**The Telluric Waterway Blessing at the Winter Solstice**

*The purpose of this ceremony is to provide healing, blessing, and protection to the waterways and bodies of water upon which our planet depends. It uses a two-part ritual: the first is using a modified Sphere of Protection that is placed on a stone. The second part of the ritual involves leaving the stone at the waterway as a blessing.*

*This represents a full script for the ceremony; you may also find a simplified version on the website:* [*http://aoda.org/earthrituals/waterwayblessing/*](http://aoda.org/earthrituals/waterwayblessing/)

For this ceremony, you need to gather one or more small stones that can be taken with you to a local waterway. To select your stones and waterway, use your intuition and connect with the land.  Find a stone that is willing to receive the blessing (you can sense this intuitively or can do a simple divination). We recommend using local stones as these are directly returned to nature, either gathered from the waterway or the surrounding landscape. You will also need to select a waterway in order to receive the blessing. If you know what watershed you live in, you might wish to do your first ceremony for the watershed you live in. If you are in the US, you can learn more about your watershed through the [United States Geological Survey Site](https://water.usgs.gov/wsc/map_index.html). Canadian Members can [visit here](https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/science-and-data/science-and-research/earth-sciences/geography/topographic-information/geobase-surface-water-program-geeau/watershed-boundaries/20973).

Given the cold and dark nature of the Winter Solstice, the ritual itself can be done in advance at your home, and then the stone taken to the waterway and offered there. You can also perform the stone blessing at the waterway itself if it is private and the weather is appropriate.

You can bless one or more than one stone, leaving the stones at one waterway, along a waterway, or at multiple waterways in your region. If you are blessing more than one stone, you will want to trace the symbol on each of the stones as you perform the Sphere of Protection on them.

**The Ceremony, Part I: Blessing the Stone**

In preparation for the Stone Ceremony, place the stone(s) upon your altar and decorate your altar as you see fit. Include AODA’s four elements and, if you can, a sickle or other small blade with a sprig of mistletoe or evergreen. Have spring water, snowmelt, or water from the waterway itself available in a small bowl.

Open up a Sacred Grove using [AODA’s Solitary Grove Ritual.](http://aoda.org/publications/articles-on-druidry/aodas-solitary-grove-opening-and-closing/)

**Solitary Grove Opening**

### Declaring Peace:

The first duty of Druids assembled in the Sacred Grove is to proclaim peace to the four quarters of the world, for without peace our work cannot proceed.

(Raise your hand in the east, facing outward toward the east and say):

I proclaim peace in the east.

(Pause, feeling peace radiating within and without.  Lower your hand and proceed to the south, where you repeat the same process, saying:)

I proclaim peace in the south.

(Proceed to the west, and do the same thing, saying:)

I proclaim peace in the west.

(Proceed to the north and do the same thing, saying:)

I proclaim peace in the north.

(Advance to the north side of the altar, facing south across it.  Say:)

The four quarters are at peace and the work of the grove may proceed.

### Purifying the Grove with the Elements

Let this grove and all within it be purified with air.

(Go to the eastern side of the altar, pick up the cauldron with the incense, and carry it to the eastern edge of the space.  Pause there, holding the cauldron out as though offering the incense, and then walk in a clockwise circle once around the outer edge of the space, tracing a circle around the grove with the cauldron.  When you’ve come back around to the east, return the cauldron to the altar.

(While you do this, visualize the following. When you hold the cauldron as though offering the incense, imagine a current of yellow light streaming in from the east and forming a sphere of yellow light around the cauldron.  As you carry the cauldron around the grove, imagine the cauldron tracing a line of yellow light in a circle around the outside of the grove. When you carry the cauldron back to the altar, see it trace a line of yellow light in from the edge to the altar, and see the sphere of yellow light remaining with the cauldron on the altar.

(If you are doing this in a natural setting, instead, observe in the four directions around you, starting in the east.  Look at how the air manifests in the surrounding landscape.  Feel it on your skin.  Feel the element of air coming into your sacred space, see it tracing a line of yellow light around your space and then, from the east, into the center of your space..)

(When you have finished, say:)

Let this Grove and all within it be purified with fire.

