Sacred Values: Peace, Community, Family — For us, the sacred is embodied in the living systems of the earth and the human community. We see all things as interconnected and interdependent. We inform all our political stands. We support alliances across the barriers of difference, while recognizing that political decisions arise out of what we most value.

Diversity — We embrace diversity as integral to our country’s strength and central to our spiritual practices; we understand the vital importance of biological diversity. We support education that includes many viewpoints and respect for differences. And equal access to resources and decision-making power for all.

Self-Determination — We stand for the right of all people to have a voice in decisions that affect them, the right of individuals to make free and informed choices concerning their bodies, sexuality, powers of reproduction, and manner of life.

Environment — We affirm that the interconnected life-systems of the earth have a right to be and an inherent value that goes beyond their usefulness for human ends.

Human Needs and Social Justice — Human beings have a right to those things that make possible a fulfilling life. Rather than protect the privilege of the few, government has the responsibility to assure that each person has access to the means and opportunities to pursue their own view of happiness.

Human Values — We affirm that the interconnected life-systems of the earth and the human community.

Our only creed is the Reclaiming Principles of Unity.

A Brief History of Reclaiming — Vibra Willow

The Reclaiming Collective was a group of women and men in the San Francisco Bay Area who formed from classes in magic taught by Starhawk and Diane Baker. In 1997 the Principles of Unity were written and the collective dissolved. Reclaiming Witches are in US, Canada, UK, and Germany, largely due to the influence of Witch Camps in those places, as well as the influential writings of Starhawk.

This document is not an official publication of any Reclaiming organization.

Source unknown for chanted. www.reclaimingquarternary.org/web/chants04/
Free MP3 audio files & lyric files: www.culturemagic.org/Material/Spirituality.html

The Five-Point Agenda

— The DreamRoads Collective, Starhawk, 1995

www.dreamroads.com/power/stara.html

www.starhawk.com

Reclaiming Distinguishing features of the Reclaiming Tradition of Witchcraft

M.acha NightMare, and Vibra Willow © 2000

no specific pantheon; no specific beliefs; no dihedral hierarchies; no formal membership or requirement of initiation, and when initiations are undertaken, customized ones; strong emphasis on political involvement and social and ecological responsibility/consciousness; no set liturgy (except certain large, public sabbath rituals) but rather training in principles of magic and structure of ritual; this, rather than historical or religious, is the structure; cultivation of ecstatic states (customarily without the use of entheogens or psychotropics) and divine collogoy — more than transcendental; cultivation of self-empowerment, self-discovery, creativity; extensive use of chanting and breathwork in magical rites; intense “energy-raising,” often using our trademark spiral dance (or even double helix/DNA molecule dance); magical use of Pentacle of Iron construct and its obverse, Pentacle of Pearl; concept of Three Souls or Selves: Younger Self (unconscious mind), Talking Self (verbal and conscious expression), Deep or God Self (Divine within); support the creation of new ritual forms by anyone.

Our vision is rooted in the religion and magic of the Goddess: The Immanent Life Force.

Reclaiming Mission Statement

We are empower our women’s teaching and making magic — the art of our world, and to birth a vision of a new culture.

Come Earth

Come earth, Come air, Come fire, Come water.

We bring the power of your spirit into our circle.

Earth My body

Earth, my blood, Air, my breath and Fire my spirit

Body She Comes

She comes on a wave. From the cauldron of the ocean.

Swept to the shore. Transformed once more.

Weave Your Circle

Ladie, weave your circle tight.

Spin a web of glowing light.

Earth and air and fire and water.

Bind us to you.

Diversity — We embrace diversity as integral to our country’s strength and central to our spiritual practices; we understand the vital importance of biological diversity. We support education that includes many viewpoints and respect for differences. And equal access to resources and decision-making power for all.

Spiraling into the Center

Spiraling into the center, the center of our soul (2x)

We are the weavers.

We are the wove ones.

We are the dreamers.

We are the dream.

Come Earth

Come earth, Come air, Come fire, Come water.

We bring the power of your spirit into our circle.

Earth My body

Earth, my blood, Air, my breath and Fire my spirit

Body She Comes

She comes on a wave. From the cauldron of the ocean.

Swept to the shore. Transformed once more.

Weave Your Circle

Ladie, weave your circle tight.

Spin a web of glowing light.

Earth and air and fire and water.

Bind us to you.

All living beings are worthy of respect. All are supported by the sacred Elements of Air, Fire, Water and Earth. We work to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, that can help to heal the wounds of the earth and her peoples, and that can sustain us and nurture future generations.

The “W” Word, or Why We Call Ourselves Witches

M.acha NightMare 1998-2000

By calling ourselves Witches, we honor our oppressed foremothers, who lived as free women by the practices and customs of their time. Our practice arises from a deep, spiritual commitment to the Earth, to healing and to the linking of magic with political action.

