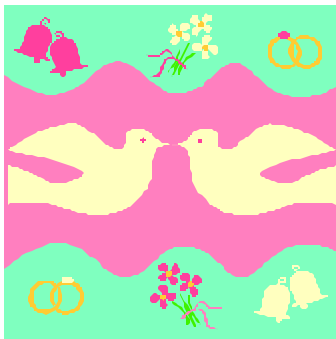


SERVICE OF MARRIAGE



**WRITTEN, COMPILED AND EDITED BY
REV. DR. GREGG R. ANDERSON
THE ASPEN CHAPEL**

INTRODUCTION

We are gathered here together to celebrate the union of this man, _____ and this woman, _____ in holy matrimony. As far back as our history records, two people have come together within a compact under society to fulfill their lives. Today it remains as an honored and esteemed institution of love and loyalty. It is a human symbol of devotion by two people who promise to give themselves to one another through all of life's challenges. But more than this it is a sacred symbol, for ordained by God and given to God's people. _____ and _____ you now stand before God to pledge your never ending trust to each other.

Be well assured that through your love in each other and your faith in God, your marriage will be blessed. How God's relationship is with us is how we should strive to be with one another. As God's covenant with us is to be our God and we to be God's people, so to shall you, _____ be _____ husband and you _____ be _____ wife.

PRESENTATION

It is this covenant that is realized from generation to generation. In this tradition, I would now like to ask those who have gone before _____ and _____ and have given them your patience, care,

understanding, and blessing, will you continue to do so for the future of their marriage?

COMMITMENT

At this moment _____ and _____ you now stand somewhat apart from all others. You stand within the sphere of your own love. Yet surrounding this sphere is the spirit of God's grace and compassion. Your natural union, tempered by centuries of tradition is duly sanctioned by God and God's prophets. Keep your commitment and protect this same spirit within the circle of the bond that you shall soon make. By so doing, you will make it your own and keep alive the nature of God's intention of enduring love.

COMMUNICATION

As God's creation has sustained us, so shall we support one another. Likewise, as God has revealed message and self to us, so also shall we share with one another. As a flower unfolds its petals to the purposes of the light, let us open ourselves to the respect of each person. We will ask to be forgiven when our own perspective blankets that of our loved one. We will ask to be helped to peel back the marks of closure so as to expose the halls of honesty. As God hears our humble prayers – let us listen to our lover's words.

CONSIDERATION

As God considers us each free and unique, so too shall you respect each other. Your real task is not to be alike, but to be together, not to mold, but to receive, and not to change the other, but to abide with one another. It is through this accent of acceptance that you will further the abolishment of separateness. It is through your giving that you will gain. The more you let each one be, the closer you shall become. As God loves us for who we are; so to shall you.

CHALLENGE

These are the commitments that will sustain you through the times of your

togetherness, especially the times that could become even too tender. These are the times when we might feel somewhat alone, a little afraid, a bit forsaken, partially misunderstood, or simply sad. To persevere and struggle through will be your aim. Do not let false idealism fray the true reality of your relationship. Any problem is not the problem, but what we will do with it. Meet the challenges that shall surely come before you, but meet them with mutual dignity and respect for both oneself and the other.

Remember, to be known in the way of love is a priceless treasure. With such a foundation of acceptance and understanding it will make it easier for us to live through our

failings and worries when they occur. It is love and loyalty alone which will prevail. It is out of this ongoing tension between separateness and union, that love whose incredible strength is equal only to its incredible fragility is born and reborn.

THE READING

First Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 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 have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

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 and endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, and I reasoned like a child, when I became an adult I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall understand fully even as I have been fully understood.

So faith, hope, love abide; these three, but the greatest of these is love.

THE READING

The Prophet by Gibran

You were born together and together you shall be forever more.

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

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

But 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 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.

FOUR WISHES

First of all, we wish for you a love that allows both of you to grow, that continues to give you zest for living, and that provides you with the energy to face the responsibilities of life.

