

LRS and MB Wedding. October 1, 2016.

There's something a little odd about what we're doing here today. What I mean is that Michael and Richard have already shared their lives for many years. Their love for each other is mature. Their individual lives have been fully joined, with the hope and expectation that their family will continue for the rest of their lives. Their relationship is already a school for holiness for each of them, as they continue to learn how to live fully for another, to give their individual lives away for the sake of a relationship that is more beautiful than either of their lives in the liberty of solitude. And so it isn't immediately clear how what we're doing today is a joining of two lives into one, since that joining has already long been forged.

But there is a deep wisdom in a wedding. It is said that every marriage is a mystery to those outside it. We all know a couple who we look at and say "what does *she* get out of that partnership?" Or "what must the breakfast conversation in *that* house be like?" There is a mystery to the interiority of any marriage, even those obvious marriages that we can't imagine not being a part of the lives of those most intimately involved. But that does not mean that marriage is private—in fact, the deep wisdom of a wedding makes the claim that the opposite is true.

Richard and Michael, all of us are here because we believe that your love for each other is "some of our business." We have some stake in your lives together, as you together have a stake in our lives. I don't mean that we should all hear about it when Richard neglects to do the dishes or Michael leaves dirty clothes all over the floor. I mean that we are people who love you, people whose lives are changed and enriched by your presence in them, people who care about this relationship, because it is at the center of each of your lives. We should not all be marriage counselors to you, but we should all be supports in some way to the deep mystery that burns at the heart of your life together.

This is the wisdom of a wedding. It is a sacrament—and Unitarians, please stick with me, because I promise I'm not going to ask you to assent to anything you can't affirm. What we are doing this afternoon is a sacrament because we are making visible truths that are usually invisible. Like the truth that you are not in this alone, but are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who are always rooting for you. The fabric of your lives is woven tightly together, but I think you'll find that there are a few strands of many of us that have slipped into that tapestry, just as a few strands of you have slipped into the tapestries of ours. And today, as we all pray with you, we are trying to make that truth visible.

Or the truth that love is the language of the universe, and that when we learn to speak it—whether through marriage or friendship—we are always speaking along with the rhythm that is the heartbeat of reality itself. The relationships that teach us this language are teaching us nothing less than what it means to be. That is finally what this service, and even what marriage itself, is all about. Because it is about all of us as much as it is about Michael and Richard, it is about more than all of us. Michael and Richard, your love, your marriage, is a sign to us all not just of what love can do in the lives of two people, but of what the world means. Thank you for reminding us. Amen.