

Wedding Booklet

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1. INTRODUCTION

Unitarians place great value on individual freedom of belief. We work towards honouring the beliefs of those participating in a Unitarian ceremony. We especially encourage couples being married to plan their own ceremonies. This booklet is intended to help you in that process.

The circumstances under which persons contemplate marriage vary considerably. A couple may each have been living with their own families until now, or may have been living some time entirely on their own before deciding to marry. One partner or both may have been through the disillusionment that accompanies separation and divorce, or through the delights of a happy marriage that ended by the death of a spouse. Whatever the circumstances, entering into a marriage is a serious step and is treated so in our denomination.

A wedding is usually a social occasion – a public recognition of a private relationship. It is traditionally a time for the gathering of families and clans, though in this age of mobility people are far more scattered than once was the case. Wherever possible it is desirable that a couple exchange their vows amid the good wishes of family and friends.

A Unitarian ceremony, based as it is upon the personal integrity of the participants rather than upon institutional forms, may provide a suitable meeting place for people coming from different religions, ethical or cultural traditions. We try to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

Marriage Licence:

A marriage licence is required for a legally valid ceremony. Licenses are very easily obtained at the Department of Vital Statistics, 818 Fort Street, and at the following London Drugs stores: Colwood Corners, Sooke Road & Goldstream; Harris Green, Yates & Vancouver; Saanich Centre, Quadra & McKenzie; Tillicum Mall, Tillicum and Burnside.

Make sure to bring all your primary identification with you: birth certificates, passports and drivers' licences. If either of you is recently divorced, you will need to show the court order which made that official. Please note: on the marriage licence you will need to provide the names of your parents (including your mother's maiden name) and their place of birth. The license does not mean that you are married, but that you may get married anytime within the following three-month term of the license.

The fee for a BC Marriage License is \$100. A licence is valid on the day the application is made, and is valid for three months from the date of issue. (The marriage certificate will be mailed to the residence of the person noted on the licence.)

Marriage Certificate:

Following the wedding service it is a part of the lay chaplain's duty to deliver the signed licence

to BC Vital Statistics. Once the registrar has processed the licence, the Province of British Columbia will mail a certificate of marriage to the address listed on the marriage licence. It usually takes at least two weeks for the certificate to be mailed.

B.C. Marriage Requirements:

Age: No marriage of any person under the age of nineteen years can take place without the prior consent of his or her parents or guardians.

Relatedness: The couple can not share a family relationship.

Marital Status: Both parties to the marriage contract must be 'free to marry', which means that they can't already be married to someone else. If either party has been divorced in the past few months, you must bring proof of your divorce when you apply for your marriage licence.

Sobriety: No members of the wedding party or ushers should drink alcohol before the service. By law, the service cannot proceed if, in the opinion of the person officiating, either the bride or groom is under the influence of liquor or drugs. The officiant will not perform a ceremony where there is an open bar or if any person present seems intoxicated. **IT IS BEST IF NO ALCOHOL IS SERVED PRIOR TO THE CEREMONY.**

3. THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

THE CEREMONY CANNOT BEGIN UNLESS THE OFFICIANT HAS THE MARRIAGE LICENCE. MAKE SURE THAT IT IS PROVIDED BEFORE THE CEREMONY STARTS. In an emergency, we can still go through the ceremony as if it were a rehearsal, then later, together with witnesses, redo the legal parts and then have the signing of the licence and the registry.

The legal requirements of a marriage ceremony are: the greeting (identification of officiant & couple), the vows, the pronouncement, and the signing. (The signing can take place during the ceremony or immediately after the recessional.)

Your family and friends will expect the wedding to start in a timely manner, and will expect your wedding ceremony to take between 15 and 20 minutes.

It is important that your wedding ceremony be meaningful to you. The following materials are offered as helpful suggestions. You may choose from them as written or with some modification, or you may wish to write your own ceremony.

At the end of this booklet you will find a Service Choices page on which you can note your choices of readings or portions of the service that you would prefer. Also please fill in the names by which you would like to be called during the service. Please discuss your choices with your Lay Chaplain.

The Ceremony text begins here:

Greeting and Instruction:

(The Lay Chaplain will give any necessary instructions to the gathered company before the entrance of the bride [or couple].)

(Bride [or couple] enters)

Good Afternoon/Evening! My name is Amanda Tarling. I'm a Lay Chaplain with Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Victoria. It is my honour to officiate at the wedding of FULL NAME & FULL NAME.

A. Recognition of Gathered Company

A wedding is not solely about the two individuals who are joining their lives, but includes everyone who has played a role in the journey which has led the couple to this point of commitment. In traditional weddings we would see the father of the bride “give away” his daughter in marriage. For some people, this approach is still meaningful, but there are many ways in which couples may recognize parents, children, friends, and other loved ones. This section offers several ways to do this. (You may also wish to have words of recognition for someone important who is unable to be present at the service.)

You may choose A1 only, or one of A2 to A6, or write your own recognition(s). If you wish, you may use both A1 and one of A2 to A6.

A1: Each person present here has been invited because he or she is a special person in the lives of [..... and]. You have come to rejoice with them; to hear their vows, their hopes, their plans... to extend good wishes and to be reminded of the loves and commitments that are a part of your own lives. Answering in your own words, will you, therefore, do all in your power to uphold these two in the marriage they are about to undertake?

[To parents:]

A2: The ideals, the understanding and the mutual respect which these two bring to their marriage have roots in the love, friendship and guidance with which you have provided them. Answering in your own words, do you, then, grant these two your blessings and offer them your love and acceptance?

A3: Who gives these two to be joined in marriage?

Parents respond: They give themselves, and we bless their choice. *or* We do.

A4: Who brings this woman (or man, or name) to be wedded to this man (or woman or name)?

Response: I do, or Her Mother/Father and I do.

A5: Who presents the bride (or name) in marriage?

Response: I/We do.

A6: Who stands with this couple to express the good wishes of their families (or families and friends)?

Response: I/We do.

B. Opening Words

The opening words set the tone for the ceremony and usually say something about the nature of marriage which is in keeping with the beliefs of the couple. It is a statement about the occasion, its importance, and its significance to society as well as the principles involved.

B1: Welcome, to all of you who have gathered today to share in this ceremony with [..... and].

The words which will be spoken here today are sacred, however it is not merely words that unite these two. We are not here to mark the start of a relationship; we are here to recognize a bond that already exists. [..... and] have joined themselves together, and we have gathered so that they might bear witness before us of their union.

Here, they will affirm this union and this dedication formally and publicly, as they have already affirmed it to each other. As they now exist as one in their own eyes; so may they exist in yours. This unity has already occurred in the giving and receiving of their love, and in the myriad ways in which they have entwined their lives together. We are here today to witness their statement of love and commitment. This is an act as ancient as the human race, and as new as each morning, for it speaks of the past and of the future, of the life of the individual and the existence of the community. Marriage is a going forth, a giving up of one way in search of a greater fulfillment than either can achieve alone, risking what they are, for what they might be. [..... and] come now to declare their love and solemnize their commitment. Today we celebrate their commitment as they come to be united in marriage.

B2: We are gathered here to join this man [or woman] and this woman [or man] in marriage.

This is an act as ancient as history, and as new as each morning, for it speaks of the past and of the future, of the life of the individual and of the existence of the community.

The commitment of marriage must not be regarded lightly. Those who enter into this relationship must cherish for each other a mutual esteem and love, must bear each others' infirmities and weaknesses, comfort each other in sickness, trouble and sorrow, encourage each other in trials of the spirit, and live together as the heirs of life.

