



# **THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT.....**

**WEDDING CEREMONIES, ETC.  
From Massachusetts Town Clerks**

Compiled by  
Linda E. Hutchenrider

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there is a variety of things that include poems, quotes, glass breaking , candle lighting, wine drinking etc.	

## PREFACE

Town Clerks in Massachusetts may apply to become a justice of the peace by virtue of their position as clerk. Many of the Commonwealth's 351 clerks are justices. Over the years, as a member of the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association, I have noticed that, occasionally, one of the clerks will announce that they are looking for a ceremony for a double wedding or some other specific type of wedding. Hence, I felt it might be of assistance to all clerks if we had a handbook with sample ceremonies that could be used in such instances.

I queried the Massachusetts clerks and the following is a collection of what they submitted. Hopefully, this will be a good reference for any justice. There are also some special poems and readings, which could be added to any ceremony, as well as some additional forms and letters that could be utilized in the planning phase. You will probably find some duplication of ceremonies or poems, especially the Apache Wedding Prayer, which is used quite a bit, and follows this preface.

The position of a justice is a very important one. Helping the couple choose a ceremony that is special to them is a very important part of the service to the bride and groom. This collection, will hopefully be an asset in finding just the right words for that special occasion.

Some additional tips are included relative to putting together a totally new ceremony. I have often referred to my wedding ceremonies as something old, something new, something borrowed and hopefully not blue. This guide will demonstrate that there is no ONE official ceremony, and that sometimes the best ceremony is created by borrowing segments from others.

Appreciation and thanks go to all clerks who helped by submitting forms, poems, articles and ceremonies. Some clerks sent one thought, one ceremony or idea and some clerks like Ed English from Newton sent many. He gets the long term award – he has been a justice for 30 years and has performed 3,350 weddings and is still going strong. Due to the lack of time, I was not able to re-type all documents, so many are just as I received them – but in

some ways it adds character to this collection. I also tried to make sure that all clerks received recognition for their individual pieces. If I have inadvertently left your name out, I am sorry; but some things were handed to me in a hurry with no name on them. I thank everyone, because even if you did not give me a ceremony, you were excited about the project, and that helped me a lot. Clerks are noted for coming to the aid of one another; and this is a typical case where you came forward with submissions. This is dedicated to all of you....

Enjoy,  
Linda



## APACHE WEDDING PRAYER

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 will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other.

Now you are two persons, but there are three lives before you: His life, her life and your life together.

Go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your life together.

May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years.

May happiness be your companion to the place where the river meets the sun.

And may your days together be good and long upon this earth.



## TIPS:

In time your own experiences will guide you in your role as a justice of the peace. But for the beginner the following are just a few thoughts or tips to get you going. Each clerk/justice has his/her own style. Some clerks are very formal and wear a robe or a suit at all weddings. Other clerks are less formal, and some will even perform a Halloween wedding in costume. Your personality will normally define the type of justice you are or may become.

When you first meet with or talk to the bride and groom you could provide them with a ceremony worksheet (there is a sample in this book) where the couple can actually pick and choose sections of the service. At the same time, you could also give them a form or letter that answers common questions that they may have, explains your fee, gives them your phone number etc. (a sample of one of those is also enclosed). Some things you should be cautioned on are:

1. This is not your wedding – you should give the bride and groom all the latitude they need and provide as many possible options that you can for helping them make decisions regarding the actual ceremony. Some couples want to be involved and want to give you special readings; while others would prefer that you choose a ceremony for them. Sometimes the length of the ceremony is the only important factor to a couple – they may make a request that it be short and sweet due to nerves and other similar issues. Others may be paying big money for a facility and want their monies worth and a longer ceremony. In any event you should spend a little time talking with the bride and groom to be and find out some information about them that may help you design and coordinate just the right words for that couple.
2. Stay out of the middle of issues. If they try to make you the deciding vote on anything – decline to comment – you are safer that way. Weddings are very emotional and the smallest of details can become a huge problem. Let them solve it and keep your opinions to yourself.
3. If they ask for help in lining people up and you feel comfortable with that, do it. But be aware that procedures and wedding etiquette have changed and just about anything is allowable. If you wish to check out Emily Post or Miss Manners or some other guide for weddings, it might help you.
  - a. In Victorian times who walked down what aisle, and who lined up where were very defined. Today it is anything goes – but normally the groom and his best man and ushers convene in the front of the room with the justice of the peace just prior to the appearance of the bride.

- b. The bridesmaids walk in first, followed by the flower girl and ring bearer, then the maid/matron of honor and the bride. Again- this is only one way of lining people up you can do it any way that makes the couple happy.
  - c. The aforesaid lineup will end up with the groom and his men on the right (as you face them from the audience) and the bride and her ladies on the left. When they leave, the bride will then be on the right of the groom to walk down the aisle and the groomsmen and bridesmaids will also be lined up to walk out in pairs.
4. Be early – do not panic the bride, she has enough to be worried about without you being a possible no show.
5. Make sure you impress upon the bride and groom the importance of bringing their marriage license to the wedding. Do not perform the ceremony without it. You need to follow your own advice. In fact, if the couple wants a rehearsal, ask them to give you the license at that time. Or, if they apply in your office, have them check it out to make sure it is error free and then you keep it and bring it to the wedding.
6. Follow the state laws that apply for what justices may charge to perform a wedding ceremony. You, of all people, should know not to overcharge. Fees are not listed in this book since there is active legislation to raise them.
7. Get a black (or other preferably non-descript colored) binder, folder or other holder that you can put your ceremony in. This looks nicer and you can put the license in it as well and have everything together for the wedding. To stand in front of an audience and shuffle papers around is not professional. You could actually go a step further and color coordinate your folder with your gown or suit (this would be more of a female thing). Some justices memorize the ceremony, and if you have done this fine, but to make yourself less nervous, have a copy in front of you.
8. Even though this is a serious occasion, maintain a sense of humor because you never know what may happen during the course of a ceremony. Brides have fainted. Grooms have fainted. One or the other have thrown up. Flower girls continue on their mission of throwing petals during the ceremony. Ring bearers have lost the rings as well as some best men. Both flower girls and ring bearers are noted for stealing the show by talking or singing or blowing out the altar candles or just being cute children. People have fallen down, gowns have ripped from being stepped on. Be prepared for just about anything.
9. Be flexible. The bride and groom have chosen a justice of the peace for what could be a variety of reasons. You may find that they want to integrate certain parts of other ceremonies into yours (such as the Jewish tradition of breaking a glass – which is included in a few of the ceremonies in this book). Be willing to adapt, this is what makes you special, and will make them appreciate you more.
10. Carry tissue up your sleeve...you can never tell when you or someone else will need it.

