



Weddings

at St Stephen's Green
**Unitarian
Church**



Introduction

Dublin Unitarian church is pleased to offer itself as a venue for the celebration of both legal wedding ceremonies and wedding blessings. In keeping with our church's liberal ethos, we place no barrier on the remarriage of divorced people or the marriage of same sex couples. However, we do expect those who marry in our church to be in sympathy with our principles and to attend some of our Sunday services before the wedding takes place.



About Us

We are an open and inclusive church community in the heart of Dublin city, dedicated to providing people of all backgrounds a welcoming spiritual home. We celebrate both belief and unbelief as we do not have a creed or set of doctrines. We are open to searching for the good in all people. We listen to and honour the wisdom from many faith traditions. We take seriously the need to challenge our members with the problems of our time and take action together on social justice issues with hope, inspiration and love. Our roots in Dublin were sown in the 17th century by those seeking freedom from imposed doctrines and dogmas. That desire for freedom remains true for today's Unitarians.





Legal requirements

It is necessary for both parties to the marriage to meet with the Registrar of Civil Marriages in 8 to 11 Lombard Street East, Dublin, (or with a Registrar in another region). All the information is available on the HSE website. This must be done at least three months before the proposed date of the wedding (although, in certain circumstances, it is possible to obtain a court order to bypass this regulation). You will be expected to make and sign a declaration in the Registrar's presence that there is no impediment to the said marriage. The Registrar concerned may require each party to an intended marriage to provide him or her with evidence relating to the party's forename, surname, address, marital status, age and nationality, as may be specified by the Registrar. At this time the couple should tell the Registrar that they intend their marriage to take place in the Unitarian Church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, and give the name of the wedding celebrant.

The Registrar will give the couple a Marriage Registration Form. This is a very important document. It must be signed at the marriage and returned within one month to the Registrar. It is the responsibility of the couple to return this form.

For more detailed information, contact the Registrar at the earliest possible opportunity. If the wedding legalities have already been performed elsewhere, we offer a non-legal ceremony of blessing. This has all the characteristics of a legal wedding ceremony, but no marriage register is signed.



Organising your wedding



Organising your Wedding.

1. Contact the church to ensure that your chosen wedding date is available, or, better still, talk to one of our wedding celebrants after the eleven o'clock service on Sunday morning. The wedding diary fills up rather quickly and the summer months are very busy, so it is best to fix your date and time well in advance. Make sure that the names and telephone numbers of both parties are entered in the church wedding diary.
2. At least three months before the proposed date of the wedding, you must fulfil the legal requirements as outlined in this booklet.
3. Attend a Sunday service as often as you can before the wedding.
4. A few weeks before the wedding day, you will be contacted by one of our wedding celebrants and invited to come to the church to meet. This will be an opportunity for you to discuss the format of your wedding. If by some oversight you are not contacted, then make contact with the church yourself and arrange a date to meet with your wedding celebrant.
5. In the meantime, think about your wedding ceremony. What readings would you like? (see suggestions for readings in this

booklet). What kind of music do you want? What about flowers? (Music and flowers are the responsibility of the couple and are not covered by the fee paid to the church.) And remember, your wedding celebrant will always be willing to answer any queries you may have. Contact can be made by phone or email, and he or she will generally be available after a Sunday service.

6. A few days before the wedding you will meet with your wedding celebrant for a rehearsal in the church. You may want to bring your best man and chief bridesmaid to this, along with any other members of your wedding party who may be participating, but this is by no means necessary and, generally speaking, only the wedding couple are required. If you have not already done so, you will be expected to pay the fee for the wedding at the time of the rehearsal. The fee is currently €850.

Please note: We have a number of people who regularly officiate at weddings in the Dublin Unitarian church, both male and female, and you will be allocated a person by the church. All are highly trained, experienced and legally qualified. It may be possible to request a certain person to perform your ceremony, but this is not guaranteed.



Outline of Wedding Service

- ◆ **Entry** (accompanied by music).
- ◆ **Welcome and introduction by celebrant.**
- ◆ **Opening Words of Ceremony.**
- ◆ **Lighting of Candles.**
- ◆ **Prayer.**
- ◆ **Readings and music chosen by the couple**
- ◆ **Wine ceremony** (The couple drink sweet and dry wine to represent the pleasant and difficult periods within any marriage).
- ◆ **Marriage Vows.** In a legal marriage ceremony, the vows on page 7 **are compulsory**. If the couple wish to do so they are free to add their personal vows.
- ◆ **Exchange of Rings.**
- ◆ **Acknowledgement of the newly married couple.**
- ◆ **Lighting of Marriage Candle.**
- ◆ **Signing of Register.**
- ◆ **Closing words by celebrant.**
- ◆ **Final Blessing followed by exit music.**