Because the family is the foundation of human fellowship, marriage is not to be entered into by any unadvisedly, but with devotion and discretion. Love and loyalty provide the foundation of a happy and enduring home, and if the solemn vows you are about to make are kept with honour and integrity, your life will be full of peace and joy, and the home you are establishing will be one of warmth and understanding.

B3: [..... and] are here today, with their family and friends, to publicly declare their love for one another, and to be joined in marriage. This is much more than a social and civil occasion, because it is the declaration of their hearts, built upon experience, and enriched by their love.

With love it is possible to live a life together, each one encouraging the happiness, the comfort,

the health, and the enrichment of the other – working together to divide sorrow and multiply joy.

B4: [..... and] have invited us here today to share in the celebration of their marriage.

We come together today, not to mark the start of a relationship, but to recognize a bond of love that already exists.

We all search for meaning and strength in the seeming disorder of this world. And we discover the truest guide to our quest when we realize love in all its magnitude. Love is the eternal force of life. It is love which allows us to face fear and uncertainty with courage.

The giving of yourself in love is difficult, for you must learn to give your love without surrendering those attributes which make you a unique individual. Therefore, in your giving, share your joy, as well as your sorrow, your understanding, as well as your confusion. Share all the expressions that make up life. But remember that your partner chose you because of your unique qualities. So share your love, but preserve your individuality. This is the challenge of love within marriage.

C. Opening Readings

The readings have been divided into three sections: Opening, the Reading -- in the middle of the service -- and Closing words. Many of the readings would be appropriate in many locations. The divisions are artificial. Your choices are important. If you want to change the order, do so and talk about your choices with your Lay Chaplain.

C1: What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labour, 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 unspoken memories.

(by George Elliot, pen name of Mary Anne Evans (1819–1880), English novelist)

C2: Let not the marriage of true minds admit impediments. Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove: O no! It is an ever fixed mark, That looks on tempests and is never shaken; It is the star to every wandering bark, Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks within his being sickle's compass come; Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks but bears it out even to the age of doom. If this be error and upon me prov'd, I never writ nor no man ever lov'd. (English poet William Shakespeare: Sonnet 116)

C3: The most wonderful of all things in life is the discovery of another human being with whom one's relationship has a growing depth, beauty and joy as the years increase. . . .love between two human beings is a most marvellous thing; it cannot be found by looking for it or by passionately wishing for it. It is a sort of Divine accident, and the most wonderful of all things in life. (by Sir Hugh Seymour Walpole (1884 - 1941), English novelist)

C4: Love consists of this: that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other.

(by Rainer Maria Rilke, 1875–1926, one of the German language's greatest poets):

C5: When love beckons to you, follow him, though his ways are hard and steep, And when his wings enfold you, yield to him, Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you believe him, though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden. Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed: For love is sufficient unto love.
(from "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran, 1883-1931, a Lebanese-American artist, poet and writer)

C6: If life has meaning to us at all, it possesses it because of love. It is love which enshrines and ennobles our human experience. Love is the basis for the peace of family and the peace of peoples of the earth. The greatest gift bestowed upon humans is the gift, not of demanding, but of giving love.

C7: Love does not consist in gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction. There is no comradeship except through union in the same effort.
(from "Airman's Odyssey" by Antoine De Saint-Exupery (1900–1944), French writer and aviator)

D. Statement of Purpose and Affirmation of Intention

This element of the service is important because it asks the couple to proclaim their desire for commitment and it affirms, for the entire assembly, that the couple understands the step they are taking and are freely entering into commitment without reservation.

D1: [..... and] The solemn commitment which you make today, is the outward symbol of an inward relationship. It is one step in a continuing process of change and growth. Moving in step as you go forward together, your marriage will be a source of mutual strength. You have freely decided to enter into this sacred union -- a continuing relationship in which your lives will be intertwined. In the presence of these witnesses, you will exchange your pledge of that commitment, affirming your intention to cherish one another through the coming years.

D2: [..... and] You have freely decided to enter into a sacred union -- a continuing relationship in which your lives will be intertwined. The solemn commitment which you make today, is the outward symbol of an inward relationship. It is one step in a continuing process of change and growth.

Inevitably there will be mistakes; there will be times of tension and conflict. But if these are openly acknowledged and faced, they can be turned from problems into opportunities, and you will find new meanings and richness in your shared life together.

D3: We have come together in this place to share the joys and hopes of [..... and] who will live from this day forward as one (or, as husband and wife). And they have freely come to pledge their vows of marriage: one to the other.

D4: We are gathered this day to witness the joining of [..... and] in marriage, an estate which embodies all the warmth and precious values which grow from love and human companionship. Therefore it is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, but reverently, thoughtfully, and in the knowledge that love is the greatest human fulfillment. [..... and] now

freely come to join together in this estate. This celebration is the outward ceremony for an inward union of hearts. It is a union which is created through loving purpose and maintained by enduring loyalty.

D5: We have been called together as witnesses to the happiness which these two individuals have found together, and to the pledges they will freely make, each to the other, for the mutual service of their common life. Let us rejoice with them, and support them, that they may henceforth find deep meaning and great richness in life, by sharing it with each other.

D6: [..... and]: do you come in freedom and without reservation to give yourselves to each other (in marriage)?

Reply: We do.

E. Charge to the Couple

The Charge to the Couple is the moment set aside to address the magnitude and significance of the vows about to be taken. This segment need not be brief; it is most important that this aspect of the ceremony reflect the many implications involved when two people commit to a lifetime of love. It is a time to reflect on those implications, and the charge adds depth and meaning to the service.

E1. Your decision this day is your act of faith in one another. This faith must not be a vain hope in what the other will or will not do, might or might not become. Yours must be that deeper faith that you each will be acceptable in the other's eyes despite the changes of the years and the assaults of the world. Such faith requires that you honour yourself, as well as attend to the needs of the other. Such faith requires that you learn to listen with an open heart. Such faith requires that you each be open to that divine spark within you, and be willing to be guided by the grace of its light. If you faithfully hold to that sacred centre, your covenant together will endure the trials of time, and your life together will deepen with each passing year.

E2. You cannot choose what changes and chances may befall you in the coming years, but you can choose the spirit with which you will meet them. Let it be the spirit of the noble vows in which you will plight your troth, each to the other. If you take these vows not as a form, but as a bond of honour which you will keep with unswerving loyalty, then whatever may come, you will have inward happiness, which no pleasures of themselves can give, nor sorrows take away. Then the whole of life, will be an abiding security to yourselves, and a welcome example to others. Today your separate lives, with your own memories, hopes, temptations and trials, are merged into one. Bring into this new life, each for the sake of the other, the best you can bring. Then the love you bear each other will be ever strengthened and enriched.

E3. Your task is to talk, to listen and to grow; Talk, because one must share of oneself to communicate with the other; Listen because what the other has to say matters deeply; Grow in dignity, each following along the paths that are his or her own to follow, becoming all that each is capable of becoming, while giving the other supporting love. To grow in love; this is the crown of marriage.

To grow in the love of life, the love of growth, and the love of becoming; the love which gives courage,
Which does not cling, but bestows freedom, Which does not hold back, but makes bold for growth, Which stands fast in disappointment and sorrow, Which endures through frustration and pettiness, Which seeks to keep the relationship balanced, and which is confirmed by answering love.
You have set yourselves on this road, You have chosen to walk it together; Thus you will make a marriage.

