

## **Thornhaven 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ritual/Imbolc “Coming Home”**

People will begin in the meadhall, and do breathing and stretching exercises.

### **Statement of purpose**

“Imbolc is a Fire festival, one of the four major fire festivals of the Celtic year (Imbolc, Beltain, Lammass and Samhain). In Celtic countries, it is celebrated as the beginning of spring. In northern countries, like our own, it is more of a festival of lights- the world is still harsh and cold, but we are already starting to get light back, and we can believe that spring is around the corner.

The weather is bad at this time of year, and not conducive to travelling, and food would also be getting scarcer, so Imbolc is a smaller, family-oriented festivity. We tend to look inward, to our hearths and home, to keep the fires burning and stay warm during the last days of winter. Whereas in the spring, summer and fall months, when we are busy sowing and reaping from our efforts in the external world, at this time, we have the leisure to turn inward, into ourselves, to tap into our own creative powers- make art, write or tell stories, read and ignite our internal passions. Imbolc is about our own internal flames, the fire in the hearth of our spirits.

Imbolc is also a special day for Thornhaven, because it is the very first feast day we celebrated together. In 2007, a very small group of people stood here and worked our way through the ADF Core Order of Ritual to honour Brigid. Since then, the Grove has grown, people have come and gone, but the land and the spirits that reside here have remained the same. And though the words we used may have changed over the years, we have fulfilled our oath of celebrating every high day together. We have also celebrated other occasions, weddings and funerals, unity rituals and pagan pride day. In all of these events, we’ve created a spiritual space together, of protection and kinship. It’s a sacred space where we connect with our Gods, our ancestors, and all the spirits that protect, guide and teach us. In coming together and creating this space, we are creating our spiritual home.

So let us now go and build this space together once more, return to the place where we are one with the Spirits and with each other.

We sing as we process:

“We will never, ever lose our way to the well of her Memory

And the power of her living flame it will rise, it will rise again.”

Two celebrants stand at the entrance to the Grove. As people enter, they are greeted by smudging and sprinkling of sacred waters, then a hug or handshake, and the words: “Welcome Home”.

Once everyone is in the Grove, the ritual begins:

### **Earth Mother**

“We return to the land

To our mother, source of nourishment  
Bringer of blossom and grain  
And all that we love.  
To you we offer first sacrifice. (*Offering of grain*)  
Earth mother, we honour You!"

*Priest moves to entry way of the space:*

**Protection**

Thorn of Haw and Thorn of Thistle  
Thorn of Rose and briar bristle  
Surround us in a shield of barbs  
Let point and prick become our guards  
Drive away all ill-meant charms  
Catch the malice a 'for it harms  
Turn outwards all your lethal spikes  
Make evil like the prey of shrikes  
And pierce enchantments in the heart  
If curses are their only part  
Instead let goodness enter clear  
Slip through the labyrinth of spears  
So only blessings may be borne  
Within the haven of the thorns.  
(*offering of milk and honey is made*)

***Centering, Grounding and Merging:***

"Take this moment to close your eyes and let your cares and worries drop away from you. Feel yourself grounded to the solid earth, supported by the sky above you. Breathe deeply. There is no future, no past, only this very moment.

Feel the power of the earth grow upward, through your feet, into your legs, your pelvis, and your chest. Cool and cleansing, full of vitality, it pulses and swirls up your body, drawing out of you the stress, worry, aches and pains of every day life. It spirals gently upward, pooling in your loins, in your chest, around your heart. Let it swirl in the core of your being, restoring you, grounding you, giving you comfort.

Turn your mind's eye to the sky and feel the warmth of the sun's power descending gently upon you. A bright yellow ray shines down upon your head. As you breathe, feel the power of the sky move downward through the top of your head, your throat, your shoulders. Let it pass down, into your chest, warming and strengthening. Feel it swirling and mixing with the power of the Earth, creating a space within you that is both calm and energized.

In the space around your heart, energies pool and flow, dance and settle, carrying with them the powers of the Earth and Sky. In this space, you can feel the collective energy of your allies, supporting you and filling you with vitality, wisdom and strength. In this space you feel the vibrations of the universe around you, stroking the filament of your soul, making you glow ever brighter from the inside out. Together, the powers of earth and sky resonate within you, making you shine in your own unique way.

Open your mouth and let the light within you become sound. (People to do tonal chant)  
Now you are attuned to your spirit, and the spirit of those around you. In gathering in this way, we are blessed with each other's presence. And we know that we are not alone in this space."

Singing of "This is our song"

### **Statement of Intent**

We come together on this day to celebrate. We come back to this space, as we have done for the last ten years, to commune with our gods, with the ancestors, with the spirits of this land and with each other. We come once more, to make our spiritual home.

Let us first recreate the cosmos, the centre of all things, where our voices resound throughout all the worlds and where our magic is strongest.

