**Goddess / Earth Circles Summer Gathering**

Sunday, August 22, 2021, 1-2:30 via UUCC Zoom

Notes: Decisions from the meeting are in the block. The text from the meeting follows the notes.

The August Summer Gathering Notes: Contact Helen with questions/comments.

**Sharing and check-in—personal and group**

Meeting times and locations, COVID policy: Based on the current status and the report from the COVID-19 Advisory Committee, we decided;

---To continue meeting by zoom until we are able to be inside.

---To keep our meetings at 1-2:30pm. Next meetings: Sept. 26 and Oct. 31

Resources: From Mary Shifman, websites she has found helpful. (attached and on the website) She is also working toward a series of sessions on Wicca, possibly starting in November.

**Holding the women of Afghanistan on our thoughts.**

We suggest using ritual as we pause to hold these women in our thoughts. We are scheduling a zoom meeting for next **Sunday, August 19, 1-2:00pm** to share our specific rituals and thoughts.

We are exploring responses from UU Service Committee and UU Women’s Federation.

*May we keep these women in our view and hearts as we hear the news.*

*From our awareness of these situation of these women, may we turn with renewed understanding of women everywhere and appreciate our place in the worldwide fellowship of women.*

**The Phases of the Goddess/Our Lives, Celebration October 31**

We accepted the July 2021 Phases as the working description. (Website)

We will consider the phases of our own lives by:

---Reviewing our words in the Wisdom Books over the years. Helen will send by the September 16 gathering.

--Using the phases as a basis for our writing for the Wisdom Book this year.

Celebration Oct. 31 by zoom – Details to be planned at the Sept. 26 meeting. These will include remembrance of crones who have passed, specifically Phyllis Cudmore. AND celebrating new crones. We have one. Please let Helen know if there are others.

**GENERAL OPENING**

**Three Breaths**.

In preparation for entering sacred space, let us be conscious of three breaths.

As you inhale the first breath, be aware of what we are *leaving behind*.

As you exhale, let go of what would keep you from being here completely.

As you inhale the second breath, feel the *presence* of being here.

As you exhale, notice those who are here with you.

As you inhale the third breath, *step over the threshold* into the space where spirits meet. As you exhale, let your spirit join with other spirits present.

**Honoring the Directions, Elements and Phases of the Goddess, Earth Cycle**

East, Air (Life), the Younger Woman, New Moon, Spring

The new moon is a time for new beginnings and growth, for blessing, initiating, and re-energizing creative projects. The Maiden is curious, calling forth ways to activate life direction. This is the time of *developing*.

South, Fire (energy), the Mother/Nurturer, Full Moon, Summer

The full moon is the nurturing phase, the period of giving. The Mother/Nurturer is fulfilled through giving of herself and her gifts, and through nurturing others. This is a time of *actualizing.*

West, Water (flow), Crone, Waning Moon, Autumn

The waning moon has given the fruits of the summer for harvest. The self-described woman moves from nurturing of others to awareness of her own wisdom, growth and interests. She supports others on their own paths while paying attention to her own. This is a time of *acknowledging.*

North, Earth (grounding), Sage, Dark Moon, Winter

This phase of the moon is the time of mystery, of gestation, of rest. There is deep understanding of what needs to be held, what needs to be let go, and what needs to be transformed in the continuous cycle of existence. This is the time of *surrendering*.

Power of the Center.

Feel the love of the Goddess and show that love to others. May we find a place where our hearts give and receive love. It is hoped that we can bring the inner and outer truths into fusion - creating the great "wholeness" within ourselves. When wholeness occurs there is an energy from within - an illumination which touches all the corners of the self.

 Light a candle if you wish.

**Casting the Circle**

Putting hands together palm to palm (left hand on bottom, right hand on top)

 On zoom, reach hands toward the screen in virtual touching.

Feel the energy of the circle enter your body through your hands. Feel the sky energy enter through your head, and the earth energy through your feet.

Feel your heart expand as you open to the spirit within.

As the energy builds around and through you, feel the flow intensify around the circle, holding us for the time of this meeting.

*Pause for a moment to feel the energy.*

You are invited to speak aloud the names of ancestors, goddesses or other beings whose presence you wish to call into the circle.

We welcome you all and thank you for being with us in spirit and inspiration.

The circle is cast. We are between the worlds – the worlds of our lives as we came in and the world of our lives when we leave; the world of light and the world of dark, the physical world and the energy beyond the physical. What we do here between the worlds affects all worlds.

**Covenant for time together**

We value our time together and revere each being that is present. We share and we are silence to accept the sharing of others. We speak from our hearts and for ourselves only, without needing to respond or give advice. We hold our sharings in confidence within our circle.

SHARING AND CHECK-IN. How is it with you today?

Notes from others who are not here

Discussion of meeting locations, COVID policy

Holding the women of Afghanistan on our thoughts.

How do we do this?

I looked for traces of goddesses for Afghanistan on line…found very few, very minor – and I feel humbled by the goddess heritage that we espouse.

And I feel the pressure of the remnants of patriarch that we have melt as I even try to comprehend their lives.

It truly makes me realize how the shape and personage of our gods and goddesses determine and reflect the essence of us as women.

The also is true for them…….and I cry.

May we take a few moments in silence to think of the women in Afghanistan at this time. We will follow with some general sharing.

Do you have thoughts of blessings, compassion for these women?

Do you have personal experiences or connections to share?

May we keep these women in our view and hearts as we hear the news.

From our awareness of these situation of these women, may we turn with renewed understanding of women everywhere and appreciate our place in the worldwide fellowship of women.

PHASES AND CELEBRATIONS

About 2016 we started using the term Women of Wisdom, including the meaning of Croning. Our celebration has been at the beginning of phase three, following Mother/Nurturer, is where Croning has been offered, as we acknowledge our own wisdom.

Suggest: Keep the celebration where it is.

Focus our meeting on August 22 on the celebration and using our own statement of where we are in the phases for the celebration and our statements for the Wisdom Book.

Women who would like to be honored. One has indicated interest but Helen did not connect with her to confirm.

Women to be remembered, namely Phyllis Cudmore. Kay with work on this.

CLOSING

As we extinguish our candle(s), we release the energy of the directions and open the circle. We return to the world changed by our time together.

To the spirits that have joined us, we thank you for your presence in our circle.

Go if you must, stay if you will.

Tis with great love and gratitude we bid you farewell.

The circle is open, but not broken.

*Response:*

By the earth that is her body, And the air that is her breath,

By the fire of her bright spirit, And the waters of her living womb,

May the peace of the goddess be ever in your heart.

Merry meet, merry part, And merry meet again. Blessed be.