E4. As you stand here with each other, together with family and friends, you are enjoined to remember that love and trust are essential for a sound and enduring home. The promises you make today are the most sacred and tender human vows of caring and commitment. As you honour your vows, you will live together in peace and share joy with one another and with all who know you.

On this day, you are called to accept responsibility for each other. You are called to create a relationship of care, consideration and respect, which will sustain and empower you to face the delights, as well as the anxieties of life, in such a way that your married life comes alive. You are called to celebrate each other with laughter, passion, patience, and intimacy.

E5: Today, as you make this formal commitment to marriage, the future stretches before you in all its mystery. The values you choose and the meaning you create for your common life together, will provide the foundation for your response to both joy and sorrow, to both stability and change.

The Apostle Paul described the nature of love when he wrote to the Corinthians: “Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful, it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”
Love consists in this, that two solitudes come together in recognition of their essential unity.

E6: Marriage is not a simple love affair, it's an ordeal, and the ordeal is the sacrifice of ego to a relationship in which two have become one. A marriage is a commitment to that which you are. You and the other are one. A marriage is a life commitment, and a life commitment means the prime concern of your life. If marriage is not the prime concern, you are not married. When you make the sacrifice in marriage, you're sacrificing not to each other but to the unity of the relationship. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling.

If you want the CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY, Part 1 goes here. (see appendix)

F. Preface to the Vows

F 1. The vows through which you accept each other as partners [or husband and wife], have meaning only to the extent that they express in words your continuing intention and commitment.

Your solemn commitment to each other, made today in front of these witnesses, will need to be expressed in many different ways in the coming days and years. The expression in your vows

today is a public acknowledgement of your journey together.

F 2 [..... and], you have carefully considered what you are about to do. In sharing these moments with this assembled company, you are making public what you have already acknowledged to each other. Your solemn pledges are witnessed by those who are most dear to you, and who, by their presence today, demonstrate their support for your future life as a married couple. The commitment you make today, while witnessed by friends and family, is a commitment which only the two of you can honour. It is your duty to yourselves to honour your vows, and to cherish your love this day, and every day, as you walk the path of life together.

F 3. In the quiet of this very special moment we pause to give thanks for all the rich experiences of life that have brought [..... and] to this special moment in their lives. We are especially grateful for the values which have flowed into them from those who have loved them and nurtured them and pointed them along life's way. We are grateful that within them is the dream of a great love and the resources to use that love in creating a home that will endure.

F 4. [..... and], to create a life together with the blessing of God (the Divine, the Goddess), requires that you honour the divine in each other and in yourself; that you honour the many voices of the soul – the joys, the delights, the love, as well as the anger, the fear, the illness, and the unhealed wounds; that you not ask your life partner to be any less than the fully powerful, proud person that they are; that you embrace them in their complexity – in their delights, in the fullness of their dreams, in their relationship with God (the Divine, the Goddess). This is both God's blessing and charge to you; to live together with honour, courage, and honesty.

G. Exchange of Vows

To say a vow means to consecrate yourself to another person or to a particular action. To consecrate means to make a solemn commitment of your life to a service or goal. Therefore marriage vows are the verbal recognition of the sacredness of the relationship which has grown up between two people. The act of speaking vows is a simple one – perhaps too simple for the deep meanings that vows hold. It is therefore wise to remember e e cummings' words: "Of love be a little more careful than anything."

You may use one of the following or use them as inspiration to write your own vows.

[Bride hands bouquet to]

[Optional intro] And now, as they make their promises to each other, may they make them with the deepest insight into their meaning and with their fullest sincerity. May this be but the beginning of a relationship that will grow and mature with each passing year until the latter days become even more wonderful than the first. I invite you now to join hands as you repeat your vows.

The vows can be memorized or repeated after the Lay Chaplain.

G - 1. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband/partner, to share with me all the wonders

life has to offer, through good times and bad, through laughter and tears, as long as we both shall live.

G - 2. In the presence of these witnesses I, _____ now take you, to be my wife/husband/partner. To have and to hold, from this day forward, For better, for worse, For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, In sorrow or in joy, To love and to cherish As long as we both shall live.

G - 3. _____, I take you to be my wife/husband/partner, to be the mother/father of my children, to be the companion of my days. We shall bear together whatever sorrow and adversity life may lay upon us. We shall share together whatever of joy and fulfilment life may hold in store.

G - 4. In the sight of God and in the presence of the company here assembled, I, _____, do take thee, _____, to be my wedded wife/husband/partner, to have and to hold from this day forward, till death do us part.

G - 5. From this day forward, _____, you shall be my wife/husband/partner, together to love, to work and to share, to grow and to understand, to discover a deeper, fuller life.

G - 6. In reaffirming the relationship we have been building together, I, _____now take you, _____ to be my wife/husband/partner.

G - 7. In the presence of these witnesses I, _____, now take you, _____ to be my wife/husband/partner. I give you my friendship and trust, my loyalty and respect. I stand before you and pledge my love and commitment to you, and to our lifelong relationship.

G - 8. I _____, pledge to you _____, a life of giving and of hoping, a life of growing and of loving. I shall dedicate to you both my work and my play. I shall be with you in your tears and in your laughter, just as I shall bring to you my joys and my sorrows. I take you to be my wife/husband/partner, and I pledge to you; honour, faith, and love.

G - 9. From this day forward, _____, you shall be my wife/husband/partner, together to love, to work and to share, to grow and to understand, to discover a deeper, fuller life.

G - 10. I, _____, take you, _____, to be no other than yourself. Loving what I know of you, trusting what I don't yet know, with respect for your integrity, and faith in your abiding love for me, through all our years, and in all that life may bring us, I accept you as my wife/husband/partner.

G - 11. _____, will you take this woman/man/partner to be your wedded wife/husband/partner through all of the days of your life, to live together in constancy and devotion? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honour and cherish her/him, in sickness and in health, and will you love her/him as long as you both shall live?

Response: I will

G - 12. _____ and _____, as you have come here freely to give yourselves in marriage do you now

promise that you will love and honour each other as husband and wife/wedded partners?

Response: We do

H. Recognition of Your Children

If you have children, they are a precious part of your family. This day will be an important and emotional event in their lives too. To leave your children out gives them strong messages that may last for years as they try to work out their place in the new family relationship. Unitarian tradition urges you to include them and discuss their involvement in the service with them.

However, age is a factor here; children under 4 may find it very hard to do what is required – being a flower girl or ring bearer could be too stressful for them (and you). Speak to your lay chaplain if you have young children whom you would like involved. For older children there are many options such as Best Woman, Best Man, Attendant, Usher, Flower Girl, and Ring Bearer. They could stand beside the lay chaplain, light a candle or do a reading.

H - 1. Where one or both of the partners has children by a previous marriage who are to be part of the family, they may take the child/children by the hand and repeat:

____, we want you to share in the life and love of our family home. *(then perhaps hug the child/ren)*

H - 2. _____, you are a part of this marriage. In becoming one family, your life, like those of your parents, has become enriched. We hope that together, we will all find ways to comfort and help one another. We will do our best to make our home a place of safety and caring. Will you agree to help us to create a joyful family home?

Reply: I/We will.

I. The Ring Ceremony

The rings are ancient symbols of commitment. They are circles, unbroken, and can be understood to represent a timeless love, or an enduring promise. The exchange of wedding rings is common; while not all couples exchange rings, most choose to do so. During the service, as rings are exchanged, it is usual that the couple will say a few short phrases to each other. Below are some suggestions.

