



All-Inclusive Wedding Ceremony

WELCOME STATEMENT

OFFICIANT *(to congregation):*

Please be seated... Thank you.

Welcome Friends, Family, and loved ones! We are here today to celebrate the lives of _____ and _____ and to bear witness as they join their lives together in marriage! I know I speak for _____ and _____ when I say they're so glad to see all of you here to celebrate this moment with them.

SPEECH / SERMON / INTRODUCTION

OFFICIANT *(to congregation):*

Before we begin, I'd like to start with a poem that _____ and _____ have chosen to symbolize the journey upon which they're about to embark.

[Officiant reads poem of couple's choosing, if no poem is chosen, the following may be used:]

OFFICIANT *(to congregation):*

*The night knows nothing of the chants of night.
It is what it is as I am what I am:
And in perceiving this I best perceive myself
And you. Only we two may interchange
Each in the other what each has to give. Only we two are one, not you and night,
Nor night and I, but you and I, alone,
So much alone, so deeply by ourselves,
So far beyond the casual solitudes,
That night is only the background of ourselves,*

*Supremely true each to its separate self,
In the pale light that each upon the other throws.*

—Wallace Stevens, *Re-Statement of Romance*

OFFICIANT *(to congregation):*

Beloved friends and family, we hold _____ and _____ up high this day, and we celebrate them as they turn from the loneliness of night that Wallace Stevens describes and enter a new dawn, now as one at the dawn of a new life together.

We talk a lot in our culture about how marriage is hard work. How it takes commitment, and sacrifice, and most of all, love, but what we don't often talk about is why we do it. Why do we agree to stick by one another when it seems so hard to do sometimes? Why do we agree to share our most intimate secrets and details with another, and make ourselves so vulnerable to that person so as to be considered one flesh by so many?

The answer, of course is love. But what does love do for us? Love - real love - the kind that's a verb, not a noun - is having someone to rely on when the world is throwing you to the wolves. And real love is being committed to be there when your lover is being thrown to the wolves, too. Real love is a partnership and a commitment to facing not only life's challenges together, but life's triumphs.

Real love is being able to run down the hall and tell someone you just got the best news ever, and it's being committed to jumping for joy when your spouse runs down the hall and tells you about the news they just got.

Real love is about being open and honest with one another, and trusting that the person you love is going to help you work through things together, as a partner.

OFFICIANT *(to couple):*

_____ and _____, I want to urge you to hold to that vision of your love for one another, because even though all of us hear are behind you and rooting for you, life throws us challenges, and in the midst of those challenges, it's the kind of love that is going to get you through it.

Knowing this, it's time to declare yourselves to one another.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

OFFICIANT (to _____):

_____, will you take _____ to be your lawfully wedded *husband/wife/partner* from this day forward; will you love, honor, and cherish *him/her/them*; hold *him/her/them* up in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?

_____: **I will.**

OFFICIANT (to _____):

_____, will you take _____ to be your lawfully wedded *husband/wife/partner* from this day forward; will you love, honor, and cherish *him/her/them*; hold *him/her/them* up in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?

_____: **I will.**

VOW/RING EXCHANGE

OFFICIANT (to *couple*):

_____, _____, it's now time to say your vows.

(If the couple do not have their own vows prepared, the following may be used)

OFFICIANT (to _____):

_____, please repeat after me: _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my undying and never-ending love for you. With it, I promise to love you, cherish you, and stand by you in good times and bad, sickness and health, for as long as I live.

(_____ puts ring on _____'s finger)

OFFICIANT (to _____):

_____, please repeat after me: _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my undying and never-ending love for you. With it, I promise to love you, cherish you, and stand by you in good times and bad, sickness and health, for as long as I live.

(_____ puts ring on _____'s finger)

PRONOUNCEMENT

OFFICIANT *(to couple):*

_____, _____, having proclaimed your love for, and commitment to one another in the sight of myself and these witnesses, it is my pleasure to pronounce you, by the power vested in me by the Universal Life Church and the state of _____, *husband/wife/partner* and *husband/wife/partner*. _____ you may kiss your *bride/groom/partner*!

(Couple kisses)

OFFICIANT *(to congregation):*

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to present to you *Mr./Mrs./Mx.* and *Mr./Mrs./Mx.* _____!

CLOSING STATEMENT

OFFICIANT *(to congregation):*

Following the processional the _____ and _____ will greet their guests. They ask that you meet them for the reception at _____. Thank you so much again for joining us today. This concludes our ceremony.