cascading Awens, moving around the circle to build up energy. To finish, the Bard returns to the centre, raises his staff, and then brings it firmly down.*

*Bard sits.*

## GROVE ATTUNEMENT

*Seer speaks from the seated position.*

**SEER:** We are about to attune ourselves to the power of the Sacred Grove. Take a moment to ensure your comfort. Place your feet firmly upon the Earth, adjust your posture to ease your breathing, and relax any last vestiges of tension you may be carrying. Clear your mind of mundane thoughts as we experience the energies of Earth and Sky.

Breathe deeply... and with each breath, feel your body relax... breathe, and feel your head and neck relax... feel your shoulders loosen... your abdomen relax... feel your arms and legs become still... let all tension drain from your body... breathe and let your mind become alert and prepared...

As you continue to breathe deeply and regularly, feel roots springing from the soles of your feet, or the base of your spine, reaching down into soil and stone, down to the World below you. Feel strong roots sliding down, going deeper and growing stronger, down to touch the cool, dark waters beneath the Earth; the dark, cool, magnetic powers of the land.

Breathe deeply, and with each breath draw the Earth Power up through your roots. Feel it flowing into your feet, tingling and energizing. Rising up from the Earth... into your legs... rising up through your legs... feel it pool in your groin... Breathe deeply, and draw the Earth Power up your spine... rising through your belly... rising through your heart... rising up to pool in your head... filling and energizing you... rising still to fountain out the crown of your head and flow back to the Earth. Feel it flowing back out through your head and hands, to return to the Earth.

You are now filled with the Power of the Earth.

Now feel that from far overhead, from deep within the turning Wheel of the Sky, a single ray of light shines down, out and down to bathe your body and your spirit in the warm, electric Sky power. Shining down over your head... over your heart... over your loins... touching and warming the Earth Power.

Everywhere the light touches becomes bright, shining like the sun on the water. Let the Earth Power flow into your head. Feel... see... your body brighten and energize with the combined Powers of the Earth and Sky.

You are now the Sacred Pillar, the World Tree, the vertical axis of all the Worlds.

Reach out to those beside you. Join your shining hands together. Let the Waters and the Light merge and flow through us all... the Power flowing upward from below... the power flowing downward from above... through each and all of us... making us one light, one depth, one united and Sacred Grove.

*Seer holds this circle of energy for a moment, then speaks.*

**SEER:** Let the energies continue to flow within you and between us all for the duration of this rite.

*Ritualist, Seer, and Bard stand and move to centre.*

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**RITUALIST:** We are gathered here today to mark the longest day. This is the point where the sun reaches its zenith and its northernmost point in the solar cycle. Today the light overpowers the dark, and we celebrate the triumph of the sun. With this turning point, we must also mark that in the sun's victory lay its fall. From this point on, the days will begin to shorten until we reach the other half of the year when the night has triumphed.

So today we celebrate, as we have done before, and as our ancestors have done in the ancient past. We will pay homage to the light, and may the joy of our celebrations keep the light within bright, even unto the darkest times.

**SEER:** Today we honour Belenus, god of the sun. It is fitting to make offerings to Belenus on this, his most powerful day of the year. We call upon Belenus because this is a solar festival and he is a solar deity. We also call upon him because he is associated with prosperity, crops, and the Druids. Belenus has the power to make our summers prosperous and bountiful. We would do well to honour him this day.

**BARD:** The Celts of the ancient world worshipped Belenus throughout their lands. Offerings and inscriptions to him have been found from southern Gaul to Ireland. In some places he was viewed as a healer, in others a protector, but no matter where he was worshipped, his power was undeniable.

In 238 BCE, when the Roman emperor Maximinus was besieging the city of Aquileia in northern Italy, an oracle foretold that Belenus would protect the town. The Romans were unable to take the city, and several historical accounts of the battle include testimonies from soldiers who saw an image of Belenus above the city, and saw Him intervening in the battle.

## RECREATING THE COSMOS

**RITUALIST:** We are gathered together at the axis of all worlds. Within our rite we will recreate the cosmos and connect our world to all the others. We have the Well into the Underworlds, and the Fire into the Upperworlds. In order for our triad to be complete, we need the World Tree that links us all together.

## HONOURING THE SACRED CENTRE

*Ritualist, Seer, and Bard chant and circle sunwise three times around the container that will house the World Tree.*

World Tree  
(by Cheryl Angst)  
From tree to staff,  
Works wrought by hand.  
From staff to Tree,  
Our works will stand.

