

SOPHIA'S WELL

A Wisdom & Wellness Center

270A Hanford Street, Sutter Creek, CA 95785

Phone: 209-418-9003 Website: www.sophiaswell.org Email: sophiaswell@volcano.net
Rev. Dr. Patsy Walker Fine, Minister/Spiritual Director; Rev. Tracy Johnson, Rituals Minister
Music Director, Shari Anderson

***Please sign in on the Informed Consent roster in the foyer and silence cell phones.**

Winter Solstice 2016

Hosted by Rev. Tracy Johnson

Drumming/Flute Prelude

The Lighting of the Solstice Candles: Seasonal changes of wintertime are created because the power of the sun is waning. Ancient cultures created rituals to call the sun back from where it seemed to have been swallowed up by the darkness of the womb. They lighted torches and other lights to lighten the darkness and remind the sun to come back. They experienced its return at the winter solstice as a rebirth from the womb of night or the goddess. Now we too come to the winter solstice, longest night of the year when darkness seems to triumph, yet gives way to light. Like many others at different parts of the globe we gather to honor the return of the light.

Our large white candle is lit to call in the Christ Light, *the light shines in the darkness, a light the darkness cannot overcome...*

Invocation:

Fruitful ground of our Being
Who turns the sun's face away from us
And gathers us into the darkness of winter,
Lead us inside to the great fires in our hearts.
Warm the hands of hope in our secret soul places.
Show us the holy seeds that have been planted in our souls.
Remind us that heaven's answers rest in the
dark ground of our being.

Welcome Gabriel, Archangel of the Winter Solstice:

Gabriel is the Angel of tenderness, mercy, compassion and love. He is the chief guardian of the Winter Solstice festivities. It is during this season that the inflow of divine Light reaches the heart of the planet and concentrates there. From highest to lowest, each living thing absorbs this Light according to its capacity to receive.

Gabriel uses this divine Light (Love) to purify, elevate and spiritualize the human souls in his charge. As Love consciousness expands, we learn to use it as a Power of Spirit.

Music: *Let it Go* by Pentatonix

The Significance of the Dark Madonna: Rev. Patsy

- *The Return of the Black Madonna: A Sign of our Times or How the Black Madonna is Shaking Us Up for the Twenty-first Century*, Rev. Mathew Fox, Ph.D., 2006.
- *Dancing in the Flames: The Dark Goddess in the Transformation of Consciousness*, Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson, 1996.
- www.interfaithmary.org
- *Kali Takes America: I'm With Her*, Vera de Chalambert, 201, <http://www.rebellecommunity.com/2016/11/18/veradechalambert-kali/>

Winter Solstice: Honoring Our Dark Side (Ideas Taken from *Owning Your Own Shadow* by Robert A. Johnson)

The four seasonal festivals are like plays that enact the process of individual enlightenment. They trace the progress of the “spiritual sun” through the seasons of the year. They represent the process of involution/evolution, when the seed of inner potential descends out of the divine source into the darkness of matter to learn and to awaken through the process of life. At the winter solstice darkness is at its maximum, yet there is hope in the winter sunrise as light gradually increases. May this light nurture and grow soul seeds planted deep within.

Yet even as we honor, the polarity of light and darkness in nature, the light giving way to darkness and the darkness giving way to the light in the changing of the seasons, we are less comfortable with and often reject the darkness within ourselves. Carl Jung alerted us to the positive and negative (or “shadow” sides) within everyone. Though we are born whole, he tells us, in the process of being assimilated into a culture, we begin to divide our God given characteristics into those that are acceptable to society as a whole and those that must be hidden. To refuse the dark side of one’s nature, however, is to store up or accumulate the darkness.

