

Slavic Blessing Rite
Sassafras Grove, ADF, Pittsburgh PA
Second Fridays at Moonstone's
Friday, July 10, 2009, 8:00 PM

Officiants: Diane "Emerald" Vaughn & Michelle Handa
Specific credits are within the text of the rite.

TIER ONE: BEGINNING THE RITE & ESTABLISHING THE GROUPMIND

Consecration of Time

Musical Signal (Nine Knells)

Opening Prayer: Emerald in Russian, Michelle in English.

My zdyes' DAby POchyest' otDAT tryom roDAM.
We are here to honor the Three Kindred.

("Mih zee-yes DUB-ya PO-kin-est oat-DAT tree-ohm ra-DAM")

Consecration of Space and of Participants

Processional (Chorus from "Center of the World")

The Waters flow around us
The Fire burn with in us
Standing tall we gather at the Center of the World
Upon the Earth our mother
We worship here together
All as one we gather at the Center of the World (Words and music by Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)

Purifications

Land, sea, and sky as normal.

Each person is greeted by Emerald and Michelle holding bread and salt as they enter the ritual space.

The Warding of the Site/the Acknowledgment of the Outsiders

Oh Mighty ("PEAR-rune") Perun, god of thunder, god of lightening, god of weapons and war
Stand guard we pray, watch over our work
And keep the chaos at bay.

Perun, accept our sacrifice! (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)

Invocation to Bardic Patron/Spirit of Inspiration (Stribog)

("STREE-bog") Stribog, Grandfather of the winds of the eight directions, let your breath fan the flames of inspiration! Oh Grandfather, kindle the sacred fire within us. May the wind quicken our tongues, sharpen our minds, and hasten our wit. May our words, our songs, and our prayers be a blessing to all the worlds!

Stirbog, accept our sacrifice! (Chris Jacocks)

Honoring the Earth Mother

("matka sarah ZEM-uh-lah") Matka Syra Zemyla, Moist Mother Earth

You birth, nurture, and sustain our lives

And in your arms we find our final rest.

Like our ancestors before us, we honor you

And we dedicate our worship to you first and foremost.

Matka Syra Zemyla

Accept our sacrifice! (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)

All touch or kiss the ground.

Song: ("Oh Earth Mother") (Words by the RDNA, music by Richard MacKelley.)

Remembering Brighid (As Patron of Sassafras Grove)

I light this candle in honor of Brighid

The Patron of Sassafras Grove

Through the years you have been midwife

To many changes and new beginnings within our grove.

You foster our hope through good times and hard,

Through challenge and victories

You are the source of all our work

The voice in our song

The strength of our arm

The hand that heals discord

The inspiration of all we create

Lady of the Hearth Fire

Lady of the Sacred Wells

Lady of our grove

Remember us as we remember you.

(Maria Stoy)

Ground, Center, and Establish Group Mind: Janet

Close your eyes and picture yourself high in the Carpathian Mountains. You are surrounded by trees. You choose a tree you like and place your back up against it. In the next three in and out breaths you feel your body blending with the tree--you become one with the tree. . . . Now focus on your roots--feel how far into Mother Earth they go. Down, down into the cool moist earth. Feel the earth's energy around your roots, and with your next breath bring that energy up through your roots and into your trunk, your center.

Now focus on your branches-- feel them reaching high into the night sky...up to the stars and the moon. Feel the energy, and in your next breath bring that energy down through your leaves , down through your branches, and into your center. Let the energy from the earth and sky join together. Now feel your roots mingling with other roots and your branches in twining with other branches as we join together. Now open your eyes. We are one. We are a grove. (Janet Kline)

Declaration of Intention & Historical Precedent: Emerald

Tonight we gather to celebrate Sassafras Grove's first Slavic Rite. We seek to introduce ourselves to the Slavic Worldly Spirits and Deities in a hope to get to know them better. We also honor our Slavic Ancestors of blood and heritage whom we already know and introduce ourselves to the Slavic heroes and other Slavs among the Mighty Dead whom we may not know. We seek to strengthen these relationships as well. And finally, at the Height of the year, we gather to honor the Zorya, Goddesses of the Morning, Evening, and Midnight Stars, and Dazhbog ("DASH-kah-bog"), God of the Sun.

