

A Ceremony of Commitment Uniting

_____ and _____
Saturday, September 20, 1997 at 6:00 p.m.

The Rev. _____ Officiant

*Gathering for Celebration
Opening and Introduction
Gathering Prayer
A Blessing of Friends and Family
Scripture
Promises
Exchange of Rings
A Blessing Upon the Relationship
Lighting of the Covenant Candle
Signing of Covenant
Celebration of Commitment
A Blessing For the Journey
The Community Is Dismissed to Celebrate Life*

Gathering for Celebration

Music from

(Music will begin and minister will invite folks to gather for celebration.)

*After family and friends gather,
the couple will join minister
for the ceremony)*

Opening & Introductions

(To all who are present)

Dear friends, out of our care for these two who stand before us, we have gathered together to witness and bless their commitment to each other that they are about to affirm in the form of sacred promises, publicly shared. To this moment they bring the fullness of their hearts as a treasure to share with one another. They bring the dreams which bind them together. They bring that particular personality and spirit which is uniquely their own, and out of which will grow the reality of their life together. We gather today to rejoice with them as the outward symbol of an inward union of hearts, a union created by friendship, respect, and love.

Prayers

Gracious God, we do not come today seeking your presence, but rather we acknowledge you are already here in our midst. And so, amidst this holy gathering of your children, blessed by the sacred hospitality of family and friends, help us to be conscious of your activity as we gather in this afternoon of celebration. Sustaining God, we do gather in your presence to celebrate with _____ and _____ as they affirm their covenant with you and declare publicly in the eyes of family and friends their covenant with each other. For the dreams they have dreamed, and the hopes they have for the future we give thanks. So also do we pray that the words mentioned on this occasion and the spirit in which we gather will empower us for this time and also be filled with meaning for the passing years. This we pray through the Spirit of our Creator. AMEN.

A Blessing of Friends and Family

(to all who are gathered)

The truth and wisdom of this celebration of commitment is something we are all a part of as family and friends of _____ and _____ .

We need to remember that the path of love is always meant to be walked together with everyone who is a part of our supporting community and affirming family. Thus, it is important for these two who come before us to understand that any hope, for a future of joy and love, relies greatly upon the nurture and guidance of others, especially you who are gathered in this place.

It is in such truth as this, _____ and _____ have asked us to be present with them here, to celebrate this on occasion as they formally affirm their commitment to each other.

Enveloped in the care and friendship of you all, and in the presence of the love of family, they hope we will sustain them, encourage them, and participate with them in the daily celebrations of love to which God calls all of God's children.

In such hope then, I now ask all of you who are gathered here, as family and friends of this couple...

...will you offer your blessing on these two who come to be united in a relationship of affirmed commitment and love with each other...

... And do you promise the support of your own love and commitment to _____
and _____ 's future together as they seek to be faithful to the love they know?

If so, will you respond by saying, "***We do.***"

All gathered respond by saying, "*WE DO!*"

(To all who are gathered)

Thank you.

Regarding Love

Read by friend of couple

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

(Reading continued on next page...)

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (*1 Corinthians 13*)

Promises

(To all who are gathered)

Because they have come together in this place at this time, out of their love for each other, _____
_____ and _____ _____ will now share with each other words which symbolize that love.

(To the couple)

_____ _____; _____ _____; As you come now to the sacred moment when you make your commitment of love and faithfulness to each other, I want you to remember something: Promises and commitments are never to be taken lightly, especially when they are made before God and within the company of family and friends.

The promises you are about to speak do not hold any power in and of themselves. There is nothing magic about them. But, if you are sincere in the words you say to each other, and if you will remember them as long as you both shall live, ...they can act like a firm foundation to hold you solid in the storms of life. Remembered eternally, these words will also empower your living in times of celebration .

Moreover, the God who hears your promises made on this day will always be present to aid you in keeping them whenever you repeat them in awareness of God's Spirit.

(To each partner in turn)

As you turn and face each other, holding your partners hands in your own, I invite you to offer each other your promise of commitment at this time:

(pause)

(full name of 1st person), repeat after me:

I, _____, take you _____
_____, to be my companion, friend and lover, from
this day forward. I will love you always and be faithful to
you, when we are together and when we are apart, when
life is peaceful and when it is in disorder. I will give you
the freedom to be creative. I will honor your goals and
dreams and help you to fulfill them. I will seek to be open
and honest with you in all things. This commitment I make
in love, will keep in faith, and will live in hope as long as we
both shall live.

