

IN

22 June 1993

Dear

Thank you for your gentle reminder to send you copies of services which I had in my computer. I have enclosed the same, plus another service which I have not yet entered.

I want to reiterate to you my concerns about writing anything "for" another group of people when that group has not yet had time to discuss the topic at hand. I do truly appreciate the work that your group will be doing, yet I think that the gay and lesbian community needs to sit and to hammer out what the content and tenor of such ceremonies might be; undoubtedly, the content and tenor will be different for each community.

My concern is also that the service not mimic a marriage ceremony in content or tenor or intent. It doesn't seem to me that the model nor vows of the heterosexual marriage rite fit very well for heterosexual couples, much less for lesgay couples. The issues for lesgay couples are very different, and whatever rite is used ought to reflect some of those inherent differences.

I wish you all the best, and I thank you again for asking for the info I have.

Yours in Christ,

Vicar

COPY: Material located in the
Archives of the Episcopal Church

Ceremony #1

It is written that the greatest of all things, the most wonderful experience in the world, is love. and , into your lives has entered a deep and lasting love and you have requested that the church and its ministry help you celebrate that love.

We would call you love partnership a "holy union," for wherever there is love, God abides there also.

Ever since there have been human beings, there have been some people who have shared their deepest expression of love with a person of the same sex. Our church has grown to recognize the validity of that special way of loving and strives with others to overcome the prejudice about it in society so that one day all true love partnerships may be legally recognized and fully affirmed.

and , you have honored us by inviting us to witness your commitment to each other in holy union. May your live your lives ahead together.

You have chosen the following poem as an expression of your thoughts and feelings on this day of celebration:

and have asked us to serve as the witnesses to their holy union-- a union that they themselves make today. Their vows are their own and they have been spoken in their hearts before they will be spoken before us as witnesses here.

I am not a thought and I am not a living thing
that passes in your dreams.
I am a woman.
I promise before these witnesses to be faithful.
I promise to forgive and strengthen you
and join with you
so that we may be together
as long as we both shall live.

With all my love, I take you as my partner in life.

May I have the ring, please? May these rings be forever a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Love freely given has no giver and no receiver-- for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May these rings remind you always of the vows you have made here today.

, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love.

and have sought and accepted each other joyously. They come here as two and will leave with one life ahead of them. May all that life brings to them strengthen the bond they have declared today. May all their loved ones, those present and those unable to be present, continue to rejoice in the warmth of the love that has united them. May they be comfort and joy, counsel and.....

Now you will feel not rain, for each of you will be shelter to the other.
Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now there is no lonelinesses for you.
Now you are tow persons, but there is only one life before you. God now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your togetherness
And may your days be good, and long upon the earth.
Apache Indian Ceremony

and , for as much as you both have committed yourselves to each other, and in token have given and received a ring, by the authority vested in me as a minister of the church, I recognize you spiritually united.

CEREMONY #2

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness, to be one with each other in the silent unspeakable memories?

We who have gathered here thank you for allowing us to share in your joy on this occasion. Our hope for you is that the love adventure you have begun will be nourished. Our pledge to you as friend is to help you, to the best of our abilities, in its nourishment. Love is not some accident we fall into. Falling in love should be suspect. But if we grow in love, then there is the possibility that our tomorrows will be even more joyous, more tender and caressing, more devoted to life flowing through us; tomorrows more full of the thrill of life even as each today is better than yesterday. Love has the capacity for that magic. Perhaps only love has such capacity.

Thus, it is in loving relationships that we can find out what the meaning of existence is about. Such a state of love does not start with a public ceremony; the wedding ceremony is only a public testimony, a community YES to what already exists.

A love that can grow can also protect itself then from the myriad blights; the attrition of the work-a-day world; the many distractions that erode one's commitment.

As the lack of love breeds contempt for the world, you will find your growing love to unite you not merely to one another but in closer bonds with all people, and, indeed, to the world of nature from which we all come. When your love is secure and you are secure in your love, you are then free to see the preciousness of people behind their little masks and to see the sunsets, the star-filled nights, the movement of waves upon the beach with brilliant new perspective. Such love has been pictured by the Chinese in poetry this way: Let us live

Among the white clouds and scarlet woodlands
Singing together
Songs of the Great Peace.

