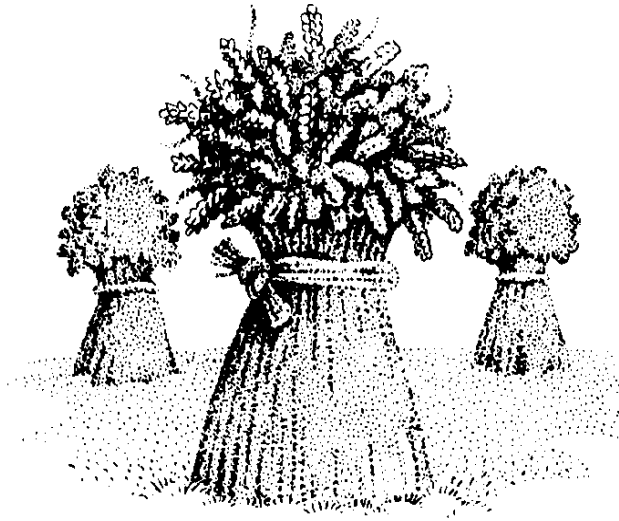
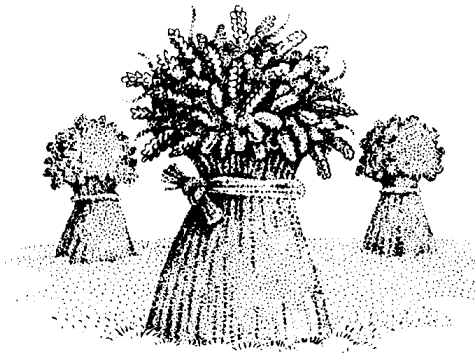


ALBAN ELFED



THE AUTUMN EQUINOX
CEREMONY OF
THE ORDER OF BARDS
OVATES & DRUIDS



ALBAN ELFED THE AUTUMN EQUINOX

21/22 SEPTEMBER
NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

21/22 MARCH
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

The ancients conceived the earth as afloat in water, and the Summer Solstice is concerned with the shores: the ever-trembling and moving shore of the earth, the place of eternal change and balance between the rising and the falling year at the sun's highest point. But beyond the shore is the mysterious depth of ocean, into which all waters seem to flow, which grows darker with the shorter evenings.

*Water is the sphere of the autumnal equinox,
Alban Elfed, the year descending into the ocean.*

Nuinn

The energy of harvest, of completion in preparation for a new cycle, that was begun at Lughnasadh, finds its fulfilment here at Alban Elfed. On the opposite side of the year we have Alban Eilir, the time of Promise. At this time, the Spring is beginning, seeds are sown and we look forward as we sow these seeds, in our lives and in our land, to the promise of their fulfilment. So Alban Elfed can be called the Time of Fulfilment, the time of achievement. On the circle of the year it is placed in the West – the place of the setting sun, the evening. In the circle of our lives it is placed at the time of the beginning of Old Age. Here, as we gaze west to the setting sun, we glimpse the Blessed Isles on the horizon. We look back on the achievements and experience of our lives, and like a vintner admiring their ripe grapes in the golden glow of autumn, we can let go of striving, and enjoy instead the fruit of our lives and our year – at whatever our age.

In Ancient Greece, the Autumn equinox was the time of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the greatest mysteries of ancient Greece. The rituals of Eleusis were almost certainly based on corn-harvest symbolism, and one of the culmination points is said to have occurred when the initiate was shown a single ear of grain and told: 'In silence is the seed of wisdom gained.' (It is interesting to note the common symbolism of the single ear of grain in the Taliesin Story). A powerful way to open to the energy of harvesting and garnering that occurs at this time - with the fruit of the earth, and within our own lives - is to take time to reflect on the harvest that is occurring on the land around us, and then on all that has happened to us, and all that we have gleaned or learnt during the previous year.

A TIME OF BALANCE & HARVEST

At Alban Elfed the hours of daylight become equal to the hours of night once again, but this time it is the dark that will shortly have the ascendancy. Earth offers up her last gifts of berries and nuts in the hedgerows and woods, while in the fields, the full harvest is underway and all of nature seems to redden, or turn to gold or bronze in the poignant, slanting rays of the weakening sun.

