

Thornhaven ADF Harvestide ritual 2015: Blessings of the Harvest

Fire is lit and water is blessed in the Vé

Opening statement:

We are here to honour and give praise to the Kindred, and celebrate the blessings of the harvest. Bless us, O Shining Ones, in our work.

Procession to Vé, singing suitable chant.

Earth Mother: *(Njörun = Nyurrun aka Nerthus)*

We give this gift to you Mother Njörun
The Earth from whence we all come,
On whose back we tread,
Whose bounty nourishes us;
Look kindly on our work this day.
The foundation of our lives and all our happiness is built upon you, and so we give this, the first offering,
in thanks.

Hail Earth Mother, accept our sacrifice.

(offering of grain to the land)

Response: Hail Earth Mother, accept our sacrifice.

Sea Father: *(Njörð = Nyurdh)*

Njörð, peace-weaver, calmer of sea, wind and fire,
Grant us to find for the ship of our life
Safe space in your harbour, respite from all storms.
Let us feed on the fair riches you share,
The hunt's bounty, the fishermen's prize.
Mighty Njörð, honour us as we honour you.

Outwellers (offered to the north): *(Ásgarðr = Awsgardhur, Vanaheimr = Vanaheimur)*

All you wights unhallowed,
Ettins, trolls, and all the Out-garth
You enemies of Vanaheimr,
We give you honour.
Take this gift, freely given,
And trouble not our working,
For our hall is well-guarded.

(offering of beer is left out)

Building the Cosmos:

Tree: (*Oðin = Odhin*)

In the centre of all, there is the one tree
Yggdrasill, mighty pillar
Stretching above and below
And through the nine worlds
Steed of Oðin, home of secrets
Time worn but ever standing
(offering of water to the tree)

Sacred tree, grow within us

Response: Sacred tree, grow within us

Water:

In the centre of all, beneath the tree
There are three wells of power
One of magic, mighty wyrd
The other, deep and full of darkness,
The third, belonging to the Nornir,
of wisdom and fate, for those who seek it
(offering of silver to the well)

Sacred waters, flow within us

Response: Sacred waters, flow within us

Fire:

In the centre of all, beneath the tree
We light the sacred fire
Bright is the praise that we will give
In kindling the flames of sacrifice
With holy fire we raise our offerings up
Upward to the realms of gods
And pure will our worship be.
(offering of oil to the fire)

Sacred fire, burn within us

Response: Sacred fire, burn within us

With Holy Flame, with Sacred Waters, this Grove is claimed and hallowed.
With the World Tree stretched above us and below us, this Grove is claimed and Hallowed.
With the Spirits of the People shining bright and strong, this Grove is claimed and Hallowed.
So be it!

Warding/Claiming of the Garth:

Opening the Gates: (*Bifröst = Beefrust, Heimdallr = Heimdahlkur, Vanaheimr = Vanaheimur, Miðgarðr = Meedhgardhur*)

See Yggdrasil, the cosmic tree, the axis of the universe that connects the nine realms. Now we call upon Heimdallr, the gatekeeper, so we can connect to the realms and the shining ones. Watch the fire and Yggdrasil and see Bifröst, the Rainbow Bridge, manifest to us.

Heimdallr, shining one, guardian of beautiful Bifröst, where Vanaheimr and Miðgarðr meet, we ask you, father of all men, to open the gates. Let the blessings and praise flow freely between our worlds, and let us know our Gods, and they us.

(This is optional and will be done by me if deemed ok)

Nine pillars of fire we will light in our mind's eye to aid Heimdallr in his work:

We light the fire of Múspellsheimr, origins of the first flame;

We light the fire of Hel and Niflheimr, barren realm of the dead;

We light the fire of Niðavellir, in the places under the mountain, where the treasures of the Gods are made;

We light the fire of Jötunheimr, land of the Giants, frigid and frightful realm of the North;

We light the fire of Svartálfheimr, place of the dark elves, land of mischief and shadows;

We light the fire of Miðgarðr, our own world, so rich and beautiful, garden of the Gods;

We light the fire of Álfheimr, land of the light elves, world of twilight;

We light the fire of Vanaheimr, home of the Vanir, land of all that is good and plentiful;

We light the fire of Ásgarðr, world of the mighty Æsir, kingdom of power, land of heroes.

Let our voices be made heard throughout the nine worlds, riding the roots and branches of Yggdrasil: worlds of darkness, worlds of light, worlds of fire and of ice, worlds of beauty and worlds most bleak- through all the worlds do we proclaim: Let the Gates be open!