“May I have the ring(s) please?” The lay chaplain takes the ring(s) from the attendant (Best man, Maid (Matron, Woman) of Honour or Ring Bearer) and says:

I - 1. A circle is the symbol of the sun and the earth and the universe. It represents wholeness and peace. In the form of a ring it is the accepted token of marriage. By the use of this ring you express in visible form the unbroken circle of your love, in which wherever you go you will always return to your shared life together.

I - 2. You have had these rings crafted as special symbols of what you intend that your love

and your marriage will mean to you. As you wear them, may your commitment to that ideal be fulfilled abundantly.

I - 3. May your ring be always the symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Love freely given has no separate giver and receiver. You are each the giver and each the receiver. May your ring always call to mind the freedom and the power of this love.

I - 4. The power of the world is circular. The sky is round, the earth is round, and so are the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. Life is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. (attributed to Black Elk, Oglala Sioux)

I - 5. These rings are formed as the linked strands, with no beginning and no end, and as these two form one ring, so shall your two lives entwine in one. May your love be carried safely thus, by each of you, for both of you.

I - 6. The ring symbolizes the unbroken circle of endless love. It is worn on the third finger because of an ancient Greek belief that a vein from that finger is connected directly to the heart, thus symbolizing the depth and sincerity of love.

I - 7. The circle of the ring speaks of love freely given: it has no beginning and it has no end. This ring declares [these rings declare] the unity and the oneness of your two lives, which shall contain your devotion that beyond every journey, you will always find reunion.

I - 8. The metal in these rings has little real value except in its use today. These words are gone as I say them, but as I say them, Your lives are changed forever. The two are become one. We are to witness now to the sealing of this promise with these rings, sign and token before the world of the union you have created.

J. Exchange of Rings; Ring Vows

The one giving the ring repeats after the lay chaplain:

J 1. ____, With this ring I marry you, and pledge to you my faithful love.

J 2. ____, I give you this ring in token of the commitment we celebrate today.

J 3. ____, I give you this ring to wear upon your hand as a symbol of our love and commitment.

J 4. ____, I give you this ring in token of the love and commitment we celebrate today.

J 5. ____, I give you this ring as a symbol of our love and unity.

J 6. ____, This ring is a symbol of our union, a token of my faith and love. With this ring, I marry you. (or: I thee wed.)

J 7. ____, accept this ring as a token of my love and devotion, as the sign from my heart that I

desire to live with you _____ from this day forward.

J 8. _____, accept this ring as a token of my love and devotion, that you may remember that I have chosen you _____ above all others.

K. Ring Affirmation

K-1. These rings are circles, unbroken, just as your love is unbroken and complete for each other. May the love between you grow and strengthen through all the years it would take to travel around your rings and come to their ends.

K-2. In giving and receiving rings, [..... and] have taken unto themselves symbols of all that this marriage means to them, and in wearing these rings, they are joining those meanings with a public statement that they are married. Each of us knows the values of love and devotion, companionship and trust, honour and caring which come in any intimate relationship. Let us take a few moments of silent reflection, to think on these things and share our hopes for [..... and]. (10 seconds of silence) Amen (or, So Be It, or Blessed Be).

K-3. The following is said by the lay chaplain after each ring is exchanged.

May s/he who gives it and s/he who wears it honour in life the pledge for which it stands.

May s/he who gives it and s/he who wears it honour in life the pledge for which it stands.

L. The Reading

You may choose one or two from this section, or select a favourite from another source. Some of these readings may be appropriate to be used as prayers later on in the service. The readings represent many different philosophical and personal outlooks. Select the one(s) which best express your thoughts and feelings about your marriage.

L - 1. **On Marriage**, by Kahlil Gibran (from *The Prophet*)

You are joined together and together you shall be forevermore.

You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.

Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God,

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,

And let the winds of heaven dance between you.

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 others 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 your 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.

L - 2. **On Love**, by Thomas of Kemp (from *The Imitation of Christ*, 15th Century)

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good.

Love alone lightens every burden, and makes the rough places smooth. It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable.

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God.

Love flies, runs and leaps for joy. It is free and unrestrained. Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds. Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil, attempts things beyond its strength; love sees nothing as impossible, for it feels able to achieve all things. Love therefore does great things; it is strange and effective; while those who lack love faint and fall. Love is not fickle and sentimental, nor is it intent on vanities. Like a living flame and a burning torch, it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle.

L - 3. **On Love**, by Paul the Apostle (Modified rendering of **I Corinthians XIII**)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; And if I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long, and is kind. Love envies not, love vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, and rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. And now abideth faith, hope, love these three; But the greatest of these is love.

L - 4. **On Love**, by Paul the Apostle (New English Bible rendering of **I Corinthians XIII**)

I may speak in tongues of men and of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

I may have the gift of prophecy, and know every hidden truth;

I may have faith strong enough to move mountains; But if I have no love, I am nothing.

I may dole out all I possess, or even seek glory by self sacrifice,

But if I have no love, I am none the better. Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one.

Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; Never selfish, nor quick to take offence.

Love keeps no score of wrongs, Does not gloat over other peoples shortcomings,

But delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face;

There is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance. There are three things that last forever: faith, hope and love; But the greatest of them all is love.

L - 5. **The Rhythm of Free Partners** by Anne Morrow Lindbergh (from *Gift from the Sea*)

A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on some of the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but happy and swift and free, like a country dance of Mozart's. To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern & freeze the movement, to check the endlessly changing beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back - it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving in the same rhythm, creating a

pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it. The joy of such a pattern is not only the joy of creation or the joy of participation, it is also the joy of loving in the moment. Lightness of touch and living in the moment are intertwined. When both partners love so completely that they have forgotten to ask whether or not they are loved in return; when they only know that they love and are moving to its music - then, and then only, are two people able to dance perfectly in tune to the same rhythm.

L - 6. **Come Travel With Me** by Walt Whitman (from *The Song of the Open Road*)

Listen! I will be honest with you,
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes.
These are days that must happen to you;
You shall not heap up what are called riches
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve.
Come, we must not stop here,
However sweet these laid up stores,
However convenient this dwelling,
However sheltered this port and however calm these waters,
We must not anchor here,
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us,
We are permitted to receive it but a little while,
Come, I give you my hand.
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching and law;
Will you give me yourself?
Will you come travel with me? Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

L - 7. **A Marriage Blessing** (attribute to the Salish people)

Now for you there is no rain
For one is shelter to the other.
Now for you the sun shall not burn
For one is shelter to the other.
Now for you nothing is hard or bad,
For the hardness and the badness is taken by one for the other.
Now for you there is no night,
For one is light to the other.
Now for you the snow has ended always.
It is that way, from now on, from now on.
Now it is good and there is always food, And now there is always drink,
And now there is comfort.
Now you are not alone. Now, you've found your life's companion.

L - 8. **Respect for One Another**, by Albert Schweitzer (*Memories of Childhood and Youth*)

To know one another cannot mean to know everything about each other; it means to feel mutual affection and confidence, and to believe in one another. We must not try to force our way into the personality of another. No one has the right to say to another: "because we belong to each other as we do, I have the right to know all your thoughts." All demands of this sort are foolish

and unwholesome. In this matter giving is the only valuable process; it is only giving that stimulates. Impart as much as you can of your spiritual being to those who are on the road with you, and accept as something precious what comes back to you from them.

L - 9. When a Man and a Woman are in Love, by Stephen T. Fader (poet for Blue Mountain Art cards)

When a man & a woman are in love, his life lies within hers and her life within his.
Each lives as an individual, yet they also live for one another; each strives for independent goals, but they also work together to achieve their dreams.