Do you, , take , to love and to cherish, to honor and to comfort, in sickness or in health, in sorrow or in joy, in hardship or in ease, to have and to hold, from this day forth? [I do.]

[Here may read a pronouncement, or an additional reading, or closing words.]

CEREMONY #3

Music

Welcome (Couple both address spontaneous words of joy, sharing and welcome to their friends. The congregation and the couple are standing or sitting in a circle.)

Congregational response (Each tells in a few words the things s/he wishes for the couple. These can be statements, poetry, or whatever. Guests should be told of this ahead of time so they can be prepared, and should also feel free to be silent.)

Music

Vows

Exchange of Tokens (Rings, bracelets, or an appropriate charm on a neck chain are exchanged by the couple with a few words. The tokens may be blessed by the minister as they wish before being exchanged. The couple then shares flowers, wine, or whatever with the members of the congregation.)

Minister: and , you are beginning a journey that will take you to many unexpected places in your lives. There will be times when that journey will be uphill and tedious, the pathway will be hard and bitter. At those times you will be guides for each other, supporting, loving, giving strength. May there be wisdom in your support, openness in your loving, and gentleness in your strength. At other times the way will be beautiful and easy. May you share in each other's joy, rejoice in each other's being. May you learn to cherish the spaces between you, each preserving the other's integrity and growth, and may you balance the spaces with the closeness that nurtures and encourages. May your lives together be rich and full, living and loving together as long as your love endures.

Kiss

Music

CEREMONY #4

We are gathered here this afternoon at this time and place to share this moment with and , to join with them in asking God's blessing on their union.

They embark on life's journey together and growing together; to develop and enhance their devotion, to share all joys and sorrows, to strengthen their bond through the search of understanding and wisdom, and to develop as individuals who are able to give of themselves to all who touch their lives.

In this moment before they exchange vows, X and Y would like to dedicate this poem to one another.

take my hand
for i offer it only to you
with the strength of a deep love
born of our sharing

.....
to touch
so tenderly meaningful a moment
and with the firmness of our grasp
the giving and sharing
the sincerity of such a union
for our hearts and minds and souls
become one

such is the supreme closeness

an invulnerable bond
strengthened and cherished
with the security of finding an individuality
within our oneness

Will you now join right hands please, and repeat after me:

I, X, take you, Y, to be mine before God and humanity; to have and to hold, from this day forward and forever more; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love and to cherish, till the end of our time.

May I have the ring, please?

, with this ring I do thee wed.

Marriage is the union of two souls in a strong love for the abolishment of separateness. It is that higher unity which fuses the separate unities within two spirits. It is the golden ring in the chain whose beginning is a glance and whose ending is Eternity.

And now, having come before me and these witnesses, having exchanged vows and given and received rings, I declare you one. May God bless you both.

SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

and , you will no doubt find some difficulties adherent with this change of status. There will be those few who will not accept; those who will not accept are afraid. Understand their scorn for the fear it is and with your lack of retaliation, the will, in time, come to admire your dignity as one human being to another. This will require strength and courage and patience on your part, and these qualities must be supported in one another. Together you will withstand more than if each were alone.

Do not retreat within yourselves, but rather broaden your spheres to encompass all of society, even those who cause you pain. It is their ignorance that hurts you and , by closing the door, you are denying them the understanding they need. Stand before all as an example of that segment of humankind who has been hidden away by self-choice or social condemnation. With your expression of dignified love and devotion for one another, pave the way for others who wish to express the kind of love you fell.

CEREMONY #5

Dear Friends: We are gathered together in the presence of God to witness the joining together of these two persons in marriage.

True marriage is a comradeship of two who strive to grow together in their mutual differences for their mutual happiness, who work for the achievement of their common ideals, and who recognize in each other individual lives to be lived, rights to be maintained, and talents to be developed.

The ceremony which we are about to perform does not guarantee the success of permanency of this marriage. The real and lasting happiness of a true marriage depends on the willingness to give as well as receive, and to create out of separate hopes and ideals, shared love and trust.

What the church now celebrates, these two shall henceforth make real.

