

Three Branch River Grove, ADF
Samhain Celebration

Linda Sager Kazalski

Requirements:

Bread – Gail
Salt– Linda
Honey – Linda
Wine/Mead – Kyla
Bone – Linda
Ale – Linda
Cornmeal– Linda
Butter– Gail
Whiskey – Wes
Pork – Linda
Hazelnuts – Linda
Straw wreath – Gail
Black ribbon – Gail
Silver – Wes
Oil – Linda
Horn – Linda
Cauldron for CAILLEACH – Gail
Protection bags (angelica, sage,
parsley, thyme, basil, rosemary,
oregano) – Linda
Incense – Linda

Semi-precious gems – Linda
Folding chairs for all participants
Folding Table – for altar – Michelle
Black cloth for the altar – Linda
Black candle – Michelle
Place setting/Shrine for the ancestors
– Linda
Herbs – Linda
Potluck feast including pork roast
Apples – Linda
Lights – Tiki Torches...

Roles:

YOUTH – JESS
ELDER – LINDA
CAILLEACH – GAIL
SEER – WES
D1=DRUID1 – WES
D2=DRUID2 – MICHELLE
WATERBEARER – KYLA
FIREMASTER – TOM

PRIOR TO RITUAL:

Ask all to write down on paper things they wish to let go of. Keep until the Cailleach retrieves them for the fire.

Hand out black ribbons.

OFFERINGS/SUPPLIES

ESTABLISHING THE BOUNDARIES:

Cornmeal
Saltwater
Incense/Sage Wand

OUTDWELLERS

Tobacco
Water from the well
Cider/Ale

HONORING THE EARTH MOTHER

Cornmeal or other flour

GATEKEEPER/Mannanan Mac Lir

Oil

KINDREDS OFFERINGS:

Ancestors – Bread and Butter
Nature Spirits – Bird seed
Gods/Goddesses – Hard Cider

Cailleach –

(Pour into well) precious Stone
(Pour into fire) Whiskey
(Offering placed at the Tree) Bone

Donn –

(Offering made in the well) Silver
(Offering made to the Fire) Oil
(Offering placed at the Tree) Horn

Special Ancestor Offerings

To the Heroes: Apples
To the Honored Dead: Pork
To the Beloved: Hazelnuts

WREATH Passed – ribbons to be tied on

SPECIAL WORKINGS

Salt
Bread
Honey

To be cast in the fire

PROLOGUE¹

One of the youngest present (The YOUTH) and one of the eldest/most experienced in druidry (The ELDER) sit next to the fire with the others seated around them. The CAILLEACH remains in the shadows, preparing herself.

YOUTH – I come to your hearth, wise ELDER, for comfort. On this night, I feel the Otherworld draw near.

ELDER – The hearth fire burns brightly on this night, young one, and you are welcome to share in its warmth. Now is the time of Samhain – the old year is dying away and the dark months approach. The Otherworld does indeed feel closer at this hour, for time ceases to exist during Samhain.

YOUTH – If time stops during Samhain, what becomes of that invisible wall which time raises between the land of the living and that of the dead?

ELDER – Like Time, its builder, it is abolished for three days and three nights. Then and then alone, time will be reborn, the invisible wall will be built new and then alone will begin the New Time.

YOUTH – Is it possible, then, to move between one world and the other, the land of the living to the land of the dead and back, without fear or risk?

ELDER – It was during Samhain that Cuchulainn penetrated the realm of the dead and it is during these three nights and three days, each time a year dies and the dark hours begin, that the veil between the worlds is thin and the dead may walk with us again and the living may cross to the Otherworld.

YOUTH – ELDER, your words, and the thought of seeing the dead fill me with fear.

¹ Adapted from [Samhuinn](#) © 2001 The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

ELDER – Do not try to go to the Otherworld then, for this test would be more difficult than you are prepared for at this time. Stay within your own self and your own home. Know that each of us is on a journey – a journey of the Soul that passes many times through life and death and life again. We are each at a different place on this journey and there is truly no need to fear those who have gone before us, even if they are now in the Otherworld.

YOUTH – I am still afraid, ELDER. The dead have been given freedom to come among us.

ELDER – You need to understand this, little one: the spirits are friendly and favorable to those who honor, respect and love them.

YOUTH – But how can I prove to them that I honor, respect and love them?

ELDER – By offering them ritual gifts

YOUTH – What are these gifts and what are the rituals when the gifts should be made to them?

ELDER – Hear and see. Be wise and guard yourself carefully in the secret places of your heart and learn during this ceremony celebrating the Ancestors.

