



Modern Wedding Ceremony

WELCOME STATEMENT

OFFICIANT (to congregation):

Please be seated... Thank you.

Welcome Friends, Family, and loved ones! We are here today to celebrate as we watch _____ and _____ join hands in marriage. We're here to laugh with them, some of you are here to cry (*you may have already started*), but most of all, we're here to wish them well as they begin their new life together. I'd like to say, on behalf of _____ and _____, thank you all so very much for being here. I know it means a lot to them.

SPEECH / SERMON / INTRODUCTION

OFFICIANT (to congregation):

To start our ceremony off today, I've asked _____ and _____ to choose a poem to be read here at the beginning that symbolizes their relationship.

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

OFFICIANT (to congregation):

*Love is a temporary madness,
it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides.
And when it subsides you have to make a decision.
You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together
that it is inconceivable that you should ever part.
Because this is what love is.
Love is not breathlessness,
it is not excitement,*

it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.

That is just being "in love" which any fool can do.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away,

and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.

Those that truly love, have roots that grow towards each other underground,

and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches,

they find that they are one tree and not two.

—Louis de Bernières, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*

OFFICIANT (to congregation):

Ladies and gentlemen, that's what we're here to witness, the entangled roots of these two individuals that are about to join together as one united tree, reaching for the stars together, sharing the same nutrients, weathering the same storms, growing together year after year - some rings thick and healthy, some rings thinner - reminders of the years where things didn't go as planned, or the years that fires hit the reset button all around them.

Because real love is sharing a life together. Like the poet said, any fool can fall in love. Real love is what comes next. After the fall is over. What happens when you've landed and all around you is normalcy once again and it's time to do the dishes, or pay the bills, or pick up the kids from school.

There's a great line from another poem by Adrienne Rich that says "No dust on the furniture of love." In that poem, the speaker is being tongue in cheek about the difference between falling in love, and the crash landing that happens for so many of us.

_____, _____, we all stand here with you today and hold you up in happiness, but in a couple of weeks, maybe a couple of months, maybe even in a couple of years, real life is going to have to creep back in. You will need each other to face those challenges. You will need each other as partners. As equals, fiercely honest with one another and fiercely committed to one another. You have to be both. Honest and committed, because real love demands both, and a successful marriage demands a foundation of real love.

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 here are behind you and we're rooting for you. We are all here to wish you the best that life has to offer you both as you move forward as one united tree together!

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 - through whatever challenges and triumphs life brings you; will you love *him/her/them*, honor *him/her/them*, and cherish *him/her/them* and no other - for the rest of your life?

_____: **I will.**

OFFICIANT (to _____):

_____, will you take _____ to be your lawfully wedded *husband/wife/partner* from this day forward - through whatever challenges and triumphs life brings you; will you love *him/her/them*, honor *him/her/them*, and cherish *him/her/them* and no other - for the rest of your life?

_____: **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 promise to love you forever. With it, I promise that I will honor you, cherish you, and love you the rest of my days, regardless of what challenges or triumphs we face together.

(_____ puts ring on _____'s finger)

OFFICIANT (to _____):

_____, please repeat after me: _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my promise to love you forever. With it, I promise that I will honor you, cherish you, and love you the rest of my days, regardless of what challenges or triumphs we face together.

(_____ puts ring on _____'s finger)

PRONOUNCEMENT

OFFICIANT *(to couple):*

_____, _____, having proclaimed love and commitment to one another in the sight of these witnesses and myself, I am so happy 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/spouse*!

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