Scripture Readings

The Affirmation

, will you have as your spouse, to live with in love and loyalty henceforth? R:
I will

The Pledges

I, , take you , to be my spouse, to have and to hold, from this day forward. I undertake to be true to you in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, and to love and to cherish you as we go over the road of life together.

The Exchange of Rings

The wedding ring is the outward and visible of the inward union of two hearts. Please repeat after me:

With the gift of this ring, I pledge you my faithful love.

The Prayer

May God's blessings rest upon X and Y. May their hearts remain united in the bonds of love, and their minds engaged by responsibility. May they be a comfort to each other, sharers of each other's joys, consolers of other's sorrows, helpers of each other in all the ups and downs of life. May they respect and cherish each other, and so live together in wisdom and understanding, in patience and consideration, that their home may be a haven of blessing and a place of peace and joy, all the rest of their days. Amen.

Announcement

Now for as much as X and Y have consented together in wedlock and have promised their faithful love each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands and the giving and receiving of rings, I announce that they are united in marriage.

The Kiss

The Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and bless you with love and understanding from this day forth.

Ceremony #6

Music

Call: Friends, we have gathered here at the request of XX and YY to witness and honor their vows of mutual love, We have been asked as a community of loving friends to share their joy with them, to witness their union, and to pledge ourselves to support and honor their love. They will be living together, not only alone in their union, but as part of this community and it is because of this they have asked us to share their beginnings.

Solo

Couple: A: With your spirit as my strength,
I will be faithful to our love.

B: Fill us with the spirit of love,
And unite us in one heart.

A: Give us the courage we so need,
To share the bread of our lives.

B: Let us go beyond fulfilling laws,
To the freedom of loving persons.

Both: With your spirit as my strength,
I will be faithful to our love.

Gregory Norbert, OSB Weston Priory

Charge to Couple: The poet Rilke says that a good union is one in which the lovers are individual within their togetherness. He warns of the danger of losing oneself in the other and thereby losing the expanses and the possibilities.

"A good marriage," he writes, "is that in which each appoints the other the guardian of his/her solitude.... Once the realization is accepted that even between the closest human beings infinite distances continue to exist, a wonderful living side by side can grow up, if they succeed in loving the distances between them."

Gibran tells us in The Prophet, "Sing and dance and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, even as the strings of the lute are alone though they quiver with the same music..."

If a relationship is to grow, there must be room for the two people to grow as individuals, enriched and encouraged by each other's love. When the two live only for

each other, love strangles and dies. Thus it is out of a fragile balance between individuality and union that love is born. Such unions can be created only by loving purpose.

Would you please join hands as a sign of that purpose?

Music (the following music might be sung by the couple)

Take my hand, share my life:
We shall live as one.
You shall be always free to become yourself.
In this moment we are choosing
To be faithful as gifts for each other's life.

Share our joy, sing with us;
Deep the call to live.
May our days, bright with hope,
Make more clear our choice.
Long and winding roads we'll follow,
Knowing certainly peace will be our home.

Gregory Norbert

Exchange of tokens

Wine ceremony

"Love one another, but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup."
Will you now each drink to one another, fulling each other's cup, as Gibran says, but drinking from your own. Remember that what matters most is not the cup, but the wine of life within it. You can enrich each other's life, but you must drink from your own.

(Each fill the other's cup and drinks from his own. If practical, cups may be filled for those attending the ceremony, and held throughout the following:)

Charge to Community: As and have asked us to share their joy, they are also asking us to share the responsibility of a loving community. As they must stand apart from each other while sharing their lives, so we must stand apart from them. Let us not forget that marriage is a private matter between two independent human beings, a relationship upon which no one should presume to intrude without invitation. Will you stand by them, hands open in friendship and support, caring but not crowding, listening when asked but not directing or giving unwanted advice? Will you, as a community, share this responsibility?

Community: We will. (All drink.)

The Declaration: And now, and , having pledged themselves to each other in the presence of their
friends and having exchanged tokens of their love, I hereby declare that they are married.

