

Traditional Handfasting

Time: Best performed at the time of the new moon.

Setting: Bedeck the ritual area in flowers of many types, particularly the favorites of the couple, and roses. The altar should be arranged as usual, plus 2 white candles, incense of a flower scent, and a willow wand. Dress is up to the couple. Celtic tradition is that the bride wears some kind of veil or netting and an article of scarlet. The couple should bring wedding rings and small symbolic gifts for each other if desired. The priest/ess fits the rings over the willow wand, then lay them on the altar..

After lighting the candles and incense, the priest and priestess face the gathering, backs toward the altar.

Priest:

May the place of this rite
be consecrated for the Gods.
For we gather here in a ritual of love
With two who would be wedded.
_____ and _____ please come forward
and stand here before us, and before the gods of nature.

They couple comes forward and stands before the Priest and Priestess, groom in front of Priestess, bride in front of Priest.

Priestess:

Be with us here, O beings of the Air
With your clever fingers
Tie closely the bonds between these two.

Be with us here, O beings of Fire
Give their love and passion
your own all-consuming ardor

Be with us here, O beings of Water
Give them the deepest of love
and the richness of the body, of the soul and of the spirit.

Be with us here, O beings of Earth
Let your strength and constancy
Be theirs for so long as they desire
to remain together

Blessed Goddess and Laughing God

Give to these before you, we do ask
your love and protection
Blessed Be.

All:

Blessed Be.

Priestess and Priest hold up the wand between them with the rings upon it.
Priestess:

Place your right hands
over this wand and your rings
his hand over hers

Above you are the stars
below you are the stones
as time does pass
Remember
Like a star should our love be constant
Like a stone should your love be firm
Be close, but not too close
Posses one another, but be understanding
Have patience each with the other
For storms will come, but they will go quickly
Be free in the giving of affection and warmth
Make love often, and be sensuous with one another
Have no fear and let not the ways or words
of the unenlightened give you unease
For the Goddess and the God are with you,
Now and Always.

(Pause for five heartbeats)

Priestess:

Is it your wish, bride's name to become one with this man?

(bride gives her answer)

Is it your wish, groom's name to become one with this woman?

(groom gives his answer)

Do any say nay?

Then, as the Goddess and the God and the Old Ones

Are witness to this rite

I now proclaim you husband and wife.

A kiss is appropriate at this time, and the tokens may be exchanged. The ceremony is then over and the cakes and wine on the altar should be served at the revel that follows.

This from A Book of Pagan Rituals by Herman Slater, Editor, 1978, Samuel Weiser Inc. NY, NY.