

Opening Rite – Three Realms 2006
Honoring the 3 Cauldrons and Sacred Center Within
By Z.L. Bennett

I. Preparing the Nemeton and Participants

- **Sound Cue – (chime 3x3)**

Purification of Space (*PD purifies space with sage and salt water as Druids call the following.*)

Calling on the Protector:

Bold Lugh, Warrior of the Great Ones, Bright Bladed Steed,
Flawless form of hidden shadow and radiant light -
Golden seed and spear, you bear the gifts that sustain us.
Samildanach, of the sure hand and strong arm,
Your people call on you this night so that you may ward us in our steps, forge right alliance,
And defend us from harm for the length of our time here together and our journey home.

We offer this in friendship and gratitude. (*offer red ale*)

Treating with the Outdwellers:

To those who serve beyond the boundless dark and wild,
To those who teach us our mettle and how far our sinews bend,
To those parts of you within us we seek to heal or allow to thrive,
To the siren sea-currents and fearful, tempestuous trials
Where the elemental ethers of chaos swirl nothingness,
The truth of zero, and the strange comfort of the abyss.

We honor you here -

And though our ways are as foreign to you as yours are to us,

We respect your lessons and unfathomable power.

We offer this and ask that you neither hinder our work at this time, nor for these next days, unless it
be for the greatest good of all. (*offer grain*)

PD: Dear Pagan folk, you may now enter the Nemeton.

- Procession – Song: We Approach the Sacred Grove by Sean Miller

We Approach the Sacred Grove
With hearts and minds and flesh and bone
Join us now in ways of old
We have come home.

- Purification of Participants as they enter the Nemeton

- Opening Statement and Precedence

PD: Brothers and sisters, welcome to this Nemeton and welcome to this celebration of The Three Realms, where the Otherworld, our world, and the Land of the Shining Ones touch one upon the other creating magic, myth, and vision.

As we belong to the gods and the gods belong to us, let us begin by praying with a good fire. Let us offer with a full heart, knowing that when we do, we sustain the gods and nurture our relationship with them. In remembrance, we strengthen their powers. In honor, we balance the worlds. In love, we bring peace and keep the Old Ways alive and present.

- Earth Mother

PD: Let us first acknowledge the Great Mother of all, the primeval source of life, death, and renewal, from the depths of the sacred well and the abundance of the land. *(Drums play heartbeat rhythm.)*

D: Though you are called by many names, Great Mother,
Tonight we call you as Danu, the wender of watery ways in our hearts,
The mother of the Immortal Legends and Noble Ones.
We honor you, for the mystics are wizened in the dark cave of your embrace.
We honor you, for your children are sustained in your boons of blood and bone.
We honor you, for from your starry womb,
New life and new worlds are brought to us, clean and new.
We will return to rest in you once more, a feast for a feast, and
Drinking your strong elixir, we will dwell in all the worlds, as we do now.

Join us here in the pulsing rivers within us, around us, beside us, above us,
and below us. Know our deepest offering of love.

Radiant Mother, accept our offering! ALL: Radiant Mother, accept our offering!
(offering of rosewater or milk - in a pre-dug hole near the bile.)

- Powers of Inspiration

PD: Let us now ask the Powers of Inspiration to aid us in our rite.

D1: Brigid, Exalted One, who puts prayers and praises in our mouths,
Your fiery pearls float upward from our bellies, hearts, and tongues.
May we here, in worthy deeds and honeyed songs, return them to you now.
For everything arises from you, the smallest part and the total sum.

When we speak each sacred word, let it be your words we hear.
When we hear the tunes of old, let it be your harp that sings.
When we sing of dearest love, let us know that you are near.

When we're near The Shining Ones, let it be your gifts we bring.

