**Samhain 2017**

**12 noon-4pm / Facilitators: Wendy Nan, Marty**

Time of the 3rd harvest, gratitude and thankfulness

The veil is the thinnest for contact with ancestors

Forgiveness of self and others

Preparation for entering the void

We will bring pumpkins, corn stalks, dried corn, etc. for decorations. Bring straw to use to make scarecrows. We each will bring an assortment of hot tea bags and a bottle of wine; Marty brings cold juice/herbal tea; Nan brings special hot drink.

**12 PM: 50 min. THE MEAL**

 We’ll eat first. Women have been asked to bring food of their ancestors. Save desserts until later to ingest during sharing. Nan shares blessing, tnen by one we will share what food we brought of our ancestors.

**Blessing:** Welcome to our Samhain Celebration. Samhain is the 3rd and final harvest-the end of summer. The lengthening of nights and the cooling of the air. We are enjoying the pumpkins and squash newly harvested. We’ve stored away the beans and grain for the coming winter.

Some cultures consider Samhain the end of the year and Yule the beginning of the next year. The time between now and Winter Solstice is thought to be a magical void. When we leave this celebration today we will enter the void between the years with our souls a little more prepared.

Samhain is also a time of year when the veil between the world of humans and spirits is thinnest. Today we are going to take advantage of this window of opportunity. We will remember our ancestors who have passed, honor and welcome them. We don’t always think of our ancestors as a presence in our life; a presence that might make us feel more whole; that might lead us through the void and support us in our challenges of the dark winter.

To prepare for the void we are going to spend some time clearing our connection with our ancestors. We will focus on forgiveness and gratitude. Perhaps letting go of some bad blood and old beliefs that served those who went before but are no longer fitting for us in these changing times.

Please shut your eyes and take a deep breath and I will read a blessing for our Celebration adapted from a poem by Ellen Orcutt.

 Air moving to earth

 Thought moving to body

 Window to the unknown unclouded

 Bless this time of completion and winding down in the world of matter.

 The last of the harvest is gathered

 Bless this time to create a haven against the winter’s storms.

 Bless this time to honor the past and hope for the future but to remain timelessly suspended between them.

 Guide and protect us as we descend to the place within, for renewal and growth, as we seek to touch Oneness within, oneness with our ancestors, oneness with our fellow celebrants and oneness with all that is our universe.

 And…Bless this wonderful food that nourishes our bodies as we begin our Samhain Celebration with a harvest feast! Ho!

**10 min. WARM-UP (store instruments inside):**

 Marty will begin drumming on the back patio and as people are finishing up their meal, they will join her with her a drum or rattle and we will make music until all the women have joined us.

**1 PM: 5 min. THE STORY FROM THE LAND AND CASTING OF THE CIRCLE:**

In the same location on the property, Wendy will share a story/blessing from the land which will honor the elements and earth.

*Black Elk speaks:*

*“While I stood there, I saw more than I can tell, and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.”*

North

Beloved Mt. Shasta

Big Dipper in the night sky

Shade and springs flow forth.

West

Sunsets and moonsets glow

Wild animals shelter here

Ocean waves crashing.

South

Fire rises from the south

Middle mountains guard us there

Prevailing winds cool.

East

Sunrise, moonrise, eclipse

Sierra meets the Cascades

Birth land calls to me.

Below

Ancients of this land

Teach through subtle messages

Eat seeds of the Ta-ne.

Above

Searing, glaring light

We could not live without you

Please bring lots more rain.

**15 min. THE BLESSING:**

In the grass area, Nan will demonstrate the Sufi blessing that will be exchanged with each woman. Each woman will work her way down the line to share the blessing with each of the other women. While looking into each other’s’ eyes, sing “Your ancestors hold you in love.” (With hand over each other’s heart and hand) “I am your sister and I love you so very much.” (While turning in a circle) “Welcome, welcome, welcome, we are all one.” Go [here](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CDeborah%20Willsey%5CDocuments%5CWomens%27%20Group%5Cwebsite%5C8%20Samhain%5CBlessing-Casting%20the%20Circle%5C2017%20Blessing%20Sufi%20Dance001.pdf) to this link to for a pdf showing the dance.

While walking back to the house sing “Ancient Mother, I Hear You Calling”. (Nan will pass out the words.)

**20 min. HONORING OUR ANCESTORS AND THE EARTH**

 Back inside the house, there are two altars, a low one and a higher one. Lower one is for the objects representing the earth (or ancestors of the land) and the higher one is for the objects representing the ancestors. Women wrote 2 haikus before they came (on the flyer); one fore the ancestors; the other is for the earth. The haikus could be about their altar item they brought. (Haiku-3 lines: 1st and 3rd line, 5 syllables; the middle line has 7 syllables.) Wendy introduces this.

 Then, all 3 of us read “Praise Song for the Day”. Go [here](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CDeborah%20Willsey%5CDocuments%5CWomens%27%20Group%5Cwebsite%5C8%20Samhain%5CPoems%20%26%20Stories%5C2017%20Samhain-Praise%20Song%20for%20t001.pdf) for a link to this poem. Also found on the website in Samhain/Stories and Poems.

**20 min. JOURNEY INWARD** (women set out mats and get comfortable)

 Marty lead a visualization about contacting ancestors. It focuses on both sides of our ancestral lines. Also a Thich Nhat Hanh exercise that focuses on gratitude and forgiveness. 5 minutes will be provided at the end for writing in journals.