Many believe we are presently dealing with the accumulation of a whole society that has worshipped its light side and refused the dark, leaving us with a residue of war, economic chaos and racial intolerance. If we accept this to be true (and I believe that it is) our only choice is whether we will incorporate the shadow consciously or express it through some neurotic behavior. Countries and organizations have shadow sides as well. If we willing to do our shadow work, we can avoid the problem of projecting it onto others. Have we not seen examples of the shadow at work in recent times? Johnson also maintains that the high creativity of our modern society can only be maintained if we recognize the shadow that accompanies it and pay out that shadow in an intelligent way. An important piece of this work is that we serve the whole when we engage in it. Western tradition teaches that if only a few people find wholeness the whole world can be saved.

And so can we honor the darkness and trust that it has many gifts to offer us? Johnson reminds us that the shadow contains a good deal of energy and that it is the cornerstone of our vitality. May we use the energy it creates wisely. It is also important to remember that it is possible to project the “best part of one’s self” onto another person or situation. What we admire in someone else is often an unacknowledged part of ourselves. Can we accept ourselves in all our humanity not just the positive parts that have no vitality? Are we willing to go within and reclaim all the rejected parts of our selves?

Shadow Meditation

Time of Sharing

Burning Bowl Ceremony

The Great Turning is upon us. At this moment ending and beginning anew, it seems appropriate to think about letting go of those things in our lives which no longer work. This might be a feeling, a situation, a concern, a relationship. (Pass out papers)

Communion

As we celebrate the Winter Solstice, we are in communion with some of the Earth’s most ancient energies. With the birth of the midwinter Sun inaugurating a new cycle of growth, we are again bathed in Christ light preparing us for a fresh beginning. Each year this new beginning is on a higher level of the evolutionary spiral. The season is marked by a profound inner stillness, a call to remember that there is more to life than we can see.

As we come to the table to share and enjoy our blessed elements, let us remember how much we have to be grateful for. We are thankful for the sun, which warms our lives and gives us sustenance. It passes its holy fire to us through the food we eat. We are thankful for the moon and the stars that reflect the sun and give us beauty. And most especially we

are thankful for all those men and women who have been a source of inspiration to us. As we serve one another let us speak aloud the name of someone who stands out as a guiding light on your life's journey.

Carol Parrish was reminding her students that "to whom much is given much will be required." We were thus asked to remember that we have a responsibility to use the spiritual energies we receive from the blessed elements wisely. As we pass the cup, let us commit to releasing this energy of goodwill into the world wherever there is opportunity to promote healing, peace and cooperation among all the nations of the world. If there is an area to which you personally would like to direct these healing energies, please speak the name of that nation aloud as you dip your bread into the cup.

As we take and eat may we "remember to remember" that we are children of light at work in the world of matter. May we commit to courageously standing in the place that you have chosen for each of us and serve as we are led.

Celebration of the Darkness:

Rejoice in the winter solstice.

Celebrate the darkest part of the year!

Praise the darkness at the center of the universe.

Embrace the darkness at the center of our beings.

All: We honor the darkness and celebrate the return of the light.

The night brings us refreshing sleep
and nurtures dreams from treasure deep,
Uncharted paths toward which we long
becomes the theme of our night song.

The darkness of the womb gives birth
to life and love throughout the earth
From blackest soil comes richest fruit;
the deepest night inspires the muse.

The darkness of the earth transforms
the coldest death to living warmth.
Our healing comes when we let go
And into darkness freely flow.

Dance of Remembrance: We will dance counterclockwise so as to unwind linear time and rational mind, in an effort to remember who we are and why we incarnated. (Music for Circle)

Benediction: As we face the uncertainty of what lies ahead, may we do so with courage and trust in the unfolding process. Please say the benediction with me.

Lead us, oh Lord, from darkness to Light,
From the unreal to the Real,
From death to Immortality,
From chaos to beauty.

Let us not be afraid
Lift us out of anxiety to confidence.
Help us to appreciate all those who share our life's journey
As well as the struggles of everyday life.

Help us this holy season to remember
We are your children of light
At work in the world of matter.

Closing Song: *Hallelujah* by Pentatonix

Closing Group Chant - All

*Sophia, Sophia, Source of Healing, guide us through.
Lead us inward to our Center, where we are Whole. (3x)*