When a man & a woman are in love, they will give to one another what they need to survive & help fulfil each other's wants.

They will turn one another's disappointment into satisfaction.

They will turn one another's frustration into contentment.

They will work as a mirror, reflecting to each other their strengths & weaknesses.

They will work together to alleviate the emotional walls that may separate them.

They will work together to build a better understanding of one another.

They will learn to lean on each other, but not so much as to be a burden on the other.

They will learn to reach out to one another, but not so much as to suffocate the other.

They will learn when it is time to speak & when it is time to listen.

They will be there to comfort each other in times of sorrow.

They will be there to celebrate together in times of happiness.

They will be one another's friend, guiding each other to the happiness that life holds.

They will be one another's companion, facing together the challenges that life may present.

When a man & a woman are in love, his life lies within hers & her life lies within his.

Together they will love one another for the rest of their lives & forever.

L - 10. In marriage, the greatest courage will be required. You will be put to the test of continuing to accept your spouse with all defects revealed; but beyond this, you will be faced with the anguish of having to accept your own weaknesses. In the eyes of your partner, you will see reflected, not only your strengths, but your weaknesses. However, marriage also offers us the opportunity to accept, and be accepted, with all our strengths and weaknesses. This openness can lead us to the very ground of our being; and bring us to the glory of existence.

Further Wedding Reading:

H. & C. Clinebell	The Intimate Marriage
Carl Rogers	Becoming Partners
J. Powell	The Secret of Staying in Love
Herbert A. Otto	More Joy in Your Marriage
G M Nelson & C Witt	Sacred Threshold
Daphne R Kingma	Weddings from the Heart
Carl Seaburg	Great Occasions
Koran Arisian	The New Wedding

If you want the CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY, Part 2 goes here. (see appendix)

The WINE CEREMONY can go here. (see appendix)

M. Prayer of Aspiration; Hopes for the Future

M - 1. We wish you all happiness; but our wishes cannot give it, nor can it come from outward circumstances. It can only come from yourselves, from the spirit within you. You cannot choose what changes and chances will befall you in the coming years, but you can choose the spirit with which you will meet them. Let it be the spirit of the noble vows with which you have just made your pledges each to the other. If you take these vows as a bond of honour which you will keep with unswerving loyalty, then whatever may come, you will have inward contentment, which no pleasure can give, nor sorrow take away. Then the whole of life which awaits you will be an a place of deep peace, and continuing love.

M - 2. In this hour, rich with meaning and hope and promise, we pray that the spirit of trust, understanding and love may be with [..... and] through all the years that lie ahead. May their trust bring them strength and confidence, whatever trials and adversities they may meet; may their understanding support an acceptance of each other amid life's uncertainties; may their love be an avenue of insight into the deepest realities of our being. In the tomorrows which [..... and] will enter together, may they find far more in life than either of them would have found alone. May they find tolerance and respect for each other, and reverence for the beauty they will encounter as they go forward together.

M - 3. We cannot know what the future may bring into the lives of [..... and] but we pray that together they may be equal to the demands of all their tomorrows. May their marriage always be a shared adventure, rich with moments of serenity as well as excitement, vital with challenges that test as well as achievements that lift, marked by a sense of personal freedom as well as mutual responsibility. May they find in each other companionship as well as love. May their friends and family, those present today and those unable to be present, continue to rejoice in the love that has united them. May the home they build together surround them with peace. May it be a place where personal preoccupation does not usurp concern for others, and where the warmth of humour puts both crisis and dullness into perspective. From their life together, may they draw patience in time of strain, strength in time of weakness, courage in time of discouragement, vision in time of doubt, and above all, a growing love to share with the world around them.

M - 4. May the love which has brought you together continue to grow and enrich your lives, bringing peace and inspiration to each of you and to those who know you. May you meet with courage any problems that arise to challenge you; may you meet with strength whatever troubles may beset you. May your marriage be one of ever growing depth and meaning, because of the sympathy, understanding, and love you give to one another in the life you share.

M - 5. Out of this fragmented world, these two have come together, bound with the sure bonds of love. Their destinies shall now be woven of one design. As they increase in mutual understanding, may they complete the unfinished pattern of their true selves. Even as they have chosen each other from the world's multitudes, so let the days and years, now veiled by time, deepen the joy of that choice, and make it abidingly true.

M – 6. May your marriage bring you all the joys a marriage can bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding. May you need one another, but not out of weakness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you entice, but not compel, one another. May you embrace, but not encircle one another. May you succeed in all important ways with one another yet not fail in the little graces. May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you," and take no notice of small faults. May you enter into the mystery which is the awareness of one another's presence. May you find happiness in making one another happy. May you have love; and may you have it abundantly.

M - 7. Awed by the many meanings of this hour and overjoyed by its promises, we hope the spirit of trust, understanding and love may be with [..... and] through all the years that lie ahead. Whatever trials may come, may they trust each other wholly, for without such faith, marriage is a mockery; may they understand each other, for without understanding there is neither acceptance nor forgiveness; and may they truly love each other, for without love, marriage is only an empty shell. As they build together a new life and a new home, may that home be bright with the laughter of children and many friends; may it be a haven from the tensions of our time and a wellspring of strength; and in all the world, may it be the one place they most want to be. May the years deal gently with them; walking together may they find far more in life than either would have found alone. and may this shining hour be an open door through which [..... and] go forth to build a wonderful future together.

M - 8. May the sun bring you new energy by day; May the moon softly restore you by night;
May the rain wash away your worries And the breezes blow new strength into your being,
And all the days of your life, may you walk gently through the world and know its beauty.
Now you are two persons, with but one life before you. Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your life together, And may your days be good and long upon the earth.
(Attributed to the Salish people)

M - 9. Eternal God, source of life, in the midst of which we live and move and have our being, in thy name are we met together, to witness and to bless the union of these two lives. May they be a blessing and a comfort, each to the other, sharers of each other's joys, consolers of each other's sorrows, helpers of each other, in all the chances and changes of the world. In perfect love and creative peace, may they keep themselves, fulfilling in their very beings the laws of creative life. Amen.

M - 10. We pray rich blessings upon [..... and] who, in the presence of eternity and in the sight of this company, have pledged unto each other all that mind and heart and hand can give. May they ever remain faithful to the vows taken this day. In serenity of spirit, may they learn to face with courage and patience whatever afflictions may be visited upon them or those whom they love. For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health may the love which they have for one another grow in meaning and strength until its beauty is made manifest. Learning to serve one another in a partnership of love, may they learn to serve the highest ends of humanity itself and thus become witnesses, in the midst of each common day, to the sacredness of life. Amen.

M -11. Today we pray together for the lives of [..... and]. We pray for concord and creativity as well as for love and laughter. We pray for joy, that they may share it with others, and for their home, that it may be a temple for that which is beautiful and good and true. We pray for courage when there is fear, and for compassion where there is pain. As they share the rich experience of life, may their hearts and minds increase in understanding, and their bond become ever stronger. May [..... and] carry the past gracefully with them in all the years of their sojourn, and with an equal measure of hope, face the future unafraid. Amen.

M -12. May the beauty of springtime remain in your marriage and in your home. May there be warmth and gentleness, growth and courage, love and care. May there be joy and song through all your days together.

N. The Pronouncement

The pronouncement is the official recognition of the new couple. This is the time in the wedding we are all waiting for, the moment when those magic words are spoken, "... I now pronounce you husband and wife (or, married)." All the nervousness beforehand, all of the hopes and fears, the joys and plans, were directed at this moment. But, even here, there are options to be considered...

