

The Wedding of Jonathan Leary & Allison King

Warfield House Inn

Charlemont, MA

June 18, 2005

### **General Orientation**

Welcome to this wonderful and joyous occasion. You have been asked here today to celebrate with Jonathan and Allison as they express their love and devotion for each other in the form of a pledge, the commitment of marriage. This act is truly one of the most beautiful of human expressions, a sacred rite, a joyous mystery - the joining of two hearts united in love.

The wedding ritual that you are about to witness is as unique as the couple themselves. It is a mixture of various religious traditions and cultural beliefs that reflect who they are as individuals and as a couple. In particular, it reflects the traditions of a collection of polytheistic, Earth Centered belief systems called Paganism.

Many of you have been to weddings before. You can see that while some of the elements of this ritual are unusual, the heart of the ceremony is the same as those you have witnessed. Let us all now come together and begin our celebration of love.

### **Processional**

*Jonathan Leary, the groom, will take his position. Beside him will be the groom's men: Matt Barth (Air), Tom Olson (Fire), & Jeff Harding (Water), Eric Hoffmann (Earth).*

*Processional music begins.*

*The bride's Maids enter: Meg Stivison (Air), Meredith King (Fire) & Shannon  
Petsa (Water), Anna Pavlova (Earth).*

*Their corresponding Elemental Groom's Man meets the bride's Maids and together they  
will go to their Elemental quarter.*

*Allison King, the bride, enters with her parents: Rona and Ronald King.*

*When they reach the end of the aisle, Allison will give her parents a hug and kiss. They  
will take their seats.*

*Jonathan will greet Allison. Together they will come forward to take their places.*

### **Creation of Sacred Space**

We joyfully welcome you here to this place of beauty on this wonderful and special day. We are gathered here in love, peace and compassion to witness the marriage of Allison and Jonathan, as they give themselves to one another of their own free will. You stand in the center of the circle where all things meet their compliments, Female & Male, Darkness & Light, Spirit & Matter– that which makes each other whole and complete. Just as you two, Jonathan and Allison are about to join together to compliment each others' lives

But before we begin, let us take a minute to relax, quiet our minds and be together in this special moment. Please close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Let your breath flow in and out slowly. Let go of the stresses and anxieties of the day: work you may have left undone, travel challenges, knowing what to wear, arriving on time...

As you continue to breathe I would like you to see you your minds eye the circle of life that is around us with its many gifts and miracles.

The air that fills your lungs with life giving breathe, the gentle breezes of clear communication and song.

The warmth of the sun above, the passions that drive you, the dance of life within your heart gently beating its rhythm,

The waters, and rivers, the rain that cleans and nourishes, and the tears of joy on our cheeks as we allow the love of this moment to fill our hearts.

The fertile earth beneath your feet, which cradles the small seeds, filled with potential, nourishing and containing them as they grow, to reach up and touch the sky.

Earth, air, fire and water are the elements of life. They connect us to the greater web of life, to the circle to which we are all a part,

Let yourself breathe deeply and consider the intertwining of your life with the people around you. In your mind's eye, you begin to see a web of relationships forming, built stronger with every link. Think of your relationship to Allison and Jonathan as part of that web. By your presence here, you are an important part of their lives and a part of the larger web that encircles them today, creating a circle that binds us together as friends, family... a community.

See Allison and Jonathan as they stand in the center of this beautiful spiral. In your hearts and in your minds, think of all the wonderful hopes and dreams you have for them as they begin their new journey. Heart to Heart, we encircle them with Love.

Take one last deep breath, and let us begin.

## **Declaration of Intent**

Here before the Goddesses on whose steady green body we stand and whose immense blue skies embrace us from above, we have come.

Here before the God whose voice is carried in whispers in the breezes from the trees, mountains and animals, we have come.

Here surrounded by the spirits of nature, the elements of life, we have come.

Here before the fates who change our lives in accordance with cosmic design, we have come.

We have come, to witness two hearts welcome each other and become one in a sacred union.

To rejoice as two people are joined in life and love in the vows of marriage.

Jonathan and Allison, by Astarte, Goddess of love and wisdom and by Cernunnos, God of strength and steady hand, we greet you.