*Ritualist, Seer, and Bard thrust their staves into the container at the end of the chant.*

**RITUALIST:** The Sacred Centre is complete! The World Tree stands!

*Ritualist moves to the Well, Seer moves to the Fire, and Bard remains at the Tree.*

**RITUALIST:** Let the waters become the Well,  
The sacred link with the Earth.  
Let the waters become the Well,  
The sacred cauldron of rebirth.

*Ritualist offers silver to the Well.*

**ALL:** Let the waters become the Well!

**SEER:** Let the flames become the Fire,  
In tongues that speak to the Sky.  
Let the flames become the Fire,

Carrying messages to those on High.

*Seer offers oil to the Well.*

**ALL:** Let the flames become the Fire!

**BARD:** Let the World Tree be our link,  
Rooted deep.

*Bard asperses the World Tree with Well water.*

**BARD:** Let the World Tree be our link,  
Crowned high.

*Bard lights 3 sticks of incense in the Fire, censes the World Tree, and places the incense in the sand at the base of the World Tree.*

**BARD:** Let the World Tree be our link!

**ALL:** Let the World Tree be our link!

**RITUALIST:** With the re-creation of the cosmos, we stand at the centre of All Worlds. We are connected to all space. We are connected to all that is sacred. Let us attune to the Three Realms surrounding us.

## **HONOURING THE THREE REALMS**

**SEER:** We are surrounded and supported by the Three Realms. Take a moment to feel the Earth under your feet... Feel it firmly supporting you... Feel the Sea gently cradling the land... Feel its gentle rocking soothing you... Feel the Sky over your head... Feel the breath of the wind calling to you... Feel connected to the centre of all.

**SEER:** Upper world of the Sky,  
Home to the Shining Ones,  
We feel your presence at our rite!

**BARD:** Mid world of the Land,  
Home to the Nature Spirits,  
We feel your presence at our rite!

**RITUALIST:** Under world of the Sea,  
Home to the Ancestors and Mighty Dead,



We feel your presence at our rite!

**ALL:** We feel your presence at our rite!

*Seer and Bard sit as Ritualist remains at the altar to open the gates.*

## OPENING THE GATES

*Bard creates a rhythmic drum beat and leads the chant (at least nine times) to build the energies to open the gate.*

**ALL:** Open the Gates!... Open the Gates!... Open the Gates!...

*Bard brings chant and drum beat down to a whisper, but keeps it going throughout, until Ritualist declares all gates to be open.*

**RITUALIST:** Manannan Mac Lir!  
O Mighty Gatekeeper!  
Warder of the Ways!  
We ask for your aid in opening the Gates between the Worlds!

*Ritualist offers salt water to the offering bowl.*

**RITUALIST:** Manannan Mac Lir,  
Accept our offering!

**RITUALIST:** Let the Well become a Gate between the Worlds.

*Ritualist makes the sign of the Triskele above the Well.*

**RITUALIST:** Let the Fire become a Gate between the Worlds.

*Ritualist makes the sign of the Triskele above the Fire.*

**RITUALIST:** Let the World Tree stand as a bridge, connecting all worlds.

*Ritualist circles the World Tree once clockwise with arms raised and palms toward the World Tree.*

**RITUALIST:** Let the Gates Be Open!

*Bard ceases drumming.*

**ALL:** Let the Gates Be Open!

## INVITING THE THREE KINDREDS

*Seer and Bard move to join the Ritualist at the altar.*

**RITUALIST:** Let us now invite the Three Kindreds to attend our rite.

**BARD:** Nature Spirits! Noble Sidhe!  
You who dwell in stone and tree,  
Spirits of the land, we invite you,  
To join us in worshipping the Patron of our rite!

*Bard offers oil to the Fire.*

**RITUALIST:** Ancestors! Mighty Dead!  
You who offer advice from beyond the veil,  
Those who have gone before, we invite you,  
To join us in worshipping the Patron of our rite!

*Ritualist offers oil to the Fire.*

**SEER:** Gods and Goddesses!  
You who dwell above us all,  
Shining Ones, we invite you,  
To join us in worshipping the Patron of our rite!

*Seer offers oil to the fire.*

*Ritualist, Seer, and Bard sit.*

*Bard creates a rhythmic drum beat and leads the folk in singing the chant three times through.*

### Hail All the Gods

(Original Words by Paul Maurice, Richard Mac Kelly, Gwynne Green. Music by Paul Maurice, Sean Miller and Gail Williams. Lyric adaptations by Cheryl Angst, Keith Baldwin, Genevieve Lacombe, David Wheeler)

Hail all the Gods,  
Hail all the Goddesses,  
Hail all the holy ones,  
We dwell together!