**Town of Barnstable**  
**Office of Town Clerk**  
367 Main Street, Hyannis MA 02601

Office: 508-862-4044  
Fax: 508-790-6326

Linda E. Hutchenrider, CMC/AAE/CMMO  
Town Clerk

***You have asked if I can marry you...***

The answer is simple, yes I can, if I do not have any conflicting meetings or projects. I am first and foremost the clerk of this town. I am a justice of the peace by virtue of my position, but I feel that I cannot take away from my job in any way.

***Is there a fee?***

Yes, the fee is \$35.00 and you need to pay prior to the marriage.

***Do we need witnesses?***

No you don't. The laws in Massachusetts do not require witnesses; you may bring someone with you, but it is not required.

***Where will we get married?***

If it is a nice day – the Town Green makes a lovely setting for a wedding. If it must be inside we can try to use one of the meeting rooms upstairs; but if they are being used, the only alternative is my office.

***Is this my official wedding day?***

Yes it is. In the United States you have ONE and only one ceremony. You can have a minister, priest, rabbi or justice of the peace marry you – but this is the only official wedding you will have. Therefore, if you are planning a religious ceremony, do not bother to have a justice marry you prior to it. You are not required to have two weddings – only one, and it should be a special day for you.

***Can I get married at my home?***

You can get married wherever you like. However, if you wish to marry someplace other than the Town Hall, during a week day, please look in the yellow pages under Justices of the Peace and call someone other than myself. I cannot leave my office during office hours.

If we set a date and time for the wedding, please call if you need to change your plans or you change your mind. I am flexible, but would appreciate the courtesy of a cancellation or postponement call. My best to you as you begin your new life together...Linda E. Hutchenrider

## WHAT IS THE RECIPE FOR A GOOD WEDDING CEREMONY?



Poems have a rhyme pattern or theme. Most successful books or stories have a formula for a successful creation. There is no official pattern, theme or formula for wedding ceremonies, except what has been commonly used throughout time. This historical factor is, in itself, extremely important to some couples but not at all important to the couple who wants to write their own vows. There are fairly established parts or segments that can be left out, added to, enhanced or changed to accommodate the couple's wishes. Some

familiar phrases such as: "with this ring I thee wed", "I now pronounce you husband and wife", "do you take this man to be your lawful wedded husband" are looked for by some couples as being integral inclusions in the ceremony. Others will labor at re-wording the phrases to update or better suit their tastes. You will find the majority of women do not want the archaic "obey" to be included in the ceremony, whereas the majority of men do not care if it is included or not.

The following are **not** have-to-do's, but are suggestions on what you can include in a ceremony.

### Ingredients:

#### Greeting – Welcome – Opening

Whatever you want to call it – this

establishes the reason why you are gathered together and announces who is going to be joined and who gives the bride away (if anyone).

Standard such opening: *Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here this day to join this man and this woman in marriage. John and Mary you are surrounded by your friends and family, who are here to share in the joy of this occasion, which should be one of the most memorable and happy days of your lives.*

*Who gives this woman in marriage?*

You have now established who is present, why you are present and who is giving up the bride.

#### Explanation or Meaning of Marriage

This is a section that is as varied as the individuals whom you marry. It can be lengthened or shortened depending upon the wishes of the couple. But can go something like this....

*Matrimony is an honorable estate not to be entered into unadvisedly. I charge you both to remember that love and loyalty are the foundation of a happy home. It is love and the ongoing commitment that two people have for each other that brings growth and fulfillment in marriage. This is not achieved, however, without great effort. To this happy occasion John and Mary bring the fullness of their love to share with one another and with you. They bring that particular personality and spirit which is uniquely their own and out of which will grow the reality of their life together. Marriage is a union of two individuals and*

*should not be taken lightly. Today we come joyfully to acknowledge the decision of these two people to share their lives together.*

### **Initial vow or intent**

This is the initial simplistic vow of do you take the other.

*John will you take Mary to be your lawfully wedded wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, for better, for worse, and promise to live with her and cherish her with a husband's loyalty and devotion?*

Then the same is repeated for the woman to take the man.

Sometimes this is all the couple can deal with and will say "I will" and that will be it for the vows. However, many like to have some longer vows added. They actually turn and face each other and hold hands and individually repeat after you....such as

*I John take thee Mary  
To be my wedded wife  
And I promise to be  
A loving and faithful husband  
Through joy and sorrow,  
Sickness and health,  
Forsaking all others,  
As long as we both shall live.*

Then the bride will also repeat.

In between the vows you can add more readings, poems, explanations, or someone can sing, or someone other than you can also do a reading if the couple wants.

### **Rings – explanation and exchange of**

This is where you explain (if you desire) the symbol of the exchanging of rings and then have them say a short vow while placing the rings on each other's hands. For instance:

*May the giving and receiving of rings be symbolic of a love that is as endless as the band which encircles the finger and as precious as the metal from which it is made.*

*Please place this ring upon the finger of your bride as a token of wedlock and repeat after me:*

*I, John give you this ring  
In token and in pledge  
Of our constant faith and abiding love  
And with this ring....I thee wed.*

### **Closing – wrap up – blessing - pronouncement**

Again you can read a poem – the "Apache Blessing" is beautiful, of any of the standardized verses or blessings or do a simple closing such as:

*Throughout your new life together we wish for you to be able to say, because you love me, you give me faith in myself; and because I see the good in you, I receive from you a faith in humanity. In as much as the two of you have agreed to live together in matrimony, and have promised your love for each other by these vows, the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of rings, by the power vested in me by the Commonwealth of*

*Massachusetts, but more importantly by their own love, I now pronounce you husband and wife.*

At this point they kiss, you can introduce the couple to the assembly, everyone marches out (you are the last), you are done and the marriage is complete (except for completing the marriage certificate).

As you know, no two ceremonies are alike. Just about anything can be added to it. In the collection of ceremonies, we have more poems, writings, sayings, etc. So you can pick what you like or leave it up to the bride and groom. What is sometimes the easiest is for you to put together a few ceremonies to have: a long one, short one, one with the breaking of the glass, one with a unity candle, one for very young people with more current or up-to-date readings (you can even get vows of movie stars off the internet), and a ceremony that is more closely based on an historical one, for the older couples. You might also want to have on hand a renewal of vows service for anniversaries, a ceremony for people with children, and a possible double ceremony.

Whatever you do, know that there is no wrong way – except if you call the bride or groom the wrong name, that could get you on the list of “don’t call that j.p.” Good luck and enjoy reading!!!

**STANDARD CEREMONY W/OPTIONS & CHOICE FORM**

**WEDDING CEREMONY**

We are gathered here today to unite (Groom) and (Bride) in marriage, an institution which the state may regulate and the church may sanction, but which can only become real in the lives of two people.

