



Rev. Ann Fuller

Should you wish to honor your Irish or Scottish heritage on your wedding day, there are a number of things you can do to add a dash of the Celtic to your celebration. You can attire the wedding party in traditional Irish or Scottish dress (who can resist a groom in a kilt?), use Gaelic music for your processional and recessional and include some of the elements described below in the ceremony.

Vows

Supposedly the following vows have been translated from the ancient Brehan law. To the Celts and early Irish Christians these vows symbolized what an ideal marriage should be: a marriage of love and respect between equals. They are quite lengthy so I recommend the couple read them to one another rather than repeat after me.

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. The honeycomb will taste sweeter coming from my hand. I pledge yours will be the name I cry aloud in the night and the eyes into which I smile in the morning. I pledge the first bite from my bread and the first drink from my cup. I pledge my living and my dying, each equally in your care. I shall be a shield for your back and you for mine. I shall not slander you and shall honour you above all others. When we quarrel we shall do so in private and tell no strangers our grievances. This is my wedding vow to you, this is a marriage of equals.

Ring Exchange

If you have chosen Claddah rings to exchange you can capitalize on the symbolism corresponding to the qualities of love, friendship and loyalty. The ring features two hands clasping a heart and surmounted by a crown. Consider saying the following as you exchange your rings.

With these hands I give you my heart and I crown it with my love.

Readings

Include a passage or poem written by an Irish or a Scottish author.

[Irish Authors List](#)

[Scottish Authors List](#)



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Handfasting

This is a unity ritual placed immediately prior to the blessing of the marriage. The cords are removed for the declaration of marriage.

Officiant:

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the east, symbol of air, the intertwining of the heart, mind and body; fresh beginnings with the rising of each sun and the knowledge of growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the south, the symbol of fire, the warmth of the hearth and home, the heat of the heart's passion and the light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the west, symbol of water, the deep commitments of the lake, the swift excitement of the river, the refreshing cleansing of the rain and the all-encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the north, symbol of earth, the firm foundation on which to build a stable home to which you may always return and the steadfastness you give one another.

Please look into one another's eyes and join both your hands.

<Officiant drapes the cord over their hands and fastens a loose knot.>

Woven into this cord, within its very fibers, are all your hopes and dreams. With the fastening of this knot I've secured, not only your union, but also the love and happiness of everyone who cherishes and supports you in your new life together. May this cord draw your hands together in love, never to be used in anger. May the pledges you have made never grow bitter in your hearts. Two entwined in love, bound by all which brings strength to this union.

The knots of this binding are not formed by this cords, but rather by being steadfast in the vows you have made. Either of you may drop the cord, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union. May that which has been united before this company be not rent by another.

The Oathing Stone

Have you ever heard the expression, "etched in stone?" When we use those words, we convey both our good faith and our intention that what is being referenced is meant to last for a very very long time!



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This is a ritual in which the couple place their hands upon a stone, or hold a stone, while saying their marriage vows. Scots in days past considered swearing on a stone to be the best way to express sincerity when making a solemn pledge. The Stone of Scone, or what the English refer to as the Coronation Stone, has been used for centuries in the coronation of the monarchs of Scotland and later the monarchs of Great Britain. Couples today typically use much smaller and lighter stones for their weddings, unless they have access to a stone altar.

Today, couples who opt for this tradition can purchase special stones engraved with their names and wedding date to use and then keep as a memento of their wedding. The stones range in size from fitting in the palm of the hand to stones large enough to require the couple both hold it at the same time. The latter stone seems like something that would be lovely to place in a garden.

The officiant can say a few words before the vows to explain the tradition to the guests or the couple can simply use the stones with no reference made to them whatsoever. Guests can be included by giving each a stone to hold in their hands during the ceremony. Additional meaning can be imbued into the stones by including a Communal Declaration of Support in which the guests pledge to uphold the couple in being steadfast in the promises they have made. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the guests place their stones in a keepsake container for the couple to place in their home.

Irish Marriage Blessings

May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, The rains fall soft upon the fields. May the light of friendship guide your paths together. May the laughter of children grace the halls of your home. May the joy of living for one another trip a smile from your lips, A twinkle from your eye. And when eternity beckons, at the end of a life heaped high with love, May the good Lord embrace you with the arms that have nurtured you the whole length of your joy-filled days. May the gracious God hold you both in the palm of His hands. And, today, may the Spirit of Love find a dwelling place in your hearts.

May the light of friendship guide your paths together. May the laughter of children grace the halls of your home. May the joy of living for one another trip a smile from your lips, A twinkle from your eye. May the Spirit of Love find a dwelling place in your hearts.