

**SAMHAIN RITUAL SCRIPT  
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAMILTON  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2012**

**SERVICE LEADERS:** Lyla Miklos & Vanessa Sage

**5:30 PM**

**SANCTUARY SET-UP**

- Ritual will take place in the Sanctuary rather than outside.
- Weather for October 31<sup>st</sup> will be wet and cold due to hurricane Sandy.
- Pews and chairs will be moved so a circle of chairs can be created for the ritual.
- At the East, West, North, and South positions of the circle a chair will be removed so an altar table to represent East (Air), West (Water), North (Earth), and South (Fire) can be put in their place.
- In the middle of the circle will be a cauldron, fire, bells, food & pictures for the main altar of the ritual.

**6:45 PM**

**GROUNDING AND PURIFYING FOR SERVICE LEADERS**

- Lyla and Vanessa will ground themselves before the ritual with smudging and protection spells.

**7:00 PM**

**OPEN DOORS TO SANCTUARY**

- Lights will be dimmed and candles will be lit
- Celtic/Pagan Music will play softly on a CD player

**7:30 PM**

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

(Ring Bell in the foyer to indicate that everyone should now enter the Sanctuary. Close the Sanctuary Doors once everyone has taken a seat.)

**LYLA:** Good Evening. Please kindly take a seat and make yourself comfortable. If you have any cell phones or other electronic devices with you we ask that you turn them off until our ritual is completed.

(Wait for participants to get settled and seated.)

Welcome to the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton. My name is Lyla Miklos. Vanessa Sage and I will lead you in tonight's Samhain Ritual.

Samhain, Halloween, Harvest's End, All Hallow's Eve . . . is the night when the veil between the living and the dead is at its thinnest. Pagans view this date as one of the holiest on the calendar. The leaves have fallen, the days have become shorter, the nights have become longer, the Pagan New Year has begun.

I ask any of you who have brought photos of your dead loved ones, honoured ancestors, or momentos in honour of those you have lost and place them in the centre of our ritual space facing out so we can all see and share in what you have brought to this ritual.

(Give everyone a moment to place their pictures and objects.)

The Death Card in a Tarot Deck does not necessarily represent actual physical death. Many times it symbolizes the death of the old and the start of something new. Sometimes this death can be the end of a relationship, a job, a home, a mindset, or an illness. Even if you didn't bring a photo or memento with you today you may also use this ritual as a part of your process of letting go of the old burdens of your past, so you can start the new year fresh.

As we honour our dead we must come to this ritual with the intention of NOT calling them out and away from the peace of the otherworld they are now in. Do invite the dead to share with you in our ritual, but do NOT demand that they come to you. Rather, invite them to be present if they wish to. And at the end of the ritual silently bid them farewell if you have invited them to be in the ritual space. Before we begin this ritual Vanessa and I will cast a protection spell so good energy and positive forces enter our ritual space. This protection spell will help ground all of us as we partake in this ritual and help to ensure that this remains safe space.

**7:40PM**

### **CASTING THE CIRCLE/CALLING THE DIRECTIONS**

(Source: Singing The Living Tradition. Reading #446. To The Four Directions by Joan Goodwin.)

**VANESSA:** Please rise if you are able and stand behind your chair as we cast the circle and call the directions.

(Give everyone a moment to get in place.)

As we call to each direction please face the direction and as we ask its forces to come into our circle tonight.

Our response to each call of the directions is "Be Here Now".

(Vanessa and Lyla will move to the West/Water Altar)

**VANESSA:** Spirit of the West, Spirit of water,  
Of evening and autumn:  
Be with us as the sun sets and help us enjoy a rich harvest.  
Flow through us with a cooling, healing quietness,  
and bring us peace.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be Here Now.

(Vanessa and Lyla will move to the North/Earth Altar)

**LYLA:** Spirit of the North, spirit of earth,  
Of nighttime and winter:  
Be with us in the darkness, in the time of gestation.  
Ground us in the wisdom of the changing of the seasons  
As we celebrate the spiraling journey of our lives.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be Here Now.