ELDER and YOUTH go to their places in the Circle. Candles and incense are lit. Protection bags will be distributed to all.

INITIATING THE RITE

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.²

D1: ESTABLISHING THE BOUNDARIES/PURIFICATION

LAND: (cornmeal sprinkled around the outside of the sacred space)

² Words by Sean Miller, music "an Old English plainsong" traditional

By Fire and Well, let the blessed Land be the foundation of this Grove.
SEA: (saltwater sprinkled around the outside of the sacred space)
By cleansing Water, let the Sea be the boundary of this Grove.
SKY: (incense is thrown into the fire)
By light of the Fire, let the shining sky be the roof of this Grove.

D2: OUTDWELLERS: A bowl of water from the Well together with an offering of tobacco are offered at their altar.

D1: Gods and spirits of this land,
Whose ways are not ours,
Offerings now for you and yours,
In memory of your band.

D2: We come from East and West,
North and South, to be together here.

Let us take three breaths...

Together with the Earth beneath us.
Together with the Sky above us.
Together with the Sea about us. *(Ring the bell)*

D1: TWO POWERS MEDITATION (drummer plays heartbeat pattern) ³

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.

(Centering)

For just a moment let us close our eyes and feel the life which
courses through us all. *(pause)*

The beating of our hearts is at the center of our core.

³ Rev. Kirk Thomas via www.adf.org

Like sparkling blood, the coursing of the waters and light of life
Now mix and swirl and energize us all.

ALL: Chaos of the Earth, fill us!

ALL: Order of the Heavens, mold us!

ALL: Join the powers deep within us!

With the merging of these powers let us join as one!

ALL: UNITY CHANT

We are one with the Mother

We are one with the Earth

We are one with each other

By our lives, by our birth⁴

HONORING THE EARTH MOTHER - All kneel and touch the earth

(Offering of cornmeal or other flour)

D1: We honor the Earth Mother, without whom nothing exists.

LINDA - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: **Samhain is one of the original Celtic fire festivals and means "Summer's End", when the sun's power wanes, and the strength of the Gods of darkness, winter, and the underworld grows great. As Beltaine marks the beginning of summer, Samhain records its end. Samhain is regarded as the Celtic New Year and also the 'Festival of the Dead'. It is believed that at this time of the year the souls of the dead can walk amongst the living. On the night of Samhain, the door to realms beyond mortal comprehension is opened, the veil between life and death is at its thinnest, and the revolving wheel guarding the gates of the Spiral Castle has stopped for a brief moment. This night and all of the first week of November once blazed with ritual fires, upon which the early Celts symbolically burned all the frustrations and anxieties of the preceding year.⁵**

⁴ Rev. Jeffrey Wyndham (Ian Corrigan)

⁵ Mystic Ash Samhain – 2004 via www.adf.org

RECREATING THE COSMOS

ALL: The waters support and surround us.
The land extends about us.
The sky stretches above us.
And at the center burns a living flame.
Let us pray with a good fire.
May all the Kindred bless us.
May our worship be true.
May our actions be just.
May our love be pure.
Blessings and honor and worship to the holy ones.⁶

OPENING THE GATE(S)

D2: We stand at the shore and watch the mists close in
Waves rolling over and over where shore meets ocean
Where sea and sky do meet the land we call to you, Manannan.⁷

A drum beat begins and rattles are used to fill the sound. All begin to chant, over and over:

ALL - Open the Gates. Open the **Gates. Open the Gates...**

When the chants, drums and rattles are well established,

D1 (over the chanting): Manannan! Gatekeeper! Open the ways for us. We walk your holy ways; we walk the Sacred Road. Share your power with us; ward us as we walk in safety. Manannan, accept our sacrifice!

D2 makes an offering of oil to the fire. The chanting, drums and rattles continue. They increase in speed and volume.

*D1 holds a staff, pointing the top of it at the top of the World Tree. D1 begins to spin. When **D1's** staff first passes the Fire, D1 says: Let the Fire open as a Gate!*

D1 continues spinning at least one full revolution.

