



The *Green* Celebrant  
WEDDINGS & HANDFASTINGS



# *the green celebrant* ceremonies for love

**Becoming a legal marriage celebrant  
meant that I could support other  
couples with spiritual weddings.**

When I was married in 2006, I wanted a ceremony that expressed my spiritual beliefs. And I wanted a celebrant that I truly clicked with, and who understand my love of our earth, and my spiritual world view. And while I looked and looked, and I found some beautiful people, I couldn't find one who was...well, like us. So, we engaged the services of the nicest celebrant to do the simple legal thing at our hotel, and then we went out on the earth, and had a different person conduct our spiritual wedding ceremony. And that second ceremony was powerful.

At the time, having two different ceremonies was the best that I could do, and I sometimes wonder what it might have been like to have the whole ceremony conducted by that one special celebrant who saw the world as we did. I imagine us sharing our story of love, offering our vows to each other, all within a one sacred ceremony.

**And doing it all legally.**

In the years since, I have been crafting ceremonies to mark womanhood, ceremonies to mark the death of a loved one, ceremonies to welcome new babies into the world, and ceremonies to celebrate the love two people have for each other. But like myself, I had other people looking for a legal wedding ceremony that also wanted to celebrate their love & their spiritual beliefs in an authentic way, with a celebrant who also held those same beliefs of sacredness.

**So I pulled up my green striped socks in 2016, and I registered as a legal celebrant!**

That decision to dedicate myself to my love of ceremony was easy. Dedicating myself to the wider sacred community was even easier. Today, I live in the Southern Highlands of NSW and I am surrounded by natural beauty: the mountains, the lakes, the national parks. I am enfolded in the love of my community, and I willingly & joyously devote my life to serving others in ceremony, whether that is a wedding, handfasting, funeral, motherhood blessingway, baby blessing or women's rites.

And it has been a privilege and honour to support loving couples as they have crafted unique and earth-conscious ceremonies.

**Welcome to Green Celebrant ceremonies!**

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# who is jenneth tollin-graham?

I am a pagan, priestess & teacher.

I am a bard & artisan.

I am a woman & wife.

I am a daughter, sister & aunt.

**I craft ceremonies that are deeply moving, intensely spiritual, and shaped with you in mind. And as a registered celebrant, and practising priestess, I offer ceremonies that celebrate life & our earth.**

In 2001 I discovered the power of ceremony, and practised rituals with other women that celebrated the moon & the seasons. At that time I was completing a degree in Visual Arts, and loved how my art become another way to express this connection I felt with the beautiful world around me.

In 2012, I began to lead my own ceremonies, working with many different people who all walked their own paths with passion and truth. I began to understand what would work in a ceremony, and what wouldn't. Those early forays into leading ceremony were important learning experiences for me. That, and the patience of my beloved friends as we tried many different things to see what would truly enhance the intensity of a ceremony.



While my ceremonial experience grew, I was still living a separate life in the corporate world. I felt the dissonance between these two lives – one with uniforms and policy manuals and staff meeting minutes; the other with sometimes simple, other times elaborate ceremonies by moon rises and sunsets.

**In 2017 I made a big decision, and I left the corporate world, dedicating myself fully to ceremony.**

As a long time pagan, and passionate creator of ritual and ceremony, I realised that sharing space with other people was one of the most sacred things I could do. I wanted to be the most authentic version of myself that I could be – and that meant setting aside all the things society told me I “should” do, and following my heart of what I actually felt called to do.

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**As a triple Capricorn, I love that my closest friends describe me as compassionate, supportive & curious about life ... as well as focused and organised.**

I find that having a structured side to myself means that I can see the way different parts weave together into ceremony, and I can understand and see that natural flow.

As a very creative person – musician, artisan, graphic designer & writer – I bring a powerful balance to that systemised-side of myself. Like walking between two worlds, I can feel the inspiration, and I can also express it. And I thank the gods every day for this gift.

As a pagan, I hold a deep reverence for our earth, and all living beings that we share it with. And as I try to live a life that is based on eco-ethical decisions, I try to do so with some compassion for myself too, for sometimes I stumble in my intention to do no harm to this world.

**But why ceremony? Because it is essential and sacred work in our modern world, and I feel called to it.**

To a Wedding & Handfasting ceremony I bring:

- A passion for ceremony & a wealth of ceremony experience
- Authenticity, honesty, patience, respect & understanding
- A creative heart & an organised mind
- A sacred outlook to life & openness to spiritual expression in ceremony



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# wedding and handfasting ceremonies

A wedding ceremony is the coming together of two people in a sacred partnership of love and support for the rest of their lives.