N - 1. For as much as [..... and] have thus pledged themselves to each other in the presence of God and this company, I do now, by virtue of the authority vested in me, pronounce that they are husband and wife [or, joined in marriage].

N - 2. Inasmuch as [..... and] consent together in marriage, have witnessed the same before this company, and thereto have pledged their faith, each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving rings and by drinking from a common cup, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together (or, two, who have become one in marriage). Those whom love joins together, let none put asunder.

N - 3. For as much as [..... and] have consented together in marriage, declaring their love for each other, they are now husband and wife [or, joined in marriage]. May their days be long upon the earth and may they dwell in love and joy together.

N - 4. Inasmuch as [..... and] have grown in knowledge and love of one another, seeking an ever richer, deeper relationship, and inasmuch as they have pledged to meet sorrow and joy as one family, we rejoice to recognize them as husband and wife [or, joined in marriage].

N – 5. Since [..... and] have committed themselves, each to the other, and have signified their commitment to each other in the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, they are now and henceforward husband and wife [or, joined in marriage].

N – 6. Since you, [.....] and you, [.....] have signified your commitment to each other in declaration of solemn vows, you are now and henceforward husband and wife [or, joined in

marriage].

N - 7. [..... and] have chosen one another. They have declared their love and purpose before this gathering, and have made their pledges one to another. I declare that they are husband and wife [or, joined in marriage]. Let all others honour them and the threshold of their house. May they find here the good beginning for the fruitfulness of many years.

N - 8. [..... and] have grown in knowledge and love of one another. They have agreed in their desire to go forward in life together, seeking an ever richer, deepening relationship. And they have pledged themselves to meet sorrow and joy as one family. We rejoice to recognize their marriage, and I now pronounce them husband and wife [or, joined in marriage].

N - 9. [..... and], in a deep sense the two of you were married long before you came here today. Today is merely the sharing of your wishes and hopes with these close friends and relatives who have gathered here this afternoon. We all want you to know that our best wishes are with you at this time. We thank you for sharing this very personal moment with us. I now pronounce you husband and wife [or, joined in marriage].

The Wedding Kiss

The wedding kiss is optional, but at many weddings, the exchange of a kiss between the married couple is part of the ceremony.

I now invite you to seal your commitment with a kiss.

OR

You may now kiss the bride.

Signing the Registry

The people being married, the two witnesses and the lay chaplain all sign the provincial marriage licence and CUUC wedding register, often as part of the service. Alternately, the wedding party may proceed to another room for this purpose, although this option leaves a gap in the service, while the wedding party and lay chaplain are out of the room. A reading or song can be inserted here. *(For an outdoor service and signing, you will need a paperweight to keep the documents from blowing away.)* Your family members (over 19 years of age) can be witnesses. This is a good time for photographs.

O. Closing Words; Blessing

O – 1. Go now to walk the ways of the world together, and may your days be good and long upon the earth.

O – 2. Let us now take a moment to silently give our individual blessings to this man and woman [or these partners], as they become husband and wife [or, joined in marriage]. (10 seconds of

silence)

May the blessing of each of us be felt by you. And may you also sense the blessing which is not ours to give but which comes from the very heart of life and is known to those who seek it. Go now to walk the ways of the world together, and may your days be good and long upon the earth.

O - 3. Go now to walk the ways of the world together, and you, (names of children), you too have entered this circle of love where you will be sheltered and cared for until you are grown, and go to find your own way in the world. May the days of each of you be good and long upon the earth.

O - 4. May all that is beautiful, noble, and true abide with you forever. Go now in peace, and may peace attend you all your days.

O - 5. Now and forever may you be united in love and harmony; may you share your lives and dreams with loving care; may you keep trust in each other, constant and deep; May you find joy in life and warm contentment as husband and wife [or, as married partners].

O - 6. May the love in your hearts give you joy. May the greatness of life bring you peace. And may your days be good and your lives be long upon the earth. Go now to walk the ways of the world together.

O - 7. May all who love [..... and] rejoice in the commitment they have made to one another. May the meaning of these moments abide throughout their lives, and may they be a comfort and a joy to each other. May each bring intelligence and commitment to the task that is set before them. May they maintain enduring respect and trust for one another. May their home be a place of peace for them and for all who enter it. May all who follow their lives with interest and affection have cause often to rejoice, not only in their happiness, but also in their brave and generous living.

O - 8. And now may that glory which rests upon all who love, rest upon you, bless you and keep you, and fill you with happiness and a gracious spirit. And despite all changes of time and fortune, may all that is loving and true abide in your hearts, and give you strength in all your days together. *[Amen or Blessed Be]*

O - 9. May the blessing that rests upon all who love, rest also upon you and fill you with all spiritual grace. May the bond that unites you be ever strengthened. May you so love and share together in the days that are to come, that your lives shall be enriched and ennobled by a true and deepening comradeship of mind and heart.

O - 10. The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

O - 11. [..... and], may you establish a home of warmth and understanding; may your lives be filled with peace and beauty; may you always exhibit to one another truth, sympathy and love, and may the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; may the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace this day and forever more.

O - 12. May the spirit which has been in all the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition be also in us, that the deepest in us may seek the loftiest in the universe, and that we may dwell in love and joy with one another.

P. Introduction of Married Couple

P – 1. It is my pleasure to introduce [..... and] as joined in marriage [or, husband and wife].

P – 2. It is my pleasure to introduce Mr. & Mrs. _____, husband and wife [or, who are now joined in marriage].

4. OTHER SERVICE OPTIONS:

Candle Lighting Ceremony Part 1

The Candle Lighting Ceremony works best indoors. If you are interested in the Candle Lighting Ceremony (CLC) you'll need to provide your own candles. Then you will be able to use them again to light on your anniversary. You will need three candles.

The candle lighting ceremony represents the families that you have come from and the new family that you begin today. _____ and _____, you have arrived here today with the help of your respective family's love and support, their courage and their commitment to you. And through your marriage this day you will face tomorrow as a new family, ready and eager to embark on this new journey.

CLC-1 In recognition of their love for you and their hopes for you in your marriage, two representatives of your families will come forward to each light a candle to symbolize your present families and the ancestors from which you have come. I now ask _____ and _____ (choice of relative) to come forward to light the family candles.

CLC-2 We now invite _____'s and _____'s parents to light a candle signifying the flame of their love for and pride in their child. May the spirit of this love and pride glow forever brightly in the new life of [..... and].

Candle Lighting Ceremony Part 2

Earlier in this service, _____ and _____, on behalf of your families, lit candles symbolizing their love for each of you and their hopes for you in your marriage. You will now light the central candle from those candles as you unite in marriage and undertake new dimensions in your relationship. Please light the candle of unity

CLC - 3. As you each take a candle and together light the centre candle, you are symbolizing the

union of your lives. There are two of you, yet there is only one life before you. May this life be blessed and ever richer because of everything you bring to it as individuals. CLC - 4
Candles have been lit to signify the love and support of your families. As you together light a candle, you are symbolizing the union of your families, and the creation of a new life for you. May this life be blessed and ever richer because of everything you bring to it as individuals.
CLC - a. This tiny flame of yours is fragile. It shines its light upon the path you will tread together; It warms you in its glow and leads you into ways of love and understanding. May the light you have kindled together illumine your lives and the lives of others through both sunshine and shadow in the days to come.