This celebration is but the outward sign of an inward union of the hearts, and as such, marriage is the most tender of all relationships in life. It is our fondest hope that in this union, your separate lives may together explore new dimensions of love.

(Groom) and (Bride), your free decision to join together for life is prompted by the love you have for each other. This love provides you with the determination to be yourselves, the capacity for surrender and the desire for life. It gives you the courage to hope and the ability to dream. Your purpose in joining together is to nurture that love in each other and, as best you can, to give it to others.



VOWS

**SELECTION #1:**

*I, (Groom), take you (Bride), to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward. I promise to love you, to comfort you, to honor and respect you, in sickness and in health, so long as we both shall live.*

*I, (Bride), take you (Groom), to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward. I promise to love you, to comfort you, to honor and respect you, in sickness and in health, so long as we both shall live.*

**SELECTION #2:**

*(Groom), will you have (Bride) as your wedded wife to live together in the estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and respect her, in sickness and in health, so long as you both shall live? "I will."*

*(Bride), will you have (Groom) as your wedded husband to live together in the estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and respect him, in sickness and in health, so long as you both shall live? "I will."*



EXCHANGE OF RINGS

It is customary to exchange wedding rings as symbols of love and unity, and as a token of the vows you have taken. The act of giving and receiving rings reminds us that love itself is an act of giving and receiving.

These rings are natural symbols of enduring love. They represent an inward belief and trust in togetherness. They also represent an outward sign of spirit and commitment, signifying to all the bond the two of you share.

**SELECTION #1:**

*(Bride), with this ring I thee wed. Wear it as a token of my love and commitment.  
(Groom), with this ring I thee wed. Wear it as a token of my love and commitment.*