Marriage is one of the most important obligations that any two people commit to in their lifetime. It is a solemn promise, a pledge made to themselves and to each other, spoken in the presence of those who love them and, witnessed by the spirits of creation. Allison and Jonathan, a marriage is filled with magic and mysteries. It will continually surprise and delight you, yet it will also demand of you great strength and wisdom. It should not be entered into lightly. To join in marriage is to pass through a threshold, entering into to a new life together. Once you pass through this door of partnership your lives will be intertwined in a way that is impossible to separate without great pain.

Therefore it is important to be clear of what your intent is and to be prepared for the challenges that your decision will create.

Do you, Jonathan Leary and Allison Lehman King, pledge to one another to be friends & partners; to share your thoughts, hopes & dreams; to talk & to listen; and to respect & share each other's uniqueness?

*Both Respond: We do.*

Do you pledge to see to understand; to remember that you are one in a team and to gain comfort & strength from one another?

*Both Respond: We do.*

Do you pledge to love and to honor each other as you establish your place in the world & continue to build your lives together, as husband & wife?

*Both Respond: We do.*

With clear understanding and with hearts filled with love, we will continue.

### **Exchanging of Vows**

Allison and Jonathan, you are two separate people, unique personalities who, in the spirit of love, have chosen to embrace your differences, along with the similarities.

May I have the symbols of your individual selves?

*Allison will give her flowers to Meredith*

*Jonathan and Allison will then give their cords to Laura.*

Join hands, as your life is now to be united.

*Jonathan and Allison, join their left hands - hand to lower arm.*

Marriage vows cannot physically bind together two people. The words that you exchange are but symbols, much as these two cords are representations of your individual selves. Your promises are meant to entwine your lives, joining together your two cords, with the knowledge that united the two of you are stronger than one alone. The hope that together you can revel in the joys, weather the storms, and embrace all the changes that life will bring. Ultimately, it is your own inner sense of love and commitment to each other that will keep your union strong.

*The cords are wrapped are joined together and wrapped three times around their joined hands/arms.*

Jonathan, look now into Allison's eyes, her heart, soul and repeat after me:

My Lady Allison, I vow to love you above all others. To laugh with you in times of joy and laugh harder still through times of sorrow. I promise to value your opinion and clearly communicate my own. To support you when you falter and to lean on you when I am in need. To walk this journey of life with you by my side. To cherish and to honor, to comfort and to savor, to love and to trust. These things do I vow to you for as long as our love shall last.

Allison, now look into Jonathan's eyes, his heart, soul and repeat after me:

My Lord Jonathan, I vow to love you above all others. To laugh with you in times of joy and laugh harder still through times of sorrow. I promise to value your opinion and clearly communicate my own. To support you when you falter and to lean on you when I am in need. To walk this journey of life with you by my side. To cherish and to honor, to comfort and to savor, to love and to trust. These things do I vow to you for as long as our love shall last.

By earth and wind, by fire and rain, Spirit to Spirit, you are bound.

*Laura ties the cord, hands the ends to Jonathan and Allison and they pull the knot tight.*

With your words, with you intent, with your love, you are now joined together as one.

This is but a symbol. Do you have something more permanent to remind you of the vows you have exchanged this day?

*Jonathan and Allison: We offer rings.*

May I have the rings please?

*Laura will slip the handfasting ribbons off Jonathan and Allison's wrists.*

### **Exchange of Rings**

The circle is a symbol of the sun and the earth and the universe

A ring is an unbroken circle, symbolizing unity and unending love.

Astarte, Juno Iugalis, Green Man, Cernunnos, Old Ones, Spirits of Nature empower these rings and bless those who wear them. May their lives be filled with love, laughter, and an continuous commitment to joy.

Jonathan and Allison, may these rings forever remain a sign of the completeness and wholeness of your love for each other – and as a reminder that love has a present and a future as well as a past, and that, despite its occasional sorrows, love is a circle of happiness, wonder and delight.

Allison, take this ring, place it upon Jonathan's finger and repeat after me:

*Allison:* Jonathan, will you wear this ring, this symbol of my love, this symbol of my trust, this symbol of my vows to you?

*Jonathan:* I will with love and honor.

Jonathan, take this ring, place it upon Allison's finger and repeat after me:

*Jonathan:* Allison, will you wear this ring, this symbol of my love, this symbol of my trust, this symbol of my vows to you?

*Allison:* I will with love and delight.