**Imagine a wedding day of joy, love and sacredness.**

Imagine that in the weeks or months leading up to your wedding, you've explored all the aspects of the ceremony, and have chosen what best reflects the love you and your beloved have for each other. Imagine feeling that the wedding started back at that first interview with me, as we explored your story of love, and that you've been on a journey ever since. Imagine that in our creating your ceremony, you were both offered many opportunities to more deeply understand each other, and your love.

**A wedding ceremony is the coming together of two people in a sacred partnership of love and support for the rest of their lives.**

And maybe you live your lives in a beautiful, off-beat manner, and you want your ceremony to be the same.

Maybe you're both passionate about all things medieval, and you want to recreate that atmosphere of chivalry, honour, and fair maids on your special day. Maybe you're both beloved fans of Star Trek, and you want to hold your ceremony upon the recreated stage of Enterprise's bridge with a Captain presiding. Maybe you wish to honour your nudist beliefs, surrounded by your intimate community, and you want your celebrant to share in that skyclad ceremony.

**Whether this is a legal ceremony, a commitment ceremony, a vow renewal or handfasting, a wedding is an emotionally powerful occasion.**



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# what is a handfasting ceremony?

**A handfasting offers a couple the opportunity to have a spiritually non-Christian wedding, whose roots harken to an older past. Seen as a rural folkloric tradition in Western Europe, handfastings have become a popular spiritual alternative to a traditional wedding ceremony.**

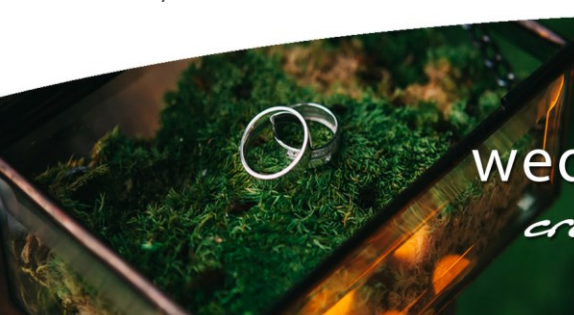
Writings from the 16th & 17th centuries give us insight to the original purpose of the handfasting in Britain - a commitment ceremony performed during either Beltane or Lughnasadh (depending on location). The whole community would come together at this time, and it was a custom for people to 'wed' for a year and a day - a type of betrothal. Once that year was up (during the next Beltane or Lughnasadh gathering), the couple could agree to continue the marriage, or separate & choose another partner. It is the physical act of tying together hands - the handfasting - that has gained popularity in our modern culture, which years to put meaning back into (often) bland & legalised ceremonies.

Modern handfastings may be a simple or intricate ceremony; include a small or large wedding party; be civil-minded or deeply spiritual - it is all up to the individual couple. It typically includes the handfasting act - the binding of the couples hands together to signify their joining in this life & marriage. This binding can be performed in different ways & I am always excited to explore with the couple which style suits them best.

A modern handfasting may also be held within a pagan ceremony. As a certified marriage celebrant, as well as Witch (member of PAN & Reclaiming Witchcraft tradition), and Druid (of the OBOD tradition), I offer unique ceremonies that reflect our spiritual beliefs. I have been leading ceremony & rituals since 2009, and due to my deep passion for my pagan beliefs & the work & teaching I do in my community, I consider myself a pagan Priestess. When we craft your handfasting ceremony together, we create a ritual that is powerful, poignant & unforgettable.

A couple may choose a modern handfasting ceremony for a range of reasons:

- they want a wedding ceremony that harkens back to their Celtic roots
- they want a legal wedding without all the "stuffiness"
- they want a non-legal wedding without all the "stuffiness"
- they are a pagan/druid/witch couple who want their spiritual beliefs included in the ceremony
- they want their wedding to be special, different & unique



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# handfasting cords

## what can they look like?

A handfasting cord is a length of 'cord' about 1.5m long that is woven around the hands of the couple during the ceremony.

You can make your own handfasting cord, ask an artist friend to create one, or purchase it from the internet ...

You can make it from fabric, twine, hemp, seaweed, wool, ribbon, cord, flax ...

It can be a length of ribbon, a strip of your family tartan, a cutting from your family wedding dress, an appliquéd piece of fabric...

It can be crocheted, woven, plaited, knotted, sewn, felted, macraméd ...

It can have pendants dangling from the ends, a bindrune on a sliver of wood woven into the middle ...

What can you imagine?