For our ancestors, who were more aware than ourselves of their dependency on the land, this was a time of fruition of the year's work; it represented the culmination of the year's endeavours to ensure they would have enough food to see them through the winter. Everyone worked their hardest to bring in the grain – wheat, barley, oats or rye – which would provide the following year's bread and beer, and store it safely against the coming months of scarcity.

Like Alban Eilir, the Spring Equinox, no clear traces of an early pagan festival remain, but it is significant that the Christian feast of this season is Michaelmas, or the Feast of St. Michael of All Angels, on September 29th. As we saw at Lughnasadh, the great Archangel with the fiery sword most likely took the place of the pagan god Lugh of the shining spear in earlier times. Michaelmas was a very important day in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, when the full harvesting traditionally began. Alexander Carmichael recorded that “the day the people began to reap the corn was a day of commotion and ceremonial in the townland. The whole family repaired to the field dressed in their best attire to hail the God of the harvest. Laying his bonnet on the ground, the father of the family took up his sickle, and facing the sun, he cut a handful of corn. Putting the handful of corn three times sunwise round his head, the man raised the *Iolach Buana*, the reaping salutation. The whole family took up the strain and praised the God of the harvest, who gave them corn and bread, food and flocks, wool and clothing, health and strength, and peace and plenty.”

Throughout the British Isles and Ireland, much ceremony attended the cutting of the last sheaf of corn. This was variously known as the Mare or the Neck or in some places, the Kern (corn) Baby, the child of the union of the Beltaine Queen and her consort in the spring. This corn spirit had taken refuge in the last standing grain in an otherwise shorn and stubbly field, so to cut the last sheaf was to slay the spirit of the harvest itself, an act not to be undertaken lightly. Many accounts speak of reapers binding the last sheaf and standing well clear while they took turns to throw their sickles at it from a safe distance until it was finally cut and felled.

In the Highlands the Corn Spirit was known as the Maiden, and in some areas it had to be a special person to cut it down: the youngest boy or girl in the field or perhaps the farmer himself. If the harvest was a good one, the Maiden was woven into a young doll and given a fine dress to wear. She was mounted on the farmhouse wall in a place of honour until next year's ploughing, when she was broken up and scattered over the fields or fed to the horses. But if the harvest was poor, the Maiden was woven into the form of the *Cailleach* or Hag and dressed as an old woman.

In the Hebrides, the last sheaf was known as the *Cailleach* or called *Gobhar Bhacach* ('Lame Goat') and nobody wanted it because it brought bad luck. A farmer who had finished harvesting his field might throw it into the fields of a neighbour who was still reaping his. In this manner the *Cailleach* might be passed from hand to hand as each man finished harvesting, but it was considered extremely unlucky to be the last to finish and therefore the one left with the *Cailleach*, because it was thought that this family would actually have to house and support a real poor old woman throughout the coming winter.

Community celebrations in the Highlands and Islands shared many of the features of Lughnasadh and were joyful occasions. On the Sunday before Michaelmas, women and girls of the Hebrides gathered St. Michael's wild carrots in a ritual manner. They dug triangular holes to signify Michael's shield, and used a three-pronged mattock to represent Michael's trident, and tied the carrots into bunches with a triple red thread. On Michaelmas Day they were handed out to visitors as a good-luck gift. Forked roots were considered especially lucky. An unblemished male lamb was sacrificed on this day, and women made a special cake, the *struan Micheil*, Michael's bannock, from all the types of grain grown on the farm, kneaded with butter, eggs and sheep's milk. It was marked with a cross and cooked on a stone over a fire of sacred oak, rowan and bramble wood. All day long there were processions, songs to 'Michael the Victorious,' athletics and horseracing along the beach, while the evening climaxed in a boisterous *céilidh* with music, gift-giving and dancing until the early hours.