**SELECTION #2:**

*Groom: With this ring I thee wed  
Bride: With this ring I thee wed.*

**SELECTION #3:**

*I, (Groom), take you (Bride) to be my wife, and with this ring, I pledge to you my love.  
I, (Bride), take you (Groom) to be my husband, and with this ring, I pledge to you my love.*

~~~~~

On this, the day of your marriage, you stand somewhat apart from others, and, this is as it should be. But love is not meant to be the possession of two people alone. It should instead be shared with others, so you grow both as a couple and as individuals, with much to give to your friends and family.

Use this bond for courage and support when hardships arise, for the marriage service leaves us looking out along a road of not only love, but struggle.

May you meet those obstacles with a steadily deepening love...one which grows in understanding and in unselfishness...a measure of patience, especially in trying times...the ability to communicate, so that you may be saved from hurtful words spoken in anger or grudges nurtured in silence...a sense of humor so that you may laugh at yourselves as well as with others...and a happy home where you may find and give serenity and strength.

In confronting those hardships which are sure to come, may your love endure and leave you even more committed to your life together.

**(If there are already children involved, this may be added ...)**

*In confronting those hardships which are sure to come, may your love endure and leave you even more committed to your life together. May this love extend to your new family so that your children may always feel the warmth and security of a loving home.*

**APACHE WEDDING PRAYER OPTION:**

*“Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other.  
 Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.  
 Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other.  
 Now you are two persons, but there are three lives before you:  
 His life, her life and your life together.  
 Go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your life together.  
 May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years.  
 May happiness be your companion to the place where the river meets the sun,  
 And may your days together be good and long upon this earth.”*

---

We ask blessings upon you both, in sickness and in health, in abundance and in want, in life, and also in death.

Inasmuch as (Groom) and (Bride) have consented in wedlock and have pledged their love each to the other, and have declared the same in the presence of this company, by the joining of hands and the giving of rings, by the power vested in me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLACE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FEE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VOWS SELECTION:** # \_\_\_\_\_ **We will do our own vows\*:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RINGS SELECTION:** # \_\_\_\_\_ **Other ring exchange\*:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADD "CHILDREN INVOLVED" SECTION:** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADD APACHE WEDDING PRAYER:** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please let me know before the wedding of any changes you'd like in the ceremony – anything may be added or deleted.*

*Barbara LaBombard, Northampton*

## STANDARD CEREMONY W/POEMS AND CHILD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Friends, we are gathered here at this hour to witness and to celebrate the coming together of two separate lives. We have come to join this man, \_\_\_\_\_, and this woman, \_\_\_\_\_, in marriage, to be with them and rejoice with them in the making of this important commitment.

Marriage is a union of two individuals. It is a relationship that is entered into thoughtfully, with respect for the past and hope for the future. Together a husband and wife will experience what life has to offer. They will bear each other's burdens as well as share each others joys.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, your marriage is intended to join you for life, in a relationship so intimate and personal that it will change your whole being. It offers you the hope, and indeed, the promise of a love that is true. Where there is love, there is a beauty that cannot be described; a strength that cannot be broken, and a joy that cannot be surpassed. You are two people who love and have the kind of devotion and faith in God that can carry you both through good times and through bad times. To preserve such love, you must commit yourselves to each other freely and happily for the sake of a richer and deeper life together. The surest basis for marriage is friendship; the sharing of real interest; the ability to work out ideas together, understand each other's thoughts and dreams, communicate openly and freely, and forgive big and small hurts. May then this love which joins your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on.

Henceforth, you belong entirely to each other. You will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affection, and whatever sacrifices you may have to make for this common life, always make them generously. No greater joy can come to your married life than pure love, true to the end.

May then this love, in which you will be joining your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on.

Reading: From 'The Prophet'

"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, 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 a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give you hearts, but not into each other's keeping, For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together yet not too near together; for the pillars of the temple stand apart, And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow."

Vows: (We would appreciate any suggestions on the phrasing of the first

two questions – substitute names needless to say)

To Child: Do you Nadia celebrate with Ted and Maria the decision they have made to be together and do you agree to support them as they pursue their life together?

To guests: Do you, friends and family of Ted and Maria, celebrate with them the decision they have made to be together and agree to support them as they pursue their life together?

Ted, do you take Maria to be your lawful wife, to love and honor, to comfort and cherish, forsaking all others as long as you both shall live?

Maria, do you take Ted to be your lawful husband, to love and honor, to comfort and cherish, forsaking all others as long as you both shall live?

Ted and Maria, since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join hands and repeat your marriage vows:

I, Theodore, take you, Maria to be my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.

I, Maria take you, Theodore, to be my lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.

Ring ceremony:

Groom: Take this ring and wear it as a token of my love.

Bride: Take this ring and wear it as a token of my love.

Ted and Maria, may you love, honor and cherish each other, keeping the covenant and vows made between you, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and happiness, that your home may be a haven of blessing and peace.

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 more loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other. Now you are two souls, but there is only one life before you.

Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder. The grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you, the Holy Spirit keep you. Amen.

We ask for you Ted and Maria a full life, a life rich in meaning, in purpose, in caring and in joy. We trust that the love which you now have will forever make you one.

Now, therefore, by virtue of these promises made by each of you and the power conferred upon me by the laws of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

You may kiss your bride.

Larry Pizer, Plymouth

## STANDARD LONG W/SECTIONS TO KEEP OR OMIT

Margaret and Brooks, today you are surrounded by family and friends, who are here to witness your marriage and to share with you the joy of this happy occasion. Marriage is that relation between man and woman in which independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and obligation is reciprocal.

Friends, we are gathered here to witness and to celebrate the coming together of two separate lives. We have come to join this man, Brooks Johnson, and this woman, Margaret Edder, in marriage, to be with them, and to rejoice with them in the making of this important commitment.

### Charge to the couple

Marriage is a union of two individuals. It is a relationship that is entered into thoughtfully, with respect for the past and hope for the future. Together a husband and wife will experience what life has to offer. They will bear each other's burdens as well as share each other's joys.

### Homily to the bride and groom

Brooks and Margaret, you are about to enter into a union that is most sacred and most serious, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. It will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly affect your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and its pains, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden in your eyes. Love can make it easy, and perfect love can make it a joy. May then this love with which you join your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on.

### Readings

Victor Hugo – You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving. The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness. We pardon to the extent that we love. Love is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again. And great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