*As **D1's** staff passes over the Well, D1 says: Let the Well open as a Gate!*

⁶ Land, Sea & Sky Text by Ceisiwr Serith via www.adf.org

⁷ Hearth Fire Grove Samhain via www.adf.org

*D1 continues spinning at least one full revolution. As D1's staff passes by the Tree, D1 says: Let the Tree connect the Worlds!
There is a loud drum roll ending in a strong stroke. Everything stops.
D1 stops spinning, holds both hands (and staff) out and grounds it firmly.
D1: Let the Gates be open!
ALL: shout: Let the Gates be open!⁸*

D2: INVITATION TO THE KINDRED

*D2: Ancestors of our grove,
Spirits of Land, Sea and Sky,
Shining Ones, First Children of the Earth,
We invite you to join us this joyous day!
(offering of a plate from the feast to the fire)*

D1: CAILLEACH INVOCATION⁹

As the Earth falls into sleep the Hag of Baere (Bah-ra) is wielding her scythe and cutting the green corn down, to sow it again in the later winter's night. She is the Cailleach (Cayl-yach), the wise and cunning old woman, who passed into seven periods of youth while her husband's passed away behind her, grandmother to peoples and races of the Earth. Her eyes are keen and sparkling like the cold river stream, her hands are gnarled like the twisted roots of ancient trees, and her skin is old and wrinkled like the scattered leaves of autumn.

When the Cailleach calls, deep within the forest, deep within the land, we can feel it in our bones, like the roots of old. It is time to come home, into the darkness of the woods, where the old hag will cut us open, and we will grow new again, our frailty and weakness cut down like the corn.

Hear us now, Cailleach Baere, Great ancient Grandmother, Lady of the Deep Forest, Old Witch of the Roots and Cauldron. We pray that you be with us, that you look kindly upon our holy rite, and that you come into our Grove and give us your blessing.

⁸ <https://www.adf.org/rituals/celtic/midsummer/ssgmidsummer.html>

⁹ Rev. Jeffrey Wyndham (Ian Corrigan) via www.adf.org

We give due offering to you. We give you... (*Pour into well*) precious stone, that the Bones of the Earth may be clothed again in life. (*Pour into fire*) Whiskey, that the Waters of Life May flow in us and Spirit dwell in flesh. (*Offering placed at the foot of the Tree*) Bone that the old and unnecessary fall away into peaceful rest. Be welcome among us Cailleach; Great Grandmother, accept our sacrifice!

All: Accept our sacrifice!

D2: THE INVOCATION OF DONN/CERNUNNOS¹⁰

In the season of darkening, the Lord of the House of Death receives the Spirits in his Hall. He is Donn the Dark, sometimes called Cernunnos: the Horned God. He is the First Ancestor, the Torc Bearer: The Guardian of the Cauldron of Plenty.

Hear us now, Horned One, Dark one, Receiver of the Dead, Granter of Rest, Patron of the Feast in the Land of the Dead. We pray you to come in, to let your gaze fall upon this Sacred Ground, to give us your blessing.

We make due offering to you. We give you... (*Offering made in the well*) Silver, that you grant the wealth of the Underworld, Source of All Potential, (*offering made to the Fire*) Oil, that the richness of the Land be renewed as our own lives are renewed. (*Offering placed at the foot of the Tree*) Horn, that the beings who know you may bless us in the Season of Hunting. Be welcome among us, Donn. Dark One, accept our sacrifice!

All: Accept our sacrifice!

¹⁰ Rev. Jeffrey Wyndham (Ian Corrigan) via www.adf.org

*Linda: Honoring the Ancestors*¹¹

On the feast of Samhain the veils between the worlds are thin. We call to our beloved dead, our Ancestors, to join our feast and receive offerings. Come to the Gates, honored ones; hear our call. We offer you our worship, our reverence and our love. You who fill the empty womb, you who cause the seed to spring forth, you who fill the breast with milk, receive now these offerings made in your honor: Apples, the fruit of life and death. Pork, the flesh of the sacred sow. Hazel nuts, concentrated meat of wisdom. We offer these...to the heroes; who did the bidding of the Gods for the good of the folk. (*Offering made*) To the honored dead: those who have inspired and guided our world. (*Offering made*) To our beloved family and friends who have gone ahead, we honor you. (*Offering made*) To all of you we give these fruits and meats that you may feast in joy in the Land of the Dead.

¹¹ Rev. Jeffrey Wyndham (Ian Corrigan) via www.adf.org

A wreath is passed & all who wish tie a ribbon for their dead during the following readings.