Bright Lady, where is there, that you do not grant life and peace?
Shelter Strong, where is there, that your prayers are not spoken?
There is nothing that does not praise you by its existence.
And so we praise and call you here, Lady of the Forge-fires,
That we may speak rightly. (*offer oil to the fire*)*

Imbas upon us! Accept our offering! All: (Repeat)
*Inspired from a prayer by Ceisiwr Serith

II. Opening of the Grove

- Grove Attunement – Two Powers and the mists

- Statement of Purpose

PD: Brothers and sisters, we arrive now at the beginning of our time together in this place to uphold the Old Ways and to create the New Ways. Let us enter this state fresh, our cares behind us for...

Here we meet in the Realms of Land, Sea, and Sky,
to honor the Kindred and to stand in fellowship.
Here, we will realize seeds that wait to be acknowledged
in our songs and the churning cosmos.
Here, we acknowledge ourselves as the Three Realms,
the balance between the past and the future, between the well and the fire.
Tonight, we will honor those realms within us, knowing that by doing so,
we honor all of which we are a part.

- Honoring the Hallows (Well, Fire. and Tree)

PD: Let us begin by sanctifying the hallows from which we make offering and attune ourselves to the worlds.

(The following Portal Song will be sung by the participants as separate celebrants come forward to offer to the hallow being sung about while quietly saying their own hallow honors and then making an offering to them. – Well (silver) – Fire (oil) – Tree (incense and water).

Portal Song by Ian Corrigan

Chorus:

By Fire and by Water, between the Earth and Sky
We stand like the World Tree rooted deep, crowned high.

1. Come we now to the Well, the eye and the mouth of Earth,
Come we now to the Well, and silver we bring.
Come we now to the Well, the waters of rebirth,
Come we now to the Well, together we sing.

(Repeat Chorus)

2. We will kindle a Fire, Bless all with harm to none,
We kindle a Fire, and offering pour,
We will kindle a Fire, A light 'neath the moon and sun,
We will kindle a Fire, our spirits will soar.

(Repeat Chorus)

3. Gather we at the tree, the root and the crown of all,
Gather we at the Tree, below and above,
Gather we at the Tree, together we make our call,
Gather we at the Tree, in wisdom and love.

(Repeat Chorus)

- Attuning with the Airs and/or Land, Sea, and Sky*

(A spear or staff is brought forth by PD to direct energy from the center to each direction as four Druids assemble around him/her. As each call to peace, each druid walks in the direction they address and encompass the circle).

D1: May there be peace in the East, source of Fertility and Prosperity.

D2: May there be peace in the South, source of Beauty and Magic.

D3: May there be peace in the West, source of Eloquence and Wisdom.

D4: May there be peace in the North, source of Courage and Strength.

PD: May there be peace in the Center, the axis of all Worlds, source of Sovereignty and the Sacred Threshold.

PD: And may there be peace in Land, Sea, and Sky, in Body, Mind, and Spirit. *(With spear or staff a triskel is drawn overhead in the center of the Nemeton with the following words).* Let there be peace in the known (*1st spiral of triskel drawn*), the unknown (*2nd spiral of triskel drawn*), the realms that are far beyond our reach (*3rd spiral of triskel drawn*), and those that are all around us (*a large circle deosil drawn above*).

*Inspired and taken in part from work of Ian Corrigan.

- Opening of the Gates

PD: Now that we have prepared ourselves and this place, let us open the portals for our work. We call upon our Gatekeeper, Mhannain Mac Lir.

D: Masterful Prince, ride your gilded chariot, and come gently to us.
Piercing the elegant blue of seductive, turquoise seas

Deep in the dappled mist of ancient spiraled threes,
Where the breath holds still, in the journey.

In your rich velvet cloak slipping silently 'round
The eternal lands of famed heroes' mighty deeds,
Move toward your seekers here and open the mystery,
Where moonlight shines from islands of silvern apple trees.

We hear the spraying waves roll in the hushed wind of your hair,
Bells and horns announce you from the trembling branches near the bay.
Fine-formed one, ward our steps, part with ease the boundaries' way,
Where all worlds flow as one, and let us now, together, open the gates.

