

SUMMER'S END RITUAL

at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort
October 30, 2011

"S/He who is remembered, lives!"

Ritual adapted from
<http://moonpathcuups.org/rituals/sam98.htm>

PARTICIPANTS

Minister
Guide
Maiden
Mother
Crone
Air
Fire
Water
Earth

ALTAR: altar cloth, seasonal decorations, incense, salt/water, crystal light, reading lights

HAVE READY: dry ice, torches, besom, cauldron, music, crystal, wand, staff, two chalices, strawman, container/sand, flashlights with orange tape, ginger snaps, cups, cider, corn husks, acorns

RITUAL INTRODUCTION

*(Minister delivers this introduction prior to the ritual. Guide will explain specific **terms** and **tools** when encountered in the course of the ceremony.*

Wand
Circle, Importance of opening & closing the circle
Flashlights and triple goddess
Broom, salt water, crystal
Speaking in rhyme
Quarter-calls
Invocation, (who is invoked?) Lord; Lady; God
Triple Goddess on altar
Strawman on the altar
Chalice
The two worlds
Ginger snaps & apple-cider

The Great Sabbat of Samhain, Summer's End or Halloween as it is popularly called, is considered the Witches' New Year. People who hold our spirituality celebrate this rite in late October through early November.

For many ancient cultures, it was the time of the final harvest, when all was prepared for the dark days ahead. Summer's End is considered a time for reassessment and letting go. We attempt to change the habits, practices and relationships that keep us from attaining our highest and best goals.

It is said that the Veil Between the Worlds is at its thinnest now. For many of us, this is the best time to practice Divination, or looking into the future.

But most importantly, Samhain is a time to remember and honor those who have gone before. Many place extra settings at the table, so the dead can be visualized symbolically, feasting again with the living. Candles and pumpkins are lit to guide their way. Although we regard our ancestors as always with us to guard and guide us, at this time we strive at making contact. We believe that "He who is remembered, lives."

The ritual of Summer's End is about to begin. Let all those who would attend of their own free will, gather on the front porch. We ask that you assume a manner of respect and reverence, as this is a sacred ceremony. All those entering the Circle must do so in perfect love and perfect trust.

*Guide explains **meaning of wand, deosil, opening of circle, significance of flashlights.***

BLESSING

[Music: Sedna by Monica Richards, begins]

Minister (raises wand): Be it known that the Circle is about to be cast. Let those who desire attendance, prepare for the blessing. Let none be here but of their own free will. Let none be here but in perfect love and perfect trust.

Minister blesses participants passing through the door with the wand saying, "Bright Blessings be with you". Participants enter the Circle deosil. Minister goes to front of altar.

[Music: Sedna by Monica Richards, ends]

*Maid, Crone and Mother enter the Circle with orange flashlights pointed under their chins. These lights, representing the Triple Goddess, are presented to Guide who places them straight up on the altar and explains the **Triple Goddess** and the **reason for rhyme.***

Maid: We come together on this night
To perform an ancient rite,
As our ancestors did before
Throughout the world, in days of yore.
The season's Wheel has turned again.
The harvest's in. It's summer's end.

Crone: We look back now and look ahead.
We mourn because the Sun is dead.
The Dark now this time will rule.
Till the Sun is reborn at Yule.
Tonight the New Year celebrates.
The Summerland casts wide its gates.

Mother: And each of us will know once more
The love of those who've gone before.
For hope to us this promise gives,
That he who is remembered, in us lives.

CASTING THE CIRCLE

Minister: We now create a magick circle that serves to focus our
thoughts between the worlds.
We cast the circle round and round.
By its protection we are bound.
As we will it, so mote it be!

*Minister, Guide, and Mother proceed consecutively casting the
Circle deosil with the ritual broom, salted water and crystal.*

QUARTER CALLS

*Guide **explains quarter calls.***

Minister: Earth and Air
Fire and Water:
Guard and guide your
Sons and daughters
We call on you this Samhain night.
Assist us with this sacred rite.

Air: Powers of the East wind, Air,
Breathe in us a hope to share
With loved ones who have gone before,
That now we will unite once more.

Fire: Powers of the South and Fire,
Flame our passions, not our ire.
Guard us. Guide us on our quest
In this New Year, to be the best.

Water: Water and the Western Powers,
Let us know the strength that's ours.
Cleanse our minds that we might be
Free from negativity.

Earth: Mother Nature, show the way.
Help us keep in mind each day,
Oh, Powers of the North and Earth,
Where there's death, there is rebirth.

INVOCATION

Minister: Soon the Sun will diminished be,
So in the dark, recall this memory:
Make lights glow and fires to burn.
For we know the Sun will return.
(Slowly increase lighting on orange crystal)

Guide: Tonight, is a night of shadows,
When our blessed God
passes into the Summerland.
(Raise staff.)
Blessed Lord, we humbly ask your presence
at our Circle tonight,
As we honor you at this season.
(Guide places strawman on the altar)
All hail the Lord!

