

The Ashcroft Wedding

Welcome

Let us join in celebration. We have been invited to share the joy of this day with _____ and _____. As their friends and families, we form a community to celebrate their love and witness their wedding.

In keeping with this natural setting, let us be reminded that weddings are also very natural. Marriage is really not an institution, but an innate progression of love between two people.

Address to Parents

Marriage not only unites bride and groom, but families as well. I would like to ask those who have especially gone before _____ and _____, their parents, who have given them your love, care and understanding in the past, will you continue to give them your love and now blessing all for their future in marriage? We will.

Address to Family and Friends

I would like to ask everyone here today, family and friends; will you all lend your support and blessing to _____ and _____? If so, please all answer, we will? "We will!"

Pastoral Prayer

Lord, we thank you for what we have – life, friends, family, the happiness of this moment and this relationship. Especially do we thank you for marriage – that in it we express our love to one another, that in it we enhance the personality of another and that in marriage each of us becomes a more complete and fulfilled person. We pray that you will guide _____ and _____ to realize their potential and their love.

May their love be as gentle as the whisper of the quaking aspen leaves, yet as strong and pure as a raging mountain stream. May it grow and blossom like brilliant summer wildflowers, and may it endure as these magnificent mountains that surround us. Please bless this marriage and may _____ and _____ always look to you and your Spirit for strength and guidance.

In keeping with the spiritual traditions of both _____ and _____, let us now say together the prayer Jesus has taught people to pray with they are in community.

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, and 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, power, glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Message on Marriage

Marriage is the joining of two lives, the physical, emotional and spiritual union of two human souls. Marriage is now the merging of two life stories. Two individuals, each of whom has a unique and life-shaping past, willingly choose to set aside the solitary exploration of them selves to discover who they are in the presence of one another.

The person we choose to marry is someone we love, but his or her depths and intricacies we will come to know only in the long unraveling of time. Yet, we know enough about our beloved to know that we will come to enjoy one another even more, and become even more of ourselves in one another's presence.

It is a journey of trust and friendship. To be married means we are not alone. There is now a parallel presence and spirit in all that we undertake. That is because in marrying, we promise to love not only as we feel right now, but also as we intend. In marriage we say not only, "I love you today," but also, "I will love you tomorrow; the next day, and always," Marriage is the bond that sets us free, free

to be and to love. Our souls are protected; our hearts have come home.

In simple terms, this means that because we are safe in marriage, we can risk; because we have been promised a future, we can take extraordinary chances. Because we know we are loved, we can step beyond our fears; we can transcend our insecurities. We can make mistakes knowing we will not be forsaken; take missteps knowing someone will be there to catch us. In the experience of putting another human being in a position of equal value to our own, we touch the web of transcendence, the presence of the eternal. Unconditional love dissolves all fears and shatters all limitations. It is this which is the true gift of marriage.

_____ and _____, you have shared many things with each other in the time you have already spent together. You have discussed your past and explored your future. You now know that your time together will be filled with many new and exciting experiences. You also know that there will be times of sadness as well as times of happiness, times of sickness as well as times of good health, times of disagreement and times of agreement. You know the faults of each other as well as the qualities of each other.

Through all of this, you are now committing yourselves to live your lives together. This celebration is your affirmation and reaffirmation each to the other. May God bless your covenant.

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 truly fulfill love's purpose. 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.

Scripture 1st 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.

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

Reading *I Love You* by Roy Croft

I love you, Not only for what you are, But for what I am When I
am with you.

I love you, Not only for what You have made of yourself, But for
what You are making of me.

I love you For the part of me That you bring out;

I love you For putting your hand Into my heaped-up heart And
passing over All the foolish, weak things That you can't help
Dimly seeing there, And for drawing out

Into the light All the beautiful belongings That no one else had
looked Quite far enough to find

I love you because you Are helping me to make Of the lumber of
my life Not a tavern

But a temple; Out of the works Of my every day Not a reproach
But a song.

I love you Because you have done More than any creed Could
have done To make me good And more than any fate Could have
done To make me happy. You have done it

Without a touch, Without a word, Without a sign. You have done it
By being yourself.

Perhaps that is what Being a friend means, After all. I love you.

Musical Interlude

Challenge

_____ and _____, I charge you with the creative challenge to keep alive the wonder of marriage; to grow, to change, to maintain the capacity for wonder, for spontaneity, for humor. May you remain flexible, warm, and sensitive. I charge you to give fully, to show your real feelings, to save time for each other, no matter what demands are made upon your day. I encourage you to see the meaning of life through the changing prism of your love; to nurture each to fullness and wholeness, and in learning to love each other more deeply, learn to also love the creation in which the mystery of your love has happened.

