

SIMPLE HANDFASTING CEREMONY

For a Heterosexual Couple

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This rite can take place during the Workings phase of a full ritual or by itself.

The guests are arranged in a circle around the Priest and the couple to be Handfasted. There is a small altar in the center, behind the Priest, to hold the following items:

*A Bell
A Silken Cord
A Chalice of Mead
A Small Loaf of Bread*

The Priest rings a bell three times three.

The Priest says:

Pwyll, Lord of Annwfn, said, "If I could choose from all the women and maidens in the world, 'tis you I would choose."

And Rhiannon responded, "If that is what you want, set a date with me before I am joined to another man."

The Hall was then prepared for Pwyll and his host, and the host of the court as well. They ate and reveled, and it came time to go to sleep. Pwyll and Rhiannon went to the chamber and spent the night in pleasure and contentment.¹

Children of the Earth, we are here in the sight of the Gods, the Nature Spirits and the Ancestors to see two lives brought together in love and happiness.

_____ *Name of Bride* _____, please state your intent to all present.

The Bride turns and faces the People and says:

Today is the appointed day. I declare to all present, Human and Divine, that I wish to join my hand to _____ *Name of Groom* _____.

The Priest says:

_____ *Name of Groom* _____, please state your intent to all present.

The Groom turns and faces the People and says:

¹ From the 1st Branch of the Mabinogi, translated by Patrick Ford

Today is the appointed day. I declare to all present, Human and Divine, that I wish to join my hand to _____ *Name of Bride* _____.

The Priest holds up the chalice of mead and says:

Share this cup as you will share your love and concern, holding faith in one another.

The Couple share the cup, drinking of the mead. The Priest returns the cup to the altar.

The Priest holds up the loaf of bread and says:

Share this bread as you will share your worldly goods and debts, holding faith in one another.

The Priest breaks the loaf and gives half each to the bride and groom. They eat of the bread and return the remaining bread to the altar.

The Priest says:

_____ *Name of Bride* _____ and _____ *Name of Groom* _____, you have shared of your love and of your goods.

What oaths do you make to one another?

The Bride says:

Dearest *Name*, in the names of the Three Kindreds, I promise that I shall hold faith with you. I also promise....

Here the Bride swears her oath, ending with:

May the earth open beneath me, may the sea rise up against me and may the sky fall upon me should I forswear my oaths.

The Groom says:

Dearest *Name*, by the Might of the Water and the Light of the Fire, I promise that I shall hold faith with you. I also promise....

Here the Groom swears his oath, ending with:

May the earth open beneath me, may the sea rise up against me and may the sky fall upon me should I forswear my oaths.

The Priest says:

Please hold hands, right on right and left on left.

The Couple cross their wrists and hold hands, right hand to right hand, left hand to left hand.

The Priest takes the silken cord and loosely binds their wrists together and says:

May love guide your hearts. May the Kindreds guide your souls, and may your joy be a light in the world, growing in the Eternal Present.

(To the couple) **Now show all attending, Human and Divine, the love you have for each other.**

The Couple kisses. The Priest unbinds the cord and says:

Children of the Earth, these two have joined their hands and hearts as one. Let us give our blessings by voicing our joy and our praise!

All hail Name and all hail Name ! Joy and Long Life! Hurrah!

The People say:

Joy and Long Life! Hurrah!

The Priest rings a bell three times three.