

# Court of the Rising Spring



*A Self-Guided Ostara Ritual by Athne Machdane  
Composed Spring 2019 for the  
Unitarian Universalist Community of Casper*

**Ritual Setup:** Arrange ritual space in a circular configuration with altar in center set with elemental talismans. Size of ritual space may vary as needed. Earth = rock or crystal, air = incense (suggest lavender or other floral scent), fire = red candle, water = wild-gathered if possible (tap water okay if not), center = basket with Ostara eggs, notecards/pens, personal talismans, food offerings, etc.

*If candles and incense are a problem in your ritual space or for personal and/or health issues, use a feather or hand fan for air, LED candle or flashlight for fire.*

**Cleansing and Prep:** Suggest sage-smudging ritual space, if possible, prior to ritual. Space should be physically clean and free of clutter and material unrelated to the ritual practice. You will need a clear walking path around the altar.

**Grounding and Centering:** Play a short track of calming music, practice a brief silent breathing meditation or similar activity to clear the mind of mundane tasks.

*Music suggestion: The Mummer's Dance by Loreena McKennitt*

**Call to Order:** Ring a bell or chime if you have one or snap fingers together.

**Opening Words (recite aloud or read silently):** Today is a celebration of the coming spring in the turning of the seasons, personal lives and communal bodies. Seeds of hope are planted now in the heart and mind, nurtured with love and compassion for all sentient being. Work now the magick of springtime.

Ostara is both a physical event and an esoteric journey. The vernal equinox marks the time when day and night are balanced, soon the land will warm and thaw to reveal the beauty of springtime. So too does the individual and collective spirit stir with creative potential and a yearning for rebirth, renewal and regrowth.

Now is the time to give form to new ideas, seek out new solutions to old problems, try new activities, reach out to new people and forgive past wrongs and injustice. As the physical landscape blossoms so can the communal, social, emotional and spiritual landscapes. All are empowered by love and compassion.

**Cast circle:** Move once around the outer perimeter of the ritual space in a clockwise direction, visualize a rainbow dome forming around the space. Use a wand, staff, athame or similar ritual implement if desired (not required). Recite the following invocation at the conclusion of the transit and visualization:

*This circle is cast with perfect love and perfect trust. So Mote it Be*

**\*Covenant (recite aloud or silently):** *UU Casper Leadership Covenant*

We covenant with one another in a spirit of love and compassion

To share honestly

Listen actively

Assume good faith

Act with integrity

Ask for and offer help

Seek and offer forgiveness

Encourage joy and celebration

Express gratitude

Speak directly to one another about concerns and issues

Support decisions in a shared voice

These are our aspirations and intentions which we pursue in good faith

So mote it be

*\*If performing this ritual in group practice, ask everyone to please rise as willing & able, in body or spirit, and recite covenant in call and response format. Ritual leader(s) recite each line followed by participants in turn. All recite So mote it be in unison. Suggest making handouts or large format poster/slide in advance.*

**Invite Elements:** East (Air), South (Fire), West (Water), North (Earth), Center (Spirit). Move to each position, facing the elemental talisman on the altar. Recite the elemental invocations in turn, moving in a clock-wise progression:

**[East] Air:** Element of Air, Primordial Breath shared by all sentient beings, Thou art invited into this sacred circle with boundless love & compassion...

**[South] Fire:** Element of Fire, Primordial Spark empowering all creative forms, Thou art invited into this sacred circle with boundless love & compassion...

**[West] Water:** Element of Water, Primordial Lifeblood nourishing all realms, Thou art invited into this sacred circle with boundless love & compassion...

**[North] Earth:** Element of Earth, Primordial foundation upon which all rest, Thou art invited into this sacred circle with boundless love & compassion...

