

Wild Church
Sunday, December 17,2023

A Testimony to the Light at the Winter Solstice

Fire Circle at Picnic Site #3
Emily Murphy Park, Edmonton

Announcements

Land Acknowledgment

Calling a Circle on Sacred Land

As Earth circles our star, the Sun, so too we gather in this sacred circle. Let us gather ourselves into silence (*pause*). Listen to your heart beat. Listen to the life blood coursing through your body. Take a deep breath in (*pause*). Let a long breath out (*pause*). Listen to the sounds around you. Feel the blessing of this moment.

You belong here. You are welcomed here. You are a part of this ecosystem. All beings welcome you, for they have not forgotten that we are all related, that we come from one dust and will return to that same dust. Take another long breath (*pause*).

As we gather here, in this sacred circle, we are entering into a relationship with Nature. We are here to re-member ourselves back to where we belong. We are here to restore a loving and kindred relationship with the rest of the natural world.

Prayer

In the heart of wintertime, we come, O Holy One, seeking the light of your wisdom in the shadows of our world. We pray for courage and for the confidence to be a blessing among all the created beings in the circle of life.

Bringing Our Names into the Circle

Each person is invited to say aloud their names. Following the offering of each name, all in the circle will reply:

We greet the light in you _____. May you bear the blessing of the light that shines in you.

Theme Reflection

We are very near the Winter Solstice, when the Sun reaches its most southerly point. The Druids and the Ancient Celts marked the Winter Solstice as a key turning point in the relationship between the Sun and Earth. It was a dividing line between the descent of darkness and the ascent of light. But it was at sunset on December 20, the day before the Solstice, that signalled the death of the old Sun, as it appeared to fall into the sea. The pale golden Sun, rising on the day before the winter solstice was regarded as the shadow of the Sun, or the dual aspect that was really a false Sun. The true Sun was a prisoner of Arawn, King of Annwn, the Celtic underworld. The Druids also believed that when the Sun was reborn on December 22 as a babe of Ceridwen, myriads of lives apart from the physical world would emanate at the same time.

It is little wonder that Christians chose the dark time of the year to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child and the return of light to a dark world.

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them has light shined
Isaiah 9:2*

A Reading

How the Light Comes pages 59 & 60, [Circle of Grace](#), by Jan Richardson, Wanton Gospeller Press, Orlando, Florida, 2015

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient contemplative prayer practice used to allow Scripture to speak to our hearts and to help us discover the multiple ways the Holy dwells there. It means “sacred reading” and the practice can be extended beyond the reading of scripture to that other great book of revelation - Nature. Lectio invites us to enter into silence and stillness, to listen deeply to the stirring of the Holy in the sacred texts around us.

This is a time in our gathering when we wander solo in Nature, listening for and watching for; sensing in all aspects of our senses, the wisdom, the beauty, the mystery of the natural world, as we amble.

Wander for 20 minutes, then return to the circle with the gifts you have received during this special time. You will be invited to share these gifts in the circle if you wish.

(When all have returned to the circle, invite participants to share insights.)

Blessing

Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light, page 47, [Circle of Grace](#) by Jan Richardson, Wanton Gospeller Press, Orlando, Florida, 2015