**Planning notes for Lammas 2011 (Overnight ritual)**

**Intention:** The power of harvest within me. Activities include: making plaster masks, facials, vision quest, decorating masks, sharing what our mask represents.

Women arrive, place chair/journal/musical instrument in circle, sleeping bag or pad/ sheet/towel on deck; set up tents

Altar of fire-colored flowers shooting up in center, with fire colored cloth and harvest of summer produce. / Arrange mask decorating items on a table below the deck / Wear harvest themed clothing (Jennifer will make corn husk crowns).

**2:00-2:45:** Casting the circle by sprinkling barley, rice, cornmeal and wheat flour around the outside of the circle, touching, sprinkling each woman as we pass while the women drum.

Opening intonations: masculine, feminine, gathering-repeat 4 X’s (Tai-Chi movement in the 4 directions)

Read traditions of Lughnasadh

Blessing: One part of the harvest poem to invoke a sense of gathering, for casting away what is no longer needed. Women journal what they want to cast away. Ring chime to end journaling. Pass cornmeal out to each woman. Women toss cornmeal over their shoulder as they cast away.

*See Cornmeal ceremony at the end of this outline*

Second part of the poem: What seeds will you keep to sow again…women journal what they want to reseed, pass out cornbread to each woman-women eat the corn bread.

**2:45-4:45**: Jean reads a piece for the transition from harvest to mask making. “The power of the harvest is within me. The seeds I have sown…

Sing “I will believe the truth about myself”.

Pass around a basket that has 2 of an item to determine partners. **Mask introduction** then, Debby demonstrates mask making and introduces facials. Jean reads the blessing for touch. (Masks are made from plaster cloth strips that have been prepared and placed into baggies. Water is poured into bowls for each pairing. After the mask has been made for a woman, partners change places. Clean up after masks to prepare for facials.

**Facial Meditation:** Materials for facials are also individually created for each person. Partners are directed to get 2 of the prepared materials.

When everyone has completed the process and masks are set to drying on the table, return to the circle with the altar to receive directions for preparing a quiet meditation spot for their vision quest which will happen after dinner (in the dark). Meanwhile we set up dinner and prepare for bread breaking ritual

**5:30ish**: Blessing with bread breaking then eat. After dinner, dishes and clean-up, social time until dark.

When it’s dark, we light candles and read the intention for the vision quest. Women leave (with flashlights) and go to the spot they’ve prepared. Ring bell when it is time to return. On candlelit deck, share about their quiet meditations. Then, Connie will set the dream intention. Close for the night.

**Next morning**

Sunrise gathering at the altar for those who wish to. Sun salutation with Jean

**7:00-8:00:** Breakfast then return to open the circle on the deck. Call in the directions for a return to sacred space

**8:30-9:30:** Decorate dried masks.

**9:30-950: “Talking to your mask.”** Mask contemplation and journaling. Have a dialogue with your mask. Who are you at this time of Lammas?

**9:50-10:50: Sharing our masks-closing the circle**

**10:50:**  Walk to creek, those that want to.

**12:00: Lunch and pack up**

We provide dinner (burritos with fixings). Women bring either dessert/beverage/cut up veggies or fruit and breakfast or lunch items to share.

We need to provide:

* Ice chests/ice for storing food items
* Messy towels for mask making
* Mask decorations / acrylic paint/ brushes/ white blue/ containers/ feathers/ animal print fabric/ sequins/ small seeds/ tacky blue
* Paper plates to hold wash cloths
* Wash cloths (2 per woman) / containers for water
* Arbonne facial packs
* Glue guns and glue sticks
* Cutting tool / Exacto knives
* Sheets
* Folding table
* Basket with items for choosing partners
* Fire colored cloths for altar and decorating the house and deck
* Candles and holders
* Large candle with chimney for altar
* Fire colored flowers / vase for altar
* Harvest produce for altar
* 4 pouches of 4 grains and Lughnasadh bread
* Corn husk/wheat crowns & corn bread with corn kernals / coffee/ half and half / wine
* Tub of pens for journaling
* Chaffing dises / rice and black bean dish / guacamole
* Pot of beans and wheat tortillas teas
* Lettuce / salsa/cheese/onion/tomatoes/corn tortillas/olives

**Breaking Bread Ritual**

To be said at the time of breaking of the bread before we eat☺

Pass the bread around, each taking a piece. Debby takes 2, one to crumble and toss to the elements