(During the last stanza bards will create the sounds of the sea with various instruments - i.e. chimes, bells, rainstick, & other items that generate these sounds. Sound of the sea will increase as Gate Opening continues with a dual chant (Mhannain- Public) (some celebrants pick up pitch and tempo that raises the energy).

D: Gatekeeper, Accept now this gift of silver (*offers silver triskel to the well*) and
Let our words sound in the depths. (*speaker uses hands or wand to direct
energy to each hallow as...a grove sacrificer adds oil to the well*)
Let our offerings rise in the fire.
(a grove sacrificer adds oil to the fire)
Let the devotion in our hearts be carried to all the worlds.
(a grove sacrificer puts oil on bile)

A Mhannain Mac Lir, Osclaitear na Geatai anois.
Let the Gates be Open!

ALL: Let the Gates be Open!

III. Offering to the Powers

- Honoring the Kindreds (Ancestors, Nature Spirits, Shining Ones)

PD: We now offer to the Kindreds and ask them to join us at this rite.

Ancestors:

D1: A Shinseara! Ancestors!
Tradition of genetic fires, the folk songs in our veins,
Epics told that hearken back forgotten memories,
Of grandest glory and generations of tears and pain,
Ancestors, O how you speak to us and are ever near!

Ageless heroes who banish apathy and hold the world,
Great Ones who majestically walk in Tir na Og,
Keep our steps in honor, our standards straight and unfurled.
Ancestors, we wait and listen, for we know that you are here!

And as the veils wane and doors do open this night,
We are mindful that we are the magical threshold -
Holding your mysteries, telling your stories, tragic or bright.
Ancestors, may we be mindful of who you are and what we will become.

A Shinseara! In great respect, we offer to you! (*whiskey to the well*)
Join us, and accept our sacrifice! ALL: (*Repeat*)

Nature Spirits:

D1: A sprideanna na talaimh! Spirits of Nature!

We call to you, Spirits of the noble trees that keep and teach us: kingly oak, mysterious yew, the magical apple, and all your green kin who befriend this world.

We call to you, Spirits of stream, stone, wind, sand, and fertile soil, you inspire, calm, test, and yield, balancing all things with your great, strong hands.

Spirits of the fiery realms of sun, moon, and star, and all your unconquerable kin above and below who challenge us and light our way, we call to you.

Spirits of the earth, of fur and fin, scale, feather, and skin, great teachers, tricksters, companions, for your perfection and sacrifice, we call to you.

Spirits of Nature! With sincerity, we offer this! (*fruit and flowers to the tree*)
Join us here, and accept our sacrifice! ALL: (*Repeat*)

Shining Ones:

D1: A Dheithe! Shining Ones! -

You who speak to what is grand in all the worlds,
And do such deeds that win our hearts and praise.
How could we go on dull and indifferent,
When our souls long to know you and do you honor?
Divine Ones, both known to us and unknown,
Those who hold the powers of this place,
Patrons of all those here,
You reveal the delicate tapestries of fate and will
And teach the most profound of lessons,
Bright from rich rhythms of Bards' timeless tales.
How could we go on dull and indifferent?
When our souls long to know you and do you honor?

A Dheithe! Shining Ones! With open hearts, ever mindful of the mutual charge between us, we offer this to you! (*offering of oil in the fire*)
Join us here and accept our sacrifice! ALL: (*Repeat*)

PD: Hail to you, Triple Hosts of Spirits, Welcome!

- Praise Offerings of the Folk

PD: At this time, let those who would offer praise and thanks to their gods and allies, do so.

- Main Offering

PD: Now, we acknowledge the altar of the sacred center, where the crossroads meet in this Nemeton, in ourselves, and in all the worlds.

