



WEDDING CEREMONY

For

KAREN & STEVE



SAMPLE SCRIPT



Ceremony composed and conducted by:

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a member of

The Humanist Society of Scotland.



WEDDING DAY

This day of days
Your separate ways
Become one

This ring, this vow
Tell you that now
A new life's begun.

Two roads converging
Then, finally merging
Under the sun.

Good luck holding
A future unfolding
That can't be undone.

Adrian Lomas



DP: Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the gardens of Platform 22 on this special day for the wedding of Karen Jones and Steve Smith. My name is David Pattullo, I am a registered celebrant of the Humanist Society of Scotland and on behalf of Karen and Steve and their families, I'd like to thank you all for being here to celebrate their marriage. Before we start I would like to remind everyone to turn off their mobile phones and say that whilst Karen and Steve are very happy for you to take photos during the ceremony there will be a formal opportunity for photographs later on as well.

Although this is a formal occasion it will hopefully be carried out in an informal atmosphere. You have been given a comprehensive Order of Ceremony as you arrived which you can use to follow what is going to happen here today and join in when required!

DP: Now, would you please stand to welcome the bride and groom...

KAREN & STEVE ENTER AND STAND AT END OF AISLE

DP: You will no doubt gather that this is not a traditional wedding ceremony though it incorporates traditions and rituals from several sources that you may recognise. To begin the ceremony and to mark this new beginning for Steve and Karen I would like to symbolically cleanse the ceremonial space by sweeping round it with this birch besom, a Celtic tradition....

DAVID SWEEPS AROUND THE CIRCLE

DP: Steve and Karen would you please come forward and join me within this circle...

KAREN AND STEVE ENTER CIRCLE

DP: Thank you. Please be seated. Steve and Karen first met some five years ago when they both joined the IT department of ACE Systems in Aberdeen. That said, it was a full year before they struck up a relationship this came about during a team building weekend at Inchnadamph where they discovered a shared love of the great outdoors and a passion for Munro bagging! Once their romance had been kindled it was not long before they were inseparable and for the last three years they have been living together at their home in the village. Having now lived together for some time during which their love and friendship have come to be confirmed. As well as a shared love of the great outdoors Steve and Karen also found common ground in their musical tastes and it was whilst at the Glastonbury Festival last year that Steve plucked up the courage to propose to Karen, indeed today marks the anniversary of that momentous occasion!

Steve and Karen have chosen a Humanist wedding ceremony because they believe that this best represents how they think and feel. Humanists believe that every society needs a moral code if people are to live together in harmony, and that morality comes from within ourselves. It is about unselfishness, kindness and consideration towards others, about accepting responsibility for our own lives, whilst recognising our responsibility to the whole world. Steve and Karen hope that those of you who hold different beliefs will see the similarities as well as the differences between this and other ceremonies.

Steve and Karen wanted to choose the form of words and declarations they make to each other, to ensure a personal and memorable occasion for everyone. Above all, they want you, whatever your beliefs, to feel comfortable about the proceedings and by being here to help give reality and significance to the ceremony which expresses their marriage. They want to enter a committed relationship with a meaningful ceremony that accords with their sincere beliefs. They see this type of ceremony, composed especially for this occasion, as being the perfect opportunity to express to those they love this commitment and joy at being with each other. They have thought deeply about their marriage and about the ideals and principles that are important to them. Together they chose the words, readings and music which they wished their ceremony to contain.

For Steve and Karen, marriage is a partnership between equals - freely and openly undertaken. Both of them wish this to be a sincere, dignified and joyous celebration - all of which is in the Humanist tradition of ceremonies. As well as these elements, there will be a handfasting, an exchange of rings and the signing of marriage schedule. You will all be asked for your participation at some parts of the ceremony!

That very nicely leads me into our first piece of music and I would ask you to stand and sing together the traditional Scottish song “Mhari’s Wedding”, the words are printed in your Order of Ceremony....