The Kiss

Music

Ceremony #7 A Celebration of Love and Commitment PGLC

Prelude

Entrance of the couple

Welcome by presiding minister, introduction to the service

Scriptures (reworded inclusively)

John 4: 7-12, 18-21

I Corinthians 13: 4-8a, 13

Hymn

A meditation, homily

Exchange of vows (usually written by the couple)

Exchange of rings (or another token)

Affirmation by minister: By the power of your love, in the presence of friends who love you, and before God

the Creator of love, you are joined together. Thanks be to God!

Embrace and/or kiss

Prayers

Leader: O God, we confess we have often cheapened love--we have sentimentalized it, or equated it with mere physical response, or narrowed it to selfish demands and expectations. We confess we have loved only those people who love us in return or are like us. May we learn to love regardless of return or condition, as you love us. Forgive us for failing to love as you have first loved us.

Congregation: Dear God, we thank you that X and X have invited us to celebrate their commitment of love to each other. In a world frightened of commitment, we admire their courage to covenant together, to give one another the gifts of love throughout their lifetimes. May we honor their invitation to us to be with them for this ceremony by honoring and giving support to their continuing relationship. May the glow from their union help light our own way in finding meaning-filled love relationships, and in discovering new meaning the love relationships we already enjoy. May we join them in making their commitment to one another as we commit ourselves to embrace them, as a couple, and as individuals unique in your sight. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, the one who taught us how to live. Amen.

Hymn

Communion (optional; includes the Lord's Prayer)

Parting blessing, prayer or benediction

Postlude

A prayer for couples: Compassionate Lord, since your servants have already been joined to one another in spiritual love, we ask you to grant them a faith unconfounded, and a love without pretense.

CEREMONY #8

We are gathered here this afternoon at this time and place to share this moment with and , and to join with them in asking God's blessing on their union.

They embark on life's journey together and growing together; to develop and enhance their devotion, to share all joys and sorrows, to strengthen their bond through the search of understanding and wisdom, and to develop as individuals who are able to give of themselves to all who touch their lives.

In this moment before the exchange vows, they would like to dedicate this poem to one another: take my hand

for i offer it only to you
with the strength of a deep love
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such if the supreme closeness

an invulnerable bond
strengthened and cherished
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Will you now join right hands please, and repeat after me:

I, ____, take you, ____, to be mine before God and humanity; to have and to hold, from this day forward and forever more; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love and to cherish till the end of our time.

May I have the ring, please?

____, with this ring I do thee wed.

And now, having come before me and these witnesses, having exchanged vows and given and received rings, I declare you one. May God bless you both.

CEREMONY #9

We are gathered here this afternoon to participate with XX and YY in this public declaration of their love for each other and to be witnesses to their joining together, the next step in the fulfillment of their love. A union ceremony is not, however, a culmination of love. It is, rather, a milestone in life which is a statement of dedication to the premise that such love can and will expand to even greater heights than is now being experienced.

Such a public declaration, however, is not an easy one for a segment of our population, for a majority of people in our society refuse to understand that love can be expressed in many ways and by many combinations of people. Essentially what we proclaim in this ceremony is the humanness of human beings, the spiritual call of one being to another, and the concept of love that has no boundaries other than that of humanity. XX and YY affirm the following words for their wedding service:

This day is the culmination
of two souls in love,
Two souls bound together
yet, therefore, two souls freed.

Free to face ignorance
and social pressures together,
Free to surmount obstacles,
free to live and be happy,
Free to love...proud to be.

We are glad in our hearts,
knowing this is right,
Hoping that all humankind
will realize it and learn
The dignity and beauty of love
in all forms.

We live in the hopes that humanity's
ignorance will give was
To love one day. That would
be humanity's true beauty attained

At last...and God wouldn't mind.

and , you are setting out in a hazardous world, with threats to your security abounding. It will require of you both a firmness of character that can withstand the arrows of contentiousness while still retaining a strong and continuous caring for each other. There will be those who will seek to divide you; there will be those who will deride your attempts at oneness; there will be still others who will shun you as outcasts. You must rise above those whose views represent the ignorance of humankind in the sure and certain hope that the future promises understanding and approbation for all the daughters and sons of God. And you may be sure that this act in which you are engaged now, the ceremony of union, will help light a path for others to follow, and will, thereby, contribute to that future understanding and approval.

