**Imbolc 2018—February 3rd—3:30-7:30** (we will arrive at 1:00 to set up)-Facilitators: Nan, Abbie, Diane & Lynn

Participants gather outside-

* Nancy helps put nametags together and assist anyone who has not made one yet.
* One at a time they enter and are anointed with rose spray and told Imbolc blessing by Diane
* Abbie hands each participant a bulb in pot and tells them something about watering seed from water on the altar and place the pot on the altar.
* Lynn is sitting in circle drumming and she does the chakra drum massage down the back of members after they set their bulb on the altar.
* After everyone is sitting, with their drums in their laps (probably having joined in the drumming), shine light as a signal to stop.

***(Nancy): Welcome to Imbolc. We will be playing drums and making music several times throughout the celebration. So that you can become immersed in your playing we don't want to you have to watch a conductor to know when to stop. Instead we will signal for you to stop playing by turning on this light.***

***Silence is its own musical entity. We say, "silence is golden". We talk about "peace and quiet". We often connect with the sacred in silence. So, when the light goes on, please move to silence.***

**Calling in Directions**: (Nancy will tell a little drum history and give instruction on holding the drum.

Nancy instructs all to stand and move behind their chair. We will be instructed on each stroke for each direction before we call that direction. We will walk one rotation around the outside of circle playing the stroke for that direction. After that, we will read the invocation for that direction. Then receive the drum lesson for next direction.)

**(Nancy):**

***Touch your drum quietly and welcome this sacred instrument to our celebration. Goddesses from centuries ago were often depicted holding drums. For thousands of years, the frame drum or tambourine was always in the hands of women doing sacred dance, drumming in processions, or playing in front of Goddesses. An ancient statue from Iraq of a woman holding her frame drum dates to 2000 BCE. -Drumming was used in nature-based ceremonies. The rising Roman Catholic church forbade women from drumming. Women refused to stop, particularly for birth and death ceremonies. In current times, Music Therapists are using drumming with a focused intent. Music generated as healing, devotional, or spiritual communing is thought to transform the musician and the listener.***

***I am going to give you a short lesson on the frame drum before our first use of it in the ceremony.*** (Show three positions: hand held; resting on shoulder; between knees.)

***Resting the drum on your shoulder or upright is especially nice for our purposes because the vibration goes to the body.***

***We'll start with East, I'll show you the stroke. We'll all play it and walk around the outside of the circle one rotation. Lynn will read the invocation for East. And then I'll show you the stroke for South, and so on.***

* **Nancy Instruction-East:** *Brush Air Movement- ‘fresh start’:* Nancy will instruct on holding drum and the brush/air beat that goes with East- All will do the brushing motion on their drum and walk around the circle once, while Lynn reads “East”.

***(Lynn): We beckon to the East, bringer of fresh air and new beginnings in the emerging spring. Send your driving winds to carry away from this circle what does not belong here. Open this space for the communion of heart, mind and soul that as a group we can support each individual member in uncovering the next stepping stone in her unique path.***

* **Nancy Instruction-South**—Tek or Teka-- Fire, sparking passion: (Double tap by rim of the drum) All do the Teka beat as they walk around the circle.

**(Diane):** ***And to the South, whose power is the sun, high in the mid-day sky. Cleansing fire, burn away what has no place here. Make way for the circle’s heart to become its hearth so our passions are free to grow and glow bright here within it.***

* **Nancy Instruction-West** - Doum — Water, healing, powerful ocean- Beat: (finger tips hit drum off center and come to rest on drum bouncing) All do Doum beat on drums and walk around the circle as Abbie reads “West”.

**(Abbie):** ***And to the West, governor of the all-encompassing sea. Wash clean this circle to make way for our dreams and feelings to flow freely, so we may recognize the seeds we need to now sow and guide us to create rich and fertile soil in which they will germinate.***

* **Nancy Instruction-North**: Kah-Earth, resounding strength, grounding-Beat: (finger tips hit the drum off center and bounce on drum head) Nan will read North. All will do Kah beat and walk around circle.

**(Nan): *And to the North, provider of quiet rejuvenating space. Release what hold us back from becoming vessels for your winter-white purity and make this circle a firm foundation upon which we are grounded for opening our hearts, minds and souls to the sacred.***

**Initiation-** (Lynn will lead)

* Go around circle sharing symbols on name tag
* Words of initiation/welcoming/group statement—present journal and head piece to Molly:

***Today we welcome Molly into our group where magically our paths have merged, and we begin journeying together. Molly, may this path be filled with the blessings of the Goddess.*** (crown her) ***May your journey inward be rich and celebrated outwardly with the manifestations of your dreams. For this we give to you a journal which is used regularly at our celebrations. Our invitation to you is to dream big, dream wild, dream whole heartedly. Do you accept this invitation? Members of the women’s celebration group do you agree to join and support Molly in big dreams and whole-hearted living? Repeat after me: “Welcome Molly, we will stand by you.”***

* Sing standing stone song 3 times: “I will be your standing stone. I will stand by you.” By Melanie DeMore
* LeeAnn sang “Welcome to the Circle” to Molly and the whole group.

**(Diane) History of Imbolc (see below)**

Diane ends by starting purification rhythm on drum. All join in. Signal the end with lights.

**(Abbie) Purification Visualization:** Abbie reads a visualization involving deep breathing and visualizing a current challenge, where it is in your body, what it looks like and transforming or dissolving.

