

The Wedding of Jane Doe & John Smith

Processional

John with parents

Jane with parents

Welcome

Welcome to this happy occasion. I am the Rev. Fiona Heath, a Unitarian Universalist minister and it is my privilege to be officiating today.

Families and Friends, we are gathered here today to share the joyful ceremony of marriage of Jane and John. Your presence is very important to them because the ideals, the understanding, and the mutual respect which they bring to their marriage have their roots in the love, friendship and guidance you have given them. Each of you contributed something precious to their lives. They stand before you in love, in trust, and in hope.

This celebration is an outward sign of an inward union of hearts, which this gathering may bless and the state make legal, but which neither we nor state can truly bring into being. It is a union created by loving purpose, kept by enduring loyalty and made sacred within the lives of those who share it.

Let all of us present, therefore, extend to Jane and John our deep love and on-going support; not just today but on into the future. Let us help them build the kind of home in which everyone is encouraged to grow to their fullest potential and most compassionate self.

Participation of the Witnesses

Will you, family and friends, do all in your power to uphold Jane and John in the marriage they are about to undertake?

If so, please answer: We will.

The guests answer: We will.

Reading

Affirmation of Intentions

Jane and John, you have come now to affirm the union that already exists between you. Knowing that each of you will grow and change with time, you are here today to proclaim that your love is strong enough to grow with these changes. Do you give yourselves freely to each other with honour, and a sense of dedication?

Each faces the other and answers: We do.

Charge to the Couple

Jane and John, we wish you every happiness, but our wishes cannot give it, nor can it come from outward circumstances. It can only come from yourselves.

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

Marriage symbolizes the intimate sharing of two lives; yet this sharing must not diminish, but enhance the individuality of each partner. A marriage that lasts is one which is continually developing, and in which each person continues to grow in understanding of the other. Deep knowledge of another is not something that can be achieved in a short time, but can develop fully only with years of intimacy.

To be known in this way is a priceless thing, because such understanding and acceptance make it possible not only to share each other's joys and successes, but also the times of sorrow and failure.

We must give ourselves in love, but we must not give ourselves away. A good and balanced relationship is one in which neither person is overpowered or absorbed by the other.

Thus it is out of the tension between separateness and union that love, whose incredible strength is equal only to its incredible fragility, increases. Today you make a pledge but it is only tomorrow that it assumes meaning.

May you cherish one another all the days of your lives.

Exchange of Vows

John and Jane, the vows through which you accept each other as husband and wife have no hidden power within themselves. Only to the extent that they express in words your continuing intention and commitment do they have meaning.

Only you, by the integrity and diligence of your love, can make these vows last.

Your commitment to each other will need to be re-expressed in many different ways throughout the coming days and years.

The expression of today's vows are simply a visible milestone in your journey together.

May you honour each other all the days of your lives.

I now invite you to speak your vows. Please take each other's hand.

Jane, then John

May the promises you made to one another today be a foundation of strength and compassion as you face life's peaks and valleys together. May it be so.

Exchange of Rings

The circle is the symbol of the sun and the earth and the universe.

It is a symbol of wholeness, speaking of love freely given.

The rings which you give and receive this day are the symbols of the circle of shared love into which you enter together as husband and wife.

Please repeat after me.

John, then Jane

I offer you this ring as a symbol of our love, friendship, and togetherness.

Pronouncement of Marriage

No single event marks a marriage.

A marriage is the freely chosen union of two individuals. You have done what in truth no outside power can do: you have joined yourselves in a shared destiny.

Our presence here is evidence of our support and enthusiasm for this profound enterprise onto which you have embarked.

I have the privilege, by the authority of the Province of Ontario, to pronounce you married.

Nuptial Kiss

I invite you to celebrate your union with a kiss.

Signing of the Marriage Documents:

Announcements

Benediction

John and Jane, we rejoice this day in your marriage.

We celebrate the love that brought you here and will deepen through many years.

May your house be a place of happiness for all who enter it, a place where the old and the young are renewed in each other's company, a place for growing, a place for music, a place for laughter.

And when shadows and darkness fall within its rooms, may it still be a place of hope and strength for all who enter it, especially for those who may be entrusted to your care.

May no person be alien to your compassion.

May your larger family be the family of all humankind.

And may those who are nearest to you and dearest to you constantly be enriched by the beauty and the bounty of your love for each other.

May you love one another all the days of your lives.

May it be so.

May it always be so.

Presentation of the Couple

Family and friends, I present to you the newlyweds

John Smith & Jane Doe!

Recessional