

A Secular Celtic Wedding Ceremony

(Handfasting Ceremony)

Family and friends, we have gathered here today to witness and celebrate the wedding of Groom and Bride. Let us turn our hearts and minds to the couple before us who wish to bind their lives together, in peace, and in love. Today, Groom and Bride proclaim their love to the world and we who are gathered here rejoice with them and for them in the new life they now undertake together.

Our celebration of the union of Groom and Bride is shared by those who have passed beyond this life. Their roles in the lives of Groom and Bride are no less remembered and honored as we savor today's joyous moments. Join with us, then, in fond memory of all these people, and in particular with (departed relatives names). In their memory, let us be silent together.

It has been said that no man is an island entire to himself. Each time two people come together to blend their lives as one, it is a reaffirmation of courage, hope and love. Marriage is the sharing of experience and an adventure in the most intimate of human relationships. Marriage is the promise of hope between two people who love each other sincerely, who honor each other as individuals, and who wish to unite their lives and share the future together. It is the joyous uniting of a couple whose mutual understandings have flowered into romance.

Community Support

We are especially grateful for the values that have been instilled in Bride and Groom from those who have loved and nurtured them. The family and friends each brings to this marriage will continue to be important in their lives, but now will be shared between them, and will be enriched and enlarged. Do you, who are here present, promise and commit yourselves to support and uphold their union?

(Answer: "We do")

Bride & Groom:

Your marriage requires "love." To see with loving eyes is to know inner beauty. To be loved is to be seen and known as we are known to no other. When you give yourself, heart and mind, into the hands of the one you love, you receive that most precious of gifts - the life and love of another. We are loved when another human being wants us, and wish to share their life with us, accept us, without qualification or reservation, not as perfect, but as human, with strengths and weaknesses.

Love endures only when the lovers love many things together and not merely each other. When they share the same values, hold the same interests. You will need to be able to trust one another and learn, as well, to depend on one another.

A successful marriage is based on love, equality, respect, and commitment on the part of both, in which each must adjust to the other's temperaments and moods. In marriage two persons turn to each other in search of greater fulfillment than either can achieve alone. Marriage should be a growing and dynamic relationship, a dream of tomorrow in which we grow and fulfill our possibilities.

Marriage is a dedication. You give yourself, your life and love, into the hands of the one you love. You do so trustingly and generously. Yet, each of you also receives a gift – the life and love of the other. You receive this gift not only from the one you love, but also from their family and friends. This celebration is the outward token of an inner union of hearts. It is a union created by your loving purpose and kept by your abiding will. It is in this spirit and for this purpose that you have come here to be joined together.

Vows

*I, [Groom's name], take you [Bride's name], to be my wife, my partner in life and my one true love.
I will cherish our friendship and love you today, tomorrow, and forever.*

I will trust you and honor you

I will laugh with you and cry with you.

I will love you faithfully

through the best and the worst,

through the difficult and the easy.

What may come I will always be there.

As I have given you my hand to hold

so I give you my life to keep

I, [Bride's name], take you [Groom's name], to be my husband, my partner in life and my one true love.

I will cherish our friendship and love you today,

tomorrow, and forever

I will trust you and honor you

I will laugh with you and cry with you.

I will love you faithfully

through the best and the worst,

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What may come I will always be there.

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Traditionally, the marriage ceremony is marked by the exchange of rings. The wedding ring is a symbol of the unbroken circle of love; a reminder that love freely given has no beginning and no end, no giver and no receiver - for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May these rings remind you always of the vows you have taken here today.

Groom, please take Bride's ring, and as you place it on the ring finger of her left hand, repeat after me . . . With this ring I thee wed . . . promising to love and respect you, . . . sharing good times and bad, . . . in sickness and in health.

Bride, please take Groom's ring, and as you place it on the ring finger of his left hand, repeat after me . . . With this ring I thee wed . . . promising to love and respect you, . . . sharing good times and bad, . . . in sickness and in health.

Since you love each other in your hearts, and have promised to help each other to live and grow, in wisdom and compassion, with these rings you bind your lives together for as long as you both shall live.

Unity Candle Ceremony

This candle you are about to light is a candle of Marriage, a light of two people in love. This candle before you is a candle of Commitment because it takes two people working together to keep it aflame. This candle is also a candle of Unity because both must come together, giving a spark of themselves, to create the new light.

As you light this candle today, may the brightness of the flame shine throughout your lives. May it give you courage and reassurance in darkness. Warmth and safety in the cold. And strength and joy in your hearts.