CLC - b. Every life is a flame, a manifestation within each separate being of the universal light that streams from sun and stars. In the fire of love those flames merge and shine with a new light. May your life together enkindle the fire of love.

Wine Cup Ceremony

The use of the wine cup at a wedding is an ancient Jewish tradition. It is particularly appropriate at a marriage where the background of one or both parties is Jewish. It is occasionally used by others who also find it significant.

This cup of wine is symbolic of the cup of life. As you share the cup of wine, you undertake to share all that the future may bring. All the sweetness life's cup may hold for you will be the sweeter because you drink it together. Whatever drops of bitterness it may contain will be less bitter because you share them. *(the couple drink from the cup.)*

WCC - 1. The years of our lives are 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 labour and honour 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. *(the couple drink from the cup.)*

WCC - 2. The years of life are as a cup of wine, poured out for you to drink. The cup contains within it the sweet wine of happiness, joy, hope and delight. The same cup, at times, holds the bitter wine of disappointment, sorrow, grief and despair. Those who drink deeply of life invite the full range of experiences. This cup is symbolic of the pledges you have made to one another to share together the fullness of life. As you drink from this cup you acknowledge to one another that your lives, until this moment separate, have become one vessel into which all your sorrows and joys, all your hopes and fears, all your dreams and dreads will be poured, and from which you will find mutual sustenance. Many days you will sit at the same table and eat and drink together. Drink now, and may the cup of your life together be sweet and full to overflowing.

If the glass is broken (really smash it!), the following may be said:

May your marriage last so long as it would take to place the pieces of this glass back together. Even as life moves on in its restless flow, we would not cling to the present moment, no matter how filled with joy. Your loyalty is to each other, to the many cups which you will fill to each other, not to the cups of yesterday.

Other Traditional Religious Elements:

If you would like to include elements from your family's traditional religion, the following may be of interest:

IF ONE OF YOU IS UNITARIAN

The 'Flaming Chalice' - a chalice with a lit candle or oil-wick - is a common symbol of Unitarians. There is traditionally a reading or statement made at the beginning of the ceremony, when the candle is lit. At the end of the ceremony, the candle is extinguished, and there is another reading or statement. During a wedding, the chalice would be placed on a small table at the centre of the ceremony. There may be other symbols, pictures or decorations placed around the chalice.

In a Unitarian service there are often interfaith elements, because many Unitarians come from different backgrounds, and are comfortable with various traditions. While the community is important, the ritual affirms the dignity and worth of individuals and their unique beliefs.

IF ONE OF YOU IS WICCAN OR PAGAN

We would be delighted to incorporate any part of a Handfasting ceremony into your wedding. Your lay chaplain has information about Handfasting.

IF ONE OF YOU IS CHRISTIAN

Christian weddings vary depending on the denomination. For instance, to welcome people of Roman Catholic origins, it is important to include some of the common elements from Catholic services. For traditional Catholics, it is affirming to play "Ave Maria" as part of the music. Most Christians will appreciate the reading of 1 Corinthians 13, Paul's letter about love. Candles may be used in the service, by using a central candle lit jointly by the couple. The symbolism is rather nice, two becoming one. The Lord's Prayer may sometimes be appropriate. We can work together to make a meaningful service that respects your background.

IF ONE OF YOU IS BUDDHIST

In some Chinese Buddhist services a large paper is provided for the guests to write their hopes and wishes for the couple. Sometimes the paper is ornate with drawings and paintings of scenes from the couple's lives. The ceremony may be quite intricate. Zen Buddhist services may emphasize simplicity. We are willing to learn about your traditions and include them in your wedding.

IF ONE OF YOU IS JEWISH

Often the parents accompany the couple in the procession. Parents stand just behind and to the sides of the couple. The bride is escorted to the huppa (canopy). Various blessings are recited, then wine is poured. Both the bride and the bridegroom drink from the cup. The ceremony is closed with the breaking of a goblet by the groom. The goblet is wrapped in white cloth and he smashes it with the heel of his shoe. The smashing of the glass is irrevocable and permanent ... just as is the marriage. It may be done in silence, or with the words, "May your marriage last so long as it would take to place the pieces of this glass back together." (Groom had better SMASH

it!)

IF ONE OF YOU IS HINDU

In a traditional Hindu wedding the couple take seven steps around a sacred flame. With each step a prayer is said for the stages of life. The prayers might include friendship and harmony, strength, courage, prosperity, emotional stability, loyalty, love, dedication, balance, deepening devotion and inspiring companionship. In this service, the minds of the couple mingle like two bodies of clear calm waters.

IF ONE OF YOU IS MUSLIM

There are many beautiful readings from the Koran which can be used in a wedding service, as well as readings from Rumi, Kabir, and Gibran. If there are rituals from your particular tradition which you would like to incorporate, speak to us. We are open to the process of honouring your traditions; we appreciate the richness of interfaith services.

IF ONE OF YOU IS HUMANIST, ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC

Many people who seek a Unitarian chaplain to perform their service, say that they do not want a "religious service". Usually they mean they want a service free from the trappings of any particular denomination, its ritual and theology. They want a service which is meaningful for their own lives. That is just what Unitarian Universalist lay chaplains attempt to provide. Asking you to choose your own readings and rituals is part of that process.

When performed by Unitarian Universalist lay chaplains, weddings are ceremonies with spiritual meaning. Some of the great issues of life are acknowledged, and modern weddings include many of the spiritual and religious traditions that have surrounded weddings for centuries.

The humanist, atheist or agnostic will be supported in their search for a meaningful wedding service – free from dogma, theism, and denominational overtones. We will work with you to build a service responsive to your own beliefs.

IF ONE OF YOU IS ABORIGINAL

One of our Lay Chaplains is Métis, and would be happy to work with you to create a service that is appropriate to your Native tradition.

5. WEDDING PROCEDURE & DETAILS

Procedure for a Formal Wedding

(For clarity, the terms “bride” and “groom” will be used to define the couple.)

The ushers should be at the church or location of the ceremony at least half an hour before the service is due to begin. The practice of seating guests as to which “side” they are on is not observed much any more, however, if this is to be followed, then the groom’s family and friends should be seated on the right-hand side, the bride’s on the left-hand side (when facing the front).

The bride’s mother is seated in the front on the left-hand side. A space is left at her side for the father to take his place after he has completed his part in the ceremony (if he is walking his daughter up the aisle). The bridegroom’s parents are in the front on the right-hand side.

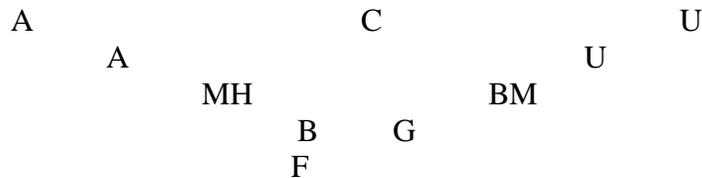
The groom and the best man arrive at least fifteen minutes before the start of the service.

If the bride is walking down the aisle directly from her car, her car should arrive exactly at the announced time for the start of the service. A member of her party (perhaps her mother or a matron/maid/woman of honour, hereafter called the maid of honour) will need to inform the lay chaplain that the bride is ready. This is the cue for the lay chaplain, groom, and best man to take their places. Alternately, the best man may escort the maid of honour and the groom escorts the bride.

The wedding march begins as the bridal party enters, and the congregation stands as the bride enters.

