

WEDDING AND UNION SERVICES:

Ceremony on the Occasion of the Marriage of

Ms. Mary Fera and Mr. Stephen Guerra

in Saugatuck, Michigan, on June 2, 2007

The Reverend Doctor Brent A. Smith, Officiating

PRELUDE

SCRIPTURE

My beloved spoke, and said to me, "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers have appeared on the earth, the time of song has come. And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree is putting forth its figs, and the blossoming grapevines give forth fragrance. O my dove in the clefts of the rocks, in the recesses of the cliffs, let me see your form, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your form is comely. My beloved belongs to me, and I to my beloved. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

PROCESSIONAL

AFFIRMATION

We are gathered together in the sight of God and in the face of this company to witness and to bless the joining of this man and this woman in marriage. We rejoice with them that they have found each other and are now determined to share with one another their lives.

On this day of your marriage, you stand somewhat apart from all other human beings. You stand within the charmed circle of your love; and this is as it should be. But love is not meant to be the possession of two people alone. Rather it should serve as a source of common energy, as a form in which you find the strength to live your lives with courage. From this day onward you must come closer together than ever before, you must love one another in sickness and in health, for better and for worse, but at the same time your love should give you the strength to stand apart, to seek out your unique destinies, to make your special contribution to the world which is always part of us and more than us.

We gathered together today wish for you a home – not a place of stone and wood, but an island of sanity and serenity in a frenzied world. We hope that this home is not just a place of private joy and retreat, but rather serves as

a temple wherein the values of your life are generated and upheld. We hope that your home stands as a symbol of human beings living together in love and peace, seeking truth and demanding social justice. We hope that your home encompasses the beauty of nature – that it has within it the elements of simplicity, exuberance, beauty, silence, color, and a concordance with the rhythms of life. We wish for you a home with books and poetry and music – a home with all the things, which represent the highest strivings of men and women.

But now to you who are about to be wed, it is written:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am as blaring brass or crashing cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Love is patient and kind. It is never boastful or rude. It does not insist upon its own way. It is not puffed up. It is not easily provoked, and does not think evil. It rejoices not in the wrong, but rejoices in the right.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies they will fail; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abides faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

CHARGE TO THE COUPLE

And now is it with such intention and knowledge that you both have come here to be joined together in marriage? IT IS. [Repeated]

READING:

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. 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 at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years. It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives. It is standing together facing the world. It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy. It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways. It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel. It is not looking for perfection in each other. It

is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor. It is having the capacity to forgive and forget. It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow. It is finding room for the things of the spirit. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful. It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal. It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

PARENTAL BLESSING

Will the parents of Mary and Stephen please rise? Marriage is between two people, but it is strengthened by the support of those who love them. Do you, the parents of Mary and Stephen, give your blessing to this union? WE DO. [Repeated]

VOWS

I, Mary/Stephen, take you, Stephen/Mary, my best friend, as my love for life. I promise you my deepest love, my fullest devotion and my most tender care through the pressures of the present and the uncertainties of the future. I promise to be faithful to you, to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to respect you as a person and to realize that your needs and interests may be different but no less important than my own. I vow to always put you first in my life. I thank God for you, and look forward to your constant companionship, friendship and love. Today I chose you as my husband/wife and will make my home in your heart from this day forward. As I give you my hand to hold, I give you my life to keep. I love you.

RING EXCHANGE

The circle is the symbol of the sun and the earth and the universe. It is a symbol of holiness and of perfection and of peace. In this ring is the symbol of unity, in which your two lives are now joined in one unbroken circle, in which, wherever you go, you will always return unto one another to your togetherness.