The pagan origins of the festival showed clearly through some of these dances. One of them, known as *Cailleach an Dùdain* 'the Hag of the Mill-dust,' was particularly significant, for the dancers, a man and a woman, dramatized the seasonal cycle to come. The man held the *Slachdan Druidheachd*, the druid wand, first over his head and then over hers, at which she dropped down as if dead. He then mourned for her, dancing about her body to the changing music. Then he raised her left hand, touched it with the wand, and the hand came alive, and began to move up and down. The man became overjoyed and danced about her. Next he would bring her other arm and her legs to life. The he knelt over her, breathed into her mouth, and touched her heart with the wand. She leapt up, fully alive, and both danced joyously. So was played out the Mysteries of the Harvest: the death of the fertile Mother of Life in the barren months that were to come and the promise of her resurrection in springtime.



LIVING THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR

Alban Elfed represents a time of reflection and contemplation, of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth and the experiences of the previous year. On your own, or with a few friends, try to allocate an evening in which you respect and honour this time. You could make a mandala of grains and seeds, all the while using this as a time for meditation, thanksgiving and reflection on all that has been before and all that is to come. You could decorate your circle or a central table with leaves, grains, nuts, apples and raisins; perhaps having a symbolic feast of dried fruits, nuts and wine. Or in meditation you may find a unique, individual way to celebrate the Autumnal Equinox which is exactly right for you at this time.

If you're not planning a ceremony as such, or in addition to your celebration, here are some suggestions for things you can do to acknowledge and attune to the energy of the time

ASSOCIATIONS TO ALBAN ELFED BALANCE, ACHIEVEMENT, FULFILLMENT, WATER, BLUE, GOLD, MEAD, WINE

Start the process of making wine or mead. Make jam, fruit gin, fruit cake.

Weigh yourself. Begin a spiritual journal or diary in which you record your experiences - and the thoughts and inspirations that come to you.

Start writing your autobiography.

Dance or movement meditation: (1) do a Stag Dance to honour the horned god and the wild places. Put up their pictures. Meditate on how the animals are preparing for winter. Wear horns, or use your hands to mimic horns, as you dance to honour them. [This is based on the more complex Abbots Bromley Stag Dance. You could use the music of this dance] (2): Autumn Tree Dance: Go into a forest where the trees grow fairly close together. Feel how their shapes, their groupings—young, old, dying, and dead - flow together. Let their community inspire you to dance among them.



ALBAN ELFED SOLO CEREMONY

PREPARE: In the Quarters, items to represent the harvest of your life in this last year – this will require some meditation in advance.

In the Quarter of Earth, the North: a representation of whatever has brought the most support, comfort, sustenance to your body and material life. This could be, for example, a favourite item of clothing, or food, or a photo from your holiday or a carrot from your garden.

In the Quarter of Water, West: something to represent that which has most sustained your heart in this last year. This could be photos of loved ones, or an image of world peace or a beautiful work of art...

In the Quarter of Air, East - something to represent the idea that has most interested and inspired you in this last year. This could be a book or other writing, or a symbolic representation of a concept...

In the Quarter of Fire, South: something to represent that which has most fired your passions and energised you. Examples might be a creative project or a political cause, a spiritual desire or a physical one.

In the centre a basket, large enough to contain all the above items. Ideally you could make a simple basket yourself. You could have a central fire/candle and a candle lit at each Quarter. Have your spiritual journal or a notebook and pen ready at the centre.

THE OPENING

Enter your circle from the West. On entering, pause for several breaths, consciously leaving your daily concerns aside, allowing yourself to relax. Feel the earth beneath you and the sky above you, feel yourself grounded and centred. Sitting if necessary, perform the Light Body exercise. If you wish, you can now visualise your Sacred Grove. This is a good time to chant a few AWENS to 'warm up' your voice. It also helps you to feel connected, centred and relaxed.

6

Move sunwise to the East, pause and make a salutation, such as

O Spirit/Great Spirit/God(s)/Goddess(es) (choose a term you feel comfortable with) , I ask for your blessings on this my ceremony of Alban Elfed (pause, then turn to face inward) O Spirit of this circle, Spirit of this place, I ask for your blessings, guidance and inspiration on this my ceremony.