### **Blessing of the Elements**

Four are the elements that make up life: air, fire, water and earth.

We ask them now bless your union, to bestow their gifts and strengths and help guide you in the life that you have chosen to dance together.

*The Brides Maid and the Grooms Man who are carrying the Element invoked will step forward to stand beside Jonathan and Allison and offer the physical blessing of that Element.*

Air of thought, the breath of life

*Matt and Meg come forward and present their Element*

May the blessing of the Winds be upon you  
blowing gently throughout your life together  
providing you open communication & clarity  
and bringing to your union  
the sweet fragrance of new beginnings

Fire of passion, the spark of life

*Tom and Meredith step forward and offer their symbols of Fire*

May the blessing of Fire be upon you

glowing warmly within your home & hearts

The dance of life and desire

and bringing to your union

the gifts of creativity and play

Water of cleansing, the pulse of life

*Jeff and Shannon step forward and offer their symbols of Water*

May the blessing of Water be upon you

ever refreshing your relationship

flowing and trickling with wonderment

and bringing to your union

the presence of intuition and inner peace.

Earth of renewal, the heartbeat within all that lives.

*Eric and Anna step forward and offer their symbols Earth*

May the blessing of Earth be upon you

as the solid ground beneath your feet

supporting you with stability

and bringing to your union

the seeds of nurturance and abundance.

May the elements bless you and guide you now and through out your lives together.

### **Celtic Loving Cup Ceremony**

On your wedding day, we celebrate the spirit of *anam cara*, or soul friend, as a way of recognizing the bond you are creating between your spiritual selves.

*Jonathan and Allison:* Today I recognize you, my *anam cara* and I ask that you become part of me in sacred kinship. With you, I will share my innermost self, my mind and my heart. With you, I have learned to love and to let myself be loved. With you as my *anam cara*, I am understood, I am home.

Drink to the love you've shared in the past, the love you share today, and the love you will share in your future.

*Allison and Jonathan drink from the cup.*

### **Libation**

*Allison and Jonathan:* By the love we share for each other we give thanks to the elements and to the God and Goddess. *They libate some of the wine.*

### **Breaking the Glass**

*While the reading is occurring, the glass will be prepared.*

## Reading by Meredith

Sonnet 116 by *William Shakespeare*

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments.  
Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds  
Or bends with the remover to remove  
O, no, it is an ever fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken,  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although this height be taken.  
Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come,  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom;  
If this be error, and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

May any impediments be shattered, the past released and the way cleared for a lifetime  
of joy, shared together.

*Glass is broken*

*People will call out "Mazel Tov"*

## **Jumping the Broom**

*Matt and Anna bring forward the broom and sword*

Behold the broom. This seemingly simple household tool contains within it many secrets. For the union of opposites is represented in its staff bound with grain. It represents home and hearth, growth and fertility.

Behold the sword. It is a symbol of protection. The blade is double edged representing clarity, the ability to see the opinions and desires of both sides fairly and evenly, going to the point of the matter so that peace and equality can be assured.

The sword and the broom represent your threshold, your doorway through which you can leap back into the world. With impediments shattered and the past released, the path to your new future is clear.

*The broom and sword are placed on the ground.*

Allison and Jonathan, in a moment I will invite you to take this leap of faith into your future together.

## **Pronouncement of Marriage**

Jonathan and Allison, above you is the sky, below you is the earth

Like the sky, let your love be free, full of movement and change.

Like the earth, let your love be solid, firm and nourishing.

Like the stars may your love be constant, providing light even in the darkest of nights

Like the waters, may it ever refresh your spirits

Give of your hearts freely and treat well what you are given.

May you have happiness, and may you find it in making one another happy.

May you have love, and may you find it loving one another!

May the blessings of the God and Goddess always be with you

as the sweet kiss, the gentle caress of magic and wonderment.

May the circle of love be open but never broken

Allison and Jonathan, as you have promised before me, these witnesses and the Spirits to give yourselves to one another and to love each other, as you have exchanged rings as a symbol of these pledges, it is with great joy and happiness that I now pronounce you husband and wife. Jonathan and Allison, you may now seal your union with a kiss and then jump the broom into your new life.

Congratulations!

*Allison and Jonathan kiss and then holding hands they jump the broom and process out, followed by each of the elemental pairs in reverse order: earth, water, fire, air.*