

Pitluck-Schmitt Wedding Ceremony



The order of service:

- A. Processional
 - 1) Prelude
 - 2) Seating of the Families
 - 3) Entrance of the Groom
 - 4) Procession of the Wedding Party
 - 5) Procession of the Bride
- B. Opening
 - 1) Opening Words
 - 2) Blessing of the Couple
 - 3) Lighting of the Chalice
 - 4) Declaration of Intent
- C. Readings and Sermon
 - 1) First Reading – *Gift from the Sea 1*
 - 2) Choral Hymn – *You are the New Day*
 - 3) Second Reading – *Gift from the Sea 2*
 - 4) Wedding Message
- D. Marriage Ceremony
 - 1) Exchange of Vows
 - 2) Exchange of Rings
 - 3) Declaration of Marriage
 - 4) [Congregational SONG?]
- E. Closing
 - 1) Blessing
 - 2) Extinguishing of the Chalice
 - 3) Introduction of the Couple
- F. Recessional

A. Processional

B. Opening (*wedding party at altar*)

- 1) **Opening Words:** “Friends and family, we are assembled here together to join Michael and Meagan in marriage. They have desired your presence on this momentous day, as witness to the happiness which they have found together, and to the pledge which they will now make, each to the other. We rejoice with them that out of the entire world they have found each other, and that by choosing to share their life together, they seek to find deeper meaning and richness of human life. Meagan and Michael, you are each charged to enter into this union with honesty, integrity, and wholeness of spirit. Do you accept this charge?”

“WE DO.” (Meagan & Michael)

- 2) **Congregational Blessing of the Couple:** “Do all of you, the families and friends of **Meagan** and **Michael**, bestow your blessings on their union?”

“WE DO.” (Congregation)

“Will you who witness these pledges do your utmost to uphold this marriage?”

“WE WILL.” (Congregation)

- 3) **Lighting of the Chalice:** “As is traditional in all Unitarian Universalists services, we shall now begin this wedding ceremony with the lighting of the chalice. The sacred bond of matrimony is a gift of love and hope uniting two people in a relationship unique and blessed. We light our chalice in honor of the love that burns between Meagan and Michael.”

- 4) **Declaration of Intent:** “**Michael**, do you believe your love for **Meagan** is deep, rich and lasting enough to enable you to build a worthwhile life together?”

“I DO.” (Michael)

“Will you take **Meagan** to be your wedded wife, to love and to cherish, to honor and comfort, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in hardship and in ease, to have and to hold from this day forth?”

“I WILL.” (Michael)

“**Meagan**, do you believe your love for **Michael** is deep, rich and lasting enough to enable you to build a worthwhile life together?”

“I DO.” (Meagan)

“Will you take **Michael** to be your wedded husband, to love and to cherish, to honor and comfort, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in hardship and in ease, to have and to hold from this day forth?”

“I WILL.” (Meagan)

C. Readings and Sermon (*wedding part sits*)

- 1) **First Reading, read by TBD Anne Morrow Lindbergh – Gift from the Sea**

“A passage from Gift from the Sea, by Anne Morrow Lindbergh”

“A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on some of the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but gay and swift and free. [...] To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and

freeze the movement, to check the endlessly changing beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand, only the barest touch is assigned. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back - it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it.”

“The joy of such a pattern is not only the joy of creation or the joy of participation, it is also the joy of living in the moment. Lightness of touch and living in the moment are intertwined. One cannot dance well unless one is completely in time with the music, not leaning back to the last step or pressing forward to the next one, but poised directly on the present step as it comes. Perfect poise on the beat is what gives good dancing its sense of ease, of timelessness, of the eternal. “

2) **Choral Hymn** – *“You are the New Day”*

3) **Second Reading:** *Anne Morrow Lindbergh – Gift from the Sea*

“But how does one learn this technique of the dance? Why is it so difficult? What makes us hesitate and stumble? It is fear, I think, that makes one cling nostalgically to the last moment or clutch greedily toward the next. [...] [Fear] can only be exorcised by its opposite, love. When the heart is flooded with love there is no room in it for fear, for doubt, for hesitation. And it is this lack of fear that makes for the dance. When each partner loves so completely that he has forgotten to ask himself whether or not he is loved in return; when he only knows that he loves and is moving to its music – then, and then only, are two people able to dance perfectly in tune to the same rhythm.”

“[Now,] When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility.[...] And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. [...] We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern. [...]”

“Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for

what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides.”

4) **Wedding Message, Rev Barbara**

Meagan and Mike: marriage is indeed like a dance, and like a dance, the qualities that marriage fosters are best done not alone but with a partner. That is, the fullest exploration of meaning in life is done in the company of others, and some of the most intimate and ultimate moments in life best accomplished with one particular partner. And as in dancing, energized by the support and energy and inspiration of other dancers on the floor, so in marriage the networks of family and friends from each of you who have come together today for this celebration and who will remain now the family and friends you hold in common, these networks create the bigger dance that this journey of life is all about.

Some words by A. Powell Davies, who many of you know as the minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington DC and in many ways the grandfather of this network of UU churches that Reston UU is part of, offered these words about marriage, which might just as well be addressed to those who dance together:

When two individuals meet, so do two private worlds. None of our private worlds is big enough for us to live a wholesome life in. We need the wider world of joy and wonder, of purpose and venture, of toil and tears. What are we, any of us, but strangers and sojourners forlornly wandering through the nighttime, until we draw together and find the meaning of our lives in one another, dissolving our fears in each other's courage, making music together, and lighting torches to guide us through the dark? We belong together. Love is what we need. To love and to be loved. Let our hearts be open and what we would receive from others, let us give. For what is given, still remains to bless the giver, when the gift is love.

I remind you to remember to give love, in all its manifestations in your life together, even if there are times when it does not seem apparent that it is love that is called for. Give love because the gift of love to another is really a means of enriching the life of the giver as much as of the receiver. Give love, so to experience a widening of each of your hearts. Give love,

and the dance of your marriage can continue to flourish, expand, and prosper. Just as in the dance, Leading and following, following and leading, in marriage, exploring this journey of life and love together.

D. Marriage Ceremony (*wedding party stands*)

1) Exchange of Vows

“I, **Michael**, take thee, **Meagan**, to be my wedded 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 cherish, until death do us part.” (Michael)

“I, **Meagan**, take thee, **Michael**, to be my wedded 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 cherish, until death do us part.” (Meagan)

2) Exchange of Rings:

“These rings are but golden, round objects, pieces of jewelry which have been given symbolic meaning. They traditionally have represented unity, an unbroken circle of never-ending loyalty and devotion. Until they are worn, though, they have no real meaning beyond what they are. Lying in my hand, they represent a possibility... that they might be worn. As they are, they are not quite complete but need something to fill the empty place inside each ring. As you give these rings to each other and place them on your hands, what was formerly empty space becomes meaning-full, just as this marriage enhances the meaning and value of your lives.”

“Meagan, I give you this ring, as a symbol of my love, my faith in our strength together, and my covenant to learn and grow with you.” (Michael)

“Michael, I give you this ring, as a symbol of my love, my faith in our strength together, and my covenant to learn and grow with you.” (Meagan)

3) Declaration of Marriage: May it be known that now, as **Meagan** and **Michael** have publically consented together in marriage, declaring their love for one another in front of this

company of loved ones, by the power vested in me by the State of **Virginia**, I hereby declare that they are husband and wife.

4) **Closing**

5) **Blessing:**

“LET US PRAY: In this special moment, we pause to give thanks for all the rich experiences of life that have brought **Meagan** and **Michael** together. We are grateful for those who have loved them and nurtured them and pointed them along life’s way. We are grateful that within them is the dream of an abundant love and the resources to use that love in creating a home that shall endure and shed its peace on them and all who seek its shelter with them. May they have made their promises to each other with the deepest insight into their meaning and with their fullest sincerity. May they continue to strengthen each other in all labor, minister to each other in all sorrow, share with each other in all gladness, and companion each other in all the living of their days. Wherever changing fortune may call them may thy blessing rest upon them. May this be but the beginning of a relationship that will grow and mature with each passing year until the latter days become even more wonderful than the first. Amen.”

“AMEN.”

“**Michael** and **Meagan**, now 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. To you and all present here, may the love in your hearts give you joy, may the greatness of life bring you peace, and may your days be good, and your lives be long upon the earth.”

6) **Extinguishing of the Chalice:** “We extinguish this flame, but not the fire of passion, the light of joy or the warmth of compassion. These we carry in our hearts as we surround **Michael** and **Meagan** as a loving community supportive of their union.”

7) **Introduction of the Couple:** “Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great joy I introduce to you for the first time, Mr. Schmitt and Mrs. Pitluck-Schmitt!”