It is customary that the participants of this ceremony exchange vows of importance to them. Vows are not chains binding one to another; rather, they are a covenant between two people based on mutual respect and love.

and , I urge you to remember that beyond the outward trapping, the words and the joy of the ceremony, there lies a lifetime of adjustment, which must be done calmly, patiently, and with reason.

Happiness must be earned; not by one word or gesture but by continuous devotion to the spirit which inspires the vows which you are about to take.

You, , will ever be one personality, and you, , another personality. But the two of you together in holy union are still a third entity. It is only with care that the toil and turmoil of the world can be prevented from injuring and destroying this new being.

With this in mind, I ask you to join hands and declare your commitment to each other before this assembled group.

I, , take you, , for whom I feel in my heart and soul so deeply, to love and to show love to, to stand by in adversity and times of ease. I will offer you understanding and support in all things dear to you, for these are also my concerns to care and share with you. I commit myself to our love, our life, and our happiness. From this day forward let us grow continuously together.

It is traditional that such vows as you have made be sealed by the exchange of tokens. May I have your (tokens/rings), please?

, as you [place the ring on 's finger], please repeat after me:

By the exchange of these [bands], themselves symbols of eternity, I pledge myself to our love and our life together.

(The couple reads together:) These bands, which symbolize our devotion to one another, tell us and the world that we came together before God this day, and that no one can divide that which pervades our thoughts and possesses our beings so deeply and which God has blessed, for we are each other as much as we are ourselves.

In the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, --I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! --and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

The candle with its flame is a symbol of life. The flame may be passed on, but ultimately the candle is consumed. It burns with a speed and steadiness and intensity which expresses its unique character. And, in so doing, it sends forth its light and warmth. (The couple lights a third candle from two separate candles.)

Today we are celebrating the joining of two lives, a joining which creates a new flame with a warmth and intensity and special character of its own. Take care that this new flame of your relationship in no way diminishes or extinguishes the original and individual flames you bring to it. May you each continue to radiate your unique warmth and light and intensity.

And now, and , having come before me and this company, desiring to be united, having clasped hands and exchanged meaningful vows, and having and given tokens, I pronounce them to be united, one to the other, in the sight of God and of humanity.

May God bless you and keep you.

May God's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May God's countenance be turned toward you, and give you peace. Amen.

CEREMONY #10

OPENING WORDS It is written that the greatest of all things, the most wonderful experience in the world, is love. and , into your lives has entered a deep and lasting love, and you have requested that the church and its ministry help you celebrate that love. We would call your partnership a "holy union," for wherever there is love, God abides there also.

Ever since there have been human beings, there have been some people who have shared their deepest expression of love with a person of the same sex. Our church has grown to recognize the validity of that special way of loving and strives with others to overcome the prejudice about it in society so that one day all true love partnerships may be legally recognized and fully affirmed.

and , you have honored us by inviting us to witness your commitment to each other in holy union. May your love grow sure and strong and true in the days and years of your lives together.

READING (choose one)

I Corinthians 13

(from The Prophet)

Love one another, but make not a bond of love;

Let it be rather a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be

alone,

Even as the strings of the lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts but not into each other's keeping,

For only the hands of love can contain your hearts.

And stand together yet not too close together,

For the pillars of the temple stand apart,

And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow. But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

(by Anne Morrow Lindbergh) When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility--the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity--in freedom, in the sense that dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. For relationships, too, must be like islands. One must accept them for what they are here and now within their limits--islands, surrounded and interrupted by the seas, continually visited and abandoned by the tides. One must accept the security of the winged life, of ebb and flow of intermittency.

(by Walt Whitman)

Listen! I will be honest with you.
I do not offer the old smooth prizes,
But offer rough new prizes.

These are the days that must happen to you:
You shall not heap up what is called riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve. However sweet the laid-up stores, However convenient the dwellings, You shall not remain there.
However sheltered the port, and however calm the waters,
You shall not anchor there.
However welcome the hospitality that welcomes you,
You are permitted to receive it but a little while.
Afoot and lighthearted, take to the open road,
Healthy free, the world before you,
Leading wherever you choose.
Say only to one another:
Camarado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love, more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law:
Will you give me yourself?
Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

VOWS

and , do you both give yourself fully to this holy union?
We do.