I GIVE YOU THIS RING TO WEAR UPON YOUR HAND AS A SYMBOL OF OUR UNITY. [Repeated]

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

PRAYER

We pray for concord and creativity as well as for love and laughter in their life together; and when there is pain, may there be peace that passes not away. We pray for joy that they will share with other people, and for their home; may it be a temple for that which is beautiful and good and true. As they share the richer experiences of life, so may their hearts and minds and souls be knit ever more closely together. And yet may their bonds of sympathy strengthen their separate personalities. We pray for courage for them when their road is rough and for humility for them when fortune favors them. May they carry the past gratefully with them in all the years of their sojourn, and with an equal measure of hope ever face the future unafraid.

AMEN.

PRONOUNCEMENT

Inasmuch as you, Stephen and Mary have thus consented together in wedlock and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have engaged and pledged yourselves each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring and joining hands, I pronounce that you are husband and wife.

BENEDICTION

And now, be not afraid.

And seeing there is naught to fear, and bearing witness to what can never die, go forth into the world in peace:

Be of good courage.

Search all things, and hold fast to that which is good.

Render unto no one evil for evil.

Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted.

Love all souls,

Serving the Most High,

And rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

AMEN.

*It is with great joy that I present to you in marriage,
Stephen and Mary Guerra.*

SERVICE ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNION OF
Linda and Amy Busby
ALL SOULS COMMUNITY CHURCH (UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST)
THE REVEREND DOCTOR BRENT A. SMITH, MINISTER

PRELUDE

SCRIPTURE

Let us love one another. For God is love. And those that dwell in love dwell in God, and God in them.

PROCESSIONAL

AFFIRMATION

We are gathered together in the sight of God and in the face of this company to witness and to bless the joining of these two into a Holy Union. We rejoice with them that they have found each other and are now determined to share with one another their lives. Surely the greatest gift we can bequeath to another is the sharing, in love, of our physical and spiritual selves; and whosoever insists on saving her lesser goods and little self shall miss what is greater; but she who will reach out to another with a loving concern is surest to find a greater strength and a nobler and happier life.

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together, to strengthen each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all gladness, to be one with each other in all the silent, unspeakable memories?

But now to you who are about to wed: It is written, *Love one another, but make not a bond of love; rather, let it 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 harp 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 a temple stand apart, and the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow. 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.*

Marriage is a divine institution and honorable to all who maintain therein a true fidelity. It unites two hearts and lives, blending all their interests and sympathies and hopes. It involves mutual love and devotion, service and sacrifice, purity and constancy. It is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, and in a spirit of consecration to the noblest purposes of life.

CHARGE TO THE COUPLE

And now is it with such intention and knowledge that you both have come here to be joined together until death do you part? IT IS.

VOWS

I, LINDA/AMY, take you, AMY/LINDA, to be my beloved, 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, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

RINGS

Bless, O Lord this ring, that she who gives it and she who wears it may abide in thy love and peace unto their life's end. AMEN.

With this ring I thee wed and pledge to you my faithful love. [Repeat]

PRAYER

We lift up our hearts in gratitude for the meaning and purpose of this hour. May all that is good and true and beautiful be present in this place at this moment, and in that presence may this man and this woman be resolved to perform faithfully the covenant they have made with one another. May their hearts be united in bonds of true love and fidelity, and may they henceforth be a blessing and a comfort each to the other, sharers of each other's joys, consolers of each other's sorrows, helpers to each other in all the trials and disappointments and blessings of life, in order that they might grow in knowledge and mutual respect one for the other. Grant also that they may faithfully discharge the duties that belong to the condition into which they have entered, that they, and all who may be committed to their care, may be led in paths of honor and virtue. AMEN.

PRONOUNCEMENT

Inasmuch as you, Amy and Linda, have thus consented together in a Holy Union and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have engaged and pledged yourselves each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring and joining hands, I pronounce that what has been joined together, let no one put asunder.

BENEDICTION

And now, be not afraid.

And seeing there is naught to fear, and bearing witness to what can never die, go forth into the world in peace:

Be of good courage.

Search all things, and hold fast to that which is good.

Render unto no one evil for evil.

Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted.

Love all souls,

Serving the Most High,

And rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

AMEN.

PICTURE PAGE