Then complete the circuit and stand again in the West, facing inwards. Take a few moments to meditate on peace, and to feel peace within you. It may help to find an image that you associate with peace, which you can then use to help you awaken the feeling within yourself. Some examples are a quiet lake; a sphere of soft light; or a particular colour. If you are not very visual, you could try imagining a piece of music, or a musical note or chord, or simply the sound of the word 'peace' as you say it to yourself. Notice also how your body feels: let yourself breathe peace. If you like, you could say the Druid Prayer for Peace

Deep within the still centre of my being, may I find peace.
Silently within the quiet of the grove, may I share peace.
Gently within the greater circle of humankind,
May I radiate peace.

Then walk to the North, face outward, and say
May there be peace in the North.

As you do, imagine peace flowing out to the North – picture it as it flows through your neighbours' homes and gardens, out across roads and forests, across towns and cities, all the way across the Earth.

Then turn and cross the circle to the South (skirting round the central fire or candle if you have one) and repeat. Then to the West, then across again to the East. Then step toward the centre and turn around in a full circle, saying

May there be peace throughout the whole world.

Now return to the West, facing centre, and, if you choose, say the Druid's Prayer:

Grant, O Spirit/Great Spirit/God(s)/Goddess(es), thy protection,
and in protection, strength,
and in strength, understanding,
and in understanding, knowledge,
and in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
and in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
and in the love of it, the love of all existences,
and in the love of all existences,
the love of Spirit/Great Spirit/God(s)/Goddess(es) and all goodness.

Chant more AWENS.

Then, moving around to start at the East, cast your circle as taught in Gwers Seven, trying to visualise it clearly as you do so. Perhaps you can hear it, or feel it, as well as see it. Notice that the circle creates a container: feel yourself to be contained. When you have completed the circle and are again standing in the East, face in to the centre and say:

This is sacred time. This is sacred space. I am fully present, here and now.

Now, if you have learnt how to do this, bless and consecrate your circle with Water and Fire, then stand at the East. (Leave out this stage if you have not yet learned how to do this). Then turn to face outwards, and raise one or both hands in salutation and say:

With the blessing of the hawk of dawn soaring in the clear pure air, I call upon the powers of the East.

See the clear blue sky above and ahead of you and feel the blessing of the dawn and of the hawk, and sense power flowing into your circle from this direction. Then turn and walk sunwise to the South, and facing outwards say

With the blessing of the great stag in the heat of the chase, and the inner fire of the sun, I call upon the powers of the South.

See warm southern lands before you in the noon-day sun – sense the blessing of the stag and feel power flowing into your circle from this direction. Then walk sunwise to the West, and facing outwards say

With the blessing of the salmon of wisdom who dwells within the sacred waters of the pool, I call upon the powers of the West.

See the sun setting over the sea or a lake – sense the blessing of the salmon, and feel power flowing into your circle from this direction. Then walk sunwise to the North, and facing outwards say

With the blessing of the great bear of the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, I call upon the powers of the North.

Gaze into a clear night sky – see the stars shining in the darkness, sense the blessings of the bear, and the Great Bear, and feel power flowing into your circle from this direction.

Then turn to face into the circle, and move your attention to the earth beneath you. Sense the energy of the earth flowing up into you, and the energy of the sky flowing down into you – meeting in the centre of your Being. Feeling connected to both Earth and Sky, say

May the harmony of my life and of this circle be complete.

THE RITE

Stand at the centre and say

8

Now are night and day in perfect balance. I stand at the threshold of dark and light. Though I come to this gateway time after time, never come I to the same Gateway twice. Tonight I shall pass once more through this Gateway, and enter the dark half of the year.

Pick up the basket and say,

As the Earth yields its harvest, so too does my life.

Go to the North, pick up and meditate on the item you've placed there, consider what it means to you and how it has contributed to your life in this last year. Place it in your basket and say in your own words or these,

I give thanks for this harvest from the Northern Quarter, that has sustained and nourished my physical existence.