Of all the people you know, you have chosen each other as partners in life. Please face each other and join hands, repeating your vows after me:

With all my love, I take you, , as my partner in life.
May I have the rings, please?

A. The circle is the symbol of the sun and the earth and the universe. It is a symbol of unity in which your two lives are now joined in an unbroken circle, in which, wherever you go, you will return unto one another.

B. May this ring/these rings be forever a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Love freely given has no giver and no receiver-- for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May this ring/these rings remind you always of the vows you have taken here today.

Handing the ring(s) back to the appropriate person(s), the minister asks the giver(s) to repeat the following words as the ring(s) is/are exchanged:

I give you this ring, as a symbol of my love.

or

Accept this ring, as a symbol of our holy union.

V. THE WINE CUP

If the wine cup is shared by the couple, it could come at this point in the service. In the Jewish tradition, the cup is wrapped in a cloth towel and broken by stepping on it at the end of the service. This symbolizes the destruction of the Temple which forced Jews to enter a new life together. Thus, it symbolizes a break with the past. Unless the couple comes from Jewish families, the breaking of the cup is usually omitted.

Holding the cup, the minister says:

The years of our lives are like a cup of wine poured out for us to drink. The grapes when they are pressed give forth their good juices for the wine. Under the wine press of time our lives give forth their labor and honor and love. Many days you will sit at the same table and eat and drink together. Drink now, and may the cup of your lives be sweet and full to running over. [And will you parent also share this cup?]

VI. PRAYERS

A. Lord, make them a channel of your peace,
That where there is hatred, they may bring love,
Where there is wrong, they may bring the spirit of forgiveness, Where there is discord, they may discover and reveal harmony, Where there is error, they may embody truth,
Where there is doubt, they may bring the spirit of inquiry,
Where there is despair, they may bring hope,
Where there are shadows, they may bring thy light,
Where there is sadness, they may bring solace,
For it is my giving that they shall receive,
By self-forgetting that they shall find,
By forgiving that they shall be forgiven.
Lord, grant that they might seek rather to comfort than to be comforted,
To understand than to be understood,
To love than to be loved. Amen.

(Prayer of St. Francis, adapted.)

B. Giver of life and love, we give thanks for all the beauty in the world, for its promise and its fulfillment; for all that gives gladness; for the joys of knowledge and of love and of faith. We give thank for all that binds us to one another; for all the common experiences which make us kin; for the needs which find their highest satisfactions in loving satisfactions in loving associations with others.

C. Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak you truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is: many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the tress and the stars; you have a right

to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive God to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy. DESIDERATA.

VII. CLOSING WORDS (Ask people to stand.)

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter to the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there is no loneliness for you. Now there is not more loneliness. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. Go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your togetherness and may your days be good, and long upon the earth.

(adapted from the Apache Indian ceremony)

VIII PRONOUNCEMENT

XX and YY, for as much as you both have committed yourselves to each other and in token have given and received rings, by the authority vested in me as a minister of the church, I recognize you as spiritually united.

God be with you always. (or) Congratulations.

Pre-ceremony music

Tape

Welcome (and)

and I would like to welcome all of you and thank you for coming. Your presence is very special to us. We know that for some of you this is a big step and we're glad you chose to make it. ()

This is a big step for us also. This ceremony marks a commitment that we made to each other a long time ago. Today is simply a way to make that commitment more formal and ask for support from our family and friends. We are not here to make a statement. This just seemed to be the next logical step in our lives. ()

Our ceremony may seem familiar to you, but it is not a marriage. We cannot be married, but we can formally join our lives in other ways. Our pastor, Dr. wanted to be here with us, but was unable to do so. In his absence, we've chosen and , two very special friends, to lead the ceremony. ()

Prayer (mother)

Readings (and)

From the book of First Samuel (18:1-4, 20:16-18a, 23) (KC)

By the time David was through talking with Saul, Jonathan's soul was in unison with David's soul; Jonathan loved him as himself. On that same day Saul retained him and did not let him return to his father's home. Because he loved him, Jonathan made a covenant with David; he stripped himself of the robe he had on and gave it to David; also his armor with sword, bow, and belt.