(oil is put on the fire)

Heimdallr, gatekeeper, we honour you!

Response: Heimdallr, we honour you!

We make my offering to the Kindreds of the Worlds
To those who dwell below and those who dwell above
To the tribes of Spirits
In the nine realms
Hear your true worshippers as we make due sacrifice.

Ancestors (*Álfar = Awlvar, Dísir = Deesir*)

Ancestors old, keepers of wisdom
Life-wise, your knowledge is hidden
Grandmothers and fathers, beloved dead
Álfar, Dísir, Heroes, and guardians,
Warding Spirits untouched by memory
Ancestors of blood, of heart and of land
We call you forth, to bless our grove
Bless our rite and the people herein.

(A quarter of the mead is poured on to the ground by the fire)

Nature Spirits (*Landvættir = Landvaehtir*)

Spirits of the Land, keepers of place
Weather-wise, your knowledge runs deep
Landvættir great, Ancient as Earth
Land wights old, Guardians of garth
Spirits of leaf, and thorn and stone
Creatures of feather and fur and skin
We call you forth, to bless our grove,
Bless our rite and the people herein.

(A quarter of the ale/mead is poured on to the ground by the fire)

Shining Ones

Æsir, Vanir, Shining Ones all
Of Askr and Embla, My ancestors first,
The beauty of Miðgarðr, the bounty of all
Many things made, Of the Gods we all come.
None of you gods is not mighty indeed,
Of soul, sense and being you have given us well,
Taught us of runes, of faith and troth,
Of right-mindfulness, and honour true.
O Shining Ones of magic and might, we call you forth,
Bless our rite and the people herein!

(Another quarter of mead is spilled on the ground by the fire)

Statement of Purpose

Today, we celebrate abundance. Now is the harvest time when autumn blazes about us in a triumph of color and bounty. What we have wrought in the spring and summer is now made manifest. At this time, long ago, the crops were now brought in and the hunts were planned. We still follow some of these patterns today. So it's actual abundance, not its potential, which makes this day special.

As light balances darkness, let's give a though for the summer that is ending, but above all, let's rejoice in the harvest, for the manifold blessings we enjoy in our lives. Because of our work, and with the help of the gods, we can partake of the bounty of the earth and want for nothing.

Key Offering(s)

We call upon the Vanir
To the most bright and beautiful Freya
And her shining brother, Freyr.

Freya, oh beautiful and mighty Goddess
Bearer of Brisngamen, Weeper of gold
You who bring peace amongst the tribes of sky and earth
And bring abundance and love into our lives.
We see you in the golden wheat
We hear you in the work of bees

We smell you in the turning leaves
And feel you in the purr of the cat.
We pray that you bear frith to our Folk,
That you show us love through the winter,
And that you bring us back to bright bounty again.
Be with us this day, to honour our rite,
As we honour you.
(Offering from the horn is made)

Freyr, Shining and Glorious one
Protector of gods, bringer of fertility
Warrior without a weapon
Who gave his sword for love,
We see you in the bristle of the boar.
We hear you in the hum of crickets.
We smell you in the overturned earth,
And feel you in the beat of the partridge.
We pray that you protect us and our kin,
That you ward us through the winter,
And that you bring us back to bright bounty again
Be with us this day, and honour our rite,
As we honour you.
(Last offering from the horn is made)

Meditation on Jera: *(rune should be passed around)* Please look at this rune, burn its shape into your mind's eye, then pass it on.

Jera is a most appropriate rune for this time of year. It signifies harvest, as well as the concept of balance- in this case the balance of day and night. It is not a static rune, it is in fact a spiral type shape, that like the wheel, moves onward, and around on to itself. As such, while it means harvest, it also stands as a reminder to plant as well as reap, or there will be nothing to reap the following year. The shape of the rune gives an indication of how our ancestors viewed the year- not as four seasons, but two- summer and winter- and shows how these two seasons were interconnected. The summer brings the harvest of grain, and while you consume most of the harvest over the winter, you must plan to keep some grain aside, to act as seed in the following.

Now that the rune is strong in your mind, I would like you to close your eyes, and turn inward, and gaze upon the rune.

Think upon some work that you did in the last year, which after much effort, time and care, came to fruition. Picture yourself receiving the harvest of your work. Feel the sense of accomplishment, fulfillment, peace, strength that this harvest has brought to you. See the harvest in the form of golden grains, spilling over your stretched-out hands, flowing endlessly with bounty.