LINDA: THE DEATH SONG (REPAGANIZED FROM THE CARMINA GADELICA) ¹²

**You go home this night to your home of winter,
To your home of fall, of spring, of summer,
You go home this night to the Turning House,
To your pleasant rest in the Land of Joy.
Rest you, rest, and away with sorrow,
Rest this night in the Mother's Breast,
Rest you, rest, and away with sorrow,
Rest, O beloved, with the Mother's Kiss.
In the Many Colored Land;
In the Land of the Dead;
In the Plain of Joy;
In the Land beneath the Wave
In the Land of Youth;
In the Land of the Ever-Living;
In the Revolving Castle, the House of Donn.
Rest in seven lights, beloved,
Rest in seven joys, beloved,
Rest in seven sleeps, beloved,
In the Grove of the Cauldron, Morrigan's Shrine.
The shadow of death is on your face, beloved
But the Cauldron of Rebirth awaits you,
The threefold turning of your Fate,
When your rest has given you your peace.
So rest in the calm of all calms,
Rest in the wisdom of all wisdoms,
Rest in the love of all loves,
Rest in the Lord of Life and Death,
Rest in the Lady of Life and Death,
Till the Season of Turning
Till the Time of Returning
Till the Cauldron**

¹² Rev. Jeffrey Wyndham (Ian Corrigan) via www.adf.org

D2: LITANY OF THE DEAD

I honor the dead who shine in my heart.

(ALL) We remember them.

I honor the dead who shine in the hearts of those I love.

(ALL) We remember them.

I honor the dead who shine in my mind.

(ALL) We remember them.

I honor the dead who are my ancestors, and yours.

(ALL) We remember them.

I honor all the dead whose names are unknown to me.

(ALL) We remember them.

I honor all those who died alone and unmourned.

(ALL) We remember them.

We are here and who we are because of you and the path you walked.

We honor you and raise our hands to you. (Pause)

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, (ALL) We remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and chill of winter, (ALL) We remember them.

In the opening of buds and rebirth of spring, (ALL) We remember them.

In the blue of the sky and warmth of summer, (ALL) We remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and beauty of autumn, (ALL) We remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, (ALL) We remember them.

When we are weary and in the need of strength, (ALL) We remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, (ALL) We remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, (ALL) We remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live,

(ALL) For they are now a part of us, and we remember them.¹³

(The wreath is offered to the fire)

ALL: PRAYER OF SACRIFICE

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.¹⁴

¹³ Adapted from Selena Fox

¹⁴ Words: Anthony R. Thompson, music: Ian Corrigan via www.adf.org

SEER: TAKING THE OMENS

A sacred grove and all is hallowed,
Gifts, given and received,
The Seer's eye turns shadowed,
The will of the Gods revealed.

The seer interprets the omens, leading the company to contemplate the things they would ask of the powers, especially as suggested by omen.

Have our offerings been accepted?
What do the Powers offer us in return?
What further needs do the Powers have of us?¹⁵

CALLING FOR THE BLESSINGS

D1: As in the ways of old
A gift is given freely
As in the ways of old
A gift is given in return.
(The pitchers are lifted saluting the fire, well and tree.)

D2: HALLOWING THE BLESSING

Bright the flow of giving turns, we come before you.
Please remember us now and grant us the Waters.

All: Grant us the Waters.

D2: The flame of wisdom lights this cup stirring our lives.
We ask again: please grant us the Waters.

All: Grant us the Waters.

D2: Thrice we call, as in days of old,

As we've opened our hearts, so grant us the waters!

All: Grant us the Waters.

¹⁵ Adapted from Anthony R. Thompson via www.adf.org

D1: AFFIRMATION OF THE BLESSING

Accepting the Gifts surrounding us,
Absorb and swirl blessings so sweet
We gladly partake of these waters before us.
(After cup is imbued with energy)
These are the waters of life!¹⁶

D2: The blessing flows in us, filling us with the magic of the Cailleach and the Donn. As the year turns, let us welcome the quiet of the Dark. Let the stillness of the land calm and satisfy our spirits, allowing us to receive the Harvest's Bounty. Let the gain of the passing year be ours, to fill our lives with contentment. Let us welcome the Dead who wish to return to the living world, even as we remember those who depart. May we rest content as we pass the threshold of new beginnings.¹⁷

ALL: Pour the waters, raise the cup.
Drink your share of wisdom deep.
Strength and joy now fill us up.
As the elder ways we keep.¹⁸
(Pass the pitchers around for all to share.)

SPECIAL WORKINGS¹⁹

D1: Ancestors, known and unknown, ancestors of our bodies and of our spirits, those who have given form to our lives, who have made us what and who we are. Parents! Teachers! Guides! Healers! All those whose Fire is in us, whose Water is in us, whose Air and Earth are in us! On this night of Samhain we feel you near. At this time of no time, we call to you! Come dear spirits! We welcome all of you who come in love and friendship, who share our quest for trust and even as you move among us, we shall remember those of the departed who are most dear to us. (LONG PAUSE) Let any who so choose, step forward and speak the names of those they wish to remember, that they be honored in our circle tonight.