**[Center] Spirit:** Deity Invocation (see next slide)

*If this ritual is being performed in a group practice event, facility or otherwise where a chalice is customarily lit, include the chalice somewhere within the ritual space and light it during or immediately following the deity invocation.*

**\*Deity Invocation (recite aloud or silently):** *Invocation of Eostre*

Eostre manifests within me now so that I may wield the magick of springtime

My spirit is empowered by limitless compassion so that I may plant love  
wherever I go

My mind is empowered by fertile creativity so that I may seek out new  
opportunities

My body is empowered by renewed vigor so that I may undertake skillful actions

Hence I go forth to bring new life into my community and my world

So mote it be

*\*If performing this ritual in group practice, ask everyone to please rise as willing & able, in body or spirit. Ritual leader(s) recite deity invocation. All recite So mote it be in unison following deity invocation and chalice lighting if applicable. Suggest making a print of the elemental and deity invocations in advance.*

**\*Opening Hymn:** #327 *Joy Thou Goddess*

*\*Optional, if using the hymn and performing this ritual in group practice, ask everyone to please rise as willing & able, in body or spirit to sing the hymn.*

**Guided Visualization:** *Court of the Rising Spring* by Athne Machdane

*If this ritual is being performed in a group practice event or live broadcast, service leader(s) should describe the grounding, narrating and visualization process to the participants prior to beginning. Suggest having multiple readers to switch off narrating the visualization at each paragraph if possible.*

*Take a moment of silence to ground, calming the mind and preparing for the visualization experience, dim interior lights if using indoor ritual space.*

The first glimmer of light rises over a high alpine plateau in the pre-dawn hours, jagged peaks thrust upwards into fathomless space illuminated by stars unfettered by human contrivance. The cold air shocks you into full wakefulness. You rise and begin preparing for a long day of trekking, a legendary summit beckons in the distance as you dress, take nourishment and gather your gear to continue your journey to a mythical land known to you in dreams and visions...

You have been traveling for some considerable time in this region, each day filled with both triumph and tragedy as this realm of unending winter devises yet more tests of your physical, mental and spiritual strength. The journey is shared with fellow travelers, some close, some distant yet you face the greatest test utterly alone with your own demons while summoning the will to keep climbing the endless mountains and crossing the limitless expanse of the place...

You traverse through dense evergreen forests and rolling foothills while approaching the base of the peak you intend to summit this day. By midday the wind is howling through the trees and you know a storm is blowing in but it is too late to turn back so you press on. As you cross the tree line into a clearing at the foot of a sheer rock face, movement catches your eye. A rabbit darts out from the tree line across the snow and soon you see it is being pursued by a bobcat...

The fierce beauty of the bobcat and the swift cunning of the rabbit are equally inspiring and captivating to you. Both are following refined instincts and are completely at home in this landscape. With your superior physical size and climbing axe in hand there is no cause for alarm in this spectacle of primal nature unfolding before you. Instead you feel honored and privileged to bear witness. Both the rabbit and cat are completely oblivious to your presence...



The rabbit takes an abrupt turn into a narrow fissure in the rock face, the bobcat follows close behind and the scene concludes as quickly as it began. This moment of quiet reflection is suddenly broken by the simultaneous crack of a nearby lightning strike and an icy blast in the face, behold thunder-snow. Gazing along the ridges of the peak you notice the storm rapidly descending upon you, dark greenish gray clouds fill the sky. You must quickly find shelter...

Previous feelings of invulnerability are instantly dissolved as you assume the role of prey being chased by unseen forces seemingly driving the storm with precise intent to catch you. Seeking the same refuge you race to the fissure, swinging furiously at it with your axe to widen the opening enough to squeeze through. Embodying both the agility and cunning of the rabbit and the strength and fierce determination of the bobcat you finally clear the path and dive in...

Venturing deeper the fissure opens into a chamber. Your headlamp reveals a confluence of several passageways within the mountain, some carry now frozen drainage streams. Sparkling icicles or perhaps crystals hanging from above draw your attention. However, in a state of haste and confusion, you don't notice the smooth, sloping ice floor and soon you are sliding feet first at a high rate of speed into the heart of the mountain. Then without warning all goes black...

An indeterminate time later you regain awareness, a faint glowing light shines in the distance and the air is now warm and moist. There is not ice nor jagged rocks but only a dry, flat stone floor beneath you. Shaken but uninjured and still in possession of your equipment you proceed slowly towards the light source. There are telltale signs the rabbit and bobcat passed through but no blood or indication of violence is to be found. You quickly arrive at the light source...

