

Fridhgardslag: Fridhgard Fellowship Constitution

Part 1:

1. The name of the society is “*Fridhgard Fellowship Society*”, also referred to below as “*the Fellowship*” or “*the society*”.

2. The purposes of the society are:

(1) the contemporary revival, celebration and preservation of the original ancestral religion and culture of the ancient Nordic and Germanic tribes indigenous to Northwest Europe;¹

(2) the acquisition, preservation and propagation of knowledge and information regarding both ancient and modern Nordic religion and culture;

(3) the keeping of *troth*,² forever more, with the gods, goddesses, *wights*³ and ancestors by observing the holy days, making offerings and fulfilling the purposes of Germanic religion for our communities. This central purpose is not confined simply to the service of the society’s membership, but rather includes fulfilling the functions of the religion for members of our local communities and the public at large;

(4) the perpetual maintenance of the holy sanctuary of *fridhgard*,⁴ wherein the ancient tradition of hospitality may be enjoyed by all who respect and preserve the peace;

(5) the healing and spiritual support and development of Nordic people, tribes, families and individuals, down through the chain of generations, through the promotion of:

¹ Nordic and Germanic tribes include any of the native speakers of languages belonging to the *Germanic language family*, including Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Icelandic, English and others, and also including some Italic language speakers such as descendants of the Vandals, Franks and Normans.

² “Troth”, root of the Modern English “betrotal”, refers to both the religion itself and our loyalty and commitment to it.

³ “Wight” is an archaic English word referring to any spirit, entity or being.

⁴ “Fridhgard” or “frithgard” refers to the sacred enclosure of a traditional sanctuary: “fridh” (fellowship, peace) + “gard” (yard, enclosure).

- (a) traditional virtues and concepts of right living and right action,
- (b) learning, goodwill and fellowship amongst ourselves, our families and within our respective communities;

(6) the education and training of priests and priestesses in order that they may:

- (a) fulfill the essential functions of our ancestral religion in and amongst their own families and communities, and/or
- (b) as distinguished fellows of the society's guild of priestesses and priests, perform the essential functions of our ancestral religion in and amongst their local communities as authorized representatives of the society;

(7) the acquisition of one or more freeholds of land, and the establishment of perpetual covenants to include:

- (a) the revival of the traditions of the sacred forests,
- (b) traditional holy burial grounds,
- (c) one or more community halls of worship, and
- (d) other facilities, including places of business, with which to fulfill the Fellowship's purposes.

3. The society's organization is informed by Nordic and Germanic culture, and the spirit of its ancient traditional legal and social systems including:

(1) a *common law* upon which the ancestors based their intertribal alliances and national confederations;

(2) a respect for *legal precedence*, which allowed for the natural evolution of traditional methods of remedial and restorative conflict resolution;

(3) a healthy balance between the rights of the individual and the overriding concern for the greater good.

4. The society is a lawful *oath-band*, whose leadership and voting members share, as common, the purposes of the organization, and have signed and sworn ceremonial holy oaths to fulfill the promise of the constitution and uphold the bylaws.

5. The Fellowship is a religious organization which seeks to help individuals and families in becoming hale and whole in body and spirit. Yet the society neither serves as, nor seeks to replace the natural hierarchy and religious functions of the family or tribe, the true centre of our ancestral religion.

6. The practical functions of the society group naturally into three categories which necessarily dictate the structure of the organization:

- academic / educational
- administrative, and
- religious.

7. These primary functions of the society are not mutually exclusive and roughly describe lines of responsibility on the part of the primary and secondary officers of the society, as per the bylaws of the Fellowship.

8. On the whole, it is the responsibility of the society's trustees⁵ to ensure all these functions are fulfilled as harmoniously and as efficiently as possible.

9. While the Fellowship's field of specialty is the historic and prehistoric past, and its field of operations is the present moment and the modern day, our primary responsibility and commitment is to the future. Among the responsibilities of the living are the accurate transmission of information and culture from the past to the future, and the perpetual safekeeping of assets such as relics, literature, and freeholds of land.

⁵ "Trustees" are the directors of the society.

Part 2: Founding Beliefs of the Fridhgard Fellowship

While not all members of the society may yet be certain about the existence of the gods and their role in creation, being to a certain degree a matter of opinion, the following beliefs are distilled from the ancient lore and inspire many members, altogether informing the philosophical and spiritual foundation of the Fellowship.