Then we wish for you a home; not just a place of stone and wood, but an island of sanity and serenity in a sometimes frenzied world. We hope that your home can stand as a sanctum which seeks inner peace, social justice, and eternal truth. We hope that your home can encompass the beauty of nature; that it has within it the elements of simplicity, exuberance, silence, color and a concordance with all the rhythms of life.

We wish for you children; children who will not be mere reflections of yourselves, but will learn from you your best traits and will go forth to re-create the values you shall have instilled in them. We hope that you will gently guide your children, and yet give them the freedom to find their own way; you will always try to know when to stand by them and when to stand aside, all for their personal destinies.

Finally, we wish that at the end of your lives you will be able to say these two things to each other: Because you have loved me, you have given me faith in myself; and because I have seen the good in you, I have received from you a faith in humanity and in God's spirit.

THE PREPARATION

Today's celebration of human affection is the outward sign of a sacred and inward commitment which religion may consecrate and states may legalize, but which neither can create nor annul. Such union can only be created by your loving purpose, be maintained by God's abiding will and be renewed by transcending spirit. In this nature, _____ and _____ you stand before us.

THE QUESTION

_____ will you have _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her,

comfort her and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep you only unto her so long as you both shall live?

_____ will you have _____ to be your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep you only unto him so long as you both shall live?

THE VOW

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to

cherish, till death do us part, according to
God's holy ordinance; and thereto, I pledge
you my faith.

I, _____, take you, _____, to
be my husband, to have and to hold, from this
day forward, for better for worse, for richer for
poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to
cherish, till death do us part, according to
God's holy ordinance; and thereto, I pledge
you my faith.

THE EXCHANGE OF RING OR RINGS

May we always remember that the circle
is the symbol of eternal, never-ending love,
now symbolizing the binding in love of

_____ and _____ in
marriage. In offering this ring which marks your
desires to enter into the days of your
togetherness, repeat after me:

With this ring I marry you, and join my
life with yours, in the name of the
Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

THE SYMBOLS OF THE SERVICE

Candle lighting –

As together you now light the single
candle, while leaving the separate candles
burning, may it be known to all that you are two
individuals, each unique and different, yet
having the common commitment of sharing
yourselves, as you are, to each other. You see,

we must give ourselves in love, but we must not give ourselves away.

Wine sharing –

As together you now drink from this cup; so may you under God's guidance in sincere union and devotion to one another, draw contentment, comfort and felicity from the cup of life that is in store for you now that you are united in the holy wedlock of matrimony.

THE PRAYER

O God, on this special and beautiful day of days, when _____ and _____ affirm their love for each other, and continue their creative relationship together, we give you

our thanks for your blessings upon them. We thank you that with the passing of fleeting moments into years that their love for each other will increase and deepen. We, also, thank you that, under this setting, all of us here may come to know your love and your grace. As _____ and _____ grow in their understanding and love for each other, may they also grow in their appreciation of your spirit. And now we give you praise for all the joys of their life together. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THE REMEMBRANCE

We can derive no moral from love except the moral to love more deeply. And most importantly, we can expect nothing from love except all that love gives. We cannot choose what chances and changes may befall us, but we can shape the spirit with which we shall meet them.

THE PRONOUNCEMENT

For as much as _____ and _____ have consented together in Holy wedlock and have witnessed the same before God and God's company, and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by joining

hands and by giving and receiving rings (a ring), by the authority vested in me, but most of all, by the power of their own love; be it thereby acknowledged that they are husband and wife together.

THE DECLARATION

Now that you will feel no rain – for each of you will be shelter to the other. Now you will feel no cold – for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there is no more loneliness – for each of you will be a companion to the other. You are two bodies, but there is only one life before you. Go now to your dwelling place, to enter into the days of your life together. And

may your days be good and long upon the earth and in the heavens.

THE BENEDICTION

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His entire countenance upon you and most of all, give you peace.

Amen and Amen.

(Exchange of affection)

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

It gives me great pleasure to be the first to announce to you _____.