

Subject: Union Ceremony

Submitted by: Rev. Diane Borcyckowski

Note: A sample of a very long union ceremony that was written by partners I joined in union based on my wedding ceremony and thoughts of their own. It can be edited to suit.

CEREMONY OF UNION FOR \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

We are gathered here to witness and to celebrate the coming together of two separate lives. We have come to join \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, in union, to be with them and to rejoice with them as they make their commitment to God and to each other.

This union is the outward expression of a great love, characterized by compassion, passion and courage. This union symbolizes the intimate sharing of two lives, a sharing which enhances both individuals. Deep knowledge of another is not something that can be achieved in a short time, and real understanding of the other's feelings can develop fully only with years of intimacy. The sensual part of love is one of life's greatest joys, and when this is combined with real friendship, both are infinitely enhanced. A union that lasts is one which is continually developing and in which each person is individually developing, while growing in her/his understanding of the other.

A balanced relationship is one in which neither person is overpowered nor absorbed by the other. As stated by Kahlil Gibran: "...let there be spaces in your togetherness and let the winds of the heavens 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 other's cup, but drink not from the same cup. 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".

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_-, your love requires that you be totally honest with yourself and your partner, that you ask for what you want, take actions even at times when you are afraid, share how it is for you, and listen...but leave your partner free. It is not important that you have found the right partner, but it is important that you be the right partner, for love must be given away. If you want to experience the best relationship that you know your union can be, you must be willing not only to be yourself, but also be the partner you desire. You must freely give love, support and understanding in the same degree you need to receive them. A committed union is the form in which you have chosen to express and live your love relationship. To serve its purpose, your union must change as you change, but your unchanging commitment to love and to life together will allow you both to experience and share a magnificence unknown to you before.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, your friends and family present here today accept for you, because we accept for ourselves, a love that brings out your magnificence, a love that gives you the courage to stand apart and the willingness to stand together. Most of all, we want for you, at the end of your lives on this plane, you will be able to look into each other eyes and say "because you have loved me, you have given me faith in myself and because I have faith in myself, I have loved you. My life with you has been complete".

True love is something beyond the warmth and glow, the excitement and romance of being in love. It is caring as much about the welfare and happiness of your partner as about your own. Love makes burdens lighter because you divide them. Love makes joys more intense because you share them. Nothing is easier than saying words and nothing harder than living them day after day. Love makes you stronger so you can reach out and become involved with life in ways you dare not risk alone.

There are no other ties on earth more sweet and tender than those \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ --- are about to assume. There are not other vows more solemn than those they are about to make. There is no other institution on earth more sacred than that of the home they are about to form. They consent today to enrich each other's existence by having a single and a shared life. They have chosen to join together because they belong not to each other but with each other. Today they have come to profess that which lies deeps within their hearts.

You, the family and friends of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, by choosing to be present here today are charged with the responsibility and obligation to actively and positively support them and their union. Those of you who are now joined may take these vows now silently in your hearts, of those who are not interested in a union may want to look at what it means to be a friend, for all committed relationships are based in friendship.

To this moment \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ bring the fullness of their hearts as a treasure to share one with the other. 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 rejoice with them in this ceremony which is an outward symbol of an inward union of hearts – a union created by friendship, respect and above all love.

Today your separate lives with their individual memories, desires and hopes continue to merge into one. Will you bring to this new life, each for the sake of the other, the finest, the truest and the best that you are and have? (We do)

## VOWS

Do you understand that the vows you are about to take are as sacred as your own integrity? (We do)

Please face each other, join hands and repeat together after me:

I freely give you my devotion. I give it as joy – never to burden. I free you with my loyalty. I love you for what you are and even more, for what you mean to me. I give you the shelter of my strength and the constancy of my friendship. As God has given us love, so do I give to you.

\_\_\_\_\_, will you take \_\_\_\_\_, whose hands you hold, choosing him/her alone to be your partner, forsaking all others? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, respect him/her and be faithful to him/her? Will you share with him/her your vision of what is beautiful in life? Will you share with him/her your dreams, your feelings, your strength and all this good within you from this day forward? (I will)

\_\_\_\_\_, repeat after me: \_\_\_\_\_, I pledge myself to you, to be your partner. It is my vow to create for us a love that grows deeper with each passing day in honesty, faith and tenderness: a love that will enrich our lives separately and together. I pray that our home will be one of love and understanding, filled with laughter, healing and joy. You are my beloved, my friend. I give you my trust and all my tomorrows. I ask you to accept me as your life partner.