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# how i support your ceremony

My role as a celebrant is two-fold: to ensure that the ceremony is conducted in accordance with legal requirements; and to support you, the couple, and make sure that the ceremony expresses your values, beliefs and personalities. My knowledge, experience and guidance are available to you as we create a unique & magical ceremony just for you.

## What You Can Expect From Me

- Attend to all the Legal Paperwork prior to & after your marriage.
- Registration of your marriage with Births, Deaths & Marriages.
- Solemnise your marriage according to Australian Law.
- Complies with the Code of Practice for Marriage Celebrants.
- Advise you of information regarding local Relationship Education Services.
- Make available your Presentation Marriage Certificate
- A rehearsal, preferably onsite at your chosen ceremony venue.

- Supply the table and decoration for the 'altar' I use during the ceremony.
- My assurance that I will not book another wedding at the same time, so you will have my full attention, and I will not arrive late or need to leave early.
- My guarantee that your ceremony will remain your ceremony, and I will do everything possible to safeguard your ownership of decisions and style.
- My full experience, knowledge & wisdom regarding ceremonies means you can be confident it will be unique, passionate and profound for you both.



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# what can happen during the ceremony

Whether you're going for a unique alternative ceremony, a traditional handfasting, or a spiritual ritual, your wedding ceremony can include whatever you can imagine! The following is a general format:

## The Welcome

**Celebrant:** Chris & Ashley, marriage is the coming together at all levels of being – the mind, the body, and the spirit. This commitment includes the willingness to be open & vulnerable, and the courage to take risks. It is a conscious act of will.

To remain in marriage we must continually renew our will to be married. We accept the challenges that living together in love offer. We decide that we will face the fears that are a necessary part of establishing & nurturing an intimate relationship.

Chris & Ashley, you have made the commitment to create and recreate this conscious partnership.

**I am duly authorised by law to solemnise marriages according to law. Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the**

**relationship into which you are now about to enter. Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.**

This means that the vows you will make are meant to sustain you both for the whole of your life together. This union is not just about the children that may be born into it, or the land you may live on together: it is about the journey that you will make, together, for the rest of your days.

## Personal Vows

**Celebrant:** In our modern times, we sometimes take for granted how important, how powerful, and how sincere vows are intended to be. They are more than just a promise to make it to the footy match on time, or, "I swear I'll remember to pick-up bread on the way home."

A marriage vow is something we wholly intend to keep, and be true to, for the rest of our lives, knowing that it will require work, and that we are supported by all our loved ones, gathered here today to witness this ceremony. John and Jane, I now invite you both to speak your vows to each other.



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## Blessing of the Rings

**Celebrant:** A Circle is one of our most powerful spiritual symbols. Like the Wheel of the Year, it has no true beginning or end, and signifies a cycle that continues on indefinitely. The Circle is also the map for all our lives – birth, death, rebirth, and so on through many lives. And like a marriage, there will be new beginnings, endings, and fresh starts, over and over.

Your rings represent a promise of constant renewal, and of always coming back to each other. They are also a sign to all the world of the deep love you have for each other; a commemoration of the sacredness of these moments shared here today; and a visible reminder of the vows you are making.

*The celebrant places her hands over the rings and blesses them saying:*

Beloved gods,  
Witness these rings forged in fire  
I ask you to bless them with Your wisdom and love.  
May they who wear them  
Be of one breath, one mind, one heart.  
Together, may they walk this life in honour and strength.

*The celebrant then offers the rings to the couple.*

**Celebrant:** Chris, as you place your ring on Ashley's finger, I ask you to repeat after me: **I call upon the persons here**

**present to witness that I, Chris, take thee, Ashley, to be my lawful wedded partner.**

*This is then repeated for Ashley.*

**Celebrant:** Ashley, as you place your ring on Chris's finger, I ask you to repeat after me: **I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, Ashley, take thee, Chris, to be my lawful wedded partner.**

## Handfasting

**Celebrant:** Chris & Ashley have chosen to conclude their ceremony with a traditional handfasting. This is a symbolic binding of the hands that inspired the terms "Bonds of Holy Matrimony" and to "Tie the knot". Throughout history in many different parts of the world, the hands of the bride and groom were bound as a sign of their commitment to one another. Rings were only for the rich.

For Chris & Ashley, the handfasting is also link, for them, to their Ancestors of the British Isles, who still practise this gesture today.

**Celebrant:** Chris & Ashley: do you both choose to bind yourselves to the other for the rest of this life?

**Chris & Ashley:** We do.

*The celebrant then wraps the tie around the hands of the couple, and then holds the couple's hands between their own.*



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Beloved gods, I ask you to bless this couple  
By the passions of Fire  
By the strength of the Earth  
By the commitment of the Winds  
By the ever-living love of the Waters  
And by the divine spark of life that is your eternal gift.  
May they understand that, together, they will know  
both joy and pain, strength and  
weariness, direction and doubt, for all the risings and  
settings of the sun. Blessed be.