Cross the circle to the South, pick up and meditate on the item you've placed there, consider what it means to you and how it has contributed to your life in this last year. Place it in your basket and say,

I give thanks for this harvest from the Southern Quarter, that has fired my passions and awakened my desires.

Go to the West, pick up and meditate on the item you've placed there, consider what it means to you and how it has contributed to your life in this last year. Place it in your basket and say,

I give thanks for this harvest from the Western Quarter, that has blessed and renewed the life of my heart.

Cross the circle to the East, pick up and meditate on the item you've placed there, consider what it means to you and how it has contributed to your life in this last year. Place it in your basket and say,

I give thanks for this harvest from the Eastern Quarter, that has inspired and stimulated the life of my mind.

Return to the centre and sit in meditation with your harvest basket, and record your experiences of the ritual in your journal or notebook. When you're ready to conclude, stand and make a salutation/acknowledgement to all the Elements, in your own words or these:

Spirit of Earth! Spirit of Fire! Spirit of Water! Spirit of Air! Spirit of infinite transmutations and permutations! Spirit of all that lives, grows, dies and is reborn! From my birth to my death, all my days are made of you.

then enact

THE CLOSING

Stand at the East facing the centre, and say

9

It is the hour of recall. As the fire/light dies down, may it be relit in my heart. May my memory hold what the eye and ear have gained. *Now extinguish the central candle. Alternatively you can say:* As the radiance of this ceremony fades let it remain as a light in my heart. May my memory hold what the eye and ear have gained.

Chant CASCADING AWENS. Then say

May the spirits of the Four Directions be thanked for their blessings.

Walk sunwise to the North, face outwards and with raised hand/s in salutation say

In the name of the great bear of the starry heavens and of the element of earth, I thank the powers of the North.

Then Walk counter-sunwise to the West, face outwards and with raised hand/s in salutation say

In the name of the salmon of wisdom and the element of water I thank the powers of the West.

Then Walk counter-sunwise to the South, face outwards and with raised hand/s in salutation say

In the name of the great stag and of the element of fire, I thank the powers of the South.

Then Walk counter-sunwise to the East, face outwards and with raised hand/s in salutation say

In the name of the hawk of dawn and of the element air, I thank the powers of the East.

Turn to face the centre again, and pause to feel that the energies of each direction have ceased to flow into the circle. Then say

May the harmony of the land be complete.

Then uncast the circle counter-sunwise, return to the East and say

May the blessings of the Goddess/God/Spirit/Great Spirit be always with me. I declare this ceremony of Alban Elfed is closed in the apparent world. May its inspiration continue within my being.

Then make whatever closing salutations you wish to the East, and exit sunwise, taking your harvest basket with you.



ALBAN ELFED GROUP CEREMONY

A meditation on the harvest, and what in your life is now ready for harvest, is ideal preparation for this ceremony.

ADDITIONAL ROLES – Lady and any number of Companions. She may be referred to in the ceremony as Lady Ceridwen, or simply as Lady, or with the title of another Harvest Goddess.

PREPARE: The Lady should have a cup of mead or wine and a bunch of grapes, and a companion a loaf of bread . At the centre have a fire, candle or fire-bowl.

THE OPENING

Each person enters from the West and circles sunwise to salute the East before taking their place in the circle.

HERALD : By the power of star and stone,
By the power of the land within and without,
By all that is Fair and Free,
We welcome you to this rite of Alban Elfed,
In the grove/seed group/family/etc. of...

WEST: We have come from East and West, North and South to be here together today. *(All join hands)*

11

DRUID 2: Let us take three breaths

Together with the Earth beneath us....

Together with the Sky above us....

Together with the Sea around us...

NORTH: With the blessings of Earth, Sea and Sky may our ceremony begin!
(All release hands)

DRUID 1: (*Saluting East and facing outwards*) O Spirit/Great Spirit/God(s)/Goddess(es) (*Choose a term you feel comfortable with*) we greet you and honour you, and ask for your blessings! (*face inwards*) O Spirit of this place, O Spirit of this circle, we ask for your blessings, your guidance, and your inspiration on this our ceremony.