Take one of the grains from the pile in your hand. Look at it. While you watch, the grain turns from gold to black. It is small, smooth and shiny, with a hard shell, but you can feel it pulsing with power. This is a

dream, an idea, a wish that you have carried with you, but never planted. See in your mind's eye, this dream, idea or wish, housed in this tiny vessel, pulsing, ready to burst out of its shell.

This seed rests in your hands, pulsing with possibility. Take the sense of fulfillment and accomplishment from harvest and infuse your seed with it, warming it like the sun. Feel the shell soften a little.

This is your seed of idea, of dream, which can come to fruition, and be like the golden grains of Harvestide, flowing through your fingers with abundance. But for that to happen, you must plant it, and work it, protect and nourish it. It will take time, but it will come to fruition, in one form or another (perhaps even one you don't expect!). You may choose to plant this seed or not, work toward your dream or not, but rest assured that you will reap what you have sown. So make sure to plant what you want.

Although you will open your eyes in a moment, the seed will remain where it is, ready for you to decide what to do with it. Now draw a deep breath, and smell the breezes of autumn. Breathe in the rich smell of hay, of leaves turning, of apples ripe and sweet. For this moment, be at rest, knowing the harvest is good and bountiful, and you will not want in the winter.

Take another deep breath, then open your eyes.

Individual prayers to Freyr and Freya (as they make their prayer, they can offer a cake into the fire):

Freyr and Freya are the gods of the folk, and it is thus an appropriate time to make prayers to them. (list off the specific areas/types of prayers that would be most appropriate- fertility, creativity, protection, love...

Prayer of Sacrifice:

Let our voices arise on the Flame... Let our voices resound in the well... let our voices echo throughout the nine realms: O, Freyr and Freya, Mighty and Glorious Vanir, accept our worship and reverence. Let our lives and lands be bountiful, and be a living testament to your gifts. Hear our calls, Oh Shining Ones, and grant us what blessings you may.

The Blót:

Mead is poured into the horn, and a ritual leader draws the rune Jera over the horn's contents, then raises the horn above their heads:

Behold the horn of plenty! This is the outpouring of Blessings from the Mighty Ones, Freya and Freyr. Let their bounty fill us up, let our lives know no want, and may we be blessed with spirit of the harvest. Hail the horn!

*Response: Hail!
(as each person drinks, they hail Freyr and Freya)*

*Once the horn is passed around, some of the mead is poured on the ground:
"Hail to the Gods and Goddesses as well, Hail Earth that gives to all humankind!"*

Taking of the Omen:

Folk of Miðgarðr, would you know the wyrd, hard won by the king of singers?

Response: yes!

Rune casting is done. If there is a need to know more, rune reader asks "would you know yet more?"

Thanking the Kindreds and Spirits:

Kindred have come, heeded our calling
Honour was given, and honour received.
Great are the dead and great are the heroes,
Great are the land wights and great are the Gods.
With each call we make to the Kindreds true,
They heed our calls more, and our troth stronger be.
Rite ending, words waning, our troth stronger still,
We carry it well, with us always.
Honour to the Kindreds, for ever more.

Freyr and Freya, Great and glorious ones, we thank you for your aid and for the blessings of this harvest.
Although we depart, you remain in our hearts.

Vanir, Æsir, Mighty Gods all, for your aid and guidance, we say Hail to you and thanks!

Honoured Dead, Dísir and Álfar, for your wisdom, we say Hail to you and thanks!

Landvættir, spirits of the land, for your protection, we say Hail to you and thanks!

Heimdallr, Guardian of Bifrost, and Gatekeeper, for your magic, we say Hail to you and thanks!

Sea Father, wielder of water, wind and fire, we say Hail to you and thanks!

Earth Mother, who gives to us all, Hail to you and thanks!

Closing of the Gates:

Now by the keeper of the Gate, and by our own magic, we end what we began:
Let the fire be flame,
Let the well be water,
Let the Bifröst bridge fade away
Let all be as it was before.
Let the Gates be closed!

Final blessing and announcement of end:

This grove was founded in January 2007, at which time a commitment was made: to celebrate together every high day, and other occasions; to worship the land and the spirits that reside here, the ancestors and our Gods. Today, as on every feast day, we now restate our oath. We have done as our ancestors

have done, and as our children will do and the Kindred have answered. Let us go now as children of the Earth. Peace be on us and blessings too.

This ritual is ended. So be it!