**(Nan): Poetic Sutra Poem:** Lynn plays Ocean drum slowly and quietly during reading

**Beloved, listen.**

**The ocean of sound is inviting you**

**Into its spacious embrace,**

**Calling you home.**

**Find that exuberant vibration**

**Rising new in every moment,**

**Humming in your secret places,**

**Resounding through the channels of delight.**

**Know you are flooded by it always.**

**Float with the sound,**

**Melt with it into divine silence**

**The sacred power of space will carry you**

**Into the dancing radiant emptiness**

**That is the source of all.**

**(Lynn): Nature sound leading up to intention setting:**

***Now that space has been made, it is fertile for the germination of new seeds, new ideas and what better inspiration to use than Mother Nature, her sounds, her rhythms. She is the best place to go for renewal, refreshment and to get re-energized. We will pass out instruments and you can trade them off or try something new to stir up her energy and to call forth Bridget. You can stay seated or get up and move around, but please honor the sacred space. When the light goes, stop whenever you are and melt into the divine silence. Notice the space inside you for germination and what wants to be planted. Let us begin to build the energy for the good of all.***

(End at peak. After wildness ends…)

**(Diane): Journal/Seed phrase** -

***How will you encourage the growth of your seed? We will take about 5 minutes to write in your journal. As you write, condense this feeling of a seed germinating and set an intention using one word or phrase. Then, begin chanting and drumming the rhythm of your word or phrase.***

Participants will continue playing their rhythm as they return to the circle until everyone is gathered again. **Lynn** will do the ocean drum over their head for a cranial opening as each woman moves to the circle of chairs doing their seed rhythm /chant....

Silence is signaled by lights.On Light signal, drumming stops and there is silence for a few minutes.

**(Abbie) Candle lighting and Seed/intention words shared and any other sharing:**

***Now we are going to get out the candle which is under your chair and begin our sharing time by lighting your candle from your sister’s next to you. Start off by sharing the word or phrase that is the seed germinating, the intention, growing in your belly. How will you encourage the growth of your seed?”***

(After sharing we should tell women about playing their rhythm every day to encourage growth of seed.)

**PUT FOOD IN OVEN / Teapot on**

Closing- We move in a procession to the table area with our lit candle forming a big circle around the eating area. Women place their candles in a candle holder when they get to the tables.

* We sing our closing song.

***“The Circle is open but unbroken. Merry meet and Merry part and Merry meet again.”***

* We all say the words for releasing the directional energies (slips of paper are on tables with words)

“***Spirits, you have been an inspiration to all of us here today. We are grateful for your loving and powerful presence and release you from this circle with our deepest thanks.”***

Nan (maybe others as well) do strokes for all the directions.

**Feast**

**THE HISTORY OF IMBOLC (2018 Ritual)**

Welcome to Imbolc, (ee-molc). Imbloc is an ancient Gaelic word that means "In the Belly". It is a time when it is still cold, but there is promise of the earth awakening and life force stirring, of renewal and hidden potential. All is pregnant with and expectant. Spring is in the belly.

It is a time of preparation for coming out of the dark. Traditionally the Celtic Festival celebrates and honors the goddess Brigid or sometimes pronounced Brede. It is a time to light her sacred flame, white for the goddess and yellow or red for the sun god.

It commemorates the changing of the goddess from the Crone to the Maiden. Brigid is the goddess of fertility. She was said to visit households and bless those within with a prosperous year. *A* bed was made for her and food and drink were set aside for her. *A* doll was made out of straw and laid in a bed with a white wand as the phallic symbol, for her set by the bed.

Holy wells were visited, and people would pray for health while walking sun-wise around the well. They would leave offerings for the goddess Brigid.

The Goddess Brigid teaches us about healing, home, hearth, birth, inspiration, and the work we must do inside and outside. Bridget was so loved as a pagan goddess that her worship was woven into the church as Saint Bridget. Candlemas is another name for this celebration. The Catholic Church found an opportunity to superimpose a holiday on the pagan ritual, holding to many of the same qualities as Imbolc, of purification, hope, and renewal. It is also most likely the originator of what we know as Ground Hog’s Day. *A* day that determines if winter will last longer or if spring is coming soon.

This song was written as part of a Candlemas celebration.

*If Candlemas day be sunny and bright, winter again will show its might*

*If Candlemas be shower and rain, winter is gone and will not come again.*

Removing all the yuletide greens from your home and burning them in a bonfire was part of the purification ritual around Imbolc. Some villages would also have a procession around their fields with lit torches meant to purify the fields and invigorate the coming seasons.

The lighting of candles represents the return of warmth and the increasing power of the sun. It is time to let go of the past and to look to the future, clearing out the old, purifying both the outer and inner space for new beginnings.

Please join in as we drum and chant to the rhythm of Pur-i-fi-ca-tion.

**Set-up:**

Decorate tables with netting/twinkly lights and greens. And seed confetti. We will need: table clothes - White and some green; twinkly lights Diane for tables and Nan for altar netting - LH; taper candle holders A& NF& L; Pots for bulbs A; bulbs A; gravel-A; cups for tapers- L; utility candles- Abbie check with Lynn; drums from Jenny- D; round folding table for altar - L; crystal for altar-Ellie has ?; Pitchers for altar (A-2 and L-l); wooden frogs/ocean drum/other nature sound makers-AII of us; Abbie African drums for Altar; Diane and Abbie - Greenery; Nan head piece for Molly and facilitators; Nan -round riser for Altar; Candles for altar -Diane; Other things for altar as so moved. Nan has rose water spray.