

Yule Ritual

Compiled and written by Patricia Hyams

**“A Circle of Women” by Mary Ann Fusco 1984
from Circle of Song compiled by Kate Marks**

A circle of women is gathering tonight
They're calling out one to another
They're coming in laughing, they're coming in light
They're coming to find their way home

Chorus:

**And so it goes around, and round and the circle is turning,
and so it goes around, and so it goes around.**

A circle of women, a womb safe and warm,
where life is forever re-birthing.
The mothers and daughters, the maidens and crones,
the circle is calling them home
(chorus)

A circle of women is dancing tonight, a circle of women is singing
They're sharing the world with their wisdom and light
and their magic is taking them home
(chorus)

A circle of women is gathering tonight
They're calling out one to another
They're coming in laughing, they're coming in light
And their power is taking them home
(chorus)

Cleanse space with salt/water

**“Oh Great Spirit”
from Circle of Song compiled by Kate Marks**

Sing 3 times

Oh Great Spirit
Earth Sun Sky and Sea
You are Inside and All Around me

SOLSTICE PRAYER

May you find peace in the promise of the solstice night,
That each day forward is blessed with more light,
That the cycle of nature unbroken and true,
Brings faith to your soul and wellbeing to you,
Rejoice in the darkness and in the silence find rest,
And may the days that follow be abundantly blessed.

READING 1

By Laural Reinhart

This is the time of the Solstice, the longest night of the year. These days, darkness triumphs; and yet, gives way and changes into light. The breath of nature is suspended: all waits, while within the Cauldron, the Dark King is transformed into the Infant Light. We watch for the coming of dawn, when the Great Mother again gives birth to the Divine Child Sun, who is bringer of hope and the promise of summer. This is the stillness behind motion, when time itself stops; the center, which is also the circumference of all. We are awake in the night. We turn the Wheel to bring the light. We call the sun from the womb of night. Blessed be!

CALLING THE DIRECTIONS (See Appendix 1)

Gathered Here

Words and music by Philip A. Porter

sing 3-4 times, possibly as a round

Gathered here in the mystery of the hour
Gathered here in one strong body
Gathered here in the struggle and the power,
Spirit draw near.

The Circle is cast. We are between the Worlds. Blessed be.

“The Dark”

Mary Grigolia

[Download lead sheet or sheet music](#) at no cost. (Scroll down to the Kids section)

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READING 2

My sisters, there are many kinds of darkness - the darkness of death and suffering, of hatred and war, of bloodshed. The darkness of fear and despair, the darkness of cruelty and injustice, the darkness of sorrow and loss. Yet, all these, as great and terrible as they are, are held within another and far greater darkness. The darkness which precedes all - the darkness from which all creation surges forth. This is the pregnant darkness - the womb darkness - the darkness of the Great Mother, She who is the Source of Creation.

And you, Her children, She does not forget. You are not abandoned nor forsaken. Even now the Goddess labors to birth the Sun. Trust the laboring darkness, for the time of Awakening and Light comes. A time when burdens shall be lifted, and refugees welcomed. Grief will be healed, dreams reborn, and all of life renewed. The slumbering animals are dreaming of it. The seeds in hardened shells know the time and push forward through darkness, seeking light. Reach with your life toward the Mother, as She reaches with unconditional love toward you, Her children. The Winter Solstice promises new dreams, new hopes and new light. BE NOT AFRAID!

SALT

(This part is adapted from The Spiral Dance Yule Ritual by Starhawk)

Dip your finger into your salt and say:

“Everything passes, all fades away. My body is salt, I taste the breath of death.”

Let us help the Wheel turn and help the light be reborn! Please say what you would like to lose to the night and then repeat the chant.

“To die and be reborn.
The Wheel is turning.
What must you lose to the night?”

(Example: Someone might say, “Injustice.” And all respond, “Injustice is lost to the night. To die and be reborn. The Wheel is turning. What must you lose to the night?” and so on.)

When all are finished

Will we help the light to be reborn?

(all) YES!

Do we, the people, hold the light in our hearts?

(all) YES!

THE HONEY

*(have a container of sand on the altar that contains a lit candle,
along with a bowl of loose candles)*

Now it is time for the honey. The honey symbolizes how we might, in this way, take the newborn Sun into our bodies, so that it can feed our hearts. May our hope be strong through all the days of the coming year.

Dip your finger in your honey and say – “I taste the sweetness of life!”
(participant takes a candle, lights it and puts it in the sand.)

“To live and birth the light. The Wheel is turning. What will you birth to the light?”

(Note: This is the same as “What must you lose to the night” but in reverse. A participant might say, “Joy.” All respond: Joy is birthed to the light. To live and birth the light. The Wheel is turning. What will you birth to the light? And so on.)

After all are finished...