The bride is on her father's right arm and will normally be preceded by her attendant(s). After mounting the steps at the front (if any), the bridal attendant(s) step to the left making room for the bride to take her place beside the groom. The maid of honour then closes in to the bride and her father steps back, so as to be between the bride and the maid of honour but to the rear. If the bride has more than one attendant, a corresponding number of ushers go forward, one usher escorting each bridesmaid in the bridal party when everyone has arrived at the front, they should be in the following positions.

C – Chaplain G -groom B - bride BM - best-man MH - maid/matron of honour
 A - bride's attendants F - father of the bride U - ushers



The bride, groom, two witnesses, and the lay chaplain sign the registration form and the register. This may be done on the pulpit or at a table placed for the purpose. Alternately, the wedding party may proceed to another room for this purpose.

After the signing of the register, the bride is paired with the groom, the maid of honour with the best man, any other bridesmaids with the ushers, and in this order they recess followed by the parents.

This order used for the recessional may also be used for the processional if preferred. Parents may enter with their son and daughter and serve as attendants and witnesses if desired.

Procedure for an Informal Wedding

For a small wedding in a home or elsewhere, you may prefer to have guests stand in a circle. At an informal wedding there is normally no music, though music may be desired before the ceremony begins while the guests are arriving.

The wedding party all enter at the same time and take up the positions indicated in the preceding section. It is often possible for the bridal party to enter separately, please speak to your lay chaplain to arrange this.

The essentials are a large room, or space, for the ceremony itself, and a desk or table for the signing. In a home setting you may wish to switch off the telephone to prevent interruption.

Wedding Location

There are many appropriate places for a ceremony to be held. The homes of couples, parents, and

of friends may be used. An Interfaith Chapel, such as UVic's, or a hall could be rented. Outside settings, such as the beach or a park, may be selected, but alternate plans should be made in case of rain. Also, if you choose a beach, be aware of any access problems for guests with disabilities. Beacon Hill Park is a lovely setting, but it can be busy; however the cost is very reasonable. For more information on local parks, contact: Victoria

http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/departments_compar_prkwed.shtml

Esquimalt <http://www.esquimalt.ca/parksRecreation/facilityRentals/parkBookings.aspx>

The gardens at Royal Roads University are beautiful but are a 20-minute drive from downtown.

Saxe Point is a nice outdoor location and can be booked in advance at a cost of about \$80, while

St Anne's is a lovely indoor setting, and is convenient to downtown. If you would like the use

of the sanctuary of First Unitarian Church of Victoria (our sister church) in West Saanich, please

note that all arrangements are made through their church office, phone 250-744-2665.

Music

Music is an excellent way to 'set the mood' and make a ceremony meaningful and memorable.

Because of this, most weddings include music, either live or recorded, to accompany the

procession and recession, and often, the signing ceremony. There is also usually quiet music

being played as the guests are arriving. You'll be choosing your own music, but just as a

guideline, a very traditional, formal wedding might use 5 different pieces. ie:

Prelude (Pachelbel's Canon in D)

Wedding party processional (Elgar Pomp & Circumstance)

Bride's processional (Wagner Lohengrin 'Bridal Chorus')

Signing music (Dome epais - Flower Duet) Approx 4 min.

Recessional (Mendelsohn Wedding March)

However, you may decide to use one piece for the entrance of the entire wedding party & bride (if so, choose a longish piece), and one piece for the recession and nothing else. It's up to you.

Photographs

Family and friends are welcome to take photos only during the wedding kiss, and during the signing of the register.

If you want professional-quality photographs of your wedding day, you will need to hire a professional photographer.

6. SERVICE CHOICES

Please make your choices and then discuss your choices with your lay chaplain. The chaplain two weeks, and not later than one week, before the wedding. The service can be modified, if necessary, at the rehearsal.

This service format provides you with all the headings from the Wedding Booklet. The only mandatory sections are: some form of dedication or vow, the pronouncement and the signing. This is your wedding. Your lay chaplain will do their best to accommodate your wishes.

Your Names (as you wished to be called during the service) _____

Greeting and Instruction: Lay Chaplain (Introduction of Lay Chaplain is mandatory)

A. Recognition of Gathered Company: A - 1, A - 2, A - 3, A - 4, A - 5, A - 6.

B. Opening Words: B - 1, B - 2, B - 3, B - 4.

C. Opening Readings: C - 1, C - 2, C - 3, C - 4, C - 5, C - 6, C - 7.

D. Statement of Purpose and Affirmation of Intention: D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4, D-5, D-6.

E. Charge to the Couple: E-1, E-2, E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6.

F. Preface to the vows: F - 1, F - 2, F - 3, F - 4.

G. Exchange of Vows & Declarations (mandatory in some form): G - 1, G - 2, G - 3, G - 4, G - 5, G - 6, G - 7, G - 8, G - 9, G - 10, G - 11, G - 12. Repeat after Lay Chaplain? Yes or No

H. Recognition of Children: : H - 1, H - 2.

I. The Ring Ceremony: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-7, I-8.

J. Exchange of Ring(s): J - 1, J - 2, J - 3, J - 4, J - 5, J - 6, J - 7, J - 8. Repeat after Lay Chaplain? Yes or No

K. Ring Affirmation: K - 1, K - 2, K - 3.

L. The Reading(s): L - 1, L - 2, L - 3, L - 4, L - 5, L - 6, L - 7, L - 8, L - 9, L - 10, L - 11, L - 12.

M. Prayer of Aspiration/Hopes for the Future:: M - 1, M - 2, M - 3, M - 4, M - 5, M - 6, M - 7, M - 8, M - 9, M - 10, M - 11, M - 12.

N. The Pronouncement (Mandatory in some form): N-1, N-2, N-3, N-4, N-5, N-6, N-7, N-8, N-9.

The Wedding Kiss: Yes or No (You might want to decide beforehand what kind of kiss it will

be.)

Signing The Marriage Licence and the Marriage Register. (*Mandatory*)

O. Closing Words: O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9, O-10, O-11, O-12.

P. Introduction of the Married Couple: P – 1, P – 2.

By what names do you wish to be called? Options include: using first names only, using first names followed by husband and wife; using first and last names, or using Mr. and Mrs.

(Please indicate if you are interested in either the Wine Cup or Candle Lighting ceremony, or if you would like to include elements of your, or your family's, religious tradition.)

Any other comments or questions?

7. UNITARIANISM

This is a short introduction to our religious tradition. Please also refer to our website, www.unitariancongregation.org/victoria/ We are a diverse religious community, with congregations across Canada and around the world. Our beliefs are framed by our Seven Principles which are as follows: We covenant to affirm and promote...

The inherent worth and dignity of every person

Justice, equity and compassion in human relationships

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation

A responsibility to the larger community beyond ourselves

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

Our Sunday service is a worship service where spirit is both welcomed and honoured. We embrace everyone in our congregation whether they are humanist, theist or atheist, because for each one of us 'spirit', in our personal definition of the word, is meaningful.

Wherever you are on your journey, Unitarians support and encourage you to discover your truth and explore your spiritual beliefs in a community of questing minds.

It is our hope that the couple getting married in a Unitarian Universalist ceremony will find the community support which all of us need in cultivating deep and meaningful relationships in life. You are very welcome to visit our Unitarian Universalist congregation, where you will be warmly included in the fellowship of our congregation. If you are interested in learning about our Unitarian tradition, please see our (Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation - CUUC) website at www.unitariancongregation.org/victoria/ or you would be more than welcome to visit our service, which takes place at 234 Menzies Street, Victoria, each Sunday morning at 10:00.

* * *

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! Your lay chaplain's goal for your wedding ceremony is to work with you to create your expression of love for each other through your unique wedding service.