

Civil Marriage Ceremony Text

The Purpose of the Gathering

Option 1 “Dearly Beloved”

Dearly beloved, we have gathered together in the presence of these guests to celebrate love in all its forms, but especially the love that makes a commitment between two people. This kind of love is not afraid to make promises, nor is it afraid to work and to struggle. This is the kind of love that creates an anchor between two people. It also anchors a community. We celebrate and applaud the love and the promises of **BRIDE'S FIRST NAME** and **GROOM'S FIRST NAME**. May they always be a living hope for the future, and a reminder of love for us all.

Option 2 “Wonderful Occasion”

Welcome. A wedding is such a wonderful occasion, filled with hopes, dreams, and excitement. We are here today to celebrate the love that **BRIDE'S FIRST NAME** and **GROOM'S FIRST NAME** have for each other, and to recognize and witness their decision to journey forward in their lives as marriage partners.

Publishing the Banns

Into this union [Full Legal Name] and [Full Legal Name] now come to be joined. If any of you present here can show just cause why they may not be [lawfully] joined, speak now, or forever hold your peace.

(Wait.)

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of these witnesses that if either of you know any reason why you may not be [lawfully] united [in marriage] you do now confess it.

(Wait.)

Statement of Free Consent & Fidelity (required) – “mini-vows”

Reverend Su says to each partner

[First & Middle], do you enter into this covenant of your own free will?
Will you love this [man], honor and keep [his] good name, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to [him] as long as you both shall live?

[Bride/Groom] answers to each:

I do, or I will.

Optional Reading(s)

Chosen by couple from the library on Rev Su's web site

Optional Homily

Whenever we attend a wedding celebration, we are given the opportunity to reexamine our own lives. Each one of us is a powerful creator in the dance of love and marriage. Each one of us, every moment of every day, has the choice to rededicate ourselves to one another or to withhold our love and caring.

Love, and loving, is powerful. It is simple. Each person gives their love to the other and each is the receiver of the other's love. Love requires us to be vulnerable to each other so that our love may flow back and forth through these open doors.

It is love that gives the deepest meaning to our lives. It is our highest calling, our greatest purpose, and our finest achievement.

Vows of the Partners

(Can be repeated, or converted to "I do" questions):

(Yo hago, Ich tue.)

Repeat after me:

Option 1 "Lifelong Partners"

I choose you, **NAME**, to be my lifelong partner, lover and best friend. I will always be faithful to you and be at your side to laugh with you in times of joy and comfort you in times of sorrow. Wherever our path leads us, it takes us together. I will encourage and support you, honor and love you. I will respect our differences and do my part to work through all our challenges. **NAME**, I'll be your safe haven and your true home. With purity of heart and love in my soul, I stand before our loved ones as your lifelong partner.

Option 2 “Traditional”:

ENGLISH

I, [Name], take you, [Name], to be my [lawfully] wedded [wife], to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, in surety and in doubt, to love and to cherish,

- until we are parted by death
- forever
- for as long as our love lasts.

[This is my solemn vow.]

ESPAÑOL

Yo, [Nombre], te elijo, [Nombre] para ser mi esposa/ marido legal, en buenas épocas y en malos momentos a partir de este día adelante, de amar y de acariciar

- hasta que muerte nos dividamos.
- por siempre.
- para mientras nuestro amor dure.

[Éste es mi voto solemne.]

DEUTSCH

Ich, [Name], nehme dir, [Name] um mein/e gesetzliche Mann/Frau, verspreche von diesem Tag an, dir zu lieben und zu ehren, in guten wie in schlechten Zeiten

- bis das der Tod wir scheidet
- für immer
- solange unsere Liebe dauert

[Dieses ist mein ernstes Versprechen.]

Exchange of Rings

Reverend Su says (optional):

All things turn in circles. The Earth spins in a circle and turns around the sun. Time turns in circles of birth and death and rebirth yet again. And, like all things, marriages move in cycles as well. By wearing a circle, you make a promise to remember always to keep faith in spring while enduring winter, to never lose hope that your love will always be renewed.

Continue with the Repeated Ring Vows:

Option 1 “Symbol”:

I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. With all that I am, and with all that I have, I honor you.

Option 2 “All of Me”:

With this Ring I thee wed, (here placing it upon the thumb)

With my body I thee adore, (here placing it upon the index finger)

With all my worldly goods I thee endow; (middle finger)

With all my intelligence, I thee champion. (little finger)

With all that I am and with all that I have, I thee honor. (here placing it upon her ring finger)

Optional Charge of the Assembled

Will you who have witnessed these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage/commitment?

The guests answer:

“We will.”

Pronouncement (required in legal marriage)

Now that [Full Legal Name] and [Full Legal Name] have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, and by the giving and receiving of rings, by the power vested in me by the State of North Carolina, I now pronounce that you are [united as] husband and wife!

First Kiss

Option 1 “Traditional”

You may now kiss the bride!

Option 2 “Humorous”

You're married now! So go ahead and kiss the bride, but please, do keep it dignified. ;-)

Smooch away!