**Autumn Equinox 2017**

Set-up: Altar, table for Yin Yang collage (with music compilation ready), snacks & drinks, blessing table at entrance w/ scarves, food table, wild flower seed packets.

Women bring: chair, potluck dish, water bottle and thoughts about balance.

**4:00-4:30:** Women gather in front. We take their things and set them around the altar, put food where it needs to go. Women enter 1 at a time. Bless them by spritzing with lavender water, place scarves around their necks.

“Take a moment to allow your energy to line up by bringing golden light into every cell of your being.”

**4:30-4:40 At circle:**

*Nancy:* **(**Beth/Bonnie blessing) “Welcome, sweet sister to the turning of the season. May you continue to journey on your personal path with greater dignity, grace and balance. Know deeply the goodness of life’s bounty and love.”

*Diane:* Leads us by singing in the Four Directions (Cards with the words were placed at each chair): “Grandmother, I see you sitting in the East. You are sacred and you are looking at me. I call to you, call to you, call to you, and you are smiling at me.

*Becky:* Intro to Mabon:

“Welcome to Mabon the time of the Autumn Equinox. The crisp autumn wind blows around you. Leaves are changing their colors to sparkling yellow, scorching vermillion and burnished orange. These colors remind us that Mabon is here. On this day of balance, we honor the birth of Mabon, also known as Modron, son of the great mother goddess who is guardian of the outer world, the earth. She is our protectoress.

As summer ends and fall begins, the dark increases and the light departs. Now, the sun and moon shine with an equal amount of time, from night to noon, creating a sacred balance of the duality of light and dark in the physical world. We are here to focus our awareness of this balance as it rests within each of us at this time of year. The air has a chilly nip and the apple cider we shall sip is crisp. The seeds we’ve sown have been reaped on this second harvest. They bring their rewards as day gives way to night. We prepare for winter’s long, cold breath as Mother Earth slips into the balancing act of light and dark, of challenge and nurture. Autumn Equinox blesses the earth and each of our spirits with a greatly deserved time of rest, reflection, redefinition and regeneration. Warm and blessed be our health, our hearts, and our plans. Welcome to Mabon.

**4:40-4:50:** Meditation:

**Meditation-Autumn Equinox 2017**

First Awareness, Then Balancing Different Aspects of Ourselves

 Close your eyes take a deep breath sinking into your body, into your heart and stomach- tuning everything out, turning off any outside thoughts. As the wheel of time turns, we all breathe a sigh of relief.

 The intensity of the masculine energy of the summer is waning, the heat beginning to subside. We are now coming into a balance of night and day.

 Contrast and duality, like night and day, are present in our lives to help us hone our balance and our preferences. Contrast in a sense helps us to steer-to steer life through our experiences of contrast, through awareness, to what choices we are making. In each moment we can pause, breathe, make a new choice, think a new thought.

 There are many aspects in life in which we have duality as part of our being. We are both our physical body and who we really are, our spirit body. Take a moment to recognize each, visually, that we are bringing them into balance.

 Balance for any of these dualities are going to differ from each other. Your scale for balance on some of these you might hope will be 80% vs 20%, or if you are more optimistic 90% vs 10%

 I am going to give you some contrasting aspects that are in some ways on opposing ends of ourselves/our scale. Take this opportunity to discern which feels most true for you. Visualize a type of scale, or meter with an arrow that can flow easily, coming to rest at a point so that you can see when it is in or out of balance.

 On the scale, where is your balance between putting out energy through action and doing for others, and in contrast/balance how you take care of and do for yourself, resting, relaxing meditating?

 Pause 30 seconds

Where is your balance between stress on one end and joy on the other?

 Pause 30 seconds

Within each of us is a mix of masculine and feminine energy.

 When we operate primarily from our masculine side we may feel tired, stressed, overworked, too much in our heads. We may feel more of a need to take control, be assertive, achieve goals.

 When we operate primarily from our feminine sides we may have more ability to flow, to adapt to change to be open to opportunities that aren't planned. We tend to be receptive, but like water it needs to be contained otherwise it gets easily dispersed, out of control, ungrounded, irritable. You may be giving away your power.

 Is one more dominant than the other? How is it expressed in your life?

 Pause 30 sec.

How is your negative and positive energy expressed?

Do you have more negative self-talk or negative self-image than positive self-talk and positive self-image?

 (Pause 30 sec.)