DRUID 2: Let us begin by giving peace to the quarters, for without peace can no work be.

(*Moving to salute each direction in turn, crossing the centre of the circle, then returning to place in the West*)

May there be Peace in the North.

May there be Peace in the South.

May there be Peace in the West.

May there be Peace in the East.

ALL: May there be peace throughout the whole world.

DRUID 1: Let us join in this prayer that unites all Druids:

ALL: Grant, O Spirit/Great Spirit/God(s)/Goddess(es), thy protection,
and in protection, strength,
and in strength, understanding,
and in understanding, knowledge,
and in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
and in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
and in the love of it, the love of all existences,
and in the love of all existences,
the love of Spirit/Great Spirit/God(s)/Goddess(es) and all goodness.

ALL: 3 AWENS

12

DRUID 1: Let all disturbing thoughts be laid aside. (*Casts circle sunwise, while Druid 2 says*)

DRUID 2: The circle of our horizon – of our lives and lands, of time and of the year, of seasons and of goodness, of birth and of growing, of dying and of rebirth....

The circle can either be cast with a wand, staff, sword or forefinger, or in the following way - particularly if children are present - SOUTH: Let us mark out this circle with symbols of the season. (*Children/adults sprinkle confetti or seeds, flowers, petals or leaves in circle sunwise around participants while Druid 2 speaks as above*).

DRUID 2: As this circle is cast, the enchantment of the apparent world subsides. We stand together in the eye of the sun/by the light of the stars, here and now, between past and future. The earth below us, the heavens above us, and the circle/ stones/trees/sea around us. This is sacred time. This is sacred space.

DRUID 1: Now let us consecrate this circle with Water and with Fire.

WEST or WATER BEARER: May our circle be purified and blessed with the Element of Water. (*moves sunwise with water*)

SOUTH or FIRE BEARER: May our circle be purified and blessed with the Element of Fire. (*moves sunwise with candle/incense*)

DRUID 1: We gather as equals, in our physical form here upon the earth. Each presence is a blessing, and with every breath we take, we breathe light and life into this circle.

DRUID 2: Let the four directions be honoured, and let the gateways of the Quarters be opened, that power and radiance might enter our circle for the good of all beings.

EAST (*turning and facing outwards*): With the blessing of the hawk of dawn soaring in the clear pure air, we call upon the powers of the East.

SOUTH (*turning and facing outwards*): With the blessing of the great stag in the heat of the chase, and the inner fire of the sun, we call upon the powers of the South.

WEST (*turning and facing outwards*): With the blessing of the salmon of wisdom who dwells within the sacred waters of the pool, we call upon the powers of the West.

NORTH (*turning and facing outwards*): With the blessing of the great bear of the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we call upon the powers of the North.

All four then turn to face into the circle.

ALL: May the harmony of our circle be complete.

THE RITE

EAST: I proclaim the festival of Alban Elfed: the Light of the Water, at the time of the Autumn Equinox.

WEST: I proclaim the symmetry of day and night.

SOUTH: I proclaim the equipoise of summer and winter.

NORTH: I proclaim the time of natural balance.

HERALD: Now are day and night in perfect balance.

DRUID 1: But balance lasts but a moment, for from this very time, night becomes longer than day for a full half-year, until at the other side of the Wheel, we reach the moment of equinox again, and day gains in strength and exceeds the time of night for a full half-year again.

DRUID 2: In our year this time of equinox marks the beginning of Autumn, the evening of the year. In our day this is the time of sunset: the time of garnering, of drawing in, of celebrating the riches of the harvest, and of preparing for the Winter that is yet to come.

SOUTH: The outer world gives forth its bounty, the wheat is harvested, the grain is cut and threshed, the goodness of the land is gathered in. And as the growing season ends, and the seeds fall and sink into the dark earth to be nourished by the Mother until Spring, so we give thanks for the riches of the earth and for the riches of our lives.

14 **EAST:** And we too allow ourselves to turn inwards, to seek the nourishing power of the Earth and of the Mother.

