

Women Holding Vigil 2020

**An invitation to participate
in a DIY, Self-organised, Women's Summer Solstice Ritual
Friday 19th June 9.21pm to Saturday 20th June 4.43am**



Image:
Chris-Bird
Jones
<http://chris-bird-jones.co.uk/>

Invitation to Make Vigil

This is a vigil which involves keeping watch through the dark hours of the night to witness the sun rising at dawn on the Mid-Summer Solstice. We begin our vigil at sunset on mid-Summer's Eve (19th June) and end on the morning of the 2020 Summer Solstice (20th June).

This is a vigil to honour the dark as well as celebrate the light.

The Summer Solstice is the time of mid-Summer representing the longest day and shortest night in the Northern Hemisphere (the shortest in the Southern) before the days get shorter and we move towards Winter and the entire cycle begins again.

The length of the vigil is roughly 7 hours. The invitation is to mark this time in a conscious and creative way on your own or with others, by crafting your own vigil or ceremony. This could be simple, this could be elaborate.

You might hold vigil for a loved one, the whole world, for a dream or for an idea.

Vigil: c. 1200, "eve of a religious festival" (an occasion for devotional watching or observance), from Anglo-French and Old French *vigile* "watch, guard; eve of a holy day" (12c.), from Latin *vigilia* "a watch, watchfulness," from *vigil* "watchful, awake, on the watch, alert. Meaning "watch kept on a festival eve" in English from late 14c.; general sense of "occasion of keeping awake for some purpose" is recorded from 1711. <https://www.etymonline.com>

What is it you will mark as you sit in the darkness and wait for the light to come?

About Me

My name is Fern Smith, I live in Wales and I'm a Ritual Artist, facilitator, celebrant, coach, craniosacral therapist and rites of passage guide.

You can find out more information about my work at fernsmith.uk, emergence-uk.org, and <https://craniosacraltherapy.wales/>.

Why Now?

We are living through a time of fear, uncertainty, grief, anger and desperation. At this time, many of us have also witnessed countless instances and moments of joy, resilience, human integrity and natural beauty.

I believe ritual is 'the art of arts' and is a practice we have in our bones to which we can all connect in our own unique way. Some might call it prayer, art, self-generated ceremony or believe it to be a kind of 'sacred activism.'

Ritual can connect us to our own sense of soul, spirit or self, to the earth and to the energies and potential of these times.

It asks that we connect to the deepest part of ourselves as well as to what we love and cherish in the world. We might call this connection to Wisdom, Beauty, Art, Universal Energy, Spirit or God. For me, it can be as simple as a conscious, intentional act of witnessing, marking and noticing. It involves opening myself to 'what is present' whether this feels like a celebration or a mourning.

I do this work as a creative human being and an artist and not as a follower of any particular lineage or tradition. I'm interested in the art of living and believe that every single human being is an artist. What might it look like to practice living as an art? It's different for all of us and involves connecting to a deep sense of purpose or calling, even if it risks sometimes taking us to a place of questioning, feeling lost or a hanging out with ideas of failure.

This work doesn't have to be done 'at scale' to be effective.

Small ritual acts of kindness, loyalty and devotion can have great power. I believe that especially at times like this, offering gratitude and marking the cycles of life, honouring the elements and all beings, can be an immense though invisible force for change.

Practical Things & Schedule

Contact me by email on fernismith@gmail.com and let me know you are interested. Send me a line or two about yourself and why you are called to be part of this. These words will be included in the final artwork I will put together which will be available for sharing so make sure you are ok with this.

Friday 19th June: online meet 5pm – 7pm GMT.

As many of us doing this as possible will meet online via Zoom on the afternoon of Friday 19th June. (I will send you an invitation once I've heard from you). We will share a little about ourselves and what we are marking and what we might plan to do. The sharing of our intentions can be very powerful and this can act as a wider 'witnessing' of what we are doing individually and together. You don't have to join the online meet to participate in the vigil. This is completely your choice.

Sunset June 19th – Sunrise June 20th: Vigil

We all mark this time making vigil in our own way. You might do this inside, you might do this outside. Make sure you are safe and can obey social distancing and any Covid-19 regulations in place where you are.

Monday 21st June: online meet 5pm – 7pm GMT.

As many of us who are able and interested, will re-connect online to share stories, words and reflections on each of our experiences.

Sunset & Sunrise Times

This website gives a general time in the UK of 21.21 for sunset on Friday 19th June and 04.43 for sunrise on Saturday 20th June <http://www.sunsettimes.co.uk/>.

If you want more precise timings depending on your exact location go to <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/> and put in your nearest city.

What Happens Next?

Over the next 7 days (June 22nd to June 28th) you are invited to send me a paragraph and one photo/image (no more than one page of A4 for the words and the image together). Also, your name, a line about yourself and a weblink to your work if you like.

Over the next 7 days (29th June – 5th July) I will compile these all into an online document which will be shared amongst ourselves and also be available to share to a wider public. I shall do this in the form of a simple e-book on the publishing platform <https://issuu.com/>.

The final document is shared between all of us – no one person 'owns it' as such. It belongs to the commons and anyone can share/upload it to their websites as a legacy of this artwork, this moment in time. Everyone who participates will be credited. I will share the final document and some information about the context of this ritual/artwork on my websites fernsmith.uk and emergence-uk.org, feel free to share it on yours.

Participation & Sharing this Invite

Participation is free (though if you would like to donate anything for my time in putting out this call, hosting the space (off and online) and creating the final document you are very welcome).

Feel free to share this invitation to other women and those who identify as women or non-binary.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you'd like to participate and before 18th June. Contact me on fernsmith@gmail.com. Thank you.