

Covenant of the Goddess Honors Victims of the 1692 Salem Witch Trials With Song and Prayer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Salem, MA, August 11, 2013 – This past weekend the [Covenant of the Goddess](#) (CoG), a 38 year-old non-profit advocacy organization for Witches and Wiccans, honored the many victims of the 1692 Salem Witch Trials. Over seventy CoG members were in Salem for the organization's yearly conference, Merry Meet, and its annual business meeting, Grand Council. On Saturday at 1pm, these modern day Witches walked to the city's Witch Trials Memorial and participated in an impromptu ritual to recognize those colonists killed and tortured in the name of Witchcraft.

"If you grow up in the United States, you learn the history of the Witch Trials but many people don't learn the lesson behind them. [They] don't heed the warnings ... about what happens when we judge those who don't believe exactly as we do, how quickly drama turns to hysteria...Today, Salem has become a refuge for the modern Witch, a place where you can feel free to express your Witchy self," explains event coordinator, Priestess Sandra Wright.

During Covenant of the Goddess' Friday business meeting, Jack Prewett, incoming Publications Officer, proposed the idea of a tribute. Within minutes of his suggestion, a prayer was drafted and a time set aside for the memorial service.

On Saturday, August 12, 2013 at 1pm, the entire attending membership walked from the historic Hawthorne Hotel, where the conference was being held, to the Witch Trials Memorial site on Liberty Street. Once there, the group formed a circle and began a light chanting led by Rayna, a CoG minister from Miami, Florida. At the center stood Jennifer Bennett, incoming Correspondence Officer, holding up a large bouquet of white and pink roses. As the groups became quiet, Heather Greene, National Public Information Officer, read the following prayer:

"We, the Covenant of the Goddess, a national organization of Wiccans and Witches, in honor of the innocents in Salem who died in 1692, wish to express our sympathy and sorrow over the pain and suffering they experienced. It is our wish that all people will be free to worship the divine presence in their own way in peace. To that end, we have laid a white rose on the marker of each of the aforementioned innocents where that place is known, or here, with these flowers to honor all the rest who suffered alongside them."

After the prayer was read, each member took a rose and laid it on a memorial marker, beneath a tree or on the memorial wall as a tribute to each and every victim. Laura Wildman-Hanlon HPs, one of the local Merry Meet coordinators, called it a "lovely and moving moment."

During the entire twenty minutes, curious onlookers and tourists quietly gathered along the perimeter of the memorial. Some took photos and others even joined in. When all the flowers were laid down, the modern day witches quietly returned to the Hawthorne to continue their business meeting and conference.