(Jean)

**This is the time of Lugh, the Shining One, the Bright One, the Golden One, the Sacrificed One. He was conceived in the depths of Winter, was born in the Spring, danced and loved in the Summer, and now, He dies in the Harvest so that we may live through the long Winter's night.**

(Jennifer):

**Corn King, Sun King, Die and Be Reborn!**

**Feel the death in the bread, the grains that grew under the Sun, feeling the wind and the rain on their husks, the scything of the grain so that the bread may be made, the sacrifice of life so that life could live.**

**Feel the life in the bread, that which has given up life, yet is filled with life, with the sustenance that it provides, contemplate hunger, and then the filling of that need. See enough bread to feed the world., for the God{dess} is not stingy, but looks after all Her Children.**

(Connie: Holding the Bread in your hand, offer it up for Blessings.)

**"Oh Mighty Mother of us all, bringer of all fruitfulness, give us fruit and grain, flocks and herds, and children to the tribe, that we may mighty. By the Rose of thy love, do thou descend upon the body of thy children."**

**"Behold, the Holly King is dead, he who is also the Corn King. He has embraced the Great Mother, and died of his love, so has it been, year by year, since time began. But if the Holly King is dead, he who is the God of the Waning Year, all is dead; all that sleeps in Her womb of Earth would sleep forever. What shall we do therefore, that the Holly King may live again?"**

(Debby):

**"We Shall eat of the bread of Life. Then shall sleep, lead on to rebirth."**

(Tear off part of the Bread and offer it to the elements.)

**“See the seed of life that will be reborn in the womb of the Earth Mother in the Winter.”**

**Cornmeal Ceremony (Cornmeal is being passed around)**

Once again, the wheel has turned. We 3/4 of the way through our year. At Winter Solstice, a spark was born. The seeds of intentions were charged with life. Throughout this year, those seeds were:

Gathered,

Sown,

They Bloomed,

And now they are being harvested,

We remove the Chaff (that which we won't replant),

And we store the best to replant in the coming year,

Once those decisions are made, we get to relish and celebrate the Fruits of our Labor.

The harvest season is a time of celebration, but it is also a time of judgment, for we are called upon to sift through the things that have grown up during the past, and decide what we wil keep & what we will cut down. We must make choices, we must pass judgment, and we must act on our choices.

Lammas marks the point where we leave the Garden and earn our own way, "by the sweat of our brow". It is the time of coming to maturity, of taking responsibility for our own path. We must select the seeds we plant, and from that we select the fruits we will eventually harvest in the coming year.

In your hand, you hold cornmeal. Corn is sacred to many Native people. Corn myths speak of life, death and sacrifice. The flesh of the corn is scraped from the bone. Only the best kernels are chosen to replant the following year. The cornmeal in your hand represents that which was not the best. You do not wish to replant these kernels next year.

We are going to take a few minutes so you can think back over your year. What is it time to let go of? What do you choose to remove from your garden? When you're ready, write down any thoughts you have at this time. When I ring the bell, we will all leave the circle to release the chaff to Mother Wind allowing the earth to reclaim and compost those energies. You can throw it over your left shoulder to throw it back in the face of bad spirits, or just release it in whatever way feels right to you. Feel free to voice what you are letting go (pass out the cornbread)

You are now holding cornbread which carries the seeds you want to replant in the coming year. When it is time, we will eat the cornbread. Your body will embrace this nourishing food. You are the vessel that will carry your seeds of intent for the coming year. From now until Winter Solstice, these kernels will share space with you and your higher self. Take some time now to write about which seeds you want to nurture, protect and ultimately replant next year. When you are ready, eat, savor, and relish the best of your harvest this year.

(Women repeat each phrase)

The power of the harvest is within me.

The seeds I have sown fell to the earth and were reborn.

The grains I planted took root in fertile soil.

The smallest seed bloomed into a mighty stalk.

I rejoice in harvesting the fruits of m^ labors.

I give thanks for the abundance I have received.

The bread you have eaten has now become part of you. Each seed is part of the whole of who you are; your individuality, your energy, your intentions, your oneness with spirit. We are now going to allow a form to emerge of this Lammas incarnation by making masks. It begins with love.

Bring your journals with you. As we move up to the deck we will sing...