Bertrand Russell – The essence of a good marriage is respect for each other's personality combined with that deep intimacy, physical, mental, and spiritual, which makes a serious love between man and woman the most fruitful of all human experiences. Such love, like everything that is great and precious, demands its own morality and frequently entails a sacrifice of the less to the greater; but such sacrifice must be voluntary, for, where it is not, it will destroy the very basis of the love for the sake of which it is made.

Brooks and Margaret, your marriage is intended to join you for life, in a relationship so intimate and personal that it will change your whole being. It offers you the hope, and indeed the promise, of a love that is true. Where there is love, there is a beauty that cannot

be described, a strength that cannot be broken, and a joy that cannot be surpassed. You are two people who love and have the kind of devotion and faith in each other that can carry you through the good times and the bad. To preserve such love, you must commit yourselves to each other freely and happily for the sake of a richer and deeper life together. The surest basis for marriage is friendship; the sharing of real interest; the ability to work out ideas together, understand each other's thoughts and dreams, communicate openly and freely. May then this love that joins your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go.

#### Blessing of parents

Will you, the parents of Margaret and Brooks, grant them your blessings and pledge them your love and acceptance?

Parents: We will.

#### Vows

Brooks: On this day, I, Brooks Johnson, do pledge my love to you, Margaret. I will love, honor, and cherish you from this day forward in times of want and plenty. This promise I give for as long as we both shall love.

Margaret: I, Margaret Edder, on this day we have chosen together, stand with you, Brooks, and pledge my love. I promise to honor and cherish you from this day forward in time of want and plenty. This promise I give for as long as we both shall live.

Do you Brooks take Margaret, whom you have promised to love, honor, and cherish, to be your lawfully wedded wife?

Brooks: I do.

Do you, Margaret, take Brooks, whom you have promised to love, honor, and cherish, as your lawfully wedded husband?

Margaret: I do.

#### Ring exchange

May these rings be forever the 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 taken today.

Brooks: Take this ring and wear it as a token of my love.

Margaret: Take this ring and wear it as a token of my love.

Brooks and Margaret, may you love, honor, and cherish each other, keeping the covenant and vows made between you, and so love together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and happiness, that your home may be a haven of blessing and peace.

## Announcements

We who are present and those who are absent thinking of these two people hope that the inspiration of this hour will not be forgotten. May they continue to love one another forever.

Now, by virtue of these promises made by each of you and the power conferred upon me as a Justice of the Peace for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

## Closing words

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In *The Art of Marriage*:

- The little things are the big things.
- It is never being too old to hold hand.
- It is remembering to say, "I love you," at least once a day.
- It is never going to sleep angry.
- It is at no time taking the other granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.
- It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.
- It is standing together facing the world.
- It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
- It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.
- It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
- It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel.
- It is not looking for perfection in each other.
- It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding, and a sense of humor.
- It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
- It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
- It is finding room for things of the spirit.
- It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
- It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal.
- It is not only marrying the right partner; it is being the right partner.
- May you always need one another, not so much to fill the emptiness as to help each other know your fullness.
- May you want one another, but not out of lack.
- May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another.
- May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces.
- Look for things to praise, often say, "I love you," and take no notice of small faults.
- May you have happiness, and may you find it in making one another happy.
- May you have love, and may you find it in loving one another.

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be a 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 you are two bodies, but only one life. You go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your togetherness. May your days be good and long upon the earth. Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to tenderness, gentleness, and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty, and fear assail your relationship – as they threaten all relationships at one time or another – remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part that seems wrong. In this way you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives – remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

You may embrace.

Larry Pizer, Plymouth

SIMPLE

**JANICE AND RONALD:**

You are about to enter into a union that is most serious: for marriage is a commitment that requires of each of you the complete and unreserved giving of self.

This union will join you in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your entire future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, successes and failures, its pleasures and pains, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. And so, not knowing what is before you, you must promise to take each other for better or for worse, to love and to cherish for as long as you both shall live.

Your willingness to pronounce these words is a tribute to your abiding faith and trust in one another. And so you will begin your marriage with the merging of your individual lives in the interest of that deeper life you will share. It is of great importance, however, that you stand prepared and willing to do all that will be necessary to preserve this common life.

Only if you are prepared to make the sacrifices that will be required of you...

Only if you are willing to give the goals of this partnership precedence over your separate ambitions

And only if you are able to accept one another's differences and shortcomings, will you reap the benefits of a long, happy and rewarding life together.

So, in essence you are not merely pledging love and fidelity; you are pledging trust, support, understanding and friendship. Surely then you will experience the unparalleled joys and cherished moments that can only be shared by the two of you.

No greater blessing can come to your marriage than pure love. May this love, through which you join your hands, your hearts and your lives today never fail...but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on.

We are gathered in the presence of family, friends and these witnesses to join together **JANICE LEWEY AND RONALD JONES** in the bonds of matrimony.

While this marriage will be solemnized in a civil ceremony, the exchange of vows comes to us from the "Book of Common Prayer" the solemnization of marriage.

**RONALD**, will you take **JANICE** here present for your wife?

**JANICE**, will you take **RONALD**, here present for your husband?

RESPONSE TO ABOVE; I WILL

THE BRIDE AND THE GROOM WILL NOW JOIN THEIR RIGHT HANDS TOGETHER AND REPEAT THE FOLLOWING:

I, **RONALD**, take you **JANICE**, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish for as long as we both shall live.

I, **JANICE**, take you **RONALD**, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, for as long as we both shall live.

THE GROOM NOW TAKES A RING AND PLACES IT ON THE FOURTH FINGER OF THE LEFT HAND OF THE BRIDE SAYING,

**JANICE**, with this ring, which is a sign of my love and affection, I thee wed.

THE BRIDE NOW TAKES A RING AND PLACES IT ON THE FOURTH FINGER OF THE GROOMS LEFT HAND SAYING,

**RONALD**, with this ring, which is a sign of my love and affection, I thee wed.

**JANICE AND RONALD**, inasmuch as you have consented together in wedlock, and have given and received a ring, and by virtue of these promises, and of the power conferred upon me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I now declare that you are and henceforth shall be husband and wife.

Paul Dawson, Stoughton

**MARRIAGE CEREMONY (with children involved)**  
**March 13, 1999 -by Linda Hutchenrider, Justice of the Peace**  
**Irene Charette and Brian Goodhue**

Dearly beloved:

*(Bride enters on the arm of her father and is delivered to the hand of the groom)*  
 Who gives this woman, Irene to this man Brian. *(Father responds "I do" and kisses the bride and turns to his seat)*

We are gathered here today to join Irene and Brian on this, one of the most important days of their lives, the day on which they become husband and wife.

Today you marry your friend - the one you laugh with, live for, dream with and love. What you mean to each other is obvious in your lives but not easily expressed in the words of a ceremony. You are adult - you have known each other for some time now and have chosen to make your lives together. Your choice is responsible, free, independent and happy.

Your children stand beside you today. *(Address the children) Your respective parents have chosen each other and plan to spend the rest of their lives together. Today they commit themselves to each other by becoming husband and wife. You should always remember that their love for you will never diminish but will grow as the years go on, the same as their love for each other will grow. All they want from you is acceptance and understanding of this love and commitment. I ask all of you, do you accept this marriage? (Children say I do)*

"Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no dashing of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen." (I Corinthians, v 13) You should always remember the devotion and love that you feel for each other this day and take it with you into your years together as man and wife.

Do you Brian take this woman Irene to be your wife and promise to pledge yourself to her - to love her, respect and honor her with faith and tenderness; and to live with her and cherish her with a husband's loyalty and devotion? *(Groom answers I do)*

Do you Irene take this man Brian to be your husband and promise to pledge yourself to him, to love him, respect and honor him with faith and tenderness; and to live with him and cherish him with a wife's loyalty and devotion? *(Bride answers I do)*

*(Please face each other)*

I, Brian, take thee Irene to be my wedded wife.  
 And I promise to be a loving and faithful husband;  
 Through joy and sorrow, sickness and health.  
 Forsaking all others.....as long as we both shall live.

I, Irene, take thee Brian to be my wedded husband.  
 And I promise to be a loving and faithful wife,  
 Through joy and sorrow, sickness and health.  
 Forsaking all others...as long as we both shall live.

We wish for you a love that makes both of you better people, that continues to give you joy and the zest for living, that provides you with energy to face the responsibilities of life.

*(You have chosen to present each other with wedding rings - who holds the rings - please present them to the bride and groom)*

Irene you will first place the ring on Brian's finger and repeat after me....

This is my beloved and this is my friend  
 With this ring I thee wed.  
 It shall forever be a symbol and token of my  
 Constant faith and abiding love.

Brian you will now do the same, please place the ring on Irene's finger and repeat after me

This is my beloved and this is my friend  
 With this ring I thee wed.  
 It shall forever be a symbol and token of my  
 Constant faith and abiding love.

Irene and Brian - As you begin your journey into marriage, may the road before you be sunlit, and the seas beside you be calm- may your hearts be light and glad. Remember your vows, nurture your love - you are individuals - but you are one couple in love and marriage. May the fruits of your love go with you always and live within your heart and home from this day forward and forever more. Throughout your new life together we wish for you to be able to say, Because YOU love ME, YOU give ME faith in myself; and because I see the good in YOU, I receive from you a faith in humanity.

By the powers vested in me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I now pronounce you husband and wife. CONGRATULATIONS - you may now kiss your bride.

Ladies and gentlemen will you please rise as I present for the first time - Mr. and Mrs. Brian Goodhue.



**Wedding Ceremony - August 8, 1999**  
**Mabel Roderick and Nicholas Daskalakis**

Dearly beloved:

We are gathered here today to join Nicholas Daskalakis and Mabel Roderick on this, one of the most important days of their lives, the day on which they become husband and wife.

Today you marry your friend - the one you laugh with, live for, dream with and love. What you mean to each other is obvious in your lives but not easily expressed in the words of a ceremony. As you know, no minister, no priest, no rabbi, no public official can marry you, only you can marry yourselves. By a mutual commitment to love each other, to work toward creating an atmosphere of care, consideration and respect, by a willingness to face the tensions and anxieties that underlie human life, only you can make your wedded life come alive.

You are adult - you have known each other for some time now and have chosen to make your lives together. Your choice is responsible, free, independent and happy. Marriage and the union that it symbolizes, can be the most sublime of human experiences; for in any final accounting, love, in its infinite manifestations is what life is all about. Today we come joyfully to acknowledge the decision of these two people to share their lives together.

You should always remember the devotion and love that you feel for each other this day and take it with you into your years together as man and wife.

Do you Nicholas take this woman, Mabel, to be your wife and promise to pledge yourself to her - to love her, respect and honor her with faith and tenderness; and to live with her and cherish her with a husband's loyalty and devotion?

Do you Mabel take this man Nicholas to be your husband and promise to pledge yourself to him, to love him, respect and honor him with faith and tenderness; and to live with him and cherish him with a wife's loyalty and devotion?

I, Nicholas take thee Mabel  
 To be my wedded wife  
 And I promise to be  
 A Loving and faithful husband  
 Through joy and sorrow  
 Sickness and health  
 Forsaking all others  
 As long as we both shall live.

I, Mabel take thee Nicholas  
 To be my wedded husband

And I promise to be  
 A loving and faithful wife  
 Through and joy and sorrow  
 Sickness and health  
 Forsaking all others  
 As long as we both shall live.

Mabel and Nicholas - We wish for you a love that makes both of you better people, that continues to give you joy and the zest for living, that provides you with energy to face the responsibilities of life.

This is my beloved and this is my friend  
 With this ring I thee wed  
 It shall forever be  
 A symbol and token  
 Of my constant faith and abiding love.

As you begin your journey into marriage, may the road before you be sunlit, and the seas beside you be calm- may your hearts be light and glad. Remember your vows, nurture your love - you are individuals - but you are one couple in love and marriage. May the fruits of your love go with you always and live within your heart and home from this day forward and forever more. Throughout your new life together we wish for you to be able to say, "Because you love me, you give me faith in myself; and because I see the good in you, I receive from you a faith in humanity."

Before we congratulate Mabel and Nicholas, I would like to read a blessing called "The days of your togetherness."

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 more loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other.

Now you are two bodies, 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.

By the powers vested in me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but more important by the power of your own love, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Congratulations - you may now kiss your bride.

Ladies and Gentlemen - may I introduce Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Daskalakis

(Marriage performed with love and best wishes by Linda Hutchenrider, Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace)

Wedding Ceremony - by Linda Hutchenrider, J.P. (Breaking of glass included)

(Bride enters on the arm of her escort (father) and is delivered to the hand of the groom)  
Who gives this woman \_Pamela \_\_\_ to this man\_\_William \_\_\_ (Father responds "I do" and kisses the bride on her cheek and turns to his seat.)

Dearly beloved:

We are gathered here today to join\_Pamela\_\_\_\_\_and \_William\_\_\_\_\_on this, one of the most important days of their lives, the day on which they become husband and wife.

Today you marry your friend - the one you laugh with, live for, dream with and love. What you mean to each other is obvious in your lives but not easily expressed in the words of a ceremony. As you know, no minister, no priest, no rabbi, no public official can marry you, only you can marry yourselves. By a mutual commitment to love each other, to work toward creating an atmosphere of care, consideration and respect, by a willingness to face the tensions and anxieties that underlie human life, only you can make your wedded life come alive.

You are adult - you have known each other for some time now and have chosen to make your lives together. Your choice is responsible, free, independent and happy. We wish for you a love that makes both of you better people, that continues to give you joy and the zest for living, that provides you with energy to face the responsibilities of life. Marriage and the union that it symbolizes, can be the most sublime of human experiences; for in any final accounting, love, in its infinite manifestations is what life is all about. Today we come joyfully to acknowledge the decision of these two people to share their lives together.

You should always remember the devotion and love that you feel for each other this day and take it with you into your years together as man and wife.

Do you\_\_\_William\_\_\_\_\_take this woman, \_\_\_Pamela\_\_\_\_\_, to be your wife and promise to pledge yourself to her - to love her, respect and honor her with faith and tenderness; and to live with her and cherish her with a husband's loyalty and devotion?

Do you\_\_Pamela\_\_\_\_\_take this man\_\_William\_\_\_\_\_to be your husband and promise to pledge yourself to him, to love him, respect and honor him with faith and tenderness; and to live with him and cherish him with a wife's loyalty and devotion?

*(Please Face Each Other)*

I\_\_\_William\_\_\_\_\_take thee \_\_Pamela\_\_\_\_\_

To be my wedded wife

And I promise to be

a Loving and faithful husband

Through joy and sorrow

Sickness and health

Forsaking all others  
As long as we both shall live.

I \_\_\_\_\_ Pamela \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ William \_\_\_\_\_  
To be my wedded husband  
And I promise to be  
A loving and faithful wife  
Through and sorrow  
Sickness and health  