WEST: This is the time of letting go to the fostering power of the night - a time of discovery of the magical powers of darkness and of the stars - of the inner realms of the Goddess.

SOUTH: We stand at the threshold of the Equinox. Tonight each one of us shall pass through its doorway, as we enter the dark half of the year.

DRUID 1: But first let there be thanksgiving and celebration!

HERALD: There are those who wait without our circle of mysteries. We welcome you, Lady of the Harvest, and your companions.

Having waited outside the circle in the west the Lady and companions process round the fire to the East, to face DRUID 1:

LADY: At this time of equal day and night, we bring the fruit and the wine of earth, fruit which has grown and wine that is ripe from the nether years. They are gifts for you, the elders and guardians who have kept, and give, the fruit of knowledge, the wine of the wise. *Gives cup of wine and bunch of grapes to DRUID 1.*

DRUID 1: From the earth its promise, from the Lady (Ceridwen) her gracious gifts of upland and plain. We thankfully take the grain and the wine. From that which is offered we build again the temple and song of the Alban Gate. *(He takes the cup of wine and a few grapes to the western side of the fire/central candle faces the Lady and her companions across it, and casts them into the flames, or places them by the central candle).* This offering is made in the faith of recurring growth, for all that is given to us is given to all, and without price. In this symbolic offering recognise blessing upon your land forever. Let all now partake of the food and drink as it is brought to us.

The LADY remains in the East, facing the fire. DRUID 1 drops back into the circle in the West. North takes bread and South takes wine or mead and distributes it to each in turn, sunwise, saying:

NORTH: Seed becomes bread; may your body be blessed.

SOUTH: Water becomes wine; may your Spirit be blessed.

When all have been blessed and North and South have returned to their places:

NORTH: I speak for the abiding Earth and Her Laws, now and for ever. Be wise!

EAST: I speak for the seed of Life; now and for ever. Be renewed!

WEST: I speak for the blessings of Water, the power of Love now and for ever. Bless and be blessed!

Optional :

DRUID 1: As the earth yields its harvest so to do our lives. Let each of us who wish step forward and speak of what we have achieved in this year, or of that which we wish to harvest in our lives.

When the feast/sharing is completed, and all is quiet, the Lady steps forward, and holding up a grain of wheat, says

LADY: In silence is the seed of wisdom gained.

(After a pause, DRUID 1 steps forward, he and the Lady bow to each other and they return sunwise to their former places - Druid 1 in the East, the Lady in the West)

EAST: We thank you, Gracious Lady, for your gifts to us, for the fruitfulness of the land, and indeed for our very lives. Lady of the ever-spinning wheel of Life, we thank you!

SOUTH: Spirit of Earth! Spirit of Fire! Spirit of Water! Spirit of Air! Spirit of all that lives, grows and dies – we thank you!

NORTH: From our birth to our death, all our days and nights are made of you

THE CLOSING

DRUID 2: It is the hour of recall. As the fire/light dies down let it be relit in our hearts. May our memories hold what the eye and ear have gained.

All hold hands.

16

ALL: *(3 times, pausing between each)*
We swear, by peace and love to stand,
Heart to heart and hand in hand.
Mark, O spirit, and hear us now,
Confirming this, our sacred vow.

All Chant CASCADING AWENS.

DRUID 1: May the spirits of the Four Directions be thanked for their blessings.

NORTH: In the name of the great bear of the starry heavens and of the element of earth, we thank the powers of the North.

WEST: In the name of the salmon of wisdom and the element of water we thank the powers of the West.

SOUTH: In the name of the great stag and of the element of fire, we thank the powers of the South.

EAST: In the name of the hawk of dawn and of the element air, we thank the
All Turn to face the centre again.

ALL: *May the harmony of the land be complete.*

Circle is uncast counter-sunwise.

DRUID 1: May the blessings of the Goddess/God/Spirit/Great Spirit be always with us. I declare this ceremony of Alban Elfed is closed in the apparent world. May its inspiration continue within our beings.



NOTES



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