\_\_\_\_\_: (I do)

\_\_\_\_\_, will you take \_\_\_\_\_, whose hands you hold, choosing him/her alone to be your partner, forsaking all others? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, respect him/her and be faithful to him/her? Will you share with him/her your vision of what is beautiful in life? Will you share with him/her your dreams, your feelings, your strength and all this good within you from this day forward? (I will)

\_\_\_\_\_, repeat after me: \_\_\_\_\_, I pledge myself to you, to be your partner. It is my vow to create for us a love that grows deeper with each passing day in honesty, faith and tenderness: a love that will enrich our lives separately and together. I pray that our home will be one of love and understanding, filled with laughter, healing and joy. You are my beloved, my friend. I give you my trust and all my tomorrows. I ask you to accept me as your life partner.

\_\_\_\_\_: (I do)

Beside me are three candles. Two are lit, one is to be lighted. Through God's light and love, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_'s paths have crossed. As they each take a candle, it represents their previous pathways. They

now, together, light the central candle symbolizing their oneness with life, a life that radiates God's love as it blesses, inspires and guides them.

The candle is temporal and in a few hours will be gone. Their love, however, is eternal and grows brighter with each hour.

## EXCHANGE OF RINGS

What tokens do you give of your faithfulness?

(We give rings)

St. Augustine said: "The nature of God is like a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." Let these rings symbolize the nature of God in your lives. They are a symbol of the unbroken unity of love and are blessed that they who wear them may ever abide in peace, unity, love and happiness. As you give of your faith and love, understanding and compassion, each to the other, it shall be returned to unto you enhanced and multiplied. The act of giving and receiving rings reminds us that love itself is an act of giving and receiving the most that life has to offer. These golden circles are the natural symbols of enduring love. They represent an outward belief and trust in togetherness. They express an outward sign of spirit and commitment, signifying to all the sacred union of the two of you.

\_\_\_\_\_, repeat after me: \_\_\_\_\_, I offer you this ring as a symbol of my covenant of love and support. I ask that you take it and wear it and that all may know you are touched by my love. I love you for being all that you are and all that you are not and all that you can be. Of all the women/men I have met and know, I choose you to be my partner. I love you, adore you and will cherish you, all the days of my life.

With this ring I thee wed, in the warmth and witness of all present.

\_\_\_\_\_, repeat after me: \_\_\_\_\_, I offer you this ring as a symbol of my covenant of love and support. I ask that you take it and wear it and that all may know you are touched by my love. I love you for being all that you are and all that you are not and all that you can be. Of all the women/men I have met and know, I choose you to be my partner. I love you, adore you and will cherish you, all the days of my life.

With this ring I thee wed, in the warmth and witness of all present.

We wish happiness for each other and will strive to reach harmony, adjusting to the needs of the other while remaining true to ourselves. We will be patient, understanding, flexible, receptive, open and loving. We will be faithful because nothing can be stronger or more important than our love. We will be truthful so

we may always trust. We will be respectful, for each of us is a special human being. We have been blessed with much love and the capacity to share it. So we will share it with others who need it. We are friends and will remain so. We are partners and shall remain so. There awaits us all the joy of growing together in a life shared for years to come.

## THE CHARGE

And now I give to you this charge: that you love each other with an encompassing spectrum of love.

That there be expressions of love in words and actions as well as in comforting being.

That there be interest and nurturing concern for each other's happiness and well being.

That you be mindful of each other's needs with honest effort to fulfill:

To talk when the other needs to hear.

To listen when the other needs to be heard.

To touch when the other needs touching

To hold when the other needs to be held.

To understand solitude when the other needs to be alone.

That you make living space for each to be one's self fully expressed.

That you grow to understand and make provision for each other's humanness with both its strengths and frailties.

That you have tenderness in your strength, and yet find strength in tenderness itself.

That you open yourselves to that Divine Love which has woven the tapestry of your union.

That you honor the Infinite Weaver with faith, hope and love, these three – knowing the greatest of these is Love.

Do you accept the charge?

(We do)

## CLOSING

(Ask the audience to join hands and stand in a circle surrounding the minister and couple).

Hand in hand our spirits join, no self submerged, but merged to form a larger harmony, orchestrating music all can hear, creating poetry that others sense, though not as intensely as it feels to each of us. We came home to our separate selves to find the other waiting there and breathing each to each, became one breath, one unity in love – in light – in joy.

I affirm that you \_\_\_\_\_ and you \_\_\_\_\_, have witnessed your commitment before God and these present. May \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ who have entered into this spiritual union, always be

conscious of the indwelling Presence of the eternal Spirit. May they remain one with each other as they are one with God. May they rejoice in perfect love and peace together, and live always in peace and harmony.

Please join me in prayer: Father-Mother God, witness of every true union and sealer of this spiritual covenant, bless these children \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Be with them upon every step of their paths together, blessing them with every goodness and truth, purity and wisdom, prosperity and contentment. Illuminate their minds with Your Wisdom, their souls with Your Life, their hearts with Your Love. And so it is.

Inasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have agreed to the vows, under the authority of the United Church of Religious Science and the power vested in me as ordained minister, I joyfully pronounce you life partners.