Forsaking all others  
As long as we both shall live.

We wish for you a love that makes both of you better people, that continues to give you joy and the zest for living, that provides you with energy to face the responsibilities of life.

*(Do you have the rings?)*  
*Groom first then bride - both repeat the following.*  
This is my beloved and this is my friend  
With this ring I thee wed  
It shall forever be  
A symbol and token  
Of my constant faith and abiding love.

Pamela \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ William \_\_\_\_\_ As you begin your journey into marriage, may the road before you be sunlit, and the seas beside you be calm- may your hearts be light and glad. Remember your vows, nurture your love - you are individuals - but you are one couple in love and marriage. May the fruits of your love go with you always and live within your heart and home from this day forward and forever more. Throughout your new life together we wish for you to be able to say, "Because you love me, you give me faith in myself; and because I see the good in you, I receive from you a faith in humanity."

It's an old Jewish custom for a groom to step on a wine glass and break it with his foot. This is reminder that even in happy moments, we must be aware of the fragility of life and of all human relationships. (Glass is stepped on)

By the powers vested in me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but more important by the power of your own love, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Congratulations - you may now kiss your bride.  
Ladies and Gentlemen - may I introduce Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ William \_\_\_\_\_.

Town of Wellfleet - Dawn E. Rickman, Justice of the Peace

These days we all work so hard trying to be the best we can be, improving our minds, strengthening our bodies, trying to take control of our lives. In the process we may overlook the key to personal happiness: harmonious relationships with those closest to us. If you really want a genuine sense of marital well being, work to become best friends with your mate.

The idea evokes images of equality and partnership, yet we are not speaking of an equality that looks to get rid of or deny the differences between men and women. Instead, we are thinking of bonds of trust, loyalty, emotional openness and, most of all, closeness.

We all agree that such closeness affords the richest and most satisfying way to be together, but we know also that that goal is by no means simple. It is the fear of emotional closeness that is at the root of most problems couples face. Achieving closeness is a three-step process that involves 1. Strengthening your own identity, 2. Nurturing the identity of your mate and 3. Improving communication between the two of you.

Having your own identity means not only having definite points of view on intellectual or philosophical matters, but having your own feelings as well. Only when you are in touch with your complete emotional spectrum - fear, anger, tenderness and pride - can you express and participate in that deep exchange of feeling that love is all about.

Help your mate take pride in what they do - a persons' career is an important aspect of their identity. Remember what makes them lovable and tell them so. Lending emotional support to your mate can be especially important when things go wrong.

As much as you love and support your mate, you're also aware that no one is perfect. If there are things about them you'd like to be different, remember the desire to change has to come from them.

Don't let complaints and grievances fester. Don't wait too long to find an appropriate time to bring up what bothers you. Your aim is not to punish or evoke, guilt, but to deal with the issue so that it no longer comes between the two of you.

Don't confine your communication to what's wrong with the relationship. Talk about things that interest each of you. People grow apart and become strangers because they fail to share feelings and ideas. Maintain a dialogue between the two of you; don't give it all to others. The solace of love in a troubled and often unjust world can help strengthen and deepen the bond between you.

Love between equals rests on a solid basis of ego and self-respect.

You can dare to reveal the hidden corners of your souls. And doing so, you will find new wonders to admire and enjoy together.

Finally - Be best friends.....

Please face each other and hold hands -

Man - repeat after me.

I \_\_\_\_\_take you\_\_\_\_\_ for my wife. May the love I share with you this moment remain with us forever.

Woman - repeat after me.

I \_\_\_\_\_take you \_\_\_\_\_ for my husband. May the love I share with you this moment remain with us forever.

Rings - (Each repeat while placing ring on finger) I give this ring to you as a token of my love.

Unity Candle used...

*Joan Marie Smith*

*and*

*John Vincent Murray*

*February 22, 2002*

*Joan and John, you are surrounded by your friends and families, both those present and those unable to be with us today. We are gathered here to witness your marriage and to share in the joy of this occasion.*

*You have chosen to marry today in order to continue sharing your lives together. Your love for each other is the highest experience either of you has known, a love which shall continue to add depth of meaning as the years go by. This kind of love is one of life's greatest joys and, when combined with true friendship, is infinitely enhanced. You have been given the gift of each other, a person with whom you can share your dreams and fears, a true companion for life.*

*Marriage embodies the commitment and honorable values which grow from friendship and love. It symbolizes the ultimate intimacy between a man and a woman and the commitment made in accepting one another in his and her entirety as a lover, companion, and friend.*

*Who presents Joan to be married to John today?*

### INTENT

*Joan, will you have John to be your lawfully wedded husband? Will you love him, comfort him, respect and keep him, in sickness and in health, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?*

*John, will you have Joan to be your lawfully wedded wife? Will you love her, comfort her, respect and keep her, in sickness and in health, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?*

*It is in this spirit that you have come before me today to be married.*

### RINGS

*These rings are the symbols of the vows you are about to take, circles of wholeness, perfect in form. They mark the beginning of a long journey together, filled with wonder, surprises, laughter, tears, celebration, grief, joy, and most of all - love. May these rings glow in reflection of the warmth and the lives which flow through you today. May their meaning bind your lives together.*

### EXCHANGE OF RINGS/VOWS

*John, take this ring and place it on your bride's finger and state your promise to her by repeating after me/ I ask you Joan to be my wife/ I pledge to share my life openly with you/ to honor and cherish you/ to always respect and care for you/ as this ring has no end/ neither shall my love for you/ this is my solemn vow.*

*Do you Joan, accept this ring as a sign of John's love and respect for you?*

*Joan, take this ring and place it on John's finger and state your promise to him by repeating after me/ I ask you John to be my husband/ I pledge to share my life openly with you/ to honor and cherish you/ to always respect and care for you/ as this ring has no end/ neither shall my love for you. This is my solemn vow.*

*Do you John, accept this ring as a sign of Joan's love and respect for you?*

*Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

### CLOSING

*Marriage is a wonderful journey that you will take together. In marriage, walk the path side by side whenever possible. Remember to hold each when it is cold. If the air becomes too close, make a little space so each can breathe. When the path is narrow, pick one to go first. Always be willing to follow, don't be afraid to lead. Trust your partner, trust yourself, for marriage is a journey that leads to great love.*

*A strong and happy marriage can be created only by loving purpose, be maintained only by abiding will, and be renewed only by heartfelt desires and intentions. Marriage is the joining of two people-the union of two hearts. It lives on the love you give each other and never grows old, but thrives on the joy of each new day. May you always be blessed in your hearts with the wonder of this special day.*

*May you be able to talk things over, to enjoy life together, and to confide in each other, to laugh with each other, to share moments of quiet and peace when the day is done. May you be blessed with a lifetime of happiness. May you continue a life together that will be source of joy both to you and to those who love you.*

*Just as all people need love and support, a marriage cannot exist alone. Family and friends, as those closest to Stig and Jehanne, share a responsibility to help provide a nurturing environment to help their marriage grow.*

### UNITY CANDLE

*Joan and John will each take a candle. Together they will light the center candle, which symbolizes the beginning of their lives as husband and wife. By allowing the flame of the two smaller candles to remain lit, they also accept the individuality of each other as a means to fulfilling their oneness. They will join together their pasts and begin the road of their future. Each partner will grow in self and in the understanding of each other. They will draw energy and knowledge from one another. In their closeness and harmony they will fully acknowledge and understand their differences which will make them unique and special to one another. The bright light will go forth.*

May the flowing flame from the candle that you lit together, represent the meaning of your love for each other. May the years to come be as fulfilling for you as was the past, which provided the good fortune of bringing you together. May your marriage bring you joy. Good luck, good health, and great happiness to you both.