(All) “The people in darkness have seen a great light and though this light is yet small, it grows stronger as it grows in each of us.”

DRUMMING

READING 3

Out of Darkness, Light is reborn. Carry the hope of this moment like a torch in your hearts through the coming year. Let it sustain you in your times of darkness, and be a sign of blessing in your times of joy. Let Peace be with you. May you find the light that is birthing at the horizon.

HEALING CIRCLE

(You may want to follow your group’s tradition for this. Suggest calling names into the circle, and asking participants to respond by saying or singing their name. My circle will do this to the tune of [“Neesa Neesa Neesa.”](#))

RELEASING THE DIRECTIONS (Appendix 2)

OPENING THE CIRCLE

“The circle is open but ever unbroken, may the love of the Goddess go ever in our hearts. Merry meet and merry part, and merry meet again!”

APPENDIX 1

CALLING THE DIRECTIONS

Written by Patricia Hyams

Spirit of the East

Season of Spring; Dawn.
Fill us with your white light of inspiration.
Bring us your magical intuition. Sing to us your beautiful music on warm updrafts.
Eagles and hawks – bring us your perspective.
We ask you to join our circle here tonight as we celebrate the longest night of the
year.
Welcome Spirit of the East.

Spirit of the South

Season of Summer, Noon day.
Fill us with the flame of will and focused passion.
Let us honor our will on this night to burn bright and do the footwork necessary to
realize our dreams in the year ahead.
May we erupt and explode with your fire to achieve equality and justice for all.
Let us harness the power of the dragon.
We ask you to join our circle here tonight as we celebrate the longest night of the
year.
Welcome Spirit of the South.

Spirit of the West

Season of Autumn; Evening.
Wash us with your cleansing waters on this longest night of the year.
Great oceans, mountain streams, country creeks, water from our tap –
Be an oasis of reflection and rest to us in the middle of our frenetic world, as we
reflect on the year that has passed.
Let us relax into your embrace of unconditional love and acceptance as a lotus opens
to the moon.
We ask you to join our circle here tonight as we celebrate the longest night of the
year.
Welcome Spirit of the West.

Spirit of the North

Season of Winter; Night.
Let us hear the silence of the caves of the north, and the wind sweep across the
plains of the tundra.
Shelter and protect us as we look inward to our own frozen places waiting to
eventually blossom forth.

Bring us the strength of the bison as she lowers her head amidst the winter storm in
order to prevail and thrive.

Sustain us through the darkness of the coming months.

We ask you to join our circle here tonight as we celebrate the longest night of the
year.

Welcome Spirit of the North.

Spirit Above

Place of uncountable galaxies, infinite cosmos, ultimate consciousness.

Bless us as we acknowledge our place with you – stardust to stardust.

Bring us the amazing light of hope as the planets appear in the night sky.

Join our circle here tonight on this longest night of the year.

Welcome Spirit Above.

Spirit Below

Our Blue planet, our mother alive, our beautiful home,
our Magna Mater.

Bring us your rootedness and security on this longest night of the year.

We honor and cherish you as our mother;

we are your children,

we are you.

Join our circle here tonight.

Welcome, Spirit Below.

Spirit Within

Beautiful Spirit of our soul's Within, Join our circle tonight.

Bring us awareness of your unconditional love and how we are worthy and honored
to be a part of your Consciousness.

We are happy to be together, on this longest night of the year.

Welcome, Spirit Within.

APPENDIX 2

Releasing the Directions

Written by Patricia Hyams

Spirit Within (Release)

Beloved Spirit Within, thank you for joining our circle tonight
with your unconditional love and acceptance.

We release you with our blessings.

Blessed Be.

Spirit Below

Spirit Below, thank you for honoring our circle tonight
and bringing your steadfast support.

May there be peace between us now and forever as you depart.

Blessed Be.

Spirit Above

Spirit Above, thank you for honoring our circle tonight
and bringing us your amazing perspective.

May there be peace between us now and forever as you depart.

Blessed Be.

Spirit of the North

Spirit of the North, thank you for honoring our circle tonight
and bringing us the strength of the bison to protect us through the winter.

May there be peace between us now and forever as you depart.

Blessed Be.

Spirit of the West

Spirit of the West, thank you for honoring our circle tonight
with your presence, with your cleansing waters,
and healing powers of reflection.

May there be peace between us now and forever as you depart.

Blessed Be.

Spirit of the South

Spirit of the South, thank you for honoring our circle tonight with your presence
and bringing your dragon energies to fight against injustices.

May there be peace between us now and forever as you depart.

Blessed Be.

Spirit of the East

Spirit of the East, thank you for honoring our circle tonight with your presence
and bringing us music, eagles, and the white light of inspiration.

May there be peace between us now and forever as you depart.

Blessed Be.