Lords of the Sky,  
Ladies of the sacred Earth,  
Spirits and the Ancestors,  
We dwell together!

*Ritualist and Seer move to the altar.*

## KEY OFFERINGS

**RITUALIST:** Welcome all the gods and goddesses, welcome nature spirits and the ancestors! Join us in worshipping our Patron of this rite, Belenus, in our sacred grove!

Tonight the sun has reached its zenith. We stand here at the centre of all worlds at the time of the longest day. This day marks the beginning of the season of summer – a time when the crops grow quickly in the heat of the sun, and the mind turns to thoughts of play and distraction.

Let us honour Belenus, god of the sun. Let us acknowledge his power as it is manifest throughout the land. Tonight we offer our worship and devotion to the power of the sun!

*Seer raises first offering as Ritualist speaks.*

**RITUALIST:** Lord of Light and Life,  
Slayer of Shadows,  
Fire in the Sky,  
Accept from us this sacrifice!

*Seer offers oil to the Fire, saying:*

**SEER:** Lord of Light, accept our sacrifice!

**ALL:** Lord of Light, accept our sacrifice!

*Seer raises second offering as Ritualist speaks.*

**RITUALIST:** God of the Sun,  
First star among many,  
Charioteer of the Skies,  
Accept from us this sacrifice!

*Seer offers oil to the Fire, saying:*

**SEER:** God of the Sun, accept our sacrifice!

**ALL:** God of the Sun, accept our sacrifice!

*Seer raises third offering as **Ritualist** speaks.*

**RITUALIST:** Belenus,  
Bright Protector,  
Lord of Prosperity,  
Accept from us this sacrifice!

*Seer offers oil to the Fire, saying:*

**SEER:** Belenus, accept our sacrifice!

**ALL:** Belenus, accept our sacrifice!

**BARD:** Let all who wished to honour their chosen deities or other powers do so now, as is befitting for the occasion.

***Ritualist** and **Seer** sit as the first person steps forward to make their offering.*

***Bard** reads the names from the list, if it is long or complex.*

*When the last offering is made, the **Bard** creates a quiet, steady drum beat to underpin the **Ritualist's** speaking.*

***Ritualist** moves to the altar.*

## **PRAYER OF SACRIFICE**

**RITUALIST:** We have made offerings to all the Powers who have attended this rite. We have made offerings of oil to our Patron. We have offered our love, devotion, and worship to the Powers.

***Ritualist** raises final praise offering, saying:*

**RITUALIST:** Through our offerings we have made our worship plain and our devotion sincere. Should we have failed to satisfy the Powers, or if anything we have done is incomplete, Belenus, and all Mighty Beings who have chosen to attend, accept from us this offering of the sweetest ambrosia!

***Bard** brings the drum beat to a crescendo as the sacrifice and prayer are offered.*

*Ritualist offers mead to the offering bowl.*

**RITUALIST:** Powers, accept our sacrifice!

**ALL:** Powers, accept our sacrifice!

## **OMEN**

**RITUALIST:** With these offerings we send our thoughts and energies to the Otherworlds. Let us all focus our prayers and intentions through the Gates, and let us determine what blessing the Powers offer us in return.

*Seer moves to the altar and prepares the Ogham cards. Bard prepares to record the omen as it is read and interpreted.*

**RITUALIST:** Have our sacrifices been accepted?

*Seer draws the Ogham, announces it, and interprets it for the grove.*

**RITUALIST:** What blessing is offered in return?

*Seer draws the Ogham, announces it, and interprets it for the grove.*

**RITUALIST:** What further need do the Powers have of us?

*Seer draws the Ogham, announces it, and interprets it for the grove.*

**SEER:** The omens have been drawn. The will and blessing of the Gods is known. Let us each take a moment to meditate on what we would individually ask of the Powers; tailor your thoughts to suit the omens just drawn.

*Seer sits while Ritualist remains standing at the altar with head bowed. After a few moments the Ritualist takes a deep breath and raises the Waters above the Fire.*

## **CALLING FOR THE BLESSING**

**RITUALIST:** Powers and Mighty Beings!  
We have made sacrifices and honoured you!  
A gift calls for a gift,  
We ask you to bless these Waters!  
Powers, give us the Waters!

**ALL:** Powers, give us the Waters!

**RITUALIST:** Shining Ones!  
We yearn for your blessing!  
We strive to please you,  
We thirst for these Waters!  
Shining Ones, give us the Waters!

