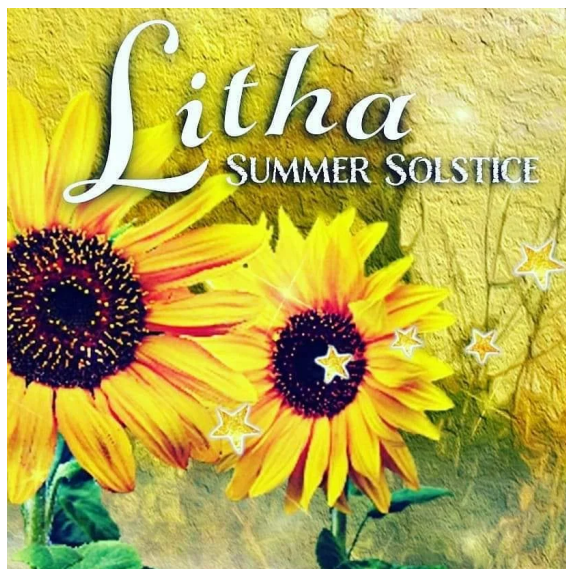


## Summer Solstice Celebration June 20, 2021



Summer Solstice, also called Litha, is the longest day of the year and is about celebrating the sun. It's a celebration of light's triumph over darkness and that of the bountiful beauty that light brings into our lives. The sun nourishes the earth—the plants, trees, and even the waters. Our ancient ancestors believed the sun was the life force of the earth. Let us celebrate the nourishing light of the Sun and the light within each of us. Summer reminds us that there is hope in the world, that the light within can spread and inspire others. We can nurture others, just as the Sun nurtures us.

This date has had spiritual significance for thousands of years. The Celts celebrated with bonfires that would add to the sun's energy, Christians placed the feast of St. John the Baptist towards the end of June. John understood that his role was to prepare the way for Christ, and then to step aside. Thus, what St. John the Baptist says of his mission is even reflected in nature – days become shorter after the feast of John the Baptist and days become longer after Christ's birth – “He must increase, I must decrease.”

**Create a prayer space with a yellow-colored cloth, candles, summer herbs and flowers.**

### **Opening: Salute to the Sun**

Lighting a candle, stand to salute the sun using body gestures in keeping with these words.

Face the sun. (Pause). Stand united with the warm Earth. (Pause). Lift your arms to the sun. (Pause). Feel the energy flow through your hands and arms. (Pause). Pull the sun's energy toward your eyes. (Pause). Hug yourself passionately. (Pause). Feel the energy flow through your body and your feet. (Pause). Connect with the sun and the Earth.

“Return Blessings, Ecofeminist Liturgies Renewing The Earth”, by Diann L. Neu

***Where I Sit is Holy*—a video by Shaina Noll of Native American Chants**

<https://youtu.be/qJ-tNr6nW5E>

Where I sit is holy;  
holy is the ground.  
Forest, mountain, river:  
listen to the sound.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Where I sit is holy;  
Holy is the ground.  
Forest, mountain, river:  
Listen to the sound.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Who I am is holy;  
Holy are we.  
Body, thought, emotion:  
Connecting you and me.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
What I do is holy;  
Holy is my way.  
Work and play together;  
Celebrate the day.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Where I sit holy;  
Holy is the ground.  
Forest, mountain, river:  
Listen to the sound

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Who I am holy;  
Holy are we.  
Body, thought, emotion:  
Connecting you and me.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
What I do is holy;  
Holy is my way.  
Work and play together;  
Celebrate the day.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Where is sit is holy. x2  
Who I am is holy. x2  
What I do is holy. x2

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Holy is the ground.  
Forest, mountain, river:  
Listen to the sound.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Great Spirit circles all around me.

Where is sit is holy. x2  
Who I am is holy. x2  
What I do is holy. x2

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Holy is the ground.  
Forest, mountain, river:  
Listen to the sound.

Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Great Spirit circles all around me.  
Great Spirit circles all around me.

## Readings

Our most urgent need at the present time is for a reorientation of the human venture toward an intimate experience of the world around us. If we would go back to our primary experience of any natural phenomena-seeing the stars scattered across the heavens at night, on looking at the ocean at dawn, on seeing the colors of the oaks and maples and poplars in autumn, on hearing a mockingbird sing in the evening, or breathing the fragrance of the honeysuckle while journeying through a southern lowland-we would recognize that our immediate response to any of these experiences is a moment akin to ecstasy. There is a wonder and reverence and inner fulfillment in some overwhelming mystery. We experience a vast new dimension to our own existence.

“The Sacred Universe”, Thomas Berry

## *The Summer Day by Mary Oliver*

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean —  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down —  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?

### **Reflection**

In the quiet sanctuaries of our own hearts, let us pause and remember our privilege, our blessings.  
Let us name and call on the One whose power in us is great and gentle, firm and forgiving, holy and healing...

You who created us, who sustain us, who call us to live in peace, hear our prayer today.

Help us to view the world and our lives with wonder and reverence for the gift of living on this sacred earth.

Hear our prayer for all who have died, whose hearts and hopes are known to you alone...

Hear our prayer for those who put the welfare of others ahead of their own and give us hearts as generous as theirs...

Hear our prayer for those who gave their lives in the service of others and accept the gift of their sacrifice....

Help us to shape and make a world where we will lay down the arms of war and turn our swords into ploughshares for a harvest of justice and peace...

Comfort those who grieve the loss of their loved ones and let your healing be the hope in our hearts....

What else do you wish to pray about?...

Hear our prayer today and in your mercy answer us in the name of all that is holy. Amen

**Merger Poem by Judy Chicago and read by Sister Anne Curtis**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZsOQJO2Ro8>

And then all that has divided us will merge.  
And then compassion will be wedded to power  
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind.  
And then both men and women will be gentle.  
And then both women and men will be strong.  
And then no person will be subject to another's will.  
And then all will be rich and free and varied.  
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many.  
And then all will share equally in the earth's abundance.  
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old.  
And then all will nourish the young.  
And then all will cherish life's creatures.  
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth.  
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

**Closing Song: *Sungazing Song* by Alexa Sunshine Rose and featuring Aimee Ringle**

<https://youtu.be/ACDzEHJyVtQ?t=1>

Oh glorious father  
You blessed me with your light  
In the center of my soul  
You blessed me with your light  
Oh sacred mother  
You blessed me with your strength  
In the center of my soul  
You blessed me with your strength  
Oh holy child  
You blessed me with your love  
In the center of my soul  
You blessed me with your love