MHARI’S WEDDING

DP: You might be wondering why you are here, indeed why any of us are here, instead of at Banchory Registry Office, for instance. As it happens Steve and Karen could have stood in the kitchen at home on any rainy Thursday night and said most of what they are going to say today but, crucially, you would not have been there. Steve and Karen want to say something very special today and they want to say it in front of you! You might think that you are here because of them but in truth they are here because of you. They want and need you to share this with them. You are not here as an audience, your presence here is an intimate part of this ceremony. You are not here merely to listen to recited words; you are to listen to the taking of solemn vows and in years to come, in good times or bad, they will look to you to remember this day and remind them of it and the hope for the future that it promises. You are not here to watch a show; you are here to witness their rite of passage and be part of the story of their lives. To begin this process I would like to invite Steve’s father, Fred, to come forward and read the poem “Witness”....

FRED ENTERS THE CIRCLE

Fred: We have been called together as witnesses
to the happiness this couple
has found together
and to the pledge which they will now make
each to the other
for the mutual service of their common life.

We rejoice with them
That out of all the world
They have found each other.
And that they will henceforth find the deeper
Meaning and richness of human life
In sharing it with each other.

Taught by our own joys,
By our own sorrows,
Even by our own failures,
We remind them
That in marriage
As in life
Whosoever insists upon saving his lesser goods
and his little self
shall miss what is greater,

DP: Although this is a happy day there is for Karen one witness who cannot be here today namely her dad, William, who sadly passed away eighteen months ago. It is traditionally the father of the bride who gives her away and William’s presence on this day is greatly missed. However, the memory of his life and all that he means to Karen and her family is very much here today and to symbolise that I would now invite Karen to light this candle....

KAREN LIGHTS CANDLE

DP: We have come together here in celebration of the joining together of Steve and Karen. There are many things to say about marriage. Much wisdom concerning the joining together of two souls has come our way through all paths of belief, and from many cultures. With each union, more knowledge is gained and more wisdom gathered. Though we are unable to give all this knowledge to these two who stand before us, we can hope to leave with them the knowledge of love and its strengths and the anticipation of the wisdom that comes with time. That said, giving advice to others on how to conduct themselves is always fraught with dangers, however, there are some things that are universally applicable. Karen’s mother Margaret will now

read the passage "The Art of Marriage" which contains sound advice for us all!

Margaret: A good marriage must be created.
In marriage the little things are the big things,
It is never being 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 having a mutual sense of values and common objectives,
It is standing together to face the world,
It is forming a circle of love that gather in the whole family,
It is the common search for the good and the beautiful,
It is not only marrying the right person,
It is being the right partner.

DP: We may now proceed to the wedding ceremony itself. Others would ask, at this time, who gives the bride in marriage, but Woman is not property to be bought and sold, given and taken. We ask simply if she comes of her own will so I say to you, "Karen, is it true that you come here today of your own free will and accord?"

Karen: Yes, it is true.

DP: And by the same token I ask you Steve, "Is it true that you come here today of your own free will?"

Steve: Yes it is true.

DP: Please join hands and listen to that which I am about to say. Above you are the stars, below you are the stones, as time passes, remember, like a stone, your love should be firm; like a star, your love should be constant. Let the powers of the mind and of the intellect guide you in your marriage, let the strength of your wills bind you together, let the power of love and desire make you happy, and the strength of your dedication make you inseparable. Be close, but not too close. Possess one another, yet be understanding. Have patience with one another, for storms will come, but they will pass quickly. Be free in giving affection and warmth and have no fear.

The handfasting of a couple is another old Celtic tradition and to assist me in this I would like Karen's son Cameron to come forward. Cameron will you now bind the hands off Mummy and Steve This cord now represents the binding in eternity of two life forces.

CAMERON BINDS HANDS (*Cameron will have cord in his sporran*)

David: Steve and Karen will now state their intentions for their future together. Steve, would you please make your declarations to Karen.

Steve: Karen, you have brought into my life love, laughter and stability; for which I am deeply thankful.

I am truly happy that you have agreed to marry me.