**ALL:** Shining Ones, give us the Waters!

**RITUALIST:** Gods and Goddesses!  
Your powers are beyond our ken,  
We call for a blessing!  
We call for the Waters!  
Deities, give us the Waters!

**ALL:** Deities, give us the Waters!

## **HALLOWING THE WATERS**

*Ritualist places the Waters on the altar.*

**RITUALIST:** We gladly offer sacrifice,  
We give our gifts out of love and devotion,  
For we are truly blessed.

*Ritualist inscribes the symbol of the first Ogham drawn over the Waters.*

**RITUALIST:** Through our worship,  
We receive the blessings of the Deities,  
They offer guidance to those who would hear.

*Ritualist inscribes the symbol of the second Ogham drawn over the Waters.*

**RITUALIST:** The Powers work to help us,  
When we listen to what the Powers have to say,  
Our worlds become richer and more fulfilled.

*Ritualist inscribes the symbol of the third Ogham drawn over the Waters.*

*Seer moves to the altar and both Seer and Ritualist pick up one of the Waters and hold it aloft.*

**RITUALIST:** Behold, the Waters of Life!

**ALL:** The Waters of Life!

*Ritualist offers Waters to the Seer, who then offers Waters to the Ritualist saying to each participant:*

**RITUALIST:** Drink and be blessed.

**SEER:** Drink and be blessed.

*Ritualist or Seer (whoever has the Waters of the Bard's choice) offer Waters to the Bard.*

*Bard creates a rhythmic drum beat and leads the folk in song as the Ritualist and Seer distribute the Waters to the participants. Ritualist and Seer lead the response portion of the chant for one full verse before moving to distribute the Waters.*

Power of the Spirits

(by Ian Corrigan)

**BARD:** Power of the Spirits...

**ALL:** Flowing through me...

**BARD:** Power of the Spirits...

**ALL:** Shining in me...

**BARD:** Power of the Spirits...

**ALL:** Growing with me...

(repeat until Ritualist and Seer return to altar)

**AFFIRMATION OF THE BLESSING**

*Ritualist and Seer return the Waters to the altar.*

**RITUALIST:** Each time we offer to the gods and goddesses we grow closer to them. As we leave this grove today, let us take with us the blessings received and use them to brighten our lives.

**THANKING THE POWERS**

*Bard moves to the altar.*

**RITUALIST:** Let us thank the Powers for both their blessing and attendance at this rite!

**RITUALIST:** Belenus, we thank you!

**ALL:** We thank you!

**SEER:** Shining Ones, we thank you!

**ALL:** We thank you!

**BARD:** Nature Spirits, we thank you!

**ALL:** We thank you!

**RITUALIST:** Ancestors, we thank you!

**ALL:** We thank you!

### **CLOSING THE GATES**

**RITUALIST:** Our workings here are complete. Let us close the Gates in preparation for ending the rite.

**RITUALIST:** Manannan Mac Lir, Keeper of the Gates, we thank you!

**ALL:** We thank you!

**RITUALIST:** Let the Fire become flame.

*Ritualist makes the sign of the reverse Triskele above it.*

**SEER:** A Gate is closed.

**ALL:** A Gate is closed.

**RITUALIST:** Let the Well become water.

*Ritualist makes the sign of the reverse Triskele above it.*

**SEER:** A Gate is closed.

**ALL:** A Gate is closed.

**RITUALIST:** Let the World Tree cease to be a bridge, and return to simple staves. Let the Gates be closed!



**SEER:** The Gates are closed!

**ALL:** The Gates are closed!

*Bard ceremoniously hands the staves back to their respective wielders.*

## **THANKING THE EARTH MOTHER**

*Seer and Bard sit.*

**RITUALIST:** As this rite draws to a close, let us offer any excess energies and sacrifices to the Earth Mother, for she gives to us without limit.

*Ritualist offers any left over sacrifices to the offering bowl.*

**RITUALIST:** Earth Mother, we thank you!

**ALL:** We thank you!

## **CLOSING THE RITE**

**SEER:** Let us take a moment to focus,  
Breathe in, breathe out,  
Feel the shared energies of our grove begin to recede.  
Pull your roots back into yourself,  
Offering excess energy to the Earth,  
Feel yourself becoming a solitary tree again.  
Feel the energy ebb away as you return to full awareness.  
Breathe deeply, once,... twice,... three times,  
As you move from the Sacred Grove, be conscious of the journey  
As moving from the sacred to the mundane.

**RITUALIST:** Go in peace,  
The rite is now ended!

*Bard creates a rhythmic drum beat and leads the folk as they recess counterclockwise around the Sacred Precinct and exit.*