("Da-BU-dayet-tak") Da BUdyet tak! So be it! (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)

TIER TWO: RECREATING THE COSMOS & PRELIMINARY POWER RAISING

Creating the Vertical Axis

Emerald sings, **Michelle** sacrifices.

*A time beyond memory, of gods and heroes
In that time now let us begin
At the Sacred Center, like them we now stand
To create the Cosmos again (All repeat last line)*

*The beautiful Cosmos of manifest *artus
Dark Waters of night, bright Fires of day
The Tree forms the axis that holds it together
And keeps the Chaos at bay. (All repeat last line)*

*We stand at the Crossroads of all of the Realms
In Time eternal, so perfect and true
Through sacrifice given and might of our magic*

We have made the Cosmos anew (All repeat last line) (Words and music by Diane “Emerald” Vaughn)

Invoking the Gatekeeper and Opening the Gate(s)/Creating the Threshold

Baba Yaga Gateway – Meditation

Close your eyes – take a few deep breaths – take a moment to feel your connections both below and above.

We are in a thick, ancient forest in Eastern Europe. It is daytime and the sun is filtered through the trees above – the air is cool and pleasant. You feel your connection to our Moist Mother Earth as we move forward through the trees – you feel connected to the trees and plants around us, feeling one with the animals.

We come to a clearing, where you can see, in the middle, the back of a strange little hut. It rests on a giant Chicken foot and is surrounded by a fence of bones and skulls. You are not afraid, but do feel a sense of anticipation – this is a place of transformation – this is the hut of Baba Yaga.

We kneel or stand before the hut and give offerings.

We call out:

MICHELLE:

*Little Hut, Little Hut
Turn your back to the forest
And your front to us!*

ALL:

*Little Hut, Little Hut
Turn your back to the forest
And your front to us!*

We give bread, a work of our hands, made from gifts of our Moist Mother Earth

<MICHELLE GIVE BREAD>

MICHELLE:

*Little Hut, Little Hut
Turn your back to the forest
And your front to us!*

ALL:

*Little Hut, Little Hut
Turn your back to the forest
And your front to us!*

We give Vodka, from the roots of our Moist Mother Earth

<MICHELLE GIVE VODKA>

MICHELLE:

*Little Hut, Little Hut
Turn your back to the forest
And your front to us!*

ALL:

*Little Hut, Little Hut
Turn your back to the forest
And your front to us!*

We give bone, as a sign of our mortality.

<MICHELLE GIVE BONES>

The air shifts. We hear a rustle – and the hut turns on its chicken foot, front door now facing us.

The face of an old crone appears in the window. She is gnarled with age, but her eyes are bright and flashing.

She asks what we want of her.

Baba Yaga – Grandmother, Bone Mother, Crone – we come to ask you to assist us in our quest to know the Slavic Pantheon better.

(pour vodka)

Snake Goddess, Bird Goddess, Mistress of Animals – we ask you to open a gate between the worlds!

(pour vodka)

Goddess of Transformation, Shapeshifter, Guide to the Land of the Dead – we ask you to assist our journey, so that we may have success.

(pour vodka)

Baba Yaga, accept our offerings!

ALL: *Baba Yaga, accept our offerings!*

She looks closer, eyes squinting.

MICHELLE:

Baba Yaga – we now also offer you this sweet treat you so love.

<MICHELLE GIVE COOKIES>

We honor your wisdom, knowledge and power. We come in reverence to ask your help now!

Baba Yaga – we ask you to open the gateway!!!

The sky darkens around the hut. The two skulls atop the fence oneither side of the walkway light up with a fire within. The door of the hut opens – we hear a voice – old and wise – whispering “the gateway to the enlightenment you seek has opened.”

THE GATEWAY IS OPEN!!!

Take a deep breath and open your eyes.