## The Finish

**Celebrant:** Chris & Ashley, before your beloved friends & family, you have vowed to live, love and grow together for the rest of your days. I now pronounce you husband and wife! You may now seal your vow with a kiss!

*The couple kiss.*

**Celebrant:** I now invite everyone to stand and welcome the newly married couple, Chris & Ashley!



## Further Ceremony Options

There are many other unique options that you may like to include in your ceremony, including:

### Acknowledgement of Country

You may like to begin your ceremony with an acknowledgement of Aboriginal land.

### The Story

The bride & groom are asked to share their “How we met” story with everyone. They can tell it together, or from two different points of view.

### The Question

The bride & groom are asked why they wish to join together in this ceremony. They might begin: “I knew I wanted to be with Ashley forever when.....”

### Lighting the Joining Candles

The bride & groom take their individual candles and use them to light a third candle, the Joining candle, together showing their unity through action.

### Combining Waters

The bride and groom (and their children, if combining two families) bring out individual jars of water. They all then pour their water into a single larger jar, showing their unity through the fact that the waters can never be separated again.



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## Prayers & Poems

You may like to include your friends and family in the ceremony by inviting one (or more!) of them to read out a special poem or inspiring words.

## The Support

Even though the bride & groom are individuals, and their choice to be wed is theirs alone, many people make up the threads of the webs of our lives; encouraging us, supporting us and weaving their lives with ours.

*For example:* Two groups (or two single people) come forward: one holds a candle representing the groom, and the other a candle representing the bride. Each group/person is offered the chance to share with everyone how they noticed the couple's lives change when they met each other. They might say, "I knew that Diana was smitten when...." Once done, the candles are placed on the altar on each side of the Joining Candle.

## The Blessing

A bag of crystals (or other such significant & small objects) are passed around for guests to take one each (or the guests may be asked to bring said-object with them to the ceremony). The bride & groom then walk around the sacred space giving each person the chance to bless them as they place their crystal into a bowl that the couple hold. A blessing might be: "May you always have laughter in your hearts."

*(The crystals can then be taken home by the couple and displayed as they choose afterwards).*

## Warming the Rings

This works best when there is small gathering for the wedding. The rings are brought forward, and then they are passed round all friends and family, inviting the to offer a brief blessing or such upon the rings. When finished, the exchanging of rings and vows are done by the couple.

## Cakes & Ale

A common practice at the end of pagan ceremonies is the sharing of food and drink (called cakes & ale). The couple first offer a "cake" to each other, feeding the other, saying: "May you never hunger." They then do the same with a chalice of drink, saying: "May you never thirst."

## Elemental Blessing

A spiritual inclusion could be the celebrant 'blessing' the couple by the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire and Water.



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# booking and fee information

## Booking

To book your ceremony, contact Jenneth directly on:

**0415 158 941**

**info@TheGreenCeebrant.com.au**

## Ceremony costs

\$800 – Southern Highlands & Wollongong

\$1,000 – Sydney, Illawarra Coast & Blue Mountains NSW

## What to expect

### Before Ceremony

- Meet in-person to sign the first paperwork
- Skype sessions/email/phone to confirm the full details of the ceremony
- Writing the ceremony
- Preparing ceremony set-up
- Site visit & rehearsal & sign second paperwork

### Day of Ceremony

- Preparation, check-in, meet & greet, perform ceremony, sign wedding certificates, pack-up

### After Ceremony

- Completion of paperwork & submission to BDM

## Deposit & Fee Structure

\$100 deposit is required to hold the date of your ceremony, and is due as soon as this date is confirmed with Jenneth. This ensures that no other ceremonies are booked for that day. The remainder of the first 50% of the total fee is payable upon the signing of the NOIM. The final 50% is payable no less than 1 month prior to the ceremony.

*For example, a Southern Highlands ceremony total is \$800, and would have \$100 paid to hold the date, and then \$300 at the initial signing of paperwork (rest of first 50%), and the \$400 (final 50%) one month before the ceremony.*

## Refunds

Please note that there is no refund offered for any payments of the first 50% made: at each stage of the ceremony preparation, the payments due cover both the holding of the date & the documentation & planning efforts already completed. However, the full final 50% is refundable if the couple advise the cancellation of the ceremony to the celebrant no less than 1 month prior to the ceremony. No further refund is available after this time.



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Ceremonies are all about people celebrating events that change their life.

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