Jonathan made this covenant with the house of David: the LORD shall require it from David's adversaries. Jonathan also took oath afresh from David, because of his love for him, for he loved him as himself.

Jonathan then told him, "And as to our mutual pledge, mind you, the LORD is our mediator forever."

From The Little Prince (pp. 86-87 trans. from French) ()

Therefore the little prince tamed the fox. And when the time came for leaving approached:

"Oh!" said the fox,..."I'll cry."

"It's your fault," said the little prince, "I didn't wish you any harm, but you wanted me to tame you.."

"Of course," said the fox.

"But you're going to cry!" said the little prince.

"Of course," said the fox.

"So, you've gained nothing!"

"I gained something," said the fox, " because of the color of wheat."

Then he added:

"Go see the roses. You'll understand that yours is unique in the world. Come back to tell me good-bye and I'll share a secret with you."

""

And he came toward the fox.

"Good-bye," he said...

"Good-bye," said the fox. "Here's my secret. It's very simple. One can see well only with the heart. The essential is invisible to the eyes.

"The essential is invisible to the eyes," repeated the little prince, so that he could remember it.

"It's the time that you spent with your rose that made her so important."

"It's the time that I spent with my rose..." said the little prince, to remember.

"Men have forgotten this truth," said the fox. "But you must not forget it. You become forever responsible for that which you tame. You are responsible for your rose."

"I am responsible for my rose..." repeated the little prince, in order to remember it.

From the Gospel According to Saint John (15: 9-12) ()

Just as the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; continue in this love of Mine. You will remain in My love if you keep My commands, just as I keep My Father's command and remain in His love.

I have talked these matters over with you so that My joy may be in you and your joy be made complete. This is my command, that you love one another as I have loved you.

From The House at Pooh Corner (pp. 306-7) ()

"Where are we going?" said Pooh, hurrying after him, and wondering whether it was to be an Explore or a What-shall-I-do-about-you-know-what.

"Nowhere," said Christopher Robin.

So they began going there, and after they had walked a little way Christopher Robin said:

"What do you like doing best in the world, Pooh?"

"Well," said Pooh, "what I like best--" and then he had to stop and think. Because although Eating Honey was a very good thing to do, there was a moment just before you began to eat it which was better than when you were,

but he didn't know what it was called. And then he thought that being with Christopher Robin was a very good thing to do, and having Piglet near was a very friendly thing to have; and so, when he thought it all out, he said, "What I like best in the whole world is Me and Piglet going to see You, and You saying 'What about a little something?' and Me saying, 'Well, I shouldn't mind a little something, should you, Piglet,' and it being a hummy sort of day outside, and birds singing."

"I like that too," said Christopher Robin, " but what I like *doing* best is Nothing."

"How do you do Nothing?" asked Pooh, after he had wondered for a long time.

"Well, it's when people call out at you just as you're going off to do it, What are you going to do, Christopher Robin, and you say, Oh nothing, and then you go and do it."

"Oh, I see," said Pooh.

"This is a nothing sort of thing that we're doing now."

"Oh, I see," said Pooh again.

"It means just going along, listening to all the things you can't hear, and not bothering."

"Oh!" said Pooh.

From the book of Psalms (100) ()

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Sharing (or)

and have asked all of us here because of the relationships that we have with them. If you have a special memory or some pearl of wisdom that you wish to share with them, they're prepared and would like for you to do so. (or starts)

(Monitor time wise and ask if anyone else goes when a break.)

Vows and Exchange of rings (and)

Secret vows that we will share that day.

I give you this ring, a symbol of my love for you with its unbroken circle. As you wear it may you constantly be reminded of my vow to you witnessed here today by these people and God.

Music and Certificate signing ("When you wish")

In the Quaker tradition, a couple signs a certificate to seal their union. Their guests, in turn, sign the certificate to pledge their support to the couple. ()

We would like to observe that tradition and formally ask you to support our relationship. The certificate will remain a constant reminder to us of your love. Please sign before you leave today. ()

Blessing ()

Champagne toast ()