**Candlemas- 2002** (Facilitators: Joy, Lynn, Shannon, Debby)

Starts at 5:30

Bring: black plastic, peat moss, tea lights,, candlestick holders, material, extra white material or blankets for those who forget, music..

Setting: 3 circles- The outside circle is a large dirt circle (wide enough to lay in). The women’s blankets have been folded and set around the outside of the dirt. Next to the dirt, closer to the center altar is an open space. Their white sheet is set in this space. In the center is the altar.

Women walk in through the side door (so they don’t see the sanctuary), deposit food, hand sit things and material to facilitators We eat in the library.

5:30: One at a time, they enter into the entrance to the sanctuary for the blessing. The last women are the initiates. Two lines are formed.

Blessing: “Welcome to Imbolc-the womb. Within you there is a divine spark, stirring the seeds of your potential.”

Facilitators remain in the back of the current members so as to model the initiation.

Initiation: “Imbolc is a time for initiation. As the new initiates walk between us, she will say, “I am \_\_\_. We respond, “I am \_\_\_. Welcome \_\_\_.” When initiate reaches the front of the line she/they wait there as the rest of the women pass through the line leading into the sanctuary. Each woman sits on her blanket on the outside of the dirt circle.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Welcome to Imbolc: (I don’t have this script but the essence is..)We have come from the longest night of the year and are entering a new year…Invite women to move into the dirt, the cave, cover themselves with their blankets, creating a womb-cave, within which they can meditate on that which they want to let go of. They remove an article of clothing or jewelry which will represent something in their life they no longer need. Removal continues until they feel done.

Then…”*Wrap yourselves in your blanket, your cloak of darkness. Now, look at those articles you have removed. Think about what they represented to you. You have chosen to remove this matter, this energy from your life. We will now thank each cast off burden for the gift of knowledge it has given you and then shake off the energy from the clothes or jewelry and let the earth compost it. Then each article will pass through the barrier into the outside of our circle. Do this with each of the unwanted things you have cast off. As the clothing or jewelry passes over, feel how the weight of those burdens is no longer with you. Sweet mother earth takes it from you. Feel how light and free this leaves you. When all have been removed, lift yourself up and let the music move through you and through your feet, supported by earth. We will stamp, stir, float, dance and feel how wonderful life is as we open ourselves to the sweetness of life.”*

As they dance, Shannon, Joy and Debbie change into their white and get candles. Lynn stays and when it’s time, she rings the bell and will tell the story of the releasing and the light returning…

Welcoming in the light ritual: “We call upon the power and light within us to bring…”

The 3 of us light our candles and begin walking into the circle. Debby takes Lynn’s hand and models what the women will be doing. As she does this the others are singing: “Spark, fire, sun, light…we are calling”. She reaches down and picks up Lynn’s sheet and gives it to her as she drops her blanket. The blanket is left outside the circle, then take her hand after she has put on her sheet and invite her over into the center circle of light where her candle and sit thing are. Each of us will move to the right and do this with each woman as we sing. Lynn then goes to the altar and lights all the candles of the altar.

Meditation: Once all the women are inside the circle, in white, we sit down and Shannon will move them into a meditation on what it is they want to bring into the light. They have created space by releasing that which no longer is needed. See what symbols may come to them. Invite them to decorate their candles using no voices. (10-15 min.) This is a time of silence.

Sharing / Lighting Candles: As they finish we will stand and each one will light their candle speaking out using one sentence or word, their intentions, dedication and such.

When all have spoken…”Let the light of this candle be a symbol to you in the coming days and months of this dedication and intention you have set for yourself. Recognize it as the spark within you, the light and shine of your soul, your most precious and loving gift-yourself- the one you have been waiting for. You are your source, the source of light, love and joy.”

Closing & Song: “Sisters our work is done” “May the Circle Be Open”