(Vanessa and Lyla will move to the East/Air Altar)

**VANESSA:** Spirit of the East, spirit of air,  
Of morning and springtime:  
Be with us as the sun rises, in times of planting.  
Inspire us with the fresh breath of courage as we go forth in to new adventures.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be Here Now.

(Vanessa and Lyla will move to the South/Fire Altar)

**LYLA:** Spirit of the South, spirit of fire,  
Of noontime and summer:  
Be with us through the heat of the day  
and help us to be ever growing.  
Warm us with strength and energy  
for the work that awaits us.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be Here Now.

**VANESSA:** Please join hands and travel clockwise around the circle and join in chanting  
Be Here Now. The chant will end when you return to the chair you started at.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be Here Now. Be Here Now. Be Here Now. Be Here Now. Be Here  
Now. Be Here Now. . . . etc.

(Wait for participants to return to the place where they started. Vanessa and Lyla will stay  
inside the circle while the chanting occurs using their wands to continue casting  
protection spells while everyone chants.)

**VANESSA:** Please be seated. If you need to leave this circle at any time during this ritual  
create a magic zipper to pull down and walk through and then zip it back up. Then cast a  
circle around yourself before you walk away. (Lyla will demonstrate.) Repeat the magic  
zipper if you plan to return to the circle. This will ensure that you are protected and that

those in the circle are also protected as we commence with this sacred rite, which calls on many powerful forces and energies.

**7:50 PM**

**MEDITATION**

(**Source:** Women's Rites, Women's Mysteries: Creating Ritual in the Dianic Wiccan Tradition by Ruth Barrett)

**LYLA:** We now ask that you close your eyes and slow your breathing and come together in the spirit of meditation. Vanessa will share a reading. Then we will have a minute of silence. The end of the silence will be indicated by the ringing of a bell.

**VANESSA:** Relax and deepen into yourself. Breathe deeply into your belly. Inhale. Exhale. Continue to breathe deeply. Float on the wind of your breath to the crossroads of your deep mind.

Three paths lead away from the place where you are standing. It is night, and you are alone in the light of the waning moon. As you gaze down one of the roads become aware of someone walking toward you. The figure draws closer. It is your old year self walking towards you.

Touch their face and gaze into their eyes. Look into their soul and know that your own soul is gazing back at you. What beauty do you find there? What is absolutely exquisite about this being? What needs to evolve? What needs to be accepted? Step forward into communion with your old self.

Now, turn to the next road. Another figure is coming slowly toward you. She is the Goddess Hecate. The Wise Crone, and Guardian of the Crossroads. She lives deeply within you as your wise self and comes forward when you must make choices at times of transition. She stands before you and hands you a gift of guidance to help you open to new possibilities in the year ahead. Receive Her gift even though you may not yet understand its meaning. Gaze into Her wise eyes that can see you past, present, and future. Breathe in your willingness to open to the unknown, which contains the seed of possibility. Breathe with Her again as you step forward into communion with Her.

Turn to face the third road. Its path leads off into the darkness. All life, all consciousness, all birth and rebirth emerges from the darkness. You have the opportunity to begin anew if you can only learn to trust the darkness, embrace its wisdom and unseen possibilities. In the darkness of the night, take your first step down that road into the unknown and back into your conscious mind.

(Two minutes of silence.)

(Vanessa rings bell.)

**7:55 PM**

**HONOURING OUR BELOVED DEAD**

**LYLA:** This is the time in our ritual when we recognize and honour our dead loved ones or acknowledge those things we want to let go of and release.