¹⁶ Chant for the Blessing Cup by ZL Bennett

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Rev. Jeffrey Wyndham (Ian Corrigan) via www.adf.org

¹⁹ Adapted from **Samhuinn** © 2001 The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

D2 You who were our predecessors, our friends, our guides, come to the help of those who are striving on the path; guide them on their quest for the light, support them in their times of difficulty. Ask for the support of Higher Powers and, if possible, the blessing of the Shining Ones. We greet you as brothers and sisters during your brief transit across our world.

Elder: The veil of midnight discloses the stars. Ancestors, in wisdom we ask you to share the Salt of the Earth. (Casts some salt into the fire)

Youth: The Sun is reborn in the setting stars of dawn; may the souls of our loved ones share again the bread and breath of life. (Casts some bread into the fire) May the fire release the essence of these offerings that you may partake of this feast in the company of those on this plane.

Firemaster: In the light of day lies understanding. Shadows are small then. True spirits, please share some of your clear vision as we share the sweetness of honey on the tongue of truth. (Casts a little honey into the fire)

Waterbearer: The Sun of all our lives sets in the West, but the Seven Sisters have risen. Beloved spirits, we welcome you to share the wine of love. (Casts bit of wine or mead into the fire)

ELDER: May the very best be manifested!

Two participants then form a gateway in the Northwest and the Cailleach appears through it, carrying a cauldron. She is dressed in black and is veiled. As she first emerges into the circle,

Elder: The Cailleach (Kayl–yach) approaches! Fear not, my brothers and sisters. Her work is veiled and little understood, but without her process of destruction and decay, the earth would be barren of all life. It is she who brings the winter snows to cleanse the autumn debris, allowing the soil to be fertilized with the remains of last year’s harvest. It is she who hardens the ground with frost and ice which quicken the dormant seeds in the earth’s womb. As the North Wind, she scours the earth, stripping branches bare. Without her work, new life could not be nurtured during the long winter sleep in the depths of the earth.

Youth: The Cailleach (Kayl–yach) calls to us. She sweeps through the cave of our souls. She clears away all that is finished or no longer of worth. Nothing unworthy escapes her challenge. At this time, she moves among us, offering us the gift of purification, of clearing away all thoughts and feelings and habits that no longer serve us. Now, if you so choose, you may in the company of your ancestors, offer to the transforming cauldron of the Cailleach all that you wish to let go of and release.

Now the Cailleach moves silently around the circle, each handing her a piece of paper on which they have written down whatever they would like to shed from their lives. The Cailleach then moves to the central fire and gives the papers to the fire.

Elder: Cailleach and Ancestors, we ask that we might be freed of all that hinders us in this life. May the design of good be brought into being.

Cailleach leaves the circle

D1: Ancestors and Spirits, we have met this Samhain night and remembered one another. With respect and love, stay if you may or depart if you wish. *(Turn to face west and make a gesture of farewell.)*

Let us rejoice – a new time begins! May it bring us whatever things are needful, support our bodies and nourish our souls. May each be shown their path.

ALL: PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO SERVE

When order is broken, you are there.
When hungry fury swirls, you are calm.
When children see warfare, you shield them.
When our bodies break down, you mend them.
Blessings of the Kindreds upon you,
You who are always there when we need you,
You who protect and serve us,
Even when we forget you are there.²⁰

D1: Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.²¹

D2: THANKING THE BEINGS

It is the hour of recall. May our memories hold what the eye has seen and ear has heard. As we prepare to depart let us give thanks to those who aid us.

Brighid, Lady of the Forge ... (All) We thank you
Manannan Mac Lir, Lord of the Seas . . . (All) We thank you
Shining Ones . . . (All) We thank you
Nature Spirits of Land, Sea and Sky . . . (All) We thank you
Ancestors and Mighty Dead . . . (All) We thank you
Cailleach . . . (All) We thank you
Donn . . . (All) We thank you

²⁰ Rev. Michael J Dangler via www.adf.org

²¹ Gaelic inscription

D1: CLOSING THE GATE(S)

Now by the Keeper of the Gates, we end what we began.

Let the Fire be flame, (gesture to Fire)

Let the Well be water, (gesture to Well)

Let the Tree be a tree, (gesture to Tree)

Let all be as it was before.

Let the Gates be closed!

All: Let the Gates be closed!

D2: THANKING THE EARTH MOTHER (*pour out ritual remains onto the earth*)

Earth Mother, we thank you for your fertility and return this, as we will return to you one day.

ALL: CLOSING THE RITE

And now our rite is at an end,

Again we part our ways

May truth and honor be your friend

And lucky be your days

I'll hold you in my heart,

I'll hold you in my mind,

And though our branches grow apart,

Our roots are intertwined.