We are at the centre of all things

(Home of our home)

The land is firm below our feet

(Home of our home)

The eternal sea surrounds us

(Home of our home)

The endless sky stretches out above us

(Home of our home)

By land and sea and sky do we come

By land and sea and sky are we made

By land and sea and sky we are

At the centre of all things.  
(Home of our home)

### **Sacred Fire:**

We call to the sacred fire. This is the fire of life, of light, of inspiration and transformation. It is the fire our ancestors depended on to survive, and the hearth fire we continue to gather around, to sing, and play and dance. It is the fire that ignites our creativity and courses through our veins when we are inspired. It warms us, kindles our passions, strengthens our will and when faced with adversity, it transform us. Behold, the sacred fire!"

"Sacred Fire, flame within us!"

*Offering of oil is made to the fire.*

People: "Sacred fire, flame within us!"

### **Sacred Waters:**

"Next we call to the Sacred Well, and the waters of life contained within. These are the primordial waters of creation, from which all life comes. It is the womb of the mother, a vessel of untapped potential and the unshaped powers that lie deep below us and within us. It is the water that nourishes us, and cleanses us, and flows through our veins with vitality and strength. Behold, the sacred waters!"

"Sacred waters, flow within us!"

*Offering of silver is made to the well.*

People: "Sacred waters, flow within us!"

### **World Tree:**

"Lastly, we come to the Sacred Tree and nestle our spirits in its roots and branches. This is the world tree, which stretches above and below, connecting the worlds together. It is the steed of the shaman, the source of wisdom, the watcher, the teacher of the lessons found in stillness and time. We take haven under its leaves and gain strength from its roots. Behold, the Sacred Tree!"

"Sacred Tree, grow within us!"

*Water from the well is given to the Tree.*

People: "Sacred Tree, grow 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.

### **Opening the Gates**

At this center that we have created,

In the place where the waters draw forth from the deepest realms,

Where the holy fire burns, and all worlds exist in the roots and branches of the Tree,

We call to that God who straddles the realms.

Maananan Mac Llyr! Gatekeeper! Ferryman to the otherworld!

Guardian of the seekers of knowledge and beauty

We call to you.

Weave your power with ours

And make with us a passageway,

A clear and shining path to magic

Plowed between the waves.

*Priest/ess takes magician's pose and begins:*

"Let the fire open as a gate

Let the well open as a gate

Let the tree open as a gate

Let the ways be open!"

"Gatekeeper Manaanan, we honour you!" (*Oil is offered to fire*)

People: "Gatekeeper, we honour you!"

### **Calling of the Kindred**

"In this space, we are never alone. And so to the Shining Ones we give honour and praise."

## **Nature Spirits**

Nature spirits, we call to you  
Dwellers in the land, fairie folk  
Kin of fur, and fin and feather  
Spirits of leaf and thorn and stone  
In your croak, your CAW, your flap, your howl  
We hear the music of the earth  
And learn about peace and the order of things.  
Come to this place and bless our rite  
Bless the grove and the people herein.

*(Offering of bird seed is given to the earth)*

Nature Spirits, we honour you!

## **Ancestors**

Ancestors old, we call to you  
Elders of memory, keepers of mystery  
Ancestors of blood, of heart and of land  
Guardians, Heroes, beloved dead  
In the ballads and stories of old and in the darkest peace  
We still hear your voices  
And learn about the sorrows and beauty of living.  
Come to this place and bless our rite  
Bless the grove and the people herein.

*(Offering of whiskey is made to the fire)*

Ancestors, we honour you!

## **Shining Ones**

Shining Ones, we call to you  
Mighty Gods and Goddesses all  
Teachers of wisdom, of craft and magic

Creators and Destroyers, keepers of balance  
In the deep recesses of caves, in golden fields and treetops  
We hear your voices in our hearts  
And learn about wonder, humility, beauty and grace.  
Come to this place and bless our rite  
Bless the grove and the people herein

*(Offering of oil is made to the fire)*

Shining Ones all, we honour you!

Children of the Earth, Folk of Thornhaven, If you have an offering to give to the matrons or patrons of your heart, you may do so now.

### **Calls to the Key Dieties**

#### **Call to Lugh**

Lugh Lamfada, Shining One, Hear your people's call

Chieftain of Chieftains, Master of All Trades, God of the Harvest

Witness your people, assembled in your honour,

Gathering in peace, in kinship, in joy.

Because of you, we have the tools to grow.

Because of you, we have the skill to make.

Because of you, we have the vision to be-

To strive for mastery of our own world and mind,

And bring the strength of virtue to our actions.

To you we call, to you we thank, to you we make our offerings!

*Offerings of bread is made to the fire, and an offering of beer is made to the ground*

***Call to Brigid***

She of the shining brow

Daughter of the Danaan,

Matron of Poets and Smiths,

Protectress of the folk and

Bringer of Peace

All around you is fire

Fire of transformation, protection, inspiration

Yet your touch is cool as healing waters

And in your presence our thirst is quenched.

Beautiful Brigid

Blessings you bring us, and truly we are blessed.

Great Goddess, Matron of the this Land

We honour you!"