(Reveal the Three Cauldrons in the center, covered by a cloth to show- three small cauldrons placed vertically on a small shelving unit with 3 tiers. Each tier has a cloth a different color to represent the focus of the cauldron and to symbolize the tripartition of IE culture, Irish regions and those aspects of those things within us - Highest Cauldron - Priest- Connacht (white), Middle Cauldron - Warrior- Ulster (red), and Cauldron closer to the earth - Producer & Music- Leinster/Munster- (blue-green). One small candle is placed next to each cauldron, matching color of cloth.)

PD: Lore offers up to us a Triple Cauldron of Blessing comprised of Bounty, Rebirth, and Inspiration. "The Cauldron of Poesy," speaks of the Triple Cauldrons within us as centers of power and the process by which we learn, grow, create, and experience magic in our lives. Let us hallow these cauldrons for our offering as a community this night.

D1: First, we honor you, Cauldron of Warming, the fire in the belly, the center of our health and survival. You of Munster and Leinster, who bring song, pleasure, bounty, and all the joys of the worldly self, accept this offering and let this flame warm the treasures you grant. (*Grove Sacrificer (GS) offers blue stone and lights green candle*).

D2: Next, we honor you, Cauldron of Action and Vocation, the fire in the heart, where intellect, intuition, and inspiration blend and grow. You of Ulster, who bring the courage, determination, and skill of our warrior self, accept this offering and let this flame warm the forces you fan to life. (*GS offers yellow stone and lights red candle*)

D3: Finally, we honor you, Cauldron of Knowledge, the fire in the head, where seership, creative power, and sound judgment flourish. You of Connacht, who bring divine counsel, realization, and the illumination of our priestly self, accept this offering and let this flame warm the wisdom you contain. (*GS offers white or purple stone and lights white candle*).

PD: Hail to you Great Triple Cauldron, Triple Realms of all the Worlds, join us and accept our offering!
Biodh se amlaidh.

(Rose quartz pieces are passed around in a basket).

PD: In the presence of our gods and allies, we have hallowed here the center of our divine selves and all the realms. You will each now receive a rose quartz. It is a kindly stone that is known to enhance loving relationship with the self and with others, increasing receptivity to beauty and bringing clarity and healing. Revisit the energies of the waters and the stars in the Two Powers and bring the energies up until they flow through your hands. *(Pause as needed.)* When you are ready, choose one of the cauldrons here that you are called to offer to at this time and holding this touchstone in your power-filled hands, send your offering into it. When the stone is filled with your devotion, place your offering inside the cauldron you have chosen or the cauldron who has chosen you. *(Slow drumming is done during the offerings).*

- Final Call for Praise Offerings:

PD: If there are still final offerings of praise and thanks to be given, let them be given at this time.

- Taking of the Omen

PD: Having made offering, let us open to voices of the Kindred, asking them what further blessings and wisdom they wish to impart. *(omen is taken)*

IV. The Blessing and Working

- Calling for Blessing

PD: We are now ready to receive all the Blessings that are in store for us, as a gift calls for a gift, as we have offered from our hearts. We freely partake of the draught of life and thank the powers for their legacy.

- Hallowing/Receiving of the Blessing: *Chant for the Blessing Cup* (by ZL Bennett)

(Preferably sung by three Bards, but it can be spoken as well as long as it is done so with careful phrasing. Before the Bards sing/charge the Cup, they should take a cauldron candle in one hand - order of candle to be taken should be the same as the order of hallowing above - and hold a portion of the blessing cup in the other hand. The idea here is to physically represent the gift (main offering) for a gift (the blessing cup.)

B1: Now bright the flow of giving turns

We come before All in love and hope

Avowed to honor, are your sons and daughters

Remember us here, and grant us the Waters.

Spoken by Bard 1: Grant us the Waters. *All: (spoken)* Grant us the Waters.

B2: Now cool the flame of wisdom alights

In this cup which stirs our lives.

Avowed to stand with our Shining Fathers,

With boons to bear, yes, grant us the Waters.

