

Prelude Music

Introduction

Dear family and friends, it is my pleasure to extend to each of you a very warm welcome on behalf of Jennifer and Brad. My name is Martin Frith. I am an Officiant with the Humanist Association of Canada.

A few announcements before we begin- although we live in a wired age, if you happen to have a cell phone or other electronic devices, it will be appreciated if they are tuned off during the ceremony.

After the recessional, the Jennifer and Brad and their attendants will be having pictures taken. They will be pleased to greet all of you when they return to the cocktail party. Brad and Jennifer ask family members to stay nearby, so you are available for photographs as well.

This is a very happy day and you too have a part to play in the formal proceedings. You will be asked to signify your support with a vigorous and rousing response. So when I direct the question to all of you and gesture like this (gesture), that's your cue to answer in one hearty voice. ***We will!!!***

Finally, and most importantly, a word about the ceremony. Just as Jennifer and Brad have chosen each other from among the world's multitudes, they have also carefully chosen and designed each element of this ceremony, including their vows. This ceremony truly is a labour of their love.

They thank you very much for your love and your presence here today.

Procession

Opening Words

Dear friends and families! We are gathered here today as witnesses to the marriage of Jennifer and Brad. Their decision to enter into this union has not been taken unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, lovingly and with honesty.

Marriage is an honourable estate symbolizing the companionship, help and comfort a man and a woman may give to one another, both in good times and in bad. It is the partners' mutual love and commitment that will strengthen their relationship and help them to understand their relationship to the world around them.

You are the people with whom they want to share their joy as they enter into marriage and they hope that in the years ahead your love will be a continuous source of strength for them. As we celebrate their union, let us bless them and their bond of love.

Declaration of Intentions

Jennifer and Brad, do you come with joy and anticipation to this moment when you will be legally joined in marriage? Do you pledge to treat each other with kindness, respect and compassion, to listen to each other and to speak to each other with honesty, today and always? Reply: We do.

Recognition of the Gathered Company

To parents:

Mr. and Mrs. ** (Jennifer) and Dr. and Mrs. ** (Brad); Jennifer and Brad come out of your family circles. They are living expressions of your love; they have been nurtured in your affections and guided by your personal counsel.

It is now their desire to broaden their family circles, maintaining the heritage with which you have provided them. They will explore new directions, but keep also the tried and tested lessons of their earlier years.

As you have brought Jennifer and Brad thus far in life, they ask for your affectionate blessings upon them, for the future they have chosen.

Mr. and Mrs. ** (J), do you give your blessing? Reply: We Do.

Dr. and Mrs. ** (B), do you give your blessing? Reply: We Do.

To the gathering of families and friends

Each of you has been invited here because you are a special person in the lives of Jennifer and Brad. You have come to celebrate with them and to witness their commitment to one another. Will you, their friends and family, do all in your power to support this couple now, and in the years ahead? We will.

Words to the Couple

You have come to love each other deeply and sincerely. That love has given you the desire to unite in marriage and to establish a home together. In this ceremony, you are dedicating yourselves to give happiness and well-being, each to the other. Your marriage is an act of trust. It must not be based on the vain hope of what the other will do or will not do, might become or might not become. It must be based on the firm belief in your own individual worth and that of the other. Your pledge today is an expression of your devotion. The words spoken in this ceremony will validate your marriage only if your love and commitment to one another are strong enough to sustain it. Today you announce your love for each other in the presence of families and friends. We rejoice with you and we wish you well.

Reading

What marriage ceremony would be complete without some inspired words on love and marriage? Brad and Jennifer have chosen an excerpt from **Union by Robert Fulghum**

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks - all those sentences that began with "When we're married" and continued with "I will and you will and we will"- those late night talks that included "someday" and "somehow" and "maybe"- and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart.

All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding. The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, "You know all those things we've promised and hoped and dreamed- well, I meant it all, every word."

Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another- acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you.

For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this- is my husband, this- is my wife.

Betrothal

Brad, do you take Jennifer to be your wife through all of the days of your life, to love her and to cherish her, to help her and to honour her, and to give her understanding and comfort in whatever the future may bring in confidence that together you are responsible for your destiny. Reply: I do

Jennifer, do you take Brad to be your husband through all of the days of your life, to love him and to cherish him, to help him and to honour him, and to give him understanding and comfort in whatever the future may bring in confidence that together you are responsible for your destiny. Reply: I do

Exchange of Vows

**** Jennifer & Brad are invited to face each other and join hands****

I, Brad, take you, Jennifer, 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; until death do us part.

I, Jennifer, take you, Brad, 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; until death do us part.

Exchange of Rings

The ring is the symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Love freely given has no giver and no receiver - for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May your rings always call to mind the freedom and the power of this love!

As the ring is placed on the finger, each party says:

Jennifer / Brad with this ring I marry you and I promise to be true for so long as we both shall live.

Signing of the Register and License (*Music*)

Family and friends, before the pronouncement Jennifer and Brad and their witnesses Cynthia and Ian will take a few moments to sign the license and register.

Ceremony of the Wine Cup

The years of life are as a cup of wine, poured out for you to drink. The cup contains within it the sweet wine of happiness, joy, hope and delight. The same cup, at times, holds the bitter wine of disappointment, sorrow, grief and despair. Those who drink deeply of life invite the full range of experiences. This cup is symbolic of the pledges you have made to one another to share together the fullness of life.

As you drink from this cup you acknowledge to one another that your lives, until this moment separate, have become one vessel into which all your sorrows and joys, all your hopes and fears, all your dreams and dreads will be poured, and from which you will find mutual sustenance.

Many days you will sit at the same table and eat and drink together. Drink now, and may the cup of your life together be sweet and full to overflowing.

Pronouncement

No single event marks a marriage. A marriage is the freely chosen union of two individuals. It is both culmination and commencement of a lifetime of love. Through your statement of common spirit and the exchange of rings, you have done what in truth neither state nor church can do, you have joined yourselves in a shared destiny.

Jennifer and Brad, for as much as you have pledged yourselves to each other in the presence of this company, I do now, by virtue of the authority vested in me pronounce you husband and wife.

Nuptial Kiss

Closing Words (Invite guests to stand)

Jennifer and Brad, may you establish a home of warmth and understanding; may your lives be filled with peace and beauty; may you always share with one another your truth and your love.

Intro Couple to the Gathering

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present to you, Mr. and Mrs. Doe!

Recessional: The Wedding March