(Go to the southern side of the altar, pick up the cauldron with the flame, and carry it to the southern edge of the space.  Pause there, holding the cauldron out as though offering the flame, and then walk in a clockwise circle once around the outer edge of the space, tracing a circle around the grove with the cauldron.  When you’ve come back around to the south, return the cauldron to the altar.

(While you do this, visualize the following. When you hold the cauldron as though offering the fire, imagine a current of red light streaming in from the south and forming a sphere of red light around the cauldron.  As you carry the cauldron around the grove, imagine the cauldron tracing a line of red light in a circle around the outside of the grove. When you carry the cauldron back to the altar, see it trace a line of red light in from the edge to the altar, and see the sphere of red light remaining with the cauldron on the altar.

(If you are doing this in a natural setting, instead, observe the role of the element of fire in the four directions around you, starting in the south.  Look at how the element of fire manifests in the surrounding landscape.  Feel the warmth on your skin, feel the heat of the sun.  Feel the element of fire coming into your sacred space, see it tracing a line of red light around your space and then, from the south, see it tracing a line of red light into the center of your space.)

(When you have finished, say:)

Let this Grove and all within it be purified with water.

(Go to the western side of the altar, pick up the cauldron with the water, and carry it to the western edge of the space. Pause there, holding the cauldron out as though offering the water, and then walk in a clockwise circle once around the outer edge of the space, tracing a circle around the grove with the cauldron. When you’ve come back around to the west, return the cauldron to the altar.

(While you do this, visualize the following. When you hold the cauldron as though offering the water, imagine a current of blue light streaming in from the west and forming a sphere of blue light around the cauldron.  As you carry the cauldron around the grove, imagine the cauldron tracing a line of blue light in a circle around the outside of the grove. When you carry the cauldron back to the altar, see it trace a line of blue light in from the edge to the altar, and see the sphere of blue light remaining with the cauldron on the altar.

(If you are doing this in a natural setting, instead, observe the role of the element of water in the four directions around you, starting in the west.  Look at how the element of water manifests in the surrounding landscape.  Feel the moisture of the water on your skin, hear the nearby sound of the stream.  Feel the element of water coming into your sacred space, see it tracing a line of blue light around your space and then, from the west, see it tracing a line of blue light into the center of your space.)

(When you have finished, say:)

Let this Grove and all within it be purified with earth.

(Go to the northern side of the altar, pick up the cauldron with the salt, and carry it to the northern edge of the space.  Pause there, holding the cauldron out as though offering the salt, and then walk in a clockwise circle once around the outer edge of the space, tracing a circle around the grove with the cauldron from north to north.  When you’ve come back around to the north, return the cauldron to the altar.

(While you do this, visualize the following. When you hold the cauldron as though offering the salt, imagine a current of green light streaming in from the north and forming a sphere of green light around the cauldron.  As you carry the cauldron around the grove, imagine the cauldron tracing a line of green light in a circle around the outside of the grove. When you carry the cauldron back to the altar, see it trace a line of green light in from the edge to the altar, and see the sphere of green light remaining with the cauldron on the altar.

(If you are doing this in a natural setting, instead, observe the role of the element of earth in the four directions around you, starting in the north.  Look at how the element of earth manifests in the surrounding landscape.  Feel the solidity of the land beneath your feet, see the mountains in the distance on the horizon.  Feel the element of earth coming into your sacred space, see it tracing a line of green light around your space and then, from the north, tracing a line of green light into the center of your space.)

(When you have finished, say:)

### Invoking the Holy Powers through the Druid’s Prayer

I invoke the blessing of the holy powers with the words that have been the bond among all Druids:

Grant, O holy ones, thy protection;

And in protection, strength;

And in strength, understanding;

And in understanding, knowledge;

And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice;

And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it;

And in that love, the love of all existences;

And in the love of all existences, the love of Earth our mother and all goodness.

(When you’ve finished the druid’s prayer, chant the word Awen three times; with each chant intone it. Draw the word out into its three syllables – Ah-Oh-En – and let it resonate throughout your body and the Grove.

AWEN, AWEN, AWEN

Then perform the complete [*Sphere of Protection ceremony*](http://aoda.org/publications/articles-on-druidry/introduction-to-the-sphere-of-protection/) to complete the opening of the grove.

