Hi Steve,

This is a reflection with movement. As we have a number who are actively involved with their churches I have joined All Hallows to Martinmas with lessons from geese.

All stand with fingertips touching like geese in flight. On the phrases, ‘stepping back, resting, stepping forward, leading’ the group make one step of movement for each phrase.

**Steeping back…..**

**Resting……..**

*Something told the wild geese  
It was time to go.  
Though the fields lay golden  
Something whispered, —“Snow.”  
Leaves were green and stirring,  
Berries, luster-glossed,  
But beneath warm feathers Something cautioned, —“Frost.”  
All the sagging orchards  
Steamed with amber spice,  
But each wild breast stiffened  
As it remembered ice.  
Something told the wild geese  
It was time to fly,—  
Summer sun was on their wings,  
Winter in their cry. [by Rachel Frost ‘For the Birds] This can be read by another voice.*

The flocks of geese have spent the summer squabbling, raising their young and resting till fallen flight feathers have regrown. Now they have heard that silent call far beyond our hearing, calling the unruly gaggle to join together for this is the time to step forward and be ready to take flight.

**Stepping forward……**

**Leading…………**

And above us the haunting cries of the forming skeins weave across our greying skies. In the north the eirey cries of migrating geese are linked to stories of Gabriel’s Hounds and the wild hunt fore-telling of death. Apt at a time of year when harvests made the difference for survival and people had time to remember their beloved dead. Some modern tales tell that geese carry souls to heaven protected within the strength of their guarding wings The time of All Hallows when we remember all those who have died known by Love and who have gone to join with Love.

[Act of remembrance if apbobriate may happen here]

As the geese rise to travel beyond our sight within the air to the beyond it mirrors the season upon the earth when life steps back and moves into resting.

**Steeping back……..**

**Resting………..**

The Celtic phrase for the Holy Spirit translates to “wild goose”. No one knew when the wild geese fly would come or when they would go. Within a skein at full flight the lead goose sets the pattern for the other geese to follow. If we step out of formation we feel the drag of wind resistance urging us to rejoin the skein and work with others to fly further than we can on our own. It cuts the flow of the air so that others making it easier to follow. When lead geese tire they fall back allowing others to lead whilst they rest in the uplift from others. If a geese falls sick or injured from formation a pair of geese will follow it down to help and protect it until they can re-join the next skein. And the incessant cry of the geese in flight is an exhortation one to the other to endure to finish this race. We described the spirit of God as a wild goose who cannot be contained nor tamed. It is only when we choose to join a skein following the lead wild goose a pattern for our life emerges. It is the call of the spirit that brings in those who seek and that moves us forward and to follow in its wake.

**Steeping forward……………..**

**Leading……………..**

Martinmas, November the 11th, which is dedicated to St Martin of Tours. A festival which may have its origins in France spreading to the Low Countries, the British Isles, Germany, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe’. It is said Martin attempted to hide within a goose pen to avoid being ordained as a bishop. Wild geese like the spirit are difficult to chase yet the spirit may chase us. He feared to step forward when he was sought. The leading call of the geese bought him forth to accept that which he had been called to undertake.

And so like the geese our lives pattern the spirits leading.

**Steeping back, resting, stepping forward, leading.**

**Stepping back, resting, stepping forward, leading.**

[Into Iona’s Bird of Heaven- assuming you know it Steve]

Catch the Bird of Heaven  
*Lock Him in a cage of gold  
Look again tomorrow  
And He will be gone  
  
Lock Him in religion  
Gold and frankincense and myrrh  
Carry to His prison  
But He will be gone  
  
All the things that man has made  
Cannot hold Him anymore  
Still the bird is flying as before  
  
Temple made of marble  
Beak and feather made of gold  
Bell and book and candle  
Cannot hold Him anymore  
Still the bird is flying  
As before [Iona. Bird of Heaven from ‘Beyond these Shores’]*