*(Offering of butter is poured on the fire, and beer poured around the fire and some in the well)*

Children of the Earth, Folk of Thornhaven, let us kindle this sacred fire as a hearth to our spiritual home. We do this in honour of the nature spirits who have welcomed us here, in particular the spirit of the Thorn, so strong and protective. We do this in honour of the ancestors of blood, spirit and land, who watch over us and teach us the wisdom of the past. And we do this in honour of our Gods, the matrons and patrons of our heart, especially the Gods of Thornhaven, Brigid and Lugh.

Let us make the hearth fire bright with our offerings!

*(people give their personal offerings)*

***Prayer of Sacrifice***

Let our voices arise on the Flame... Let our voices resound in the Well.... Let our voices echo throughout the worlds: O Shining Ones, Accept our worship and reverence. Grant us the blessings of comfort and safety in this . Let your sacred powers sing through our voices and play through our hands. Bless us, Honoured One, and let the way be open!



## **Working- Honouring the members of the Grove**

Our grove has a history, ten years worth now, and it seems right to acknowledge that history, and those past members and friends who made an impact on the direction of the Grove since its founding.

This cauldron holds the waters of Brigid, waters of love, waters of health, waters of power. As we pour the waters from the cauldron, so we pour blessings upon the folk.

*One celebrant pours waters from the well onto the ground as another celebrant reads the following:*

We pour the waters of blessing for the founders of the Grove, for having the vision and planting the seed of what would become.

We pour the waters for members and friends of the past who helped to build the Grove, who contributed to the history and lore of the Grove, but who are no longer with us.

We pour the waters for those who have served the Grove as officers, past and present, who have given of their time and dedication to helping the Grove prosper.

We pour the waters of blessing for present members of the Grove, who have committed themselves to sharing the vision and contributing to their community, by supporting the Grove and its work.

We pour the waters of blessing for those who have not yet joined us, for the future generations of Thornies who will take care of the land and serve the folk.

Let the waters of blessing flow upon the land of Thornhaven, and amongst the people here.

So be it!

## **Renewal of Promise:**

Now let us renew our dedication to our Grove and to each other. Those who are or would like to be full members of Thornhaven, who would be welcomed as kin, I would ask you to step forward.”

SD: Do you promise, in the spirit of our patron God Lugh, to always strive for excellence, to do your best, live in virtue and learn always?”

Members (in unison): I do so promise.

SD: Do you promise, in the spirit of our patron Goddess Brigid, to shine in your own right, to light the fire of inspiration in others, and approach the world with both passion and compassion?

Members (in unison): I do so promise.

SD: Do you promise, in the spirit of our ancestors, to take care of our inheritance, this world, and to learn the wisdom of those who passed before you, while always looking forward, and making a positive impact on the world that will be inherited by your children?

SD: Do you promise, in the spirit of our Landspirits, to welcome and give hospitality to those that join us, protect and aid your Grove kin in times of need, and create beauty whenever you can?

Members (in unison): I do so promise.

SD: Then this Grove will be made all the greater by the people here. May the gods continue to bless us with goodness and kin.

### **The Omen**

We have been blessed and given offerings in return. Now, let the wyrd of the mighty ones be revealed to us, so we may know they are well-pleased.

*Omen is taken.*

Hear now the nature of the blessing the Gods see fit to bestow upon us.

*Omen is read.*

### **Hallowing of the Waters:**

Omen is drawn over the cup.

Behold the waters of life! This is the outpouring of Blessings from the Mighty Ones, from the never-ending source! Drink we now the draught of the Gods. Drink in (omens) so that we may live our best lives.

Behold the waters of life!

The cup is passed in the usual way.

Singing:

Shine, shine, shine through us.

Tribe of many, heart of one!

**Final Blessing:**

The waters of blessing flow in us, filling us to the brim with the magic of the Shining Ones! We are charged and renewed as we begin the next chapter of history for Thornhaven Grove. We bring the blessings that we have received into this bright future, hand in hand.

**Goodbyes:**

We have called out to the Shining Ones and been answered with glorious resounding.

We have given our offerings and been blessed in return.

Great and wonderful is this world and the creators who made it!

With each call we make to the Shining Ones and each offering we give,

They heed our calls more, and our connections become stronger.

Though the rite is ending, we leave this place wiser,

And carry the blessings and beauty, with us always.

Brigid, Bright One, Matron of this Grove, we thank you for your blessings. Although we depart, you remain in our hearts.

Lugh, Shining One, Patron of this Grove, we thank you for your blessings. Although we depart, you remain in our hearts.

Shining Ones, Mighty Gods all, we thank you!

Honoured Dead, Ancestors of blood and land, we thank you! Migwiich!

Nature Spirits, Spirits of the Land, we thank you!

Gatekeeper, Manaanan, walker between the worlds, we thank you!

Earth Goddess, Mother of us all, we thank you!

Now by the keeper of the Gates and by our magic, we end what we began.

Let the fire be flame,

Let the well be water,

Let all be as it was before.

Let the Gates be closed!

**Closing:**

This grove was founded in 2007, at which time we made a commitment to celebrate each high day, rite of passage and other events. 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!