Sand Ceremony

Bride and Groom, you have just sealed your relationship by the giving and receiving of rings and the exchange of a kiss, and this covenant is a relationship pledge between two people who agree that they will commit themselves to one another throughout their lives. The most beautiful example of this partnership is the marriage relationship. You have committed here today to share the rest of your lives with each other. Today, this relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand one, representing you, Bride and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be, and the other representing you, Groom, and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be. As these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your marriage be.

Handfasting Ritual with Six Cords

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed you have formed ties between each other. As you seek to enter this noble state of matrimony, you should strive to make real, the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage. The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of your growth. Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Yes. We seek to enter.

I bid you to look into each other's eyes.

Groom, will you share in Bride's pain and seek to alleviate it?

I will.

Bride, will you share in Groom's pain and seek to alleviate it?

I will.

And so the binding is made. Please join your hands (in a figure 8 position). The first cord is placed on the bride and groom's hand.

Groom, will you share in Bride's laughter and look for the brightness and the positive in her?

I will.

Bride, will you share in Groom's laughter and look for the brightness and positive in him?

I will.

And so the binding is made. The second cord is placed on the bride and groom's hands.

Groom, will you share in Bride's burdens so that your spirits may grow in this union?

I will.

Bride, will you share in Groom's burdens so that your spirits may grow in this union?

I will.

And so the binding is made. The third cord is placed on the hands.

Groom, will you share in Bride's dreams?

I will.

Bride, will you share in Groom's dreams?

I will.

And so the binding is made. The fourth cord is placed on the hands.

Groom, will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

I will.

Bride, will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

I will.

And so the binding is made. The fifth cord is placed on the hands.

Groom, will you honor Bride as an equal in this union?

I will.

Bride, will you honor Groom as an equal in this union?

I will.

And so the binding is made. The sixth cord is placed on the hands.

Tie the cords together.

The knots of this binding are not formed by these cords buy instead by your vows. Whether this union will last or break is in your hands based on your communication, love, honor and trust of one another.

The cords are then removed.

BLESSING

May every blessing and grace be yours

May your love grow stronger and deeper with each passing year.

May joy and delight fill your home

May daily problems not vex you unduly

nor the desire for earthly possessions dominate you

May you have true friends to stay by you in joy and sorrow

*And if children bless you, may they return your love
many times over.*

With wise and generous hearts

May you help all to come to you in need of comfort

*and may you reach a ripe age together
content for having lived a life of goodness and worth.*

-Gertrude Nelson

Loving Cup Ceremony

On your wedding day, we celebrate the Celtic spirit of the Anam Cara. Anam Cara is translated from the Gaelic as "soul friend." By entering in a partnership with your Anam Cara, you are joined in an ancient and eternal way with this person whom you most cherish. In everyone`s life there is a great need for an Anam Cara and so I ask you to toast one another by repeating the following.

(The Bride and Groom hold the loving cup as they repeat the following)

Bride repeat after me:

*Today I recognize Groom, my soul mate
And ask that you become a part of me, in sacred kinship.
With you, I have lost all fear and have found the greatest courage.
I have learned to love and let myself be loved.
With you, I have found a rhythm of grace and gracefulness.
Love has reawakened in my life; a rebirth; a new beginning.
With you my soul mate,
I am understood,
I am home.*

Groom repeat after me:

*Today I recognize Bride, my soul mate
And ask that you become a part of me, in sacred kinship.
With you, I have lost all fear and have found the greatest courage.
I have learned to love and let myself be loved.
With you, I have found a rhythm of grace and gracefulness.
Love has reawakened in my life; a rebirth; a new beginning.
With you my soul mate,
I am understood,
I am home.*

*And now, please drink to the love you`ve shared in the past.
(The couple take turns sipping from the loving cup)*

*Drink to your love in the present, on this your wedding day.
(The couple take turns sipping from the loving cup)*

*And drink to your love in the future and forever more.
(The couple take turns sipping from the loving cup)*

Bride and Groom, as you embark on this wonderful journey ahead of you, hand in hand, experiencing life together, may all that is true and beautiful be with you always . . . May there be peace in your home, quietness and confidence in your thoughts, and joy and celebration in your hearts.

Dear friends and family, since Groom and Bride have thus pledged themselves in the presence of this company and they have spoken the words and performed the rites which unite their lives pronounce that you are husband and wife.

Groom, you may now kiss Bride.

I present to you Mr. & Mrs.