1. The gods create and shape the world of form and substance within the causal and temporal constraints of *wyrd*.⁶
2. The gods and other wights inform and animate the material world, being immanent and manifest divinities, and as such are knowable by every being. Yet while the spirits of the gods may be physically manifest, their essential spiritual nature transcends and supersedes the limitations of form and materiality.
3. The gods create life, in all its forms, and living systems, establishing and maintaining environments conducive to the support of biological life wherever possible.
4. The gods created humans and are the founders of our ancestral lines, occasionally appearing obviously among us.
5. When humans were created, the gods gave to our ancestors particular gifts in such a combination that makes us unique in the animal kingdoms. The living generations have inherited these gifts from the ancestors, and the right use of these gifts, an individual responsibility, forms the essence of our ancestor's ancient wisdom.
6. The gifts of the gods are many, but foremost among them is choice, or *will*. The gods give us freedom. The right use of these divine gifts:
 - brings health, happiness and holiness to ourselves, our families and our communities, now and down through the generations;
 - frees us from suffering, banishes fear, and uncertainty in the future;
 - fills us with courage, kindness and commitment;

⁶ "Wyrd", root of Modern English "weird", is often referred to as the Nordic conception of "fate", but it is better understood from its root meaning "to become, that which has become", which also gave rise to the word "worth". Here, *wyrd* refers to "the way of things", or the unfolding of the moment, in the manifest world of form.

- gives us opportunity to create our own future, to forge our own destinies.

7. Our ancestral religious customs, among other things, remind and reinforce our conscious experience of solidarity and communion with the gods, with the natural world, and with our ancestors, kith and kin, bringing health, joy and fellowship to our families and friendship with our communities.

8. Among the divine gifts is the family or tribe, whose collective spirit is greater than the sum of its parts and which is given form by the living generations.

9. The collective spirit of the family or tribe, which includes the ancestors and the yet to be born, transcends time itself: its manifestation is the unbroken *chain of the generations* which spans the vast gulf between the past and the future.

10. The gods are among our ancestors; likewise are we amongst the family of the gods. We are therefore obliged, to the best of our abilities and so far as possible, to make *wise choices* which are in alignment with the known purposes of the gods, including the support of life and living systems, and the health and wholeness of individuals and families within the community of living things.

11. In ensuring that the *chain of generations* is never broken, of absolute importance is:

- reestablishing the spiritual and physical health of our selves and our families, thus creating safe, supportive and loving environments within which our children, and our children's children, will thrive;
- the preservation or revival of indigenous cultures, in the society's case specifically our own indigenous European culture, whose ancient wisdom has been tried, tested and made true by *wyrd* and the natural world of which we have always been a part;
- reestablishing and maintaining a healthy relationship between our tribes and our fellow living creatures;
- the preservation and protection of the air, land and water upon which we, all life, and future generations depend.

12. The essential wisdom of our ancestral religion is truly timeless, and its full and

contemporary revival is far from anachronistic.⁷ Rather, the revival and propagation of ancestral European religion in the modern age will collectively:

- help to heal the malaise of modern Western culture,
- bring life and diversity again after a thousand years of spiritual poverty,
- restore the health of our families, tribes and nations, and
- help ensure the continued survival of our people, of all peoples, and of the natural world.

13. The reestablishment of our ancestral troth will also help us, as individuals:

- gain in joy and spiritual worth,
- identify with the eternal and indestructible core of our beings, and
- increase the awareness of our inherent wholeness and interconnectedness with all things.

14. In contrast to many other religious organizations, it is not the society's role to dictate to individuals and families on matters of opinion and belief. The Fellowship acts as a central well of wisdom and learning, a sanctuary and fridhgard, from which our members and the public may draw when and how they may need it. The Fellowship hopes to inform, educate and inspire members and the public in the private pursuit of spiritual development for themselves and their families.

15. The society is best described as a religious confederation, consisting of free and independent individuals, households, families and tribes with a wide variety of possible Nordic and Germanic ethnic backgrounds. Each household or family, as in times of old, is expected to maintain its own spiritual centre, make its own offerings and so on, according to local custom, with the essential religious focus being its own kindred or other small grouping.

16. Among the society's purposes is to facilitate the re-ignition of this family-centred religion within each household, in ways that compliment, support and restore health to preexisting, natural social structures.

⁷ "Anachronistic" means literally "out of sync with the times".