

Clann Bhride Survey 2015: Summary of Comments and Open-Ended Questions

We chose to summarize all the comments and the answers to open-ended questions to preserve the anonymity of the responses. Not all the questions had additional comments.

1: How did you first hear about Clann Bhride? Some respondents mentioned Patheos, and the “Loop of Brighid” series by Gilbride. Others mentioned the Cauldron forums, the public announcement we released in 2013 and Facebook.

3: What does membership mean to you? Several respondents mentioned the flamekeeping cill. Other respondents stressed the sense of community, shared devotion to Brighid, and the intellectual discussions about Brigidine topics.

4: What spiritual needs does Clann Bhride fill for you? There were quite a few responses to this question. The most common themes included: the sense of being part of a Brigidine community, the inclusive nature of Clann Bhride, the high quality of discussion and conversation, the information provided in articles on the website and the devotions in the Book of Hours.

5: How can Clann Bhride serve you better? This was also a popular question. Several respondents mentioned a desire for more face-to-face interaction between Clann Bhride members, as well as more organized group devotions and other shared activities. A few expressed support for more organization and more clarity in how Clann Bhride defines itself and its ideas. Several stated that Clann Bhride is meeting their needs already. There was also some support for moving some of our conversations away from Facebook.

7: ...how does the Book of Hours fit into your practice? The answers to this question covered the entire range of possible responses. Some respondents don't use the BoH at all, others use a few selected prayers with their own modifications, others use several prayers from the BoH as written on a daily basis.

8: We're considering an update or sequel to the Book of Hours. What content would you like to see added? Several people mentioned mystical, contemplative or meditative practices. Some people mentioned the “Loop of Brighid” columns. Some people asked for more ancient material or more material from the Irish sources. Others mentioned new rituals, myths, poems, and personal tips on spirituality and practice. Several people expressed an interest in seeing more content submitted by group members.

9: What is your opinion of the Nine Elements? A number of respondents expressed strong agreement with the ideas presented in the Nine Elements. Others expressed reservations or questions about some of them, particularly the idea of seeing Brighid as a creator (#3) or seeing other goddesses as being potentially the same deity as Brighid (#6). Several respondents mentioned the flexibility and inclusivity of the Nine Elements, and some described them as being significant in their daily spiritual practice.

10: What is your opinion of the Brighid Resource List? The responses to this question were for the most part highly positive, stressing how comprehensive the list is. A few people raised questions about particular resources on the list.

11: What is your opinion of the Touchstones? Responses to this question varied. Some respondents were totally unfamiliar with the Touchstones, others consider them highly personally important, others

question their connection to Brigidine spirituality specifically. Most responses described the Touchstones as a good set of values.

12: What is your opinion of the flametending cill? Some respondents describe the CB cill as an important part of their practice, others haven't joined a cill or tend the flame with other groups instead. A number of respondents consider flamekeeping a central part of Brigidine practice, whether with Clann Bhride or another group. There was one request for us to limit the cill to 19 members and add more cills if needed, and one request for us to make it clear that our cill is gender-inclusive.

14: How can we improve the Facebook group? Several respondents would like to see more activity on the Facebook group, including discussion topics and other prompts, more historical and folklore material and more conversation about personal devotional practices.

16: Why or why not? (follow-up to Do you participate in discussions in our Facebook group?) Several people commented that they don't use Facebook often enough to participate. Others commented that they participate because they do use Facebook frequently.

17: Would you participate in discussions if they were hosted on a different website or social media platform, instead of Facebook? Some respondents see Facebook as a convenient place for CB members to converse, others see a benefit in having a CB forum or messageboard. Some mentioned being too busy to participate on another site.

19: How can we improve the website? There were only a few responses here, but the most common theme was to add more content more often, including some from CB members.

20: We are planning to grow the website with more content. What kind of content would you like to see? In the comments, respondents expressed interest in seeing more content focused on meditative practice, healing practices, personal practices and interviews with Brigidine devotees from a range of traditions and perspectives.

22: what kind of merchandise are you interested in? Respondents expressed an interest in CB mugs, T-shirts, bags and devotional items such as jewelry and altar cloths.

23: ...What would you like to see Clann Bhride focus on in the coming months and years? Several respondents expressed an interest in more books by CB. Several expressed interest in a CB divination system. Others asked for more rituals (including seasonal rituals), more meditative or mystical practices and more content from members.

28: Please use this space to tell us anything at all that you want us to know about Clann Bhride Several people responded here to describe their personal experience of CB as a welcoming spiritual home or family.

30: How do you identify your religion... The answers here were extraordinarily diverse. We have members who identify as Brigidine, Wiccan, Druid, polytheist, heathen, Celtic Reconstructionist, animist, pantheist, agnostic, Christian, Vaisnava and as practitioners of Religious Witchcraft or the Creideamh Si. Several respondents identify with more than one of these labels, or with no labels at all.

32: ... what other groups (are you involved in besides Clann Bhride)? We have members involved in OBOD, the ADF, Freemasonry, the Daughters of the Flame, Tuatha De Bridget, ISKCON, Ord

Brighideach, the Benedictines, the Unitarian Universalists and other groups.

33: How do you primarily practice your spirituality? A few respondents added comments here about their personal mix of group and solitary religious practice.

35: Where do you live? Most of our members are based in the United States, but we also have members in Canada, the UK, other parts of Europe, Brazil, New Zealand and Turkey.