IMBOLC 2015 REFLECTIONS
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At Imbolc we call back the sun and call forth the transformative flame of Brigid, the Celtic Goddess of healing, inspiration and creativity, as the natural world begins to awaken from its dream of hibernation. Embodied ritual opens us to the possibility of experiencing something ancient from our tribal souls and something new from the Divine Mystery. We celebrate the Divine Feminine and the Bear in nature, psyche, and myth. We experience these archetypal energies and images of renewal through sacred story, meditation, seasonal craft, slideshow, creative sharing, Dances of Universal Peace and live music.

We began our recent celebration in Chapel Hill with a symbolic pilgrimage, with drumming, through the woods to honor spring’s re-awakening of the land. Around the outdoor fire we called to the Spirits of the Directions with Sancta’s Elements Invocation on tambourines and danced Thunder Beings together.

Then we purified at the beautiful elements altars (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water). Here is the Fire Altar:
We made birdseed mandalas to take home, infusing them with our prayers, and hung them on the Tree of Life sculpture as offerings to the air spirits. We also decorated shimmering candle cups that would later receive Brigid/St. Brigid’s eternal flame, lit from her center in Kildare, Ireland.

Bear cubs in Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Viewing images, we learned the story of Brigid, as the Celtic Divine Feminine and her Sacred Landscape. We honored the native Bears of our coastal and mountain bioregions, for which we are so thankful, and the Spirit of Bear, which preceded the Groundhog, as symbols of hibernation and emergence, death and rebirth, the renewal of nature and our souls. We saw images of the Offering Tree, the Holy Well, the Perpetual Flame, and the Sacred Earth—Brigid’s Green Mantle—in the context of the mythic Irish landscape, where there is a great resurgence of the compassionate power of the feminine at this time.

A ceremonial procession to the Shrine of Brigid followed, accompanied by live meditative guitar. At the altar participants received blessings of her sacred holy well waters . . . May you be
healed and refreshed in body, mind and spirit from the wellspring of the Great Mother . . . from her sacred flame of inspiration, May Brigid’s flame illuminate your heart . . . and from her green mantle, placed around the shoulders, May you be held and protected under the mantle of the Great Mother.

As the cups, now burning with the sacred flame, were each placed on the sunwheel, the light grew brighter and brighter until, finally, the central candles were lit and the sunwheel was spun to call back and welcome the returning Sun, with us as participants in this great cosmic cycle.

The flames of creativity shone brightly as celebrants gathered around the sun-fire and shared their wonderful songs, poetry, music, and inspiring stories.

Then we feasted to lively Irish music played by members of the High Strung jam.
We ended the celebration by dancing our prayers, circling together in community: *Be melting snow, wash yourself of yourself . . . Light and fire and spirit . . . Om mani padme hum . . . I am opening up in sweet surrender, to the luminous love-light of the One . . . May the circle be open, yet unbroken, may the peace of the Goddess be ever in your heart . . . .*

A big thank you to the celebrants and dancers, and to all who shared their talents with us and to all who helped the event flow so smoothly. For a flyer announcing the next Spirit and Nature cross-quarter events, Beltane (May 2), Lughnasa (August 5), Samhain (October 31), email blchaika@earthlink.net.