

"Beltaine Reclaiming"

Ancient Sea Island Continuum 2014

1. Grounding and purifying:

We use salt and water, or incense, to cleanse ourselves spiritually and mentally, getting rid of any thoughts or feelings that might interfere with our participation in the ritual. We meditate together so we will feel secure and rooted to the earth, and remember that we are all connected.

2. Intention:

Celebrating pleasure,
We share our gifts with the world.

3. Casting the circle:

*The ocean is the beginning of the Earth
All life comes from the sea.*

—Delaney Johnson, *Starhawk*

We draw an imaginary circle around the place where we are doing a ritual, creating a sacred space. In each direction, we draw a pentacle, which is like an imaginary window that can let in the spirits and powers we will invoke.

One person walks the boundary of the Circle in a clockwise direction, beginning either in the North or in the East, using an athame she or he "draws" a pentacle in each of the four cardinal Directions and a line connecting them, ending at the same point where she or he began, and then walks to the center of the Circle and points the athame towards the sky and then towards the ground. All participants remain attentive and focused, using their own psychic vision and imagination to aid this process of encircling the space with a magical cord (or circle of light) on the psychic plane. When the Circle is cast, the participants are said to be "between the worlds".

By the Air that is Her breath,
By the Fire of her spirit,
By the Waters of Her living womb,
And by the Earth that is Her body.

The Circle is cast
And we are between the worlds.
The ritual has begun.

4. Calling the directions:

*Air I am, fire I am,
Water, earth, and spirit, I am*

— *Air I Am* by Andras Corbin

Using words, song, chanting, and/or movement, we call the powers of the four directions, and the elements associated with the them. East — air; South — fire; West — water; North — earth. In the Center, we invoke the spirit.

5. Invoking the deity:

*Honored wild hunter,
Cernunnos, Cernunnos,
Horned one come to us*

*Fertile wombed lady,
Brigid, Brigid,
Mother come to us*

*Cernunnos and Brigid,
Come to us, come to us,
God and Goddess come to us*

— *Beltane Chant* by Neopagan Priestess

We invoke different Goddess, or Goddesses, and a God or Gods, depending on the purpose of the ritual. A deity (or deities) is (are) invoked to witness and assist magical work, and to empower those who are working the magic, so generally we choose a deity who is known for particular powers or qualities. Often an invocation is composed in advance, and it may be accomplished with poetry, song, sounding or music of any kind, movement or dance. One person may take the role of invoking, or all participants may do it together.

*Blessed be this day of Beltaine
Wedding day of the Goddess and the God
Holy day of Sacred Marriage
Holy night of Sacred Union.*

The buds and flowers of early May remind us of the endless cycle of birth, growth, death and rebirth that we see in the earth. The fertile Goddess of Summer walks through the land With the Great Horned God of the Forest. The animals breed and the plants pollinate, as the May Queen and Green Man bestow Their blessings upon the Earth and Earth's creatures.

— *As the Bell Rings, the Maypole Springs from Aion* by Dead Can Dance

6. Magical working:

*In the woods there grew a tree
And a fine fine tree was he*

*And on that tree there was a limb
And on that limb there was a branch
And on that branch there was a nest
And in that nest there was an egg
And in that egg there was a bird
And from that bird a feather came
And of that feather was
A bed.*

*And on that bed there was a girl
And on that girl there was a man
And from that man there was a seed
And from that seed there was a boy
And from that boy there was a man
And for that man there was a grave
From that grave there grew
A tree.*

— *Maypole* by Paul Giovanni from the movie *The Wicker Man*

This is the heart of the ritual. We try to work in harmony with the forces of nature. For example, when the moon is waning, we get rid of things, casting out what we don't want. When it is waxing, we try to increase the good things in our lives. With the full moon, we try to fulfill our promises, bring projects to completion, and remember the infinite possibilities in the universe. We might also harmonize our work with the seasons of the year, the phases of the tides, etc.

7. Sharing food and drink:

— *Ariadne* from *Into the Labyrinth* by Dead Can Dance

We bless something to eat and something to drink by acknowledging them as gifts of the Goddess, and share them. This is sometimes called "cakes and wine" or "cookies and juice." As the food or drink are passed around the circle, the giver may say to the recipient, "May you never hunger," and "May you never thirst." (*Note: public rituals in the Reclaiming Tradition are alcohol- and drug-free.*)

8. Devoking and opening the circle:

At the end of a ritual, participants thank the deities invoked, and then all the spirits of the Directions, this time going in a counter-clockwise direction, inviting them to leave or to stay.

*We all come from the Goddess
And to Her we shall return
Like a drop of rain
Flowing to the ocean*

*Hoof and horn, Hoof and Horn
All that dies shall be reborn
Corn and grain, Corn and grain
All that falls shall rise again*

— *We All Come From the Goddess* by Z. Budapest, Ian Corrigan

*Air moves us
Fire transforms us
Water shapes us
Earth heals us
And the balance of the wheel
Goes round and round
And the balance of the wheel goes round.*

—*Air Moves Us* by Cathleen Shell, Cybele, Moonsea, Prune

We imagine the circle we cast being erased, dissolved, unwrapped:

*By the Earth that is Her body,
By the Waters of her living womb,
By the Fire of Her bright spirit,
And by the Air that is her breath...*

*May the circle be open but unbroken
May the peace of the Goddess
Be ever in your heart
Merry meet,
And, merry part,
And merry meet again.*

— *May the Circle Be Open* by Rober Gass from *Ancient Mother*