***Photo Minute***

Steven and Holly have a fantastic photographer here today to capture these special moments, so we ask that you please keep all phones and cameras away during the ceremony and be present with us during this time. However, now is the chance for the bride and groom to get a good look at you and your opportunity to get a photo for yourself.  - pause for a minute.

Thank you, now we ask you to please keep your devices away for the remainder of the ceremony.

***Introduction***

OFFICIANT: Today is a celebration. A celebration of love, of commitment, of friendship, of family, and of two people who are in it for forever.

You don't have to have a ceremony to have a marriage. And when you think about it, the whole thing is kind of weird, right? You're standing on a stage, looking fancy, holding flowers, and being stared at by a bunch of people that have crossed into your life one way or another.. So why do we do it? The marriage ceremony has been an important feature across nearly every culture, religion, generation, and society. We have thousands of important moments that happen throughout our lives, but this one is regarded as one so critical, we acknowledge its special status by sharing it with others. Why this moment?

Because despite all of our differences, love is what we all share. It's the great unifier — our one universal truth. That no matter who we are, where we've come from, what we believe, we know this one thing: love is what we're doing right. That's why you both are standing here. That's why you all are here to watch them stand up here. We have all loved in our lifetimes, and in this moment, we're reminded that the ability to love is the very best part of our humanity

All of us here today have our own love stories. Some are short, others long. Some are yet unwritten, while others are just getting to the good part. There are chapters in all of our stories that are sad or disappointing — and others that are exciting and full of adventure.

*[Insert your own love story here]*

*In the first 14 months of their relationship, they made 4 international moves and were long-distance for three months.*

And that brings them here. A time to pause, look back, and smile at all the moments that brought them here. And a time to look ahead at all the moments that are still to come.

I'm here — we're all here — because we want those moments for you. We're here to hope with you, to support you, to be proud of you, and to remind you that love isn't happily ever after, love is the experience of writing your story. It's not one moment — not even this moment. It's every moment. Big ones like saying “I love you,” moving in together, getting engaged — but mostly a million little ones that come in between the big moments. Falling asleep next to one another, making dinner together, spending holidays with your families, binge-watching Netflix shows, getting a big hug when you get home from work… These everyday moments fuse together into one big experience.And even though this experience is so incredible, words fail us when we try and explain it. That's just the way it is with love — it's meant to be felt, not described.

But trying to describe love is one of our favorite pastimes. We use the words we have to write stories, and poems, and songs about love. And even though we describe love in different ways — and even though love can look different from one person to the next — we all know it when we see it. And we see it here.

**Unity ceremony**

To celebrate their union, Steven and Holly have chosen to stain a Welsh love spoon, which was hand carved for them by a friend of Holly's grandmothers in honor of Holly’s Welsh heritage. A love spoon is a decoratively carved  wooden spoon that dates back to the 17th century that was traditionally presented as a gift of romantic intent. There is also a history of “marriage spoons” where on the wedding day a bridegroom carries or wears a spoon. The spoon is normally decorated with symbols of love with the embedded designs all holding a different meaning.

This spoon is based on one of the love spoons collected by Holly’s Grandmother.

This spoon is a double spoon, which represents the union of two joined together.

The heart represents that my heart belongs to you, or in this case, their hearts belong to each other.

The link represents many aspects of the bond between them. It represents that they are inseparable, their love can not be broken, their destinies lie together.

They have added their own details to the spoon and incorporated a compass on the top to guide them through their journey through life together.

***Wedding vows***

OFFICIANT: You fell in love by chance, but you're here today because you're making a choice. You both are choosing each other. You've chosen to be with someone who enhances you, who makes you think, makes you smile, and makes every day brighter.

You're about to make promises to each other that you intend to keep. You're going to vow to take care of each other, to stand up for one another, and find happiness in the other.

Will you, Steven, keep Holly as your favorite person — to laugh with her, go on adventures with her, support her through life's tough moments, be proud of her, grow old with her, and find new reasons to love her every day?

Steven: I will.

Will you, Holly, keep Steven as your favorite person — to laugh with her, go on adventures with her, support her through life's tough moments, be proud of her, grow old with her, and find new reasons to love her every day?

Holly: I will.

OFFICIANT: Will you, Steven and Holly, be each other's partners from this day forward? Will you bring out the best in one another, share your happiest moments together, and love each other absolutely — for the rest of this lifetime and for whatever may come next?

PARTNERS 1 and 2: We will.

Personal Vows

Steven

Holly

**Ring Exchange**

Steven, place the ring on Hollys finger and repeat after me:

Holly, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love with the pledge: to love you today, tomorrow, always, and forever.

And now...Holly, place the ring on Steven's finger and repeat after me:

Steven, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love with the pledge: to love you today, tomorrow, always, and forever.

**Closing**

By the power vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss.

***Announcement:***

*The bride and groom would like to capture all of you that have gathered here today and ask that you join them in the lawn for a group picture. After that, there will be a reception line at the entrance of the barn where they invite you to enjoy a cocktail hour and yard games. Family photos will follow immediately after, beginning with the groom’s family, followed by the Bride’s with the Thomases, Higginbottoms, and then Harringtons.*