Vanessa has brought a talking stick. When you are in possession of the talking stick I ask that you rise, tell us your name, take from the altar the picture or memento you brought with you and say “I honour you this night”, return to your seat and share with us a memory or story of your dead love one with us. (Vanessa will demonstrate.) If you did not bring a picture or memento I simply ask that you go to the centre of the circle and chant “I honour you this night” and share your story about your dead loved one or about something you want to let go of. When you are finished sharing pass the talking stick to the person to the left of you. You are only required to participate and share in this ritual as much as you are comfortable with. If you need to pass the talking stick to the next person without saying anything we accept and honour the energy you have brought to this ritual by bringing yourself into this communal space. When a ritual participant passes the stick and finishes their sharing we will all chant “We honour you this night”.

**8:15 PM**

**CHANT**

(**Source:** Singing From The Living Tradition. Hymn #387. The Earth, Water, Fire, Air by Anonymous.)

**VANESSA:** Please rise, take one step forward, join hands and repeat the following chant thanking the spirits and energies that have joined us in this ritual as we wish them good journey as they travel back to their realm.

(Give folks a moment to join hands and settle.)

**VANESSA:** The Earth, The Fire, The Water, The Air. Return, return, return. (repeat)

**8:20 PM**

**CLOSING WORDS**

(**Source:** What We Share, Collected Meditations, Volume Two edited by Patricia Frevert)

**VANESSA:** When you leave here tonight carry the energy forward with you that you have taken from this ritual. You may want to take some time to journal, meditate, do a tarot read, light candles or other rituals or exercises that will help you keep this sacred space with you even after you leave this Sanctuary. This ritual, although you may not feel it right now, has also taken some energies away from you and you will need to replenish those energies. There is food in the centre of this altar. Please share a meal with our honoured dead before you leave to recharge before you leave this space. Lyla will now share with us our closing words.

**LYLA:** The Empty Chair by Richard S. Gilbert.

There is something about an empty chair  
That reminds us of our loneliness,  
Evoking memories of those we have loved and lost.  
No longer will they occupy that chair,  
However much their image is etched in our memory.

Chairs know of the comings and going of people,  
The assault of young bodies  
And the gentler weight of old ones.  
They know of the passing of years;  
They absorb all in well-worn wood.

There is something in us  
That doesn't like an empty chair,  
That wants it occupied  
By the ones we love and loved.  
Its presence haunts us with memories that fade  
But do not die.

We reach out across empty space,  
Encircling nothing but a memory.  
Our fingers caress the well-known cracks and grooves,  
As familiar to us as the body that filled them.  
Our eyes create the image of a former time  
When loved ones brought a chair to life  
And endeared it to us.

Now there is little to do but sit,  
Supported by the strength of years,  
Occupying beloved space for a time,

Rejoicing in times gone by, never to return.  
People, like chairs, are full of memories,  
Memories that sustain our coming in and our going out.  
From this day forward.

**8:25 PM**

**CLOSING THE CIRCLE/CALLING THE DIRECTIONS**

(Source: Singing The Living Tradition. Reading #703.)

**VANESSA:** Please rise and stand behind your chair.

(Give folks a moment to get up and get settled.)

We started this ritual by casting a circle and calling to the directions. We will now close this ritual by breaking the circle and thanking the directions. As I call to each direction your response will be “Be With Us Always”. Face the direction of the element as we call to it. After we call to every direction join hands and go around counter clockwise repeating the chat, “Blessed Be”, until you return to the chair you started at.

**VANESSA:** Spirit of the East,

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be with us always.

**VANESSA:** Spirit of the South,

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be with us always.

**VANESSA:** Spirit of the West,

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be with us always.

**VANESSA:** Spirit of the North,

**PARTICIPANTS:** Be with us always.

(All participants join hands and travel counter-clockwise around the circle.)

**PARTICIPANTS:** Blessed be. Blessed be. Blessed be. . . .

**8:30 PM**

**THANKS**

**LYLA:** Thank you for joining us tonight. Please have some of the food from our altar before you leave here tonight. You have honoured eachother tonight.

**8:31 PM**

**RECESSIONAL MUSIC**

(Music on CD will play as people leave and/or partake in food and help in the clean-up)