Balanced By Oils
Holistic Fellowship

Rev. Wood's Guide to a Holistic Union Ceremony

Pre-Planning:

- Meet with partners 3-6 months in advance, discuss date, time and location.
- Have discussion on Holism, answer any questions on the religion and mindset, have partners answer the "Union Questionnaire" and then fill out their "25 Things" sheets independently.
- Ask for the desires of partners for their day ie. Readings? Secular or Religious? Peer readers? Isle procession? Options of service readings and design
- Discuss morals of love and unity within Holism and how the practices seek to honor mind, body and spirit and the unification of two souls in this path seek to live in this light together, forever and always and carry this light to their future generations and all of those who seek to love within their life and light.
- Discuss obligations of Minister: draft of ceremony given 1 week before ceremony, is presence required for rehearsal ceremony, day of activities, after ceremony (return signed papers to courthouse within 48 hours for license and official wedding registration.
- Discuss obligations of Partners: "25 Things" Questionnaires returned 2 weeks before ceremony(for minister to draft ceremony), marriage license attained at least 72hours before ceremony (to be registered in town of ceremony: need birth certificates and/or official divorce papers from previous marriage if applicable)
- Discuss fees for services: $125-500* depending on time and work requirements and preparation for ceremony. Includes wedding keepsake gift from the ministry and a copy of ceremony on elegant print material for framing or a keepsake. *Price does not include travel or housing when ceremony is more than 25miles from minister's quarters. Get a deposit of your comfort at this time to ensure your planning is utilized or time is reimbursed.

Planning:

- Using the information discussed by the partners, questionnaire and 25 things questionnaires (cut each of these statements into small strips for use later), sit down with an intention and your spiritual supports, light a candle and look for a few themes you see in the information given by the partners. An average ceremony is 15-25 minutes when comfortable for all involved, in my opinion, and a general layout is as such:

Stand at front under arbor/behind or beside altar

Stand and welcome procession of wedding party

Welcome guests with opening talk ~5 minutes, using questionnaire results ie humor, love, first meeting, dates etc to give a background of the relationship as you have learned, led up to day.

Discuss the blending of the sands ritual "When we mix these sands they cannot be separated, just as the love today will be blended from two souls who are destined to live a life of love, light and peace together." Here are a few things that brought these two together today… (pull 3-5 from each "25 things" to exchange and show partners, given option to read aloud to the guests, place all of them at the bottom of the vase, each partner mixes the sands of their favorite color together on top), as you place the unity candle on top of the sands you can say "These are the reasons you came together today, should you ever question this, you may find these memories here at the base of this center piece you will build today."

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Remind the couple that when they do reach to grab these notes, they will only have the option to mix these sands more and generate a deeper love and communication for their future. Have each partner light a candle of his or her own and together light the one candle in the middle of the altar together; signifying the rising energy of commitment and unity as one being in love, light and faith.

Ask for the rings and the parents of the couple along with "bests" to come forward. Have parents and partners lay a hand on the rings to "warm them" ask anyone of the family to say any blessing or words of encouragement privately in this circle. Also ask now that everyone hold space for love and abundance for this new couple and join in the blessing of the rings. "As an outward symbol of an internal and everlasting bond, we now ask that with the prayers and blessings of all here in physicality and spirit, that you exchange rings and clasp hands."

Hand-fasting Ceremony and exchanging of verbal vows or commitment: When hand-fasting is complete and verbal commitment has finished, place the hand-fasted ties on the altar next to the burning unity candle and welcome the partners and their witnesses to the altar to sign the Marriage Certificate.

Turn and upon completion of signing announce the couple ie "By the power bestowed upon me by LifeSpirit Congregational Church and in front of the universe and all present I give to you _____.

Welcome all guests to attend reception or direct guests as where to receive the couple.

Additional Notes:

Readings from family or friends, public blessing of the space, traditional reading of the vows and exchanging of rings, specific partner family traditions are always welcomed in the planning of this ceremony. Develop a flow, and plan to actually walk through it at home with a timer and see how it feels and sounds BEFORE the rehearsal; you want them to be confident that you will guide the show and allow them to have their nervous giggles. Remember too, that your plan on the wedding day is not the only option, you are there to guide the partners to their ceremony and allow them to show their love; if there is a mix-up or change in the plans day of, just go with it and be there to support anyone that might have some emotional reponse to the change, be their grounding support. Have candid conversations with them about your beliefs when uniting them under your blessing; if you see something off, ask. See what is up, you are a minister to guide these families that grow within the ministry as well as individual communicants and to foster a strong future you must be able to have these conversations individually or with support.