**(full name of 2nd person), will you now repeat after
me:**

I, _____, take you _____
_____, to be my companion, friend and lover, from
this day forward. I will love you always and be faithful to
you, when we are together and when we are apart, when
life is peaceful and when it is in disorder. I will give you
the freedom to be creative. I will honor your goals and
dreams and help you to fulfill them. I will seek to be open
and honest with you in all things. This commitment I make
in love, will keep in faith, and will live in hope as long as we
both shall live.

Exchange of Rings or Gifts

May I have the rings _____ and
_____ intend to offer each other as
a symbol for their relationship.

(To all who are present)

A traditional symbol for committed relationships of love is the ring. The precious metal in the ring symbolizes the purity and value of the relationship. The ring as an unbroken circle symbolizes the endlessness of the love and commitment that are involved in a couple's highest commitment to one another..

May this expression of love now be made by this couple.

(To each partner in turn)

_____, place _____'s ring on her finger and then repeat to her, the words I am about to offer you:

_____, I offer you this ring, a symbol of my enduring love and faithfulness. I ask that you accept it and wear it as a symbol of my commitment to you, and our relationship together.

_____, will you now place _____'s ring on her finger and then repeat to her, the words I am about to offer you:

_____, I offer you this ring, a symbol of my enduring love and faithfulness. I ask that you accept it and wear it as a symbol of my commitment to you, and our relationship together.

(To couple)

May God bless these rings which you have given to each other as a sign of your love and commitment.

So also may God be present in your lives and in your love, binding you each to the other and prompting you to grow together in the wisdom that is God's gift to us all.

Blessings

Almighty God, our creator,

we give thanks for this moment that brings _____
_____ and _____ together
with commitment and love. We recognize with
thanksgiving the journeys that have brought them to
this time, and we celebrate with them the hopes they
hold for their life together. We ask your blessing
upon them, to sustain them through the difficult and
uncertain times that come to every relationship; to
fulfill with great number — the joyful celebrations
that are also a part of each relationship.

We pray _____ and _____
_____ continue to find in each other resources
which will nurture their life together. May they
continue to grow in deepening friendship with each
other. May their love for one another deepen with the
passing years, blossoming with grace and wisdom.

(Prayer continued on next page...)

...In honor of this occasion, Lord, may the rest of us who also share this celebration today, be renewed in our own commitments to one another, that we all may be participants in a healed and healing world, a reality of grace and acceptance worthy to be called your creation.

All this we ask in God's great holiness. Amen.

Candle-lighting

The lighting of the candle is always the symbol of something new coming into the world, so you all have chosen to light a candle to symbolize your new life together.

Like these two outside candles that you each will use to light the one center candle, however, each of you still has a unique and individual life which God has given you.

Even as you will **not** put out the two individual candles after the center candle is lit, so also do we recognize that even in the commitment of a relationship such as yours — the gifts that are your individual personalities, unique strengths, and personal talents will continue.

And yet, in this time together a new light does indeed come among us. It is the light of your two lives being woven together and uniting intentionally - deliberately - with great joy and celebration as one flame in intensity and purpose.

Even now, then, may the light of your two lives unite into a new life together, as the flames of your individual candles are united in one new fire upon the central candle.

And may this new unity that is your relationship of mutual care and concern also be affirmed in the signing of your covenant of commitment to each other made on this high and holy day.

Let the candle be lit.

(The couple moves to light the candle)

SONG

(...to be sung while couple lights candle, signs certificate, and then faces each other in front of Candle - holding hands until song is completed)

Covenant Signing

(After lighting the candle,

the couple and their witnesses sign their certificate of Covenant)

WITNESSES:

_____ and _____

Celebration of Commitment

_____ and _____,

I invite you to celebrate this new commitment to your relationship that God has created in your life with a kiss.

A Blessing For The Journey

At this new point in your lives together,
facing your family and friends, and to all God's
people gathered for this celebration--
...May you live forever in peace,
sharing your love with each other,
and also God's love with the rest of the world.

Amen.