**Wedding Reflection**

By Ana & Tod Gobledale

*This reflection is particularly relevant for a wedding where the couple has been waiting, perhaps for years, for their love to be recognised within a legal marriage. In the actual case, the couple had been living as family for 10 years.*

**Officiating Minister or Marriage Officer:**

Today we stand in a circle of love – family, friends, betrothed.

In most weddings, we glibly say, “Marriage is a gift from God.”  But through harsh and cruel experience, we have been taught, we have learned, we have seen, that marriage is an entitlement, coveted and controlled by governments and voters.

But hear this, as we stand here today God’s truth is breaking through, the truth of Love that cannot be chained, the truth of community that will not stand by, the truth of goodness that will moan and groan until it breaks free.

Let no one break asunder that which God has joined together.  Today we put a seal on a love blessed by God, by whatever name you would call that God – love, mystery, eternity, the cosmos, the force, the power we can never understand, the power we can only experience through the Love we experience.

Today we assert that indeed Love is more powerful than hate.  That Love is a universal gift, showered upon all people, like a winter’s snow or summer rain.  While some would attempt to build bigger dams and control that flow, love is a power to be reckoned with, a power that will not be dammed up, that will not allow itself to be shut up in dark places.  No, love will seep out, will swirl through the air, will continue to assert itself until the world stops just long enough to recognise it in its full glory, between ***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ &*** *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(the names of the couple to be married)* , between\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ (*first names of another same-sex couple known to the marriage couple, if friends have preceded them in legal marriage*), between lovers old and young.

Love is a gift.  Marriage is a gift, but not from the state.  Love is a gift from a power that knows no boundaries, that builds no walls, that leaves no one outside.

**\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_** , loving and allowing yourself to be loved -- all of you, the best, the worst and everything in between, holding your heart out to another person, that is risky, even when it is legal.  When “two people are one in their inmost heart,” to use a phrase from Confucius, it is a deeply vulnerable place to be.

But it is also a place of grace.  To experience the fullness of life’s possibility and the depths of its joy, we must risk, we must be willing to step into the unknown, the uncertain.  And even when there are times of hurt and heartache, love can carry us through.  Exchanging vows today means that you, **\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_** , are going to keep trying to “make it work,” as they say on Star Trek, no matter how hard it gets.

Love takes many forms:  love of family, love of friends, love of God, and love in marriage.  As Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians, [which we just read], “Love is patient and kind. It does not envy or boast.  It is neither proud, nor rude, nor self-seeking, nor easily angered.  Love always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.”

Indeed, these words, almost 2000 years old, still ring true today.

**\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_** , may they, always, be true for you.

May your marriage be made strong by interwoven threads of love.

Amen.