In the presence of our families and friends, I undertake that I shall do my utmost to love, cherish and respect you.

With you at my side it no longer seems likely that I will be able to have Victor Meldrew as a role model.

David: Karen, would you please make your declarations to Steve.

Karen: Steve, thank you for being the light at the end of a particularly long tunnel!

I promise to be your best friend, to respect your individuality, and I will aim to understand any differences between us.

Above all, I will love you, my wish being to bring you happiness and laughter throughout our lives together.

Perhaps eventually I may even become more tolerant of your taste in music!

DP: I will now ask Steve and Karen to accept one another as husband and wife by repeating the required declarations after me:

Steve, please make this declaration to Karen: "I sincerely declare that I Steven Smith accept you Karen Jones as my lawful wedded wife".

Steve: I sincerely declare that I Steven Smith accept you Karen Jones as my lawful wedded wife.

DP: Karen, please make this declaration to Steve: "I sincerely declare that I Karen Jones accept you Steven Smith as my lawful wedded husband".

Karen: I sincerely declare that I Karen Jones accept you Steven Smith as my lawful wedded husband.

The knots of this binding are not formed by the cords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the cords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union. It is now time for you to exchange rings and make your vows and I call on Graham and Linda to bring forward the rings for the groom and bride respectively...

DP: Steve, I have not the right to bind you to Karen; only you have this right. If it be your wish, say so at this time and place your ring in her hand.

Steve: It is my wish.

DP: Karen, if it be your wish for Steve to be bound to you, place the ring on his finger.

DP: Karen, I have not the right to bind you to Steve; only you have this right. If it be your wish, say so at this time, and place your ring in his hand.

Vanessa: It is my wish.

DP: Steve, if it be your wish for Karen to be bound to you, place the ring on her finger.

DP: In my presence, and before your witnesses and all your guests, you have made solemn declarations and exchanged rings.

I am therefore delighted to now pronounce you husband and wife.

Steve, you may kiss the bride!

DP: Steve and Karen are now bound in matrimony and I now call on Cameron to remove the cord that binds them.

CAMERON REMOVES RIBBON AND HANDS IT TO DP.

DP: Let this cord in future be an enduring reminder of this day and the strength of your union.

There will now be a short pause for the signing of the marriage schedule so please be seated, relax, and enjoy the music of Dark Island.

[Signing of Marriage Schedule] DARK ISLAND

DP: Thank you. Now it is the turn of all of you to add your voice to the ceremony again and I would ask you to join in repeating the words of a traditional Apache blessing, following the lead given by Steve's mother Sheila, the words are printed on your order of ceremony.

Sheila: Now you will feel no rain,
All: for each of you will be shelter to the other.
Sheila: Now you will feel no cold,
All: for each of you will be warmth to the other.
Sheila: Now there will be no loneliness,
All: for each of you will be companion to the other.
Sheila: Now you are two persons,
All: but there is only one life before you.
Sheila: May beauty surround you both,
All: in the journey ahead of you and through the years.
Sheila: May happiness be your companion,
All: and your days together be good and long upon the earth.

DP: we are almost at the conclusion of our ceremony. As our final ritual I would like to reintroduce the broom with which we started. It is an ancient symbol of purification, protection, fertility, prosperity and home. Until mediaeval times "Jumping the besom" or "Marriage by the broom" was legal and enforceable. As part of today's ceremony Steve and Karen will jump the broom to symbolise a "clean sweep", the moving over a threshold into their new married life. Karen will you take Steve by the hand and lead him over the broom.

JUMPING THE BESOM

DP: As witnesses we have heard, watched and participated in much today. What Steve and Karen hope you take with you is strong memories of a happy occasion. On their behalf I would like to thank the families for their willing participation and yourselves for your good wishes and the considerable efforts you have all made to be here today travelling from all over the country. All that remains is for me to formally present to you for the first time the new Mr and Mrs Smith.

DP: Thank you. You may now cheer, throw your hats in the air and party as befits the occasion! Hip-hip... Hip-hip... Hip-hip....