**The Stone Blessing Ceremony**

Using an adaptation of the AODA’s Sphere of protection ceremony, bless the stones. (Given here are words for the base ceremony; you may make any adjustments to the wording as you see fit. ) If you choose to bless multiple stones, draw the symbol on each stone and give them a group blessing at each of the directions.

Move to the east and face the altar. Dip your finger in the bowl of water and then draw the symbol of air (a circle with a line extending from the top) on the stone.

Say: “With the blessing of the hawk of May, the energy of the rising sun, and the power of the east, I ask for the blessing of the air upon this stone, and thereby, upon the waterways.” Visualize the energy of the air, a bright yellow, flowing into the stone.

Move to the south and face the altar. Dip your finger in the bowl of water and then draw the symbol of fire (right-side up triangle) on the stone.

Say: “With the blessing of the white stag in the summer greenwood, the energy of the noon-day sun, and the power of the south, I ask for the blessing of the fire upon this stone, and thereby, upon the waterways.” Visualize the energy of the fire, a bright red, flowing into the stone.

Move to the west and face the altar. Dip your finger in the bowl of water and then draw the symbol of water (a triangle with the point facing downward) on the stone.

Say: “With the blessing of the salmon of wisdom, the energy of the setting sun, and the power of the west, I ask for the blessing of the air upon this stone, and thereby, upon the waterways.” Visualize the energy of the water, a deep blue, flowing into the stone.

Move to the north and face the altar. Dip your finger in the bowl of water and then draw the symbol of the north (a circle with a line extending downward from the bottom of the circle) on the stone.

Say: “With the blessing of the great bear in the starry heavens, the midnight sky, and the power of the north, I ask for the blessing of the earth upon this stone, and thereby, upon the waterways.” Visualize the energy of the earth, in deep green, flowing into the stone.

Remain in the north for the rest of the blessing. Pick up the stone in both hands and hold it above your head. Imagine the sun’s rays of light shining down on the stone. Say “With the blessing of the solar currents and the turning wheel of the celestial heavens, I ask for the blessing of the solar current upon this stone, and thereby, the waterways.” Visualize the energy of the solar current—a golden light—flowing into the stone.

Place the stone back upon the altar (alternatively, you can take the stone to the ground and kneel on the earth). Place your hands on the stone and say, “With the blessing of the telluric currents and the flows of energy in the deep earth, I ask for the blessing of the telluric current upon this stone, and thereby, the waterways.” Visualize the enrgy of the Telluric current—a light gold-green light—flowing into the stone.

Hold the stone in your hands in front of you, over the altar. Say, “By the six powers here invoked, and here present, and with the blessing of the lunar current and the inner realms of spirit and flow of Nywfre (NOO-iv-ruh), I ask for the blessing of the lunar current upon this stone and thereby, the waterways. May the waterways be protected this day, and always, across the earth.” Focus on the energies present in the stone and then chant, “Awen, Awen, Awen.” Envision the energies of the stone melding to create a multilayered sphere. Say, “The energies of blessing, protection, and healing will be carried by this stone to the waterway, which will receive this blessing.”

Pause, then say, “I thank the waters of the earth—the rivers, streams, springs, oceans, lakes, rains, snows, and glaciers—for the gift of life. Blessings to the waterways, this day and always.”

Sit in meditation for a time once you are finished seeing if any additional insights or messages from the living earth arise. Perform any other work you choose to perform. If you are at the waterway, picking up any litter that you can easily reach is an excellent choice for a physical action that will ground the blessing. Close the grove.

## Solitary Grove Closing

(When the work of the Grove is completed, sit down in the chair in the north and let your mind return to stillness. When you’re ready, rise and go to the north side of the altar, facing south across it.  Say:

Let the powers be attentive as I am about to close a grove of Druids in this place.

(Go to the eastern side of the altar.  Take the cauldron with the incense to the east, and hold it outward as though offering the incense, as in the opening. Say:)

### Releasing the Elements

With thanks I release the powers of air to their rightful places. May peace prevail in the east.