Rehearsal/Draft ceremony Meeting:

Meet the week of or at the rehearsal for the service to go over your draft of the vows, ceremony and to ensure the partners have the appropriate marriage license papers for their state. Be sure to check-in with the county clerks office to make sure you do not have to register in that state or show paperwork before you may officiate in their state or area. Notes for NYC, LAS VEGAS and other larger cities show that additional registration is required for ministry and providing officiating services in their areas. This is the time to collect the remainder of the wedding service fees in most cases, as I feel uncomfortable at times waiting on wedding day to receive payment so this option, or waiting and billing after the service are most common pratices. Some will have the payment in the envelope with the marriage license when you show up day off too, that is always a nice surprise!

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Day of:

Ask for desired attire or if you have your own specific dress for ritual be sure to present yourself in a manner that attunes peace, love and light. Leave your morning open for meditation, visualization and rehearsal, if necessary. Shop for candles, supplies and cut paper for any needs the night before, as well as prepare and organize your outfit.

Arrive an hour before the ceremony to meet with partners and do a walk through of the venue to ensure the set-up you require, usually a table for the candle ceremony and to sign the papers, is available. Carry your display with a table cloth to the altar as soon as possible, as to not be setting up while the guests are arriving and then present yourself in a way as to usher guests, assists families and friends with last minute tasks. Check with bests' to ensure rings are present and accounted for, gather marriage certificate from partners if you have not already done so and hold with your readings for the singing during the ceremony. Check and see if they need anything from you; I usually offer some *Peace and Calming* or *Valor* essential oils to the partners if they are feeling anxious. Whatever they need should be your priority for the moment, even if it means delaying the ceremony a few minutes for an unexpected biology break or wardrobe fix.

Do any last minute meditation, hygiene and bathroom checks and grab yourself some water and spiritual crystals or oils for the ceremony. I like rose quarts, dragon stone, and clear quarts along with oils of peppermint, abundance, joy and frankincense with a little angelica. I am sure to call on my guides, angels and spiritual beings to enter this ceremony with me and to generate a vortex of love and light above the ceremony space. Close your eyes and imagine the ceremony space glowing with love and light and in the center is your ceremony with your partners, already happening, planned and just as it should be, go join the show! Gather yourself about 15 minutes before the ceremony and stand at the altar as to begin welcoming guests to be seated. Have your script ready to go, lighter and pen in your pocket for singing and lighting as needed. (Cut out paper below if you want to take with your notes to have a last minute check!)

Last minute check on arrival: Script, pen, lighter, 3 Candles at the altar, sand, vase, marriage license. Close your eyes, take 3 deep breaths and ground your energy in your heels and let it rise to your heart, turn and welcome your first partner to walk as you cue any music change needed. Relax and let your plans unfold from your heart and carry love throughout the duration of your ceremony, regardless of what happens.
YOU ARE LIGHT :D

Post Ceremony:

Be sure to stay around ceremony space until partners dismiss you or direct otherwise, some will want photos with you separate and a usual goodbye or invitation to the reception occurs. Present and conduct yourself in a manner of your ministry and maintain your role as an assistant to family and friends any anything needed to help the day run as well as your role for supporting a peaceful day for the partners to enjoy their first moments as a couple in YOUR light. Be sure to thank your hosts, guests and guides and be sure to return the marriage license to the appropriate location. Contact your couple within the next two weeks to ensure that they received their license and paperwork and to check up with an invoice at this time if necessary.

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Union Ceremony Questionnaire: Partners Fill out 1 Copy Together

Where did you first meet?

What did you do on your first date?

Where did you propose/commit?

What couldn't you tell each other the first date that you could now

What are your future plans together?

What are your most obvious struggles that you will need to support each other with?

Where is your favorite place to go together?

Where do you see yourselves in 10 years?

What is your best strength as a couple?

Any special requests or readings?

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"25 Things Questionnaire

For (Partner 1)_____, what are 25 things you love about (Partner 2)_____? These could be physical attributes, spiritual notions, memories, quirks and things that only you would be able to know about your future partner.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
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22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____

What is your favorite color? (Partner 1) _____

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"25 Things Questionnaire

For (Partner 2)_____, what are 25 things you love about (Partner 1)_____? These could be physical attributes, spiritual notions, memories, quirks and things that only you would be able to know about your future partner.

1. _____
2. _____
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25. _____

What is your favorite color? (Partner 2) _____

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