

Order of Ceremony

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9. Reading
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Gathering

The guests should gather in a circle around the area marked leaving a gap in the East for the participants to walk through.

A bell will signal the start of the ceremony.

The participants will take their places

Welcome

Celebrant will welcome everyone.

The Day's Purpose

Celebrant will ask the couple who they are, why they are here and if they come here of their own free will.

Couple respond in turn

Casting the Circle

Circle is cast by the celebrant with water and fire carrier if required

Call for Peace

Celebrant: Let us begin by calling for peace.

North: Let there be peace in the North

All: So may it be

South: Let there be peace in the South

All: So may it be

East: Let there be peace in the East

All: So may it be

West: Let there be peace in the West

All: So may it be

All: Let there be peace throughout the world. So may it be.

Celebrant speaks about Handfasting

Celebrant will speak on Handfasting, explaining a little of what it is and will then call for the first reading.

First Reading:

Walking the Seasons

Celebrant: A and B will you now walk the circle of the seasons?

Couple: We will. (Walk together to the East)

East: Will your love survive the clear light of day? Will it be nourished with the vitality of Spring?

Couple: It will

East: Then accept this token of Spring as a reminder of your words

(Couple walk together to the South)

South: Will your love survive the fires of change? Will it grow strong in the warmth of Summer?

Couple: It will

South: Then accept this token of Summer as a reminder of your words.

(Couple walk together to the West)

West: Will your love survive the ebb and flow of feeling? Will it remain steady in the storms of Autumn?

Couple: It will

West: Then accept this token of Autumn as a reminder of your words.

(Couple walk together to the North)

North: Will your love survive the times of stillness and restriction? Will it survive the frosts of Winter?

Couple: It will

North: Then accept this token of Winter as a reminder of your words.

(Couple walk together to the center to face Celebrant again)

Celebrant: All things in life are circular – night becomes day, day becomes night and night becomes day again. The moon waxes, wanes and waxes again. The year flows from Spring to Summer to Autumn to Winter and back to Spring once more. Will your love continue flow through these cycles?

Couple: It will

Second Reading:

Vows

Celebrant: We have come here to witness your vows to one another. Are you ready to make them.

Couple: We are

Couple turn to face one another and say one after the other:

You cannot possess me for I belong to myself. But while we both wish it, I give you that which is mine to give. You cannot command me for I am a free person. But I shall serve you in those ways you require and the honeycomb will taste sweeter coming from my hand. I pledge to you that yours will be the name I cry aloud in the night, and the eyes into which I smile in the morning. I pledge to you the first bite from my meat and the first drink from my cup. I pledge to you my living and my dying, each equally in your care. I shall be a shield for your back, and you for mine. This is my wedding vow to you. This is a marriage of equals.

Celebrant:

These promises you make by the sun and the moon, by fire and water, by day and night, by land and sea. With these vows you swear to be full partners, each to the other. If one drops the load, the other will pick it up. If one is a discredit to the other, his own honor will be forfeit, generation upon generation, until he repairs that which was damaged and finds that which was lost. Should you fail to keep the oath you pledge today, the elements themselves will reach out and destroy you.

Exchange of Rings

Celebrant: These rings symbolize the union in which your two lives are now joined in one unbroken circle, in which, wherever you go, you will always return to one another in your togetherness. Let these rings remind you of your commitment to love one another, to share your hopes, your difficulties and your triumphs.

A: With this ring I join my life to yours

B: With this ring I join my life to yours

Handfasting

Couple join hands. Celebrant comes forward with cloth and wraps it loosely over couple's hands

Celebrant: May the bond of your vows be no heavier to bear than this cloth. Above you are the stars; below you are the stones. As time passes remember like a star your love should be constant. Like the earth your love should be firm. Possess one another yet be understanding. Have patience one with the other. For storms will come, but they will go quickly. Be free in giving of affection and warmth.

Couple: Your hand to my hand, your heart to my heart, your life to my life.

Celebrant: Let the sun and the moon and the stars and these our brothers and sisters bear witness that A and B have been joined together and are husband and wife. You may now kiss.

Blessings

Celebrant: Blessing for the couple

Celebrant will then call for everyone in the circle to join hands and silently wish a blessing on the couple.

Gaelic Blessing:

Mìle fàilte dhuit le d'bhreid,
Fad do ré gun robh thu slàn.
Móran làithean dhuit is sìth,
Le d'mhaitheas is le d'nì bhi fàs.

This translates as:

"A thousand welcomes to you with your marriage kerchief,
may you be healthy all your days.
May you be blessed with long life and peace,
may you grow old with goodness and with riches."

Close

Celebrant: This rite of handfasting ends in peace, as in peace it began. Let us hold love and peace in our hearts until we meet again.

Opening of Circle.

Celebrant will explain that when the circle is opened all may move freely and will then open the circle.