Does your social life dominate most of your time, or do you spend too much time hibernating and alone?

 (Pause 30 sec.)

The internal you and the external you…

(Pause 30 sec.)

Do you sometimes feel like there is the good self and the bad self? Your grumpy, irritated self and your joyous carefree self?

 (Pause 30 sec.)

We have so many parts of us that can seem like very contrasting. And in some ways, they are. But when we pay attention, recognize and have awareness around them, we are better able to bring them into balance. Now you are going to step back from this close-up look and create a bit of distance as if you are from the bird’s eye view.

 Taking in all of these contrasting aspects, as well as so many others unmentioned…

How does it look? (pause)

Take a moment and imagine yourself making some minor adjustments that may bring some balance where it's needed; incremental changes, small adjustments. Any time you try to make a monumental change it's often too drastic. The scale tips from one extreme to the other.

So… Follow your lined-up impulses. Lining up -being in a state where you feel very centered.

Make an intention to bring balance to that area of life where it's needed.

 (Pause 30 sec)

Believe in your ability to know what is right for you. We are here in ceremony because we want to see, we want to grow. We want to strive for that balance in our lives. So,

embrace, accept and trust these conscious changes you want to make. You know the way, Feel it...

 (Pause 30 sec.)

Focus on gratitude for a few seconds. Start by saying, “I feel so grateful…”

Focus on harmony for a few seconds. Start by saying, “l feel such harmony…”

On love, for a few seconds. Start by saying, “I feel so loved”

 Take a deep breath and when you are ready, open your eyes, and come back into the circle.

**4:50-5:10** *Nancy: (Pass around bowls with colored strips. 1 bowl light colored paper, 1, dark)*

“Now that we have journeyed into ourselves, we’ll continue on with this exploration of ourselves. On the flyer, we asked each of you to be thinking of words that describe the negative/positive, light/dark, feminine/masculine and any other type of polarity that comes to mind. We’ll pass around 2 bowls with strips of paper. Take a few, 6-10 of each, and keep them in separate piles. We ask that you write down words representing any polarities that come to mind. Use the light strips for the “lighter” aspect, the dark strips for the “darker” aspect”. We’ll be collecting them in separate bowls in about 5 minutes.”

**5:10-6:00 *Lisa:*** Introduce the Yin Yang collage table. (Magazines, scissors and glue sticks provided.) Music collation of the women’s’ favorite songs (sent to Nancy) will be played as the collages are made.

**6:00-6:05** *Nancy: Reading the Strips*:

“In the light-colored bowl, we find the words we used to describe the “lighter” side of ourselves. In the dark colored bowl, we find the words to describe the “darker” side of ourselves. At this moment, the two are separate, but there are not two separate sides of ourselves. We are united in a way that makes each of us the unique women we are. Now I am going to combine the two bowls into one, representing the coming together of our duality, as we seek balance, peace and joy in our lives.” *(Pass the bowl around and ask that each takes a turn stirring the words.) "*Now as the bowl is passed around, grab a small bunch of words.” *(once all the words are taken),* “Now, I ask you all to gather around the altar. When I say Na-ma-sta, we will all read our words together at one time. After you’ve read a word, throw the paper on the altar.”

**6:00-7:00** *Nancy:* “Please take your seat. We are opening the circle for sharing. You may want to share what came up for you as your intention during the meditation, or…whatever you feel called to share.”

**7:00** *Becky:* Closing:

At this time of the second harvest, Mabon, Autumn Equinox- we gather what we need for navigating the darkness and creativity of Winter’s light. Now is the time to plant your seeds for the coming year; the dark seeds and the light seeds. Decide what it is you want to weave into your life in the coming year and start planning and planting now. Clarify your dreams under the light of the Mabon full moon and manifest your future as you desire it. Be aware of entering a new phase as winter draws near. Give thanks to Gods and Goddesses all, for the many blessings you have reaped in your own harvest this summer. Pledge yourself to maintain what you have gained through-out the year. Let us take a moment to honor the changing season.

To close we’ll read the words on the back of the paper at your seat:

 “At Mabon, the time of the equinox, there is harmony and balance in the universe, and so there can be in my life.”

**Sing closing songs**: “May the Circle Be Open, But Unbroken”, and “Thank You for Your Loving Hands”

**7:05-8:00:** Eating. (Remind them to take the wild flower seed packets home with them.)