(As you say this, imagine the yellow light that surrounds the cauldron flowing back to its sources in the east.  When this is finished, return the cauldron to its place on the altar, and go to the southern side of the altar. )

(Alternatively, if you are outside, imagine the energies of air leaving the center of your grove and flowing back to their sources in the east.)

(Take the cauldron with the flame to the south, and hold it outward as though offering the flame, as in the opening. Say:)

With thanks I release the powers of fire to their rightful places. May peace prevail in the south.

(As you say this, imagine the red light that surrounds the cauldron flowing back to its sources in the south. )

(Alternatively, if you are outside, imagine the energies of fire leaving the center of your grove and flowing back to their sources in the south.)

When this is finished, return the cauldron to its place on the altar, and go to the western side of the altar.  Take the cauldron with the water to the west, and hold it outward as though offering the water, as in the opening. Say:)

With thanks I release the powers of water to their rightful places. May peace prevail in the west.

(As you say this, imagine the blue light that surrounds the cauldron flowing back to its sources in the west. )

(Alternatively, if you are outside, imagine the energies of water leaving the center of your grove and flowing back to their sources in the west.)

(When this is finished, return the cauldron to its place on the altar, and go to the northern side of the altar.  Take the cauldron with the salt to the north, and hold it outward as though offering the salt, as in the opening. Say:)

With thanks I release the powers of earth to their rightful places. May peace prevail in the north.

(As you say this, imagine the green light that surrounds the cauldron flowing back to its sources in the north.

(Alternatively, if you are outside, imagine the energies of earth leaving the center of your grove and flowing back to their sources in the north.)

When this is finished, return the cauldron to its place on the altar, and remain at the northern side of the altar, facing south. Say:)

Peace prevails in the four quarters and throughout the grove.

### Returning Power to the Land

Let any power remaining from this working be returned to the Earth for her blessing.

(Any grove working leaves some energy behind it, and this can usually be sensed as a mood, a feeling, or a subtle sense of presence in the space.  Imagine this flowing inward toward the altar, down through it to the earth, and then down to the earth’s center.  Keep concentrating on this until the grove space feels clear of any leftover energy and you feel that this work is done. Then say:)

### Invoking the Sword of  Swords

I now invoke the Sword of Swords.

(If you have a sword, draw it and hold it high with the hilt up and the point down. If you don’t have one, visualize a great medieval sword in that position, hovering in the air before you, and raise your hand in salute.  Say the following incantation:)

From the rising Sun, three rays of light;

From the living Earth, three stones of witness;

From the eye and the mind and the hand of wisdom, three rowan staves of all knowledge.

From the fire of the Sun, the forge;

From the bones of the Earth, the steel;

From the hand of the wise, the making:

From these, Excalibur.

By the Sword of Swords, I pledge my faithful service to the living Earth, our home and mother.

(Chant the word Awen once:)

AWEN.

(As you chant the word, imagine the sword—whether physical or imagined—dissolving into pure light, which draws together into the image of the Sun, standing at the zenith in the south. Lower the sword, sheath it, and put it back in its place, or lower your hand, and leave the altar; walk in a clockwise circle around the grove to whichever gate your degree entitles you to use, and exit the grove.  This concludes the closing ceremony.)

**Part II: Offering to the Waterway**

Take your stone to the waterway where you intend to offer the blessing. Offer the stone, with your own words or an appropriate poem.

Using your intuition, decide if the stone will be placed in the water or next to the water. The placement is important: A stone placed in the water will allow the blessing to flow downstream, while the stone placed next to the water will continue to bless the waterway in that particular spot.

You can offer this prayer:

*Winter waters, flow now*
*From the deepest sacred springs*
*Hear the beats of our hearts*
*Share your love and life.*
*Let the Telluric current rise*
*Through ancient rock and stone.*
*Let that blessing flow*
*Upon river current and ocean wave*
*Blessing the lands*
*And all who live upon them.*

Do any other work you are led to do.

Meditate on the experience of placing the stone and thank the waterway.

After the ceremony, we suggest that you also do something to bring the energies of the blessing to the waterways directly, as an offering to the waterway. This allows you to balance both physical and metaphysical work.  This might be picking up trash along your waterway, participating in waterway monitoring, reducing your use of water in your home, or other such activities.