Spoken by Bard 2: Grant us the waters. *All: (spoken)* Grant us the Waters.

B3: Now thrice we call as in days of old,

In fellowship strong and offerings held high

We claim with pride our tie to Great Mothers

As we've opened our hearts, so grant us the waters!

Spoken by Bard 3: Grant us the waters. All: (spoken) Grant us the Waters.

B 1,2,& 3: Now we feel them rise and descend.

To imbue and swirl their blessings so sweet

We accept in love the gifts that surround us.

And we gladly partake of these waters before us.

(O... (hummed phrase) – to toning)

(After cup is imbued with energy)

PD or dignitary: (takes cup from the Bards and holds up) These are the waters of life!

Blessing Cup Song: Pour the Waters (by I. Corrigan) - found at adf.org, rituals section

V: Closing and Ending

- Affirmation of Success

PD: With blessings happily received, let us now thank the powers who we have honored here.

-Thanking the Powers: (ALL: Repeat thank you after each)

D: To the Triple Realms and Triple Cauldrons, for your many blessings, go raibh maith agaibh. We thank you.

D: Dearest of allies, witnesses of this rite, who the folk gathered here to offer up praise, go raibh maith agaibh. We thank you.

D: Shining Ones, for guiding our steps and this rite, and for holding the balance, go raibh maith agaibh. We thank you.

D: Nature Spirits, for your beauty, strength, and presence here, go raibh maith agaibh. We thank you.

D: Ancestors, for the bond we hold dear and your presence here, go raibh maith agaibh. We thank you.

D: A Brid, Lady of the Forge-Fire, for your inspiration and presence at this rite, go raibh maith agat. we thank you.

D: A Lugh, strong straight spear, for the benevolent protection of your children gathered here, go raibh maith agat. we thank you.

D: A Danu, called by many names as the Great Mother of the Earth, happy are we to be your children. To you, we now return all of the blessings we could not carry here. Uphold us now in the world as you have done at this rite, go raibh maith agat. We thank you! (offering back what is left of the blessing cup).

- Regrounding and Centering – Sending back to the Earth Mother and balancing the Two Powers for the mundane world once again.

- Thanking and Petitioning the Gatekeeper

PD: We now call upon our Gatekeeper once more.

D: A Mhannain Mac Lir, Lord of the mists through which we travel, for holding the gates open with us and keeping vigil over our steps, Go raibh maith agat, we thank you.

Now, Ageless One, we ask that you work your will with ours so that we may close the gates while allowing this sacred time to linger here as we walk in the Realms of the Kindred.

Let the well now be, the water that sustains us.

Let the fire now be, the flame that warms our nights.

Let the tree now be our shelter and comfort when we gather under its leafy boughs.

A Mhannain Mac Lir, Dúntar na Geataí anois! Let the Gates Be Closed! ALL: Repeat.

- Final Blessing and announcement of ending.

PD: As we started, so let us end (*chime* 3x3). Good folk of the Old Ways, the rite is at its end, let us share these days ahead in fellowship, blessings, and peace.

Needed items

Offerings for:

Protector: ale

Outdwellers: grain

Earth Mother: rosewater or milk

Inspiration: oil

Gate Keeper: silver triskel

The Three Hallows: silver, oil, incense
and water

The Three Kindred: whiskey, fruit/flowers, oil

The Cauldrons: 3 candles w/holders (1 green or blue, 1 red, 1 white)

3 stones: 1st cauldron (green or blue stone – emerald or lapis)

2nd cauldron (citrine or other fire stone)

3rd cauldron (quartz crystal or amethyst)

3 cloths for each cauldron: white, red, and green/blue plaid

3- tiered shelves

1 drop cloth to cover this altar (black)

Main Offering: Rose Quartz pieces – one for each person in the circle

Other: Staff or Spear

Other:

Spring & Charged Water

Oil

Sage or other Purification Incense

Return Flow:

Mead