### PRONOUNCEMENT

Before God, and in your presence as witnesses, Joan and John have made their solemn vows to each other. They have confirmed their promises by joining hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. Therefore, by the power vested in me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I pronounce that they are husband and wife.

*Ladies and gentlemen, I present Mr. and Mrs. John Murray  
Judith L. St. Croix  
Justice of the Peace*

By Nancy Burnham

Dear friends, we are gathered here today to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an institution founded in nature, ordained by the state, and made honorable by the faithful keeping of good men and women in all ages. It is therefore, not by any, to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but thoughtfully, discreetly and with due reverence. This celebration is an outward token of an inward union of hearts, a union created by loving purpose and kept by abiding will. Into this estate these two persons will come to be united.

(Groom's name), will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in holy matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, and forsaking all others be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

Groom answers: I will.

(Bride's name), will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together in holy matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, and forsaking all others be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

Bride answers: I will.

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Parents answer: I/We do.

(Groom's name), would you repeat after me please.

I, (Groom's name), take you (Bride's name) to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, to love and to cherish, till death due us part. This is my solemn vow.

(Bride's name), would you repeat after me please.

I, (Bride's name), take you (Groom's name) to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, to love and to cherish, till death due us part. This is my solemn vow.

(Groom's name), do you have a ring to give to your bride?

May the giving and receiving of this ring be symbolic of a love as endless as the band which encircles the finger and as precious as the metal from which it is made.

Place this ring upon the finger of your bride as a token of wedlock and repeat the words which I now say.

(Bride's name), I give you this ring in token and in pledge of our constant faith and abiding love, and with this ring, I thee wed.

(Bride's name), do you have a ring to give to your groom?

May the giving and receiving of this ring be symbolic of a love as endless as the band which encircles the finger and as precious as the metal from which it is made.

Place this ring upon the finger of your bride as a token of wedlock and repeat the words which I now say.

(Groom's name), I give you this ring in token and in pledge of our constant faith and abiding love, and with this ring, I thee wed.

For as much as (Groom's name) and (Bride's name) have consented together in holy matrimony and have given their faith to each other, and have declared the same by the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of rings, by the virtue of the authority vested in me by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I now pronounce that you are husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.

*Renewal of Wedding Vows – by Nancy  
Burnham*

We are gathered here today to celebrate one of life's greatest moments, to give recognition to the worth and beauty of love, and to add our best wishes to the words which shall reunite Kenneth and Judith in marriage.

Marriage is the form which you chose 25 years ago, to express and live your love. Today you are here to renew your commitment to each other and to share with us the celebration of your love.

(Names), could you please face each other and join right hands.

(Husband), do you take (Wife) to be your wife? Do you promise to love, honor, cherish, and protect her, forsaking all others and holding only unto her?

Husband answers: ***I do***

(Bride), do you take (Husband) to be your husband? Do you promise to love, honor, cherish, and protect him, forsaking all others and holding only unto him?

Wife answers: I do

(Husband), would you repeat after me please.

(Wife), I commit myself, once again, to our life together, honoring your mind, your body, and your spirit, as well as my own. I will continue to be your loving, reflective and faithful partner, from this day forward.

(Wife), would you repeat after me please.

(Husband), I commit myself, once again, to our life together, honoring your mind, your body, and your spirit, as well as my own. I will continue to be your loving, reflective and faithful partner, from this day forward.

Wedding rings are made of precious metal, symbolizing the love that you hold in your hearts right now. May they represent the perfect circle of love that is the foundation of your marriage

(Husband), could you repeat after me please.

With this ring, I honor you as my wife and promise to continue to honor, love and cherish you as such.

(Wife), could you repeat after me please.

With this ring, I honor you as my husband and promise to continue to honor, love and cherish you as such.

May this ceremony today bring you even closer to each other and to your children. May this open new doors and allow new avenues for making your special contributions to the world. May the foundation that you have laid be ever strong. May your hearts stay open, May your words be loving and your actions support the highest good for one and all.

(Husband and Wife), in so much as the two of you have agreed to live together in holy matrimony, have promised your love for each other by these vows, the joining of hand and the giving and receiving of rings, I now pronounce you husband and wife (again).

You may kiss your bride.

WEDDING CEREMONY  
from Deb Ratclif

WELCOME EVERYONE.

JEANNE AND DONALD, TODAY YOU ARE SURROUNDED BY YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO ARE GATHERED HERE TO WITNESS YOUR MARRIAGE AND TO SHARE IN THE JOY OF THIS CELEBRATION

TO QUOTE A POEM FROM EDMUND O'NEILL: "MARRIAGE OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING AND GROWTH THAT NO OTHER HUMAN RELATIONSHIP CAN EQUAL. IT IS AN EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL JOINING THAT IS PROMISED FOR A LIFETIME. WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF LOVE, MARRIAGE ENCOMPASSES ALL OF LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS. A WIFE AND A HUSBAND ARE EACH OTHER'S BEST FRIEND, CONFIDANT, LOVER, TEACHER, LISTENER AND CRITIC. MARRIAGE DEEPENS AND ENRICHES EVERY FACET OF LIFE. HAPPINESS IS FULLER; MEMORIES ARE FRESHER; EVEN ANGER IS FELT MORE INTENSELY, AND PASSES AWAY MORE QUICKLY. MARRIAGE UNDERSTANDS AND FORGIVES THE MISTAKES THAT LIFE IS UNABLE TO AVOID.

IT NURTURES NEW LIFE, NEW EXPERIENCES, AND NEW WAYS OF EXPRESSING YOUR LOVE THROUGH THE SEASONS OF LIFE. WHEN TWO PEOPLE PLEDGE TO LOVE AND CARE FOR EACH OTHER IN MARRIAGE, THEY CREATE A SPIRIT UNIQUE TO THEMSELVES, WHICH BINDS THEM CLOSER THAN ANY SPOKEN OR WRITTEN WORDS. MARRIAGE IS A PROMISE AND A POTENTIAL, MADE IN THE HEARTS OF TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE IN LOVE, THAT TAKES A LIFETIME TO FULFILL."

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

JEANNE WILL YOU HAVE DONALD TO BE YOUR HUSBAND, AND TO ACCEPT HIM COMPLETELY AND ABSOLUTELY IN ALL THINGS AND FOR ALL TIME?

DONALD WILL YOU HAVE JEANNE TO BE YOUR WIFE, AND TO ACCEPT HER COMPLETELY AND ABSOLUTELY IN ALL THINGS AND FOR ALL TIME?

LOVE CAN BE ONE OF THE HIGHEST EXPERIENCES THAT COMES TO HUMANKIND. AT BEST IT REDUCES OUR SELFISHNESS, DEEPENS OUR PERSONALITIES AND MAKES LIFE MORE MEANINGFUL. MATRIMONY SYMBOLIZES THE ULTIMATE INTIMACY BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN, YET THIS CLOSENESS SHOULD NOT DIMINISH, BUT STRENGTHEN THE INDIVIDUALITY OF EACH PARTNER. THIS VOW OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN JEANNE AND DONALD IS A PLEDGE OF THEIR EVERLASTING LOVE WHEREBY THEY COMMIT TO SHARE ALL LIFE HAS TO OFFER - THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD WITH PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING.

MARRIAGE VOWS

(PLEASE FACE EACH OTHER AND HOLD HANDS – DONALD GOING FIRST, PLEASE REPEAT AFTER ME) ON MY HONOR, I PROMISE TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO LOVE YOU AND RESPECT YOU, AND BE GOOD TO YOU SO LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE.

JEANNE, PLEASE REPEAT AFTER ME: ON MY HONOR, I PROMISE TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO LOVE YOU AND RESPECT YOU, AND BE GOOD TO YOU SO LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE.

#### GIVING OF RINGS

DONALD AS YOU PLACE THE RING ON JEANNE'S FINGER, PLEASE REPEAT AFTER ME: I GIVE YOU THIS RING, A SYMBOL OF TRUE LOVE, AS AN EVERLASTING REMINDER OF MY COMMITMENT TO YOU.

JEANNE AS YOU PLACE THE RING ON DONALD'S FINGER, PLEASE REPEAT AFTER ME: I GIVE YOU THIS RING, A SYMBOL OF TRUE LOVE, AS AN EVERLASTING REMINDER OF MY COMMITMENT TO YOU MY PERSONAL WISH FOR YOU BOTH: MAY YOUR MARRIAGE BE A LONG ADVENTURE IN PERSONAL GROWTH, MAY YOU HAVE TRUE FRIENDS TO STAND BY YOU IN JOY AND IN SORROW; MAY YOU TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THE WONDER OF NATURE; MAY YOU ALWAYS BE KIND TO EACH OTHER AND MAY YOU LIVE LONG IN PEACE AND CONTENTMENT.

#### PRONOUNCEMENT

AND NOW, FOR AS MUCH AS DONALD AND JEANNE HAVE CONSENTED TO TAKE EACH OTHER IN WEDLOCK AND HAVE WITNESSED THE SAME BEFORE THIS GATHERING, BY THE POWERS VESTED IN ME BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU HUSBAND AND WIFE. YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE. CONGRATULATIONS.