Hand Fasting Ceremony

Suggested hand fasting ceremony opening logistics

* Background music
* Music changes (this is the official start of the ceremony)
* Grandparents are ushered in by groomsmen, best man, or Groom
* Parents are ushered in by groomsmen, best man, or Groom
* Music changes
* Maid of honor and **Bride** s maids enter individually
* Ring barer,  and flower children, and bell ringer enter individually
* Music changes to bridal march
* **Bride** is escorted in
* Music stops briefly then continues (low volume) throughout ceremony

*This ceremony is very effective when with smaller number of guests they stand in a circle around the couple.*

Hand fasting ceremony introduction

*Lance:* Bride and Groom , it is our joy to witness and celebrate your wedding in a rich celebration, sustained as we are in the mysterious power of all creation and whose core is Love.

You come here today as individuals. You come to become one -- of course not to lose yourselves, but instead to promise a new life of unity and love.  
And we, your family and friends, have gathered here to share in your joy and to ask the infinite power in creation to bless you. We hold that marriage is a gift, sealed by an achiest, lasting sacred covenant.   
  
Giving of the Bride & Groom

Who presents this couple to be married?   
  
Sponsors (may be family, friends, or all): We do.

**\*Optional recognition of deceased family members here**

**\*Optional recognition of those who could not travel here today**

First Reading

Memories

Within my book of memories are special thoughts of you, and all the many nice things you often say and do. As I turn the pages and recall each single thought, I realize the happiness that knowing you has brought. There are memories of the times we’ve shared both bright and gloomy days. There are memories of your kindness and your friendly thoughtful ways. There are memories of your laughter and your bright and cheery smile, that add a bright note to each day and make life more worthwhile. There are memories of the things we planned, each friendly little chat, when we would get together and just talk of this and that. And when I recall these memories I go along life’s way, and find they grow more precious still with every passing day.

**\*Optional candle lighting here (either Western unity or other candles) here**

**\*Optional joining of current children to marriage here**

Explanation of Hand fasting Tradition

Bride & Groom have chosen a traditional hand fasting ceremony. In Europe, until the mid 1700’s, few unions were sanctified in a church or synagogue. Rather, they were celebrated by a simple hand fasting ceremony in which the two partners joined hands over the village anvil, in the fields or in the groves of trees. Today, we build upon this tradition. The couple linked hands, to form an infinity circle, symbolizing the entirety of the universe as represented in their relationship.  
  
Groom and Bride , please join hands in the infinity circle.

Handfasting/ Vows

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other. As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real, the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.   
  
With full awareness, know that within this circle you are not only declaring your intent to be hand fasted before your friends and family, but you speak that intent also to God. The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of each soul's growth.   
  
Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?   
  
Couple: Yes, We Seek to Enter.

Dedication (Blessing) of the Hands

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness.  
  
These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes: tears of sorrow and tears of joy.  
  
These are the hands that will comfort you in illness, and hold you when fear or grief racks your mind.   
  
These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times.  
  
These are the hands that will give you support and encourage you to chase your dreams. Together, everything you wish for can be realized.

**Prepare the cords**  
Back in earlier years, the hands would be bound with whatever was available - vines, colorful cords, or scarf. Today we will use this cord to symbolize the binding, or promises.

**The first promise (binding)**

Groom, Will you be Bride’s faithful partner for life?   
Yes

Bride, will you be Groom’s faithful partner for life?   
Yes

\*To Both\*   
Will you be each other’s constant friends and one true love?

Both answer: Yes   
  
And so the binding is made.   
\*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist.\*   
  
**The second promise (binding)**

Bride, do you promise to love Groom without reservation?   
Yes   
  
Groom, do you promise to love Bride without reservation?   
Yes   
  
\*To Both\*   
Will both of you stand by one another in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want?  
Both answer: Yes   
  
  
And so the binding is made.   
\*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist.\*   
  
**The third promise (binding)**

Bride, will you stand together with Groom your times of joy and sorrow?   
I will  
  
  
Groom, will you stand together with Bride your times of joy and sorrow?   
I will  
  
\*To Both\*   
Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?   
Both answer: Yes, we will   
  
And so the binding is made.   
\*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist.\* Bride  
  
  
**The forth promise (binding)**

Groom will you always to be open and honest with Bride, for as long as you both shall live?  
Yes

Bride, will you always to be open and honest with Groom,  for as long as you both shall live?  
Yes   
  
\*To Both\*   
Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes for this marriage?   
Yes   
  
And so the binding is made.   
\*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist.\*   
  
**The fifth promise (binding)**

Bride, Will you honor this man?   
I will   
  
Groom, Will you honor this woman?   
I will   
  
\*To Both\*   
Will you both seek to cherish and strengthen that honor?   
We will  
  
And so the binding is made.   
\*The cord is wrapped around the couple's wrist.\* 

**Binding of all promises**

\*Remove cord while saying:\*

The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union.   
  
\*Once chord is removed, it is placed on altar\*  
  
**Blessing and Exchange of Rings**  
Who holds the rings?  
  
Witnesses: We do   
  
(the hold their hands up to display the rings and holds them up to be blessed )  
  
Let us all bless these rings! These rings are circles, symbols that remind us of the Sun, and the Earth, and the universe. Symbols of holiness, of perfection and peace ... that which has no beginning and no end. And so, in this moment, let us all bring our blessing to these rings so that they may remain symbols of unity and commitment. Grant that the love which Bride and Groom have for each other now may always be as unending as these rings.   
  
These are the rings that Bride and Groom will wear for the rest of their lives, that express the love that they have for one another. Let us take a moment and send our prayers, our thoughts and our love to these rings, so that as they wear them, they will carry our love with them as well.

Exchange rings and state for each, “With this ring, I thee wed, let it ever be a symbol of my love.”  
  
**Optional second reading here.**

**Optional sharing of a cup of wine here.**

**Recognition Of Marriage**  
Only a couple can seal the promise of a marriage to each other, and only a couple can bind it. No power vested in me by the state can grant me the authority to declare what only these two hearts can declare, and what only these two souls can make real.   
  
And so now, inasmuch as you, Groom, and you, Bride, have announced the truths that are already written in your hearts, and have witnessed the same in the presence of these, your family and friends, -- we observe joyfully that you are now husband and wife.   
  
**I present to you Mrs. Bride and Mr. Groom Last Name**

*Lance:* Would everyone please stand as the couple departs! Please remain in your places until the parents have left the room.

Music begins, couple slowly walks out, flower girl and ring bearer depart, groomsmen and bridesmaids recess as pairs, *Lance* invites parents and grandparents to exit just in front of him.

*Lance:* (said as he departs last) Thank you all very much!