



Rev. Ann Fuller

I am always delighted to work with couples who present unique challenges with the opportunity to construct new rituals. I do feel a wedding ceremony should be meaningful to both the couple and their family and friends. This is an example of a ceremony that includes elements honoring a Macedonian Orthodox heritage. The couple no longer shared the faith tradition, preferring a more secular Rite of Marriage. However, they wanted to convey their respect for family and tradition so they selected elements adaptable to their religious beliefs and views of marriage.

Most interestingly, you may notice the Order of Service does not include any explicit Exchange of Vows. The Declaration of Intent, Binding of Hands and Exchange of Rings all satisfy the required expression of intent to be married under Florida state law.

- Words of Welcome
- Declaration of Intent
- Bread and Wine Ceremony
- Binding of Hands
- Blessing of the Rings
- Exchange of Rings
- Blessing of the Marriage
- Ceremonial Walk
- Declaration of Marriage
- Introduction of the Couple

(Bride) and (Groom), please turn towards one another, join your hands and in so doing, join your hearts.

Words of Welcome

We come together to celebrate and affirm the love between (Bride) and (Groom). Today, they enter a relationship of assumed mutual responsibilities and a promise of undying devotion. In marriage, two people reveal themselves fully and openly to one another, with no fear of rejection, but with the confidence such intimacy will make their love richer and deeper. (Groom) and (Bride) have shared with a realistic as well as romantic view of their life together as husband and wife. Their marriage is founded upon love, but dependent upon the (*concepts important to the couple*) they see as important to the success of their union. The (*qualities important to the couple*) they cherish in one another will surely help them create a marriage of great beauty and delight. Burdens will be lighter because they divide them—joys more intense because they share them.

(Bride) and (Groom) would like to take this moment to express their appreciation to you for being with them this day. Thank you for sharing in the great joy of this precious moment. At joyous occasions such as these, it is right and fitting to remember those who have been important in (Groom) and (Bride)'s lives but are unable to be with us this day. We hold their absent loved ones fondly in our hearts at this hour of commitment, honoring them with a moment of silence.



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Declaration of Intent

As marriage is a union of two people joining their lives willingly one with the other, I ask (Groom) and (Bride), is it your intention to share with each other your joys and sorrows and all that the years have to bring, and with your promises today cherish one another from this day forward? ~ *It is.*

Bread and Wine Ceremony

(Groom) and (Bride), all gathered here this day share in your joy. May your shared future be filled with the best life has to offer. At this time, I invite you to come forward together and share in this ritual of blessing and good will.

<Officiant: Holding the bread>

May the home you create this day never know the pangs of hunger and always experience the fullness of life. May you find life's joys great, its bitterness sweetened and all things enriched by your companionship and love. May your different paths meet in the middle and become one path.

<Officiant hands groom the bread. He will break off two bites and gives one to (Bride), handing the rest of the bread back to the officiant who places it back on the table. The couple each eat their piece of bread>

<Officiant: Holding the wine>

(Bride) and (Groom), this goblet symbolizes the cup of life. As you each drink from the same cup we are reminded you have committed to share all your future may hold. Your union multiplies the sweetness life brings you and any bitterness in life is diminished because your sharing divides it. You have accepted the other as your first priority and the decisions you make as individuals have consequences for you both. Drink deeply, for life is made out of what you have, not what is lacking. May your love always make you realize what you have is more than enough.

<Officiants hands the goblet to (Bride) who takes a sip and then hands it to (Groom) to take a sip. The groom hands it to the officiant who puts the goblet back on the table and gestures for the couple to return to the center position in front of the table.>

Binding of Hands

(Groom) and (Bride), you have declared your intention to enter a relationship of shared giving and assumed mutual responsibilities. I now ask you to join your hands. With the fastening of this knot we will secure the love and happiness wished here on this day for your new life together. May this cord draw your hands together in love, never to be used in anger. May the pledges you make never grow bitter in your hearts.



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Will you honor and respect one another, and seek to never break that honor? ~ *We will.*

<Officiant drapes cloth over their right hands.>

Will you strive to be a strong individual within a solid union so you may both grow in love and wisdom? ~ *We will.*

<Officiant brings ends of cloth above the hands.>

Will you give freely of your loyalty and promise to be worthy of trust? ~ *We will.*

<Officiants ties the ends of the cloth into a very loose knot to allow for mobility for the ring exchange.>

Two entwined in love, bound by all which brings strength to this union. Hold tight to one another through both good times and bad, and watch as your strength grows. Your bond is not formed of the knots of this cord, but instead by your pledges to one another. May your bond never be broken.

Blessing of the Rings

May I have the rings please?

The circle is a natural symbol of eternity as it has no beginning and no end. We place the ring on the left hand because it constitutes a direct path to the heart, a traditional metaphor for love and devotion. It's presence reminds us of the vows we have made and their relationship to the emotional seat of the heart. We ask that these rings that will forever grace (Bride) and (Groom)'s hands be blessed. May they reside on the hands of the lover, the caregiver, the companion and the guide. May (Groom) and (Bride) wear these rings as a symbol of their unity.

Exchange of Rings

(Groom), do you offer this ring to (Bride) as a token of your love for her? ~ *I do.*

Then in remembrance of this hour, please look into (Bride)'s eyes and place the ring upon her finger saying, "with this ring I commitment my life to you."

(Bride), do you give this ring to (Groom) as a token of your love for him? ~ *I do.*

Then in remembrance of this hour, please look into (Groom)'s eyes and place the ring upon his finger saying, "with this ring I commitment my life to you."



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Blessing of the Marriage

May (Bride) and (Groom)'s marriage be truly blessed with all that is good and noble and true. May they be helpful to one another in all ways. May they be strong and complement one another. May they be blessed with a happy life surrounded by the love of family and friends. May they live in harmony, true to their personal values and their joint promises. May they always be the best of friends and their love for one another deepen over the years.

Ceremonial Walk

<Officiant removes the cloth from the couple's hands and drapes it around their shoulders.>

(Groom) and (Bride), have just pledged themselves to one another recognizing their union comes with responsibilities to be diligent and responsible householders. They understand a marriage is not just a uniting of two hearts and souls as one, but a partnership with obligations to one another, their families and the community. They honor their heritage with a ceremonial walk around their guests bearing the reminders to support one another in all ways.

(Bride) and (Groom), please take your first walk as husband and wife inspired with a sense of honor and respect for your family and a legacy you now share and create anew today.

Declaration of Marriage

Because (Bride) and (Groom) have desired each other in marriage, sealing their vows in the giving and receiving of rings, I do proclaim they are husband and wife. Let all people here and everywhere recognize and respect their union, now and forever. You may kiss your bride.

Introduction of the Couple

It is my privilege to introduce to you for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. (Groom) and (Bride) Surname!