*Note: The couple have asked*

*To change the names in this sample*

*To protect their privacy.*

“Steve & Colin”

Ceremony of Marriage

Niagara Falls

October 11, 2012

**Opening Words & Welcome**

We are gathered here on this crisp fall afternoon to celebrate the miracle of love and of new beginnings. Colin and Steve, welcome to your special day. Take a deep breath. Take a moment to look at each other. Allow yourselves to relax and smile. Trust and celebrate the love that brings you both here today, to your official, legal ceremony.

**Invocation**

Marriage is an act as ancient as the history of the human race and as fresh as the start of each new morning. Marriage is caught up in the mystery of all that is truly meaningful and holy in life. There is something sacred about the committed love and partnership between two people.

In the name of all that is sacred and holy, we ask for blessings for Steve and Colin, today, and every day, as they enter joyfully into their married lives together. Let the love of family and friends surround their days and may our collective prayers bless and sanctify the holiness of this wedded union. Amen.

**Readings**

Our first reading is a poem by e.e. cummings,

**LOVE IS A PLACE**

love is a place

& through this place of

love move

(with brightness of peace)

all places

yes is a world

& in this world of

yes live

(skilfully curled)

all worlds

**Colin will now read a poem he wrote for Steve**

Like a roller-coaster from my youth

You took me up and down.

You swung me around and placed me

Gently within your hand.

Nature itself raged on

Around you and I,

You an eye in the storm

And I with you in that tender moment

When you squeezed tighter.

"Thank you," you said to my guilty pleasure.

Moment after moment,

Each frame memorialized and replayed:

Running from you in the rain;

That empassioned kiss under your umbrella

Which stopped my shiver and flushed my heart with warmth;

Your head softly resting in my lap.

4 a.m. could only have come too fast.

From four hours past bedtime

To four years together,

Our love has taken us to this, to here.

Filled I am with boundless anticipation

To see where we may find ourselves

In the new Life to come.

To you I return the sentiment:

"Thank you."

**Declaration of Intentions**

The meaning of marriage begins in the giving of words. You cannot be joined together without giving your word to one another. Let us begin with each of you declaring your intent to be married. This is the “I do” part.

Colin, do you come here of your own free will, to have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live? If so, please answer “I do.”

Steve, do you come here of your own free will, to have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live? If so, please answer “I do.”

Are you now prepared to enter into this covenant of love?

Please turn now and face one another and join hands, and in doing so, join hearts as well.

**Vows**

May I have the rings please? These rings, made of precious metal, will endure forever. A ring is a symbol of unity. Its round form symbolizes the unbroken circle of love, for love freely given has no beginning and no end. As you wear these rings, let them be an enduring symbol of your love and your covenant with one another, to create a marriage that is whole and unbroken, a partnership to last a lifetime.

Steve, please take this ring, take Colin’s left hand in your hands, look directly at Colin and please repeat after me:

I, Steve, promise you, Colin, that I will remain honest and faithful to

you, love you and care for you, and treat you always as my equal, my

husband, for the rest of our lives.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love.

Colin, please take this ring, and take Steve’s left hand in your hands, look directly at Steve and please repeat after me:

I, Colin, promise you that, as your husband, I will speak to you in pure honesty, as if you were one with my own thoughts; I will respect you as an equal in every way, and support you in all your endeavors. I will be with you to share every hardship, and every triumph; every sorrow and every joy; every moment that life hands us on our journey. I will let you be yourself, and cherish every moment of it; for I love you and everything you are, and will love you always.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love.

**Meditation/Reflection**

May the spirit of true and abiding love dwell in the hearts of Steve and Colin, who have entered into this covenant of marriage.  May each grow ever nearer to the other and see life from the other's point of view.  May they both be tolerant and large-minded, kind and sympathetic, considerate of each other and forgiving of faults.

May we all be reminded that love is more than a noun –

At its deepest calling, love is a verb –

Our love for another person is reflected as much

in the things we do

As in what we say.

Love is as much about our actions –

our behavior towards one another

as it is about our feelings for one another.

I’d like to share a few reflections about love in action,

taken from this poem,

**The Art of a Good Marriage by Wilfred Arian Peterson**

A good marriage must be created.

It is being never too old to hold hands,

It is remembering to say “I love you” at least once a day,

It is never going to sleep angry,

It is standing together and facing the world,

It is speaking words of appreciation,

It is not looking for or expecting perfection in one another.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget,

It is not only marrying the right person,

It is being the right partner.

May the inspiration of this hour remain as a sacred memory to Steve and Colin and help strengthen them in times of difficulty.  We hope that the deep bonds which form between two souls may grow stronger with the passing of time, bringing into being that mysterious oneness that appears when two whole, mature individuals meet at a place deeper than love.

**Pronouncement**

Out of the tangled world, two souls have found one another.  They have courted, laughed, cried, and grown from being alone to being together, as one.

Steve and Colin, as you have openly and honestly pledged yourselves to one another in the covenant of marriage before these witnesses,

By the power vested in me by the State of New York,

It is my great honor and tremendous privilege

To now pronounce you legally married!

It is an ancient and honorable custom to seal all such covenants with a kiss. You may kiss your spouse!

**Benediction**

*In closing, hear the words of this*

**Wedding Blessing**

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.

Now you will feel no loneliness.

For each of you will be companionship to the other.

Now you are two persons.
But there is only one life before you.

May beauty and blessings surround you

both in the journey ahead

And through all your years.

May happiness be your companion

And your days be good and long upon the earth.

Amen.