### Civil Wedding Ceremony

*Processional/Introductions/Greeting:*

We are gathered here today in this wonderful paradise, to celebrate one of life's greatest relationships – the union between man and woman, which we call marriage. As you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, are joined together in this marriage, search your hearts for the wisdom of this covenant, which has from ancient times been expressed with those ideas that come from the heart.

Since the laws of this community governing marriages have been met, the joining of these two people shall now take place. Before the vows are taken, however, it is my responsibility to remind each of you of the significance and importance of the relationship you are on the threshold of entering.

The promise you are about to make to each other is one of irrevocable love, fidelity, cooperation, and understanding through life and all of life’s difficult challenges. I urge each of you to live up to the commitments you are now making to one another.

Marriage is a commitment to life—to the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth no other relationship can equal, a physical and emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of love, marriage encompasses all of life’s most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other’s best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and counselor. Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, and commitment is stronger.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life.

When two people pledge to love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential, made in the hearts of two people who love, which takes a lifetime to fulfill.

In reminding you to observe your marital duties and obligations I have done my part. And now it is your turn…

Please join hands and look into each other’s eyes.

*Declaration of Intent/Exchange of Vows:*

Do you **Groom** have this woman to be your wedded wife and will you be faithful to her as long as you shall live?

Groom: “I do.”

Then repeat after me:

I, **Groom**, take you, **Bride**, to be my wedded wife,/ 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,/ till death do us part.

Do you **Bride** have this man to be your wedded husband and will you be faithful to him as long as you shall live?

Bride: “I do.”

Then repeat after me:

I, **Bride**, take you, **Groom**, to be my wedded husband,/ 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,/ till death do us part.

*Exchange of Rings:*

May I have the rings?

These rings are symbols of eternity and the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end.  Today you have chosen to exchange rings, as a sign of your love for each other, and as a seal of the promises you make this day. We ask that God bless these rings and this union of souls.

**Groom**, place the ring on **Bride’s** finger and repeat after me:

With this ring/ I give you my heart/ I promise from this day forward/ You shall not walk alone/ May my heart be your shelter/ And my arms be your home.

Your two lives are now joined in one unbroken circle. Wherever you go, may you always return to one another in your togetherness. May you two find in each other the love for which all men and women long for. May you grow in understanding and compassion. And may these two rings symbolize the spirit of undying love in the hearts of both of you.

Before I pronounce you husband and wife, I have just one more thing I want you to do. Your wedding day is one that seems to fly by. It’s a day filled with emotion, flowers, rings, joy and occasionally stress. Many people remember how fleeting their own wedding day was, I know mine flew by. So I want you to take a few seconds to look into each other’s eyes. Think about the happiness you’re feeling…in this place, these surroundings and this moment. Let those thoughts register in your heart and mind.

Now I want you to look at each other and imagine your life 20 years from now. Where are you? What are you doing? What do you look like? Your visions for the future are not identical I’m sure, but they should still be complimentary. It was once said, “a dream you dream alone is only a dream, a dream you dream together, that is reality. And that reality starts now.

And with that, inasmuch as you, **Groom**, and you, **Bride**, have announced the truths that are already written in your hearts, by the power vested in me by the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

**Groom**, you may kiss your Bride!