Mother: And now the Lady we invite
To guard and guide us on this night.
In Her care we'll ever be
Safe for all eternity

Guide: Tonight, is also a night of Life, when we honor the wise crone Goddess who will see us through this ever-darkening season to life renewed. (Guide raises and explains meaning of chalice). Blessed Lady, we humbly ask your presence at our Circle tonight as we honor you at this season. (Crone appears in the Circle carrying the Goddess statue and places it on the altar) All hail the Lady!

SAMHAIN STORY

Maiden: Tonight, we celebrate Summer's End, which was the Celtic New Year. Samhain marks the final harvest, the coming winter, the death of the sun. To our ancestors, particularly those living in harsher climates, this was a frightening time. Food had to be stored to last through the cold months ahead. Often the weak would not survive. An especially bleak winter could mean the end of the community itself. Even the sun appeared to leave the sky.

Mother: Summer's End was a very important festival because it offered hope. It meant the harvest had been successful and sufficient supplies had been stocked for the winter. Fires were lit in honor of the sun which our ancestors hoped would be reborn again at Yule. And they thought of those who had gone before- those who had died in the preparation of the food, or the hunt, or those who had died in past winters. Maintaining this connection is, and has always been, a very important affirmation of life itself.

Crone: Just as our ancestors did long ago, we remember and honor the dead because they are a part of ourselves. All those we have ever known, including our beloved pets, live on in our mannerisms, turns of speech,

values and practices. They are a part of our personality that distinguishes us from others. No one else had the same combination of parents, relatives, pets, friends, and teachers. The traits and memories that we maintain of those who have gone before, become immortal legacy for them.

Minister: So we pause and we look back and we give thanks for those who have made us what we are today. We hope that someday we too will be remembered, because we know that ***"S/He who is remembered, lives!"***

ANCESTOR MEDITATION

Guide: So we begin by remembering. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Relax completely. Feel a strong connection with the earth and know that you are in a safe and loving place. The veil between this world and the next gently opens. You realize that you have crossed over into the land of the dead and it is glorious. Loved ones who have passed over, now come to greet you. Take some time and experience this.

Minister: Lord of Shadows, Lady of Life-
Open wide the Gates
through which all must pass.
Let our dear ones who have gone before
Return this night to be with us.
For we know that when rested and refreshed
among our dear ones
We will be reborn again.
Let it be in the same place and the same time
as our loved ones,
And may we meet and know and remember
And love them again.

Come one by one to the Cauldron of Transformation and Rebirth, clockwise, the motion of the sun, and place the symbol of your remembrance, on the altar. As you honor your loved ones, speak their names and say what you wish. Come now, and share your connection with us, within our sacred circle.

*One at a time, deosil, congregants speak in front of the altar. After each has spoken, all say, "**S/He who is remembered, lives!**"*

You have brought with you the special memory of those we must particularly honor on this sacred sabbat. Know now and always that, "**S/He who is remembered, lives!**"

FEAST

*Crone and Maiden hand out ginger snaps and apple cider to participants. Guide explains **significance of communion** and **offering libations**.*

Minister: Now, as has been done many times before,
We feast again with our departed loved ones.

TRANSFORMATION

Mother passes corn husks to all.

Mother: The Greater Sabbat of Samhain is also the old New Year. It is the best time to rid yourself of bad habits, unhealthy attitudes and relationships. The corn husk you have been given represents that which is discarded in order to take the nourishment from the corn. Take a

moment to consider something in your life that you want to change tonight, something that is not working for you. Close your eyes and begin. Now will your intention into the corn husk.

DIVINATION

*Guide **explains scrying** as an ancient form of divination or looking into the future.*

Minister: Now with your eyes half closed, gaze for a moment into the light. Take a moment and see if you can catch a glimpse of what the New Year holds for you.

Mother passes acorns to all.

Minister: As you leave tonight, take with you the symbol of the acorn which represents the Sun. Know that from the seed will grow again the mighty oak and the Circle continues unbroken. Nothing ever ends. It just changes form. Always know that "**S/He who is remembered, lives!**"

OPEN CIRCLE

Minister: We have come together in love and peace. As we open the Circle, let us depart the same way. We know that all there is, is love, and in every moment, there is wisdom. Let us salute the Quarters:

Air: Powers of the East and Air,
We thank you for joining our Circle.
We ask your blessing as you part.
May there be peace between us now and forever.

All: Hail and farewell!

Fire: Powers of the South and Fire etc.

Water: Powers of the West and Water etc.

Earth: Powers of the North and Earth etc.

Minister: Lord of the Summerland, Lady of New Beginnings, we thank you for joining our Circle. We ask your Blessing and guidance in this New Year. As we depart tonight, may we take the first step on the path toward our highest and best calling in the certain knowledge that you are ever with us.

The Circle is now open but unbroken.
Merry meet. Merry part. Merry meet again.