(Michelle Handa)

Filling Out The Cosmic Picture: The Kindred Invocation Triad

Worldly Spirits Invocation

*Spirits of Land, Sea and Sky
You who dwell with us and among us
All Nature Spirits and especially those of the Slavic lands
The Children of Moist Mother Earth
We honor you now and welcome you to this Blessing Rite!
Worldly Spirits – accept our sacrifice! (Michelle Handa)*

Ancestor Invocation

*Ancestors and Honored Dead
You of Blood, Hearth, Heart, and Heritage
The Slavic forbearers we know, and the Slavic heroes we hope to meet
You who lived so we may live as we do today
We honor you now and welcome you to this Blessing Rite!
Ancestors – accept our sacrifice! (Diane “Emerald” Vaughn)*

Deities Invocation:

*Bright Ones, Shining Ones
You Gods and Goddesses of our hearths and our hearts
You, the Deities of the Slavic culture whom we are only beginning to know
You who guide our steps and protect us
We honor you now and welcome you to this Blessing Rite
Deities - accept our sacrifice! (Michelle Handa)*

TIER THREE: MAJOR SENDING OF POWER TO THE BEING(S) OF THE OCCASION

Descriptive Invocation to Being(s): Dazhbog and the Zorya

BOTO Altar is set up in four sections with a candle for Dazhbog and each of the Zorya: Dazhbog at top, Zorya Vechernyaya at left center, Zorya Polunochnaya at bottom, Zorya Utrennyaya at right center.

Emerald will say invocation and **Michelle** will light each candle.

Dazhbog

At the height of the year, we call to (“DASH-kah-bog”) Dazhbog, fiery, radiant, shining god of the Sun; glowing in your golden robes, brilliant in your brazen chariot! Dazhbog, Giver of Fortune, we Children of Earth recognize how fortunate we are, for without your blessings we would not have the gift of life. Dazhbog, fiery, radiant, shining one: Be welcome among us!

Zorya

Zorya (“veh-KREN-Nay-yah”) Vechernaya, Evening Star, Guardian of the Gloaming Gate. You close the gate behind Dazhbog after his return to the Underworld each evening and cover the sky with the deep blue of twilight. Zorya (“veh-KREN-Nay-yah”) Vechernaya: Be welcome among us!

Zorya (“pul-nicks-NIGH-yah”) Polunochnaya, Midnight Star, Guardian of the Darkest Night. You welcome Dazhbog as he dies in your arms each night, and you restore him to life each day by your magic. Zorya (“pul-nicks-NIGH-yah”) Polunochyaya: Be welcome among us!

Zorya (“oo-TREN-nigh-yah”) Utrennyaya, Morning Star, Guardian of the Sunrise Gate. You call Dazhbog to the Heavens each morning with the light of your flaming sword, opening the way for his chariot to travel the daily sky. Zorya Utrennyaya: Be welcome among us!

Dazhbog and the Zorya: Be welcome among us!

Emerald makes initial offerings of incense, oil, herbs, and flowers.

(Diane “Emerald” Vaughn)

Offerings and Primary Power-Raising

Individual Praise Offerings

People come forward to make offerings to Dazhbog, the Zorya, and the Kindred in a Slavic context..

Conclusionary Sacrifice/Prayer of Sacrifice: **Maria**

Maria holds platter with bread and salt.

Dazhbog, Zorya

Kindred we know well and those we have only just met.

We thank you for your many blessings, now and always.

Accept our sacrifice!

Maria makes offering.

Seeking the Omen of Return (pysanki symbol cards): **Michelle**

TIER FOUR: RECEIVING AND USING THE RETURNED BLESSINGS/POWER

Preparing for the Blessings

Regrounding/Recentering: **Janet**

Meditation on Personal and Group Needs/Induction of Receptivity: **Maria**

Over the years Sassafras Grove has reached out to and has forged relationships with many different beings of many different cultures. Today we have opened our doors to the Slavs, and they have joined us in this work. They have given us their message of _____. Is it your will to now ask for their blessings?

Then Da BUdyet tak. (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)

Receiving the Blessings (Maria)

Calling (Asking) for the Blessings

Today we began a journey to better understand the Slavic Pantheon. We paid honor to you Dazhbog and to you Zorya, and to the Kindred among the Slavs. Please Bless this bread, made from earth, water, fire and air. Grant us wisdom, knowledge, strength and health, happiness, peace and abundance. May our spirits rise and expand as did this bread. Let us continue to learn and grow in your light! (Michelle Handa)

Hallowing the Blessings

Maria presents the blessed bread to the **congregation**.