 **Visualization by Marty**

As you lay back on your mats, begin to take long deep breaths. Breathe deep into your abdomen, deep into the belly of your being. Slow, deep breaths and exhale just as slowly. No pressure, no rush, just slow easy breaths filly the cavity of your inner being and releasing the air. As you breathe, do a mental scan of your body, feeling where you may be holding tension or an area that is sore. If you feel a tight spot, tighten the muscles in that area and release them, breathing into that spot, sending the healing power of breath and awareness to places that need your focus. Locate another tense area, tighten it, release and breathe. Slowly, deeply with all the kindness you can muster towards all of the parts of your body.

We are going on a journey, back into the historical dimension to visit our ancestors. We are taking this time to formulate some observations about our ancestors. First you are going to visit your youngest ancestors, your parents. Visualize your mother, at whatever age you wish. As you observe her, what is your sense of her energetic field in the world? For better or worse, what was her impact on the kind of person you developed into. Now consider, what do you think motivated her in life and what impacted her development? Now, I’d like you to reflect on her parents, your maternal grandparents. Even if you know of them only through pictures or the telling of stories about them. Even if you don’t have a clear mental image, what is your sense of your maternal grandmother’s presence in the world? What do you imagine might have motivated her in life and impacted her development? Consider what your grandmother’s impact was on the kind of person you developed into. Now, shift to your maternal grandfather. What is your sense of his presence in the world? What might have motivated him and impacted his development. And now, even if only in your imagining, picture your great grandparents on you mother’s side. Who were these people? Where did they live and what is your sense of what their lives were like?

Visualize your father, at whatever age you wish. What is your sense of his energetic field in the world? For better or worse, consider his impact on the kind of person you developed into. What do you think motivated him in life and what impacted his development? Now, I’d like you to reflect on his parents, your paternal grandparents. Even if you only know them through pictures or the telling of stories about them. Even if you don’t have a clear mental picture. What is your sense of your paternal grandmother’s presence in the world? What do you imagine might have motivated her in life and impacted her development? Consider your grandmother’s impact on the kind of person you developed into. Now, shift to your paternal grandfather. What is your sense of his presence in the world? What might have motivated him and impacted his development? And now, even if only in your imagining, picture your great grandparents on your father’s side. Who were these people and what is your sense of what their lives were like?

These are your blood ancestors and they live on within you in your cellular structure. You are their continuation. You may have ancestors whom you admire and of whom you are proud. You also may have ancestors who had many negative traits and of who you are not proud, but they are still your ancestors. We need to return to ourselves and embrace our blood ancestors just as they are. They are part of our bodies and inevitably our souls.

Continue to breathe deeply. Since your parents and ancestors are in you, to reconcile with them is to reconcile with yourself. To deny your ancestors is to deny yourself. Visualize your ancestors and see all their positive and negative points. Be determined to accept them all as your ancestors without hesitation.

Now, we are going to engage in an exercise called “Touching the Earth”. Gently and with your eyes still closed, get to your knees and kneel, then bend over and touch your forehead to the ground and place your hands on the ground. Hold this position as I speak these words on your behalf: “Dear ancestors, I am you with all your strengths and weaknesses. I see you have negative and positive seeds. I understand that you may have been lucky and that good seeds like kindness, compassion and fearlessness were watered in you. I also understand that if you were not lucky and negative seeds like greed, jealousy and fear were watered in you, then the positive seeds did not have a chance to grow. I understand and accept that you are/were a human being who has suffered and did your best”. (QUIET FOR A FEW MINUTES.)

Your understanding will remove all rejection and anger. It is important to accept all of our ancestors unconditionally as a first step in opening the door to the miracle of forgiveness. It will help us to become more peaceful and less afraid. Acceptance, forgiveness and facing fear are the deepest results of touching the Earth in the historical dimension. You possess the wisdom and intelligence of how to become a full human being because you inherited an eternity of wisdom not only from your blood ancestors but from your spiritual ancestors as well.

Hold the prostrate position for whatever length of time you choose and then take some time to write in your journal. I’ll chime when there is 5 minutes remaining for journal writing.

**40 min. LETTING GO EXERCISE** (chime at 8 minutes)

 Marty will introduce the **Ho’oponopono Ceremony** a Hawaiian huna healing practice. (Handout is distributed with the 4 statements. Complete handout can be picked up before you leave.) Click [Here](2017%20Samhain-Ho-oponopono%20edited.docx) for a link to the Ho’oponopono Ceremony information sheet.

 We will break into groups of 4 women. One woman will speak the *statements* to the other three: two will represent each side of the speaking woman’s ancestral line (paternal, then maternal line), the third will represent the earth. The four Ho’oponopono *statements* spoken to each of the three representatives are: I am sorry. / Please forgive me. / I love you. / Thank you. (For example: “I am sorry I...” “Please forgive me for…”)

**60 min. SHARING** (approximately 2 minutes each.)

Nan will introduce the sharing time. We will get our desserts and hot drinks then sit in the circle for sharing. After singing our closing songs, Nan will let women know about the “departure blessing” that will occur on their way out.

**4:00: Departure Blessing**

Wendy and one other will hold the hoop as women depart and walk through a slit and into the void. We will provide a departure blessing to remember gratitude and forgiveness and then letting it go as we pass into the void. Women will have all of their possessions as they leave the house.