Each of us embodies the divine. Our ultimate spiritual authority is within, and we need no other person to interpret the sacred to us. We honor intellectual, spiritual and creative freedom.

Our value is an evolving, dynamic tradition and proudly call ourselves Witches. Honoring both Goddess and God, we work with female and male images of divinity, always remembering that their essence is a mystery which goes beyond form. Our community rituals are participatory and ecstatic, celebrating the cycles of the seasons and our lives, raising energy for personal, collective and Earth healing.

We know that everyone can do the life-changing, world-renewing work of magic, the art of changing consciousness at will. We strive to teach and practice personal and collective empowerment, to model shifting power relations, and to maximize the potential of empowered individuals by consensus, balancing individual autonomy with social responsibility.

Our tradition honors the Wild, and calls for service to the Earth and the community. We value peace and practice non-violence, in keeping with the Rede, “Harm none, and do what you will.” We work for all forms of justice: environmental, social, political, racial, and gender and economic. Our feminism includes a radical analysis of power, seeing all systems of oppression as interrelated, rooted in structures of domination and control.

We welcome all genders, races, ages and sexual orientations and all differences of background and ability that increase our diversity. We strive to make our public rituals and events accessible and safe. We try to balance being justly compensated for our labor with making our work available to all people of equal economic levels.

All living beings are worthy of respect. All are supported by the sacred Elements of Air, Fire, Water and Earth. We work to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, that can help to heal the wounds of the earth and her peoples, and that can sustain us and nurture future generations.

Reclaiming Principles of Unity

The values of the Reclaiming tradition stem from our understanding that the Earth is alive and all of life is sacred and interconnected. We see the Goddess as immanent in the Earth’s cycles of birth, growth, death and rebirth. Our practice arises from a deep, spiritual commitment to the Earth, to healing and to the linking of magic with political action.

We in Reclaiming call ourselves Witches for the very reason that others do not. It’s an in-your-face word. We, as feminists and women who honor our own divinity as well as our interdependence with the rest of Gaia, The Mother, reclaim the term Witch.

Some people call themselves Wiccans because the term is less loaded than Witch. Or they may describe themselves as Pagans, Wiccan, Tree Witches, or Witches. To us this is retreating from our past. We want respect for my spiritual practices from the rest of society, but I don’t necessarily want respectability.

The word Witch evokes power. What better word to describe a man or woman with the power to be an ecosystem, to be in loving, worshiping, Nature spirituality, performers of “all acts of love and pleasure?”

From: www.reclaiming.org

Permissions: Suzanne Sterling, Vibra Willow 1999-2000

Witchcraft is a religion. Historically, Wicca is one type of Witchcraft. It is an earth-based religion in some ways similar to Native American spirituality. The religion of Witchcraft or Wicca is most recognized by state governments, the federal government, and the United States Armed Forces. Courts have ruled that the witchcraft rituals and beliefs are an exercise of free speech protected by the Constitution. Witchcraft is part of what is called “Neo-Paganism,” exploring nature-based religious traditions which re-emphasize the pre-Christian culture. Other modern Pagans include: Druids, Celtic, Wiccans, Odinists, Druids, and Radical Faery.

Witches belong to dozens of different sects, which we call “Traditions” Calef, Gardnerian, Covens, and freetoform New Reformed Order of the Golden Dawn. The Covens of Goddess Babylon is the foremost organization of many covens and circles. The Reclaiming tradition is a feminist initiation started in California.

One of our most basic rules: “Harm none, you may do as you wish.” One of our favorite sayings of the Goddess: “All acts of love and pleasure are My rituals.”

For color versions of this document, in poster format (16” x 21”) and in letter format (8 1/2” x 11”) as PDF files see: www.CultureMagic.org

Allen Butcher, Denver, 2003
We imagine the circle cast being erased, dissolved. “The Circle deities invoked, and the spirits of the Directions, this time in a share them. Passing them around the circle, the giver may say promises, bring projects to completion, and remember the and crafts. We may be serious or laughing and joking. We work power within ourselves. We might sing or dance, or make arts in the world, raise energy and send it out, or seek guidance or we meditate together, remembering that we are all connected. Feelings that might interfere with our participation in the ritual; known for particular powers or qualities. It may be done with empower those who are working the magic, generally a deity or more deities to witness and assist magical work, and to ritual place, creating a sacred space. In each direction, we are co-creators of change and fate.

Dogmas nor implement any required beliefs. To us the Goddess is the— We draw an imaginary circle around the— We might heal ourselves, or something— We invoke different Goddess(s), and— We invoke different Deity(s), and— We may be serious or laughing and joking. We work in harmony with the forces of nature. When the moon is waxing we cast out the unwanted, when waxing we increase the good things in our lives. With the full moon we fulfill promises, bring projects to completion, and remember the infinite possibilities in the universe. Harmonizing with seasons.