Behold: The Blessings of the Kindred!! (**All** repeat)

Affirmation of the Blessings

Bread is passed around and people eat. [We ended up having a nice chat about Slavic customs and traditions of our families, friends, and neighbors.]

Call for Any Work Yet Undone: Emerald & Michelle

TIER FIVE: UNWINDING AND ENDING THE CEREMONY

Thanking BotO and Kindreds (in reverse order of arrival:)

Beings of the Occasion: Emerald & Michelle

As **Michelle** extinguishes the candles, **Emerald** says:

Dazhbog, we know that as the Summer wears on, your power wanes. But your live-giving blessings are always with us as you make your daily journey. And Zorya, we know that you will continue to defend the Gates of the Heavens and watch over us as you do Dazhbog when we have need to call to you.

We thank you for listening to our call this night and blessing us with your presence. This first call shall not be the last.

Dazhbog and the Zorya, Hail and Farewell! (Diane “Emerald” Vaughn)

Deities: Name

*You who live in our hearts and guard our homes
Thank you for attending us this day and always
Stay if you will, go if you must
Deities, Hail and Farewell!* (Michelle Handa)

Ancestors: Rowynn

*Ancestors and Honored Dead
All who lived so that we may live as we do today
Our Slavic forbearers we have remembered tonight
And those Slavic heroes we have just met
Thank you for your many blessings today and always.
Stay if you will, go if you must
Ancestors, Hail and Farewell!* (Diane “Emerald” Vaughn)

Worldly Spirits:

*Worldly Spirits - those who share our planet with us
Children of Moist Mother Earth
Thank you for being with us today.
Stay if you will, go if you must
Worldly Spirits - Hail and Farewell! (Michelle Handa)*

Thanking the Gatekeeper and Closing the Gate(s)/Threshold: Michelle

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath.

We find ourselves back in front of Bab Yaga's hut, realizing we have passed a full cycle of a day, traveling with The Zorya and Dazhbog (DASH ka bog).

We leave a parting gift. <Michelle makes offering>

THANK YOU, Baba Yaga, for your assistance – thank you for opening the gateway and keeping it open so that we may enter the world of the Slavic Pantheon that is so new to us. We honor you, Baba Yaga!

*The door of the hut closes, the skull torches fade and go out, and the hut slowly turns around again on its chicken foot.
Baba Yaga! Hail and Farewell!
The Gateway is Closed!!!*

Restoration of the Ordinary: Emerald

Song:

*Let the Well be but water
Let the Fire be but flame
We've been touched by the magic of the Sacred Tree
We will never be the same. (Words and music by Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)*

Affirmation of Past/Future Continuity and Success: Maria

*As it has been done in the past...
As we have done it now...
And as it likewise will be done in the future...
We have again forged a link in the sacred chain of Tradition...
LONG LIVE THE TRADITION! (All repeat) (Earrach of Pittsburgh)*

Draining Off Excess Power: Unmerging, Regrounding and Recentering: Janet

Feel the energy in your center, and in your next breath release the energy from the night sky, keeping what you need and releasing what you don't. Now focus on the earth energy, and in your next breath release it, keeping what you need. Feel your self reemerging from the tree, be free and run with the Children of the night. When you are ready open your eyes. (Janet Kline)

Thanking Brigid

*Blessed Brigid, Patron of our Grove and of our hearts
We thank you for your love and protection, now and always
Brigid, we thank you. (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)*

Blow out her candle.

Thanking the Earth Mother

*Matka Syra Zemyła, Moist Mother Earth
Like our ancestors before us, we thank you for your continued support and sustenance
Earth Mother, we honor you! (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)*

Farewell to Bardic Patron/Spirit of Inspiration

*Stribog, Grandfather of the winds
Thank you for fanning the flames of inspiration within us
Stay if you will, go if you must
Stribog, Hail and Farewell! (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)*

Clear-cut Ending: Deconsecration of Time and Space

Thanking the Warrior Patron

*Mighty Perun, we thank you for watching over our work
and standing guard against the forces of chaos.
Stay if you will, go if you must
Perun, hail and farewell! (Diane "Emerald" Vaughn)*

Final Benediction/Announcement of End: Emerald and Michelle

Musical Signal (Nine Knells)

Recessional Song ("Walk with Wisdom") (Words and music by Sable)