

CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE, GAY COUPLE

Prelude

OPENING WORDS

Sooner or later, we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines, and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories, and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all -- one known only by those who love."
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning "Sooner or Later": Sonnet XLIII", from "Sonnets from the Portuguese"

WELCOME

We are here to participate in your wedding. By this act we unite you, Groom 2 and Groom 1, in marriage. What we do today is done in conformity to the laws of the province of British Columbia. And today we also reaffirm the commitment that you, Groom 1 and Groom 2 made to one another when you moved into together, 39 years ago.

As a Lay Chaplain here with the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, I feel terribly moved and inspired to unite you in legal marriage.

(at this point, I can name special people and invite their presence into our ceremony. And greetings and blessings can be read.)

DECLARATIONS:

Groom 2 and Groom 1, you stand before me having requested that I marry you. Do you both do this of your own free will, with no pressure upon you from other persons?

Groom 2, do you arrive here today freely, willing to marry Groom 1? Groom 2: I do.

Groom 1 Place, do you arrive here today freely, willing to marry Groom 2?

Groom 1: I do.

A READING: "Blessing of the Hands" (by anon)

"These are the hands of your best friend, strong and full of love for you, hands that hold yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever. These are the hands that have worked alongside yours for 40 years. These are the hands that love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, comfort you like no other. These are the hands that hold you when fear or grief fills your heart. These are the hands that give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that when wrinkled and aged, will still be

reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.”

PREFACE TO VOWS:

I invite you now to join hands as you repeat your vows.

The hand offered by each of you is an extension of yourself, just as is your mutual love. Cherish the touch, for you touch not only your own, but another life. Be sensitive to his pulse. Seek always to understand and respect his rhythm.

VOWS:

Let us fully recognize here and now that your commitment to one another spans almost 40 years. So your wedding today marks no beginning, and no end. You have built such a powerful foundation of friendship and partnership,

Groom 2, as it is your desire to become Groom 1's spouse, then repeat your vows after me.

I, Groom 2, take you, Groom 1, to be my spouse. In this moment, I promise before these witnesses to love you and care for you all of our days. I accept you with your faults and your strengths, even as I offer myself with my faults and strengths. I promise to support you when you need support and to turn to you when I need support. I choose you as the one with whom I will spend my life.

I, Groom 1, take you, Groom 2, to be my spouse. In this moment, I promise before these witnesses to love you and care for you all of our days. I accept you with your faults and your strengths, even as I offer myself with my faults and strengths. I promise to support you when you need support and to turn to you when I need support. I choose you as the one with whom I will spend my life.

Groom 2 and Groom 1, you have shared promises in our presence. Do you have a token or symbol which you wish to exchange? Couple replies "We do."

Rings

Groom 2, will you give your ring to Groom 1 and repeat these words:

Groom 1, I give you this ring as a constant reminder of the promises we exchanged today. As you receive this ring, receive my promise of faithfulness to you.

Groom 1, will you give your ring to Groom 2 and repeat these words:

Groom 2, I give you this ring as a constant reminder of the promises we exchanged today. As you receive this ring, receive my promise of faithfulness to you.

SIGNING AND MUSIC: *we move to the signing table and sign the marriage license and marriage register.*

Groom 2 and Groom 1:

Today, we reaffirm our commitment to each other as beloveds and partners in marriage. We continue to strive to be sensitive to each other's needs, to be open and

understanding with each other, and to share our thoughts, our feelings, and our experiences with each other. We renew our promise to try always to bring out the qualities of forgiveness, compassion, and integrity in our selves, and in each other. We continue to cherish each other's uniqueness. We continue to share in life's joys and remain steadfast and comfort for each other through life's sorrows.

PRONOUNCEMENT

Groom 2 and Groom 1, you have exchanged your promises, and given and received tokens commitment in my presence. By these acts you have become each other's spouse. According to the laws of the province of British Columbia, I hereby pronounce you married. You may seal your promise with a kiss.

KISS: *and you do!*

BLESSING:

May your house be a place of happiness for all who enter it, a place where old and young are renewed in each other's company, a place for growing, a place for music, a place for laughter. And when shadows and darkness fall within its rooms, may it still be a place of hope and strength for all who enter it, especially those who are entrusted to your care. May no person be alien to your compassion. May your larger family be the family of all human kind. And may those who are nearest to you and dearest to you be constantly enriched by the beauty and the bounty of your love for one another. Amen.

And in closing, with words by Robert Browning:
 "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be".

BLESSING SONG: (sung by Lay Chaplain)

May the blessing of God (or love) go before you,
 And may grace and peace abound,
 Healing spirit live within you,
 Tender love wrap you 'round,
 May this blessing remain with you always
 May you walk on holy ground.

Go now to walk the ways of the world together,
 And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

JOYOUS MUSIC