Sharing Food and Drink—We bless what to eat and drink by acknowledging them as gifts of the Goddess/God, and— We might sing or dance, or make arts and crafts. We may be serious or laughing and joking. We work in harmony with the forces of nature. When the moon is waxing.

Evoking the Deity—We invoke different Goddess(s), and— We might heal ourselves, or something— We invoke different Deity(s), and— We may be serious or laughing and joking. We work in harmony with the forces of nature. When the moon is waxing.

A Working Definition of Reclaiming—Starhawk

Reclaiming Ritual: EIEIO

Ecstatic: We aim to create a high intensity of energy that is passionate and pleasurable.

Improvisational: We value spontaneity within the ritual. Courtspace allows us to choose the language we use to create that momentary experience out of the script beforehand, to respond to the energy around us rather than predetermine how it should move.

Ensemble: In our larger group rituals, we work with many priest/esses taking different roles and performing different functions that, ideally, support each other and the ritual as a whole. By sharing a number of core rituals, we can respond to the needs of those present without being forced to do the same thing every time. We believe the circle can be a powerful tool in developing community. By working together, we can create a sense of unity and cooperation that is not possible with a more formulaic structure. This allows for a more flexible and creative approach to ritual, enabling us to adapt to the needs and desires of the participants.

Spirit—Center of the Circle is life; Aether/Soul; wheel of year; correlation; major arcana; male/female, hot/cold, active/passive, fire/earth, spirit/matter, mind/body.

Passion—Center of the Circle is life; Aether/Soul; wheel of year; correlation; major arcana; male/female, hot/cold, active/passive, fire/earth, spirit/matter, mind/body.

Pentacle—Center of the Circle is life; Aether/Soul; wheel of year; correlation; major arcana; male/female, hot/cold, active/passive, fire/earth, spirit/matter, mind/body.

Pentagram—Center of the Circle is life; Aether/Soul; wheel of year; correlation; major arcana; male/female, hot/cold, active/passive, fire/earth, spirit/matter, mind/body.

Wheel of the Year—Vibra Willow

Witches describe the cycles of the seasons as the Wheel of the Year. There are major holidays, called "sabbats," based on solar events, marking the "Turning of the Wheel." Some holidays are celebrated on the "eve," the night before. The following calendar dates reflect the Northern Hemisphere perspective, observed in the Reclaiming Tradition.

* October 31, Samhain—(pronounced saw, to rhyme with cow, and win = sow-win) also known as Halloween. This is a major holiday, held on the night the sun, our year, welcome babies born, celebrate the ancestors, mourn those who have died, and seek to contact the spirits of the dead. It is sometimes called the Witches’ New Year.

* December 21/22 Yule—This is the Winter Solstice, the shortest day and longest night of the year, and the birthday of the sun. We watch the sun set, then stay up all night and keep the Yule log burning as we midwife the release of light, fertility, and new life in the coming of the sun. Many of us have a Yule tree (with presents) in our homes, representing the tree of life and regeneration.

* February 2, Brigid (a drivol, Candemmas, Oimcle)—This is a time we honor Brigid, or Brighde, the goddess of the forge, the flame, and the work, and healing, work, and poetry. We make pledges at the holy well, in front of the sacred flame. We celebrate the gentle signs of early spring, and of light returning after the darkness of winter.

* March 22, Spring Equinox—Also known as Oesdar or Easter, named for the Goddess of Spring. The days and nights are of equal length, and it is time to start the growth of plants that will be the food of life in the coming days. This in our lives as well as in the earth. We celebrate the renewal of life, the endless cycle of rebirth, symbolized by the egg.

* May 1, Beltane—This is also calleed May Day. Traditionally, it is a time of fertility and growth, and our ancestors would celebrate life in our lands (and get together). We dance around a Maypole, weaving ribbons; and we leap over the Beltane fire, for fertility and creativity and love of all kinds, and for healing.

* June 21, Summer Solitice—Longest day and shortest night. The day and night are of equal length, and in the days to come, this we call the birth of the Sun-King. We watch the sun set, celebrating the beauty of midsummer.

* August 2, Lammas—This holiday is also known as Lughnasad (loosh-ness-ad). This is the early harvest, when we begin to reap what we have sown. This is also a time to prepare for the coming winter, and think about what we will need to make it through the dark, cold season.

* September 22, Fall Equinox—This is the major harvest or autumnal equinox. This is the middle of the year when day and night are in balance, or of equal length. We have a feast, and also perhaps plant a winter garden. We remember to slow down and to rest, to enjoy all our blessings, especially our families and friends.