Behold a vast chamber consisting of a tall dome lined in amethyst like a geode meeting a dished basin at an equatorial rim where upon you stand at a threshold. The basin is covered in rich soil supporting trees, flowers, lush vegetation. A giant iridescent gem projects from the tip of a spire rising high into the interior space, shining like the midday sun, while meandering streams converge at the center of the basin. A path weaves downward towards the central structure...

As you follow the path and encounter many species of flora and fauna you notice they are all in bloom or in the prime of their youth. There appears to be no aging, sickness or death and certainly no conflict, storms or scarcity of resources. How can such a place exist within the perpetual winter and harshness of the environment you just came from? Arriving at the central structure you can see the overall shape of the chamber, that of an egg viewed from the inside...

Rising from a pool formed by the convergence of the streams is a broad circular pedestal taking the form of a stylized flower. A bridge arches over the moat arriving at the base of an elaborate spire set upon the central axis. The spire takes a form unique to you alone yet universal in its meaning and intent. A doorway leads inside to reveal many levels and layers of exquisite art, interactive features and representations of divinity. A mandala of your innermost being...

At the conclusion of a profound journey through the mandala of your inner deities and demons, heroes and villains, predators and prey, your very life and death cast into architectural and artistic metaphor, you arrive in the central chamber. Awaiting you is the primordial essence of fertility, passion, and creation embodied in whatever form is most appealing and compelling to you at this moment in time. Accept their embrace of limitless compassion and eternal love...

At the moment of embrace you find yourself seated in a throne, taking the form of this spirit being, at your sides are an enchanted basket within which sleeps the rabbit that first revealed the entrance to this realm and its young along with the bobcat and its cubs curled up asleep on a cushion. Various ceremonial tools and vestments are provided, each of which you instinctively know how to use. On a table before you is an ornate bowl containing an egg-shaped jewel...

Following your instincts and a voice within your head you pick up the jewel and swallow it. Instantly you are overcome by a surge of intense passion and internal heat, followed by a feeling of complete emptiness and peace. The entire mandala including yourself dissolves into a singular point of white light at which point you wake up once again in your camp, on the side of a mountain. You calmly rise and take pen and paper to record this most amazing journey...

So mote it be.

**Dissolution:** Ring a bell or chime if you have one or snap fingers together.

**Devotional:** Approach the altar as willing and able to offer forth invocations to the sacred circle and receive the blessing of your Spirit Guide(s) whom you met in the visualization. These can be shared aloud, written down or reflect upon in silence. Focus on the metaphorical significance and symbolic meaning of the egg as latent fertility and potential for new life that resides within us. Form this potential with creativity, incubate it with unconditional love and compassion, guard it with rational discernment and hatch it with skillful action.

*Specific details regarding the format of the devotional should be developed to suit the ritual space, number of participants and circumstances in the community.*

**\*Opening of Circle (recite aloud or silently):** We give thanks to Deity, the Elements, our spirit guides, our ancestors and departed loved ones, and beloved community for empowering and sharing in this working. The circle is open but never broken. Let us carry the love we have gathered here as we continue the dance of life. So mote it be.

*\*If performing this ritual in group practice, ask everyone to please rise as willing & able, in body or spirit, and recite opening of circle in unison. Suggest making handouts or large format poster/slide in advance.*

**Spiral Dance:** Optional component following opening of circle, this will require recorded music with a strong drum beat and rhythm. As music plays weave through ritual space and surrounding vicinity to spread the energy raised during the ritual and begin the post-ritual grounding. Conclude with gathering around the altar and extinguishing any candles or burning incense in use. Following the opening of the circle and spiral dance, if applicable, refreshments may be served and a ritual burning of any written prayers, notes or other paper offerings created during the ritual may be conducted in a safe and appropriate manner if desired.

*Specific details regarding the format of the spiral dance should be developed to suit the ritual space, number of participants and circumstances in the community.*