



EARTH SABBATH CELEBRATION

Sponsored by North Carolina Interfaith Power

Holy Covenant UCC - 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Charlotte, NC November 9, 2011

Community Building (30 minutes)

Weaving the Web of Existence through the Element of AIR

Service (60 minutes)

Honoring the Element of AIR

An ancient symbol for the Air Element is a circle with a vertical line extending above it. The circle represents Spirit which has no beginning and no ending, it's continuous and ever-lasting.

Since Air rises, it's natural to think of Air as "arising out of Spirit."

Let us invoke the element of AIR into our gathering tonight by drawing this symbol in a clockwise direction. In our closing we will release the element of AIR from our by drawing the symbol counter-clockwise.

The symbol for the Element of Air is made by facing East with your index finger pointing straight ahead at eye level.

Draw a circle in the air from that point clockwise to a point about level with your lower belly and back to the beginning point.

Then draw a vertical line straight up as far as you can reach.

Imagine or visualize the line you draw to create this symbol as a bright celestial yellow colored flame about an inch thick.

Imagine or visualize this flaming yellow colored flame completely filling the circle of your symbol.

To Our Common Cause

Leader:

In an era of planetary crises, we as people of faith are coming together.

Response:

We come together because our love for god and our care for creation inspires it; our concern for justice, freedom and peace demands it; and what we can learn from each other requires it.

Leader:

Baha'i, Hindu-Jain, Islamic, Jewish, Latter-Day Saints, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Sikh, we have begun to listen together to the spirit within our varied and venerable traditions.

Response:

In spite of our differences, we share many principles which spring forth from the teachings of each of our faith traditions.

Leader:

We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

Response:

A sense of the sacredness of the individual person and each one's conscience.

Leader:

A sense of the value of human community, and the role in the interdependent web of life.

Response:

A realization that might is not right; that human power is not self-sufficient or absolute, and that in god is our trust.

Leader:

A belief that love, compassion, selflessness, and the force of inner truthfulness and the spirit have ultimately greater power than hate, greed, and inordinate self-interest.

Response:

A sense of obligation to stand on the side of the poor, the hungry and the oppressed, and to serve the cause of Eco-justice for All.

Leader:

A profound hope that good choices for All of Creation finally will prevail.

Response:

Because we affirm these convictions held in common, we also affirm one another in our different religious and cultural expressions. Because we affirm our differences, we also affirm the validity of the diverse efforts and gifts which we each bring to the common cause of Caring for Creation. Because we affirm our role in the world, we also affirm our commitment to stand together as a unified force for its social and moral benefit, and to be a symbol of living together in diversity which the creator intends for all creation.

Feather Totem

Lamentation & Thanksgiving ~*~ Personal interactions with AIR

Homily

It takes skill, thought and consideration to properly thank someone. The words should accurately reflect the kindness we received. We must consider the effort of the benefactor, his attention and care. "Thank you for everything," is no thank you at all. It is proper to acknowledge the details of the favor done. Our gratitude should not be exaggerated, nor should it be understated. We want the other to appreciate the degree of our gratitude.

How can we learn to be thankful of AIR? How can we learn to truly honor our Elements? How can we possibly thank God in an appropriate manner?

According to the Shulchan Aruch [I 51:9] when we recite Psalm 100, known as Mizmor L'Todah ("Hymn of Thanksgiving"), we must actually sing it. It deserves nothing less. It is a psalm with amazing power, and we are told that in the End of Days all songs of praise will cease except for Mizmor L'Todah, just as all sacrifices will end, except for the thanksgiving offering.

Mizmor L'Todah is the moment when we acknowledge that not a day goes by when we don't experience hundreds if not thousands of miracles. We may not always see them, but we know these miracles are happening constantly around us.

Mizmor L'Todah: A Psalm of Thanksgiving & Humble Gratitude, by Rabbi Simcha L. Weinberg

Shared Singing ~ Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us,
we are his people,
the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
And his courts with praise;
give thanks to him
and praise his name.

For the LORD is good
and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues
through all generations.

Honoring our Breath

Yoga with Dr. Kathy Shea

Commissioning / Sending Forth

Leader: Grant us a spirit of concern for the future of our environment; Bring an end to the exploitation of the earth's scarce resources; Encourage us to be responsible stewards of your Creation.

Response: Creator God, make us prophets of our time.

Leader: Grant us a spirit of respect, recognizing the value and integrity of all creation; Encourage us to be accepting of ourselves and of others.

Response: Creator God, make us prophets of our time.

Leader: Help us become advocates of peace, bringing an end to conflict and division; Renew our commitment to challenging the causes of injustice.

Response: Creator God, make us prophets of our time.

Leader: Grant us a spirit of openness to see God within and around us; Help us to rejoice in the good we have experienced as we move forward to the future; Help us use our senses to celebrate beauty and creativity in the world.

Response: Creator God, make us prophets of our time.

Leader: Grant us a spirit of truth to recognize failings, which have hurt us, others and the world; Give us the humility to ask forgiveness for our part in any wrongdoing.

Response: Creator God, make us prophets of our time.

Leader: Grant us a spirit of generosity to reach out in trust to those who encounter; help us to embody God's love in our relationships with one another and with all Creation.

Response: Creator God, make us prophets of our time.

Releasing the Element of Air

Let us release the Element of AIR by facing East and tracing the Circle of Air in front of you in a counter-clockwise manner. Then complete the symbol by drawing the vertical line. Imagine this symbol as a flaming bright transparent yellow color as before and allow the Element of Air to be released.