Preparation

As you are about to make your vows of marriage each to the other know that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. No other ties are more tender, no other vows more sacred than these you now make. So you are now called upon to live together with love and deep friendship; each one being for the well being of the other, so that your life together will be full of joy and the home which you will establish may abide in God's peace now and forever more.

Question

Will you _____, take _____, to be your wife?

And from this time onward, be her faithful husband? Will you promise to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond? In faith and commitment will you share with her all that is to come and all that is to be?

Will you _____, take _____, to be your

husband? And from this time onward, be his faithful wife?

Will you promise to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond? In faith and commitment will you share with him all that is to come and that is to be?

Vows of Marriage

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife; and I promise to stand beside you and with you always; in times of celebration and in times of sadness; in times of pleasure and in times of pain; in times of health and in times of illness; I will live with you and love you always.

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my husband; and I promise to stand beside you and with you always; in times of celebration and in times of sadness; in times of pleasure and in times of pain; in times of health and in times of illness; I will live with you and love you always.

Ring Vows

O Lord, we ask your blessing upon these rings and that they who give them and wear them may abide in your peace, now and forever more. Amen.

Groom

With this ring, I give you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. May God bless you always. May we walk together through all things. May you feel deeply loved, for indeed you are. May you always see your innocence in my eyes. With this ring, I give you my heart. I have no greater gift to give. I promise I shall do my best. I shall always try.

Bride

With this ring, I give to you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home. May God bless you always. May we walk together through all things. May you feel deeply loved, for indeed you are. May you always see your innocence in my eyes. With this ring, I give you my heart. I have no greater gift to give. I promise I shall do my best. I shall always try.

Unity Candle

And now the candles of family and faith and covenant. The two side candles have been lit by your mothers representing the love of your families and your lives to this moment.

These lights represent the wisdom and grace they have received from parents and family. As they take these candles they light the unity candle symbolizing the union and unity of their lives. As this one light burns undivided, so shall their love be one with God and as a symbol of your common commitment of sharing your selves, as you are, each to the other, and now in the single bond of marriage.

The lighting of the center candle represents not only the union of (bride) and (groom) in marriage, but also the unity formed in this new family, in which your lives will now shine as one."

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 your children if they shall be part of your future, that they 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 have and shall continue to instill in them. We hope that you will gently guide them, 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.

Words of Celebration

Let us celebrate life with **RESPECT** –

By giving each other mutual regard in all endeavors and respecting special gifts each and everyone brings to the family.

Let us celebrate life with **TRUST** – believing in our love even in darkest times. Let us search for understanding of whatever troubles us and, with trust and courage, work together to find solutions.

Let us celebrate life with **CONFIDENCE** – by freeing each other to new and different worlds. Let the marriage be steadfast enough to take root and yet free enough to soar.

Let us celebrate life with **GIVING** – without thought of return, because we are not impoverished by the love we give, but made richer.

Let us celebrate life with **UNDERSTANDING** – not only in words, but in unspoken ways. A tender touch, a smile, can often say so much more than words.

Let us celebrate life with **FORGIVENESS** – overlooking our human flaws, not expecting perfection in each other or in ourselves. And let us gain wisdom from the mistakes we make.

Let us celebrate life with **SHARING** – stepping into the world together, expanding our circle of love to include

friends, family, and others. Let our love radiate outward,
touching the lives of all we meet.

Let us celebrate life with **QUIETNESS** – setting aside time
together for peaceful soul-searching, spiritual exploration,
prayer and meditation, letting the annoyances of the day slip
away.

Pronouncement

And so, _____ and _____, by the
authority vested in me by the church of God and the state of
Colorado, but much more important, by the fact that we all
believe in the power of your own love and agreement this
day, the look of love in your eyes, and the seriousness with
which you make this commitment; and because I believe my
faith is shared by others gathered here, it is my honor and
my delight to now pronounce you husband and wife, now
and forever more. Amen. (Exchange of Affection)

Benediction: "Irish Blessing"

May the road rise to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

And the rains fall softly upon your field.

May the hand of a friend always be near.

And until we meet again, May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Pastoral Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Exchange of Affection

Announcement

It gives me great pleasure to be the first to announce
_____ and _____ as husband and wife.