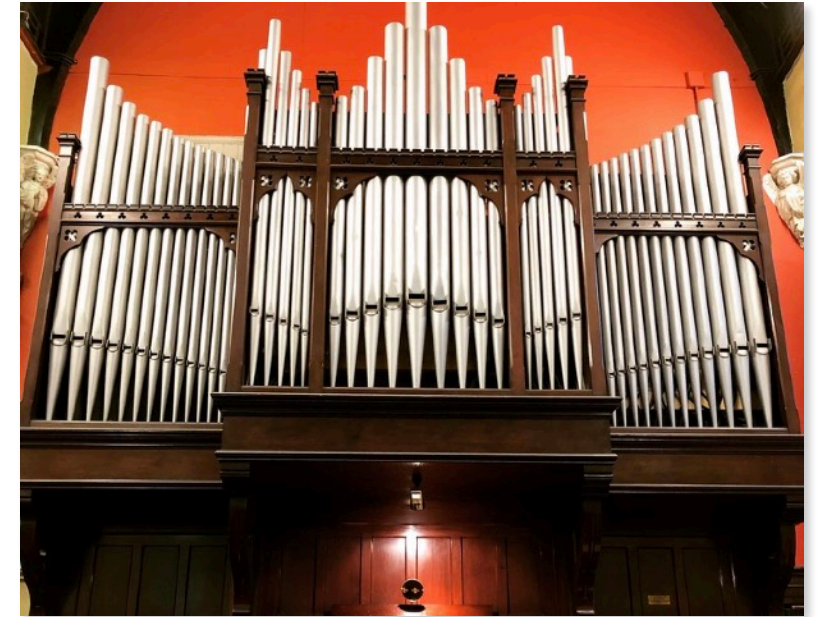
Notes

- The couple can incorporate material of their own choosing if they wish.
- The number of readings and pieces of music are a personal choice.
- You may include Prayers of the faithful/Wishes in the ceremony.
- Our organist is available to play but this must be arranged with the organist. Permission must be given by our organist for another organist to use the organ.
- It is possible to have hymns as part of the ceremony.
- If you wish to play recorded music, you can plug a laptop, phone or tablet into our sound system.
- We have a webcam which we can make available to you for friends or family who cannot make the wedding in person.

The legal wording

Before the vows, the wedding couple must declare their freedom to marry. They will be asked to repeat the following words:

**I do solemnly declare,
That I know not,
Of any lawful impediment,
Why I...
May not be joined in matrimony to...**



The celebrant will ask each in turn:

[name] will you take [name] to be your wife/husband? Will you love them, comfort them, honour them and protect them, and forsaking all others, be faithful as long as you both shall live?

Both will answer, 'I will'.

The traditional vows are as follows:

I call upon these persons here present to witness that I [name] take you [name] to be my wife (husband). From this day forward, To have and to hold, For better, for worse, For richer, for poorer, In sickness and in health, To love and to cherish, Until death do us part.

None of the above has to be remembered, the wedding couple will simply repeat the words after the celebrant.

A wedding blessing, that is, a non-legal ceremony for people who have been legally married elsewhere can contain all the above elements except for the legal wording and signing of the register. A ceremony based on the above format will last approximately 45 minutes.

Frequently Asked Questions

My partner and I live abroad. Is it still possible to marry in Dublin Unitarian Church?

Yes, but pay particular attention to the residency requirements as outlined on page 4. Should it be impossible to fulfil these, it may be best to marry legally elsewhere and have a ceremony of blessing in the Dublin church.

What sort of music is allowed during the ceremony?

Any kind of music is allowed from string quartets to rock bands, within the bounds of decency and decorum. Live music is encouraged but you can plug in a laptop, phone or tablet into our sound system. Our organist/pianist is always willing to play but wedding couples must make separate arrangements with him. He is available for consultation after Sunday service or can be contacted via telephone or email. (See appendix for contact details.)

Do you recommend printed orders of service?

It is customary to have these but it is by no means required. Experience shows that the more detailed the printed order of service, the less attention guests pay to the actual ceremony! They simply read the text! Keep it simple with just an outline of the ceremony and, perhaps, the readings printed.

Are photographs and videos allowed?

Certainly, but photographers should be discreet, especially during the solemn parts of the ceremony.

What advice can you give about flowers?

More is not always better. Too many flowers seem to spoil the look of the church! It is customary, but by no means obligatory, to leave some flowers in the church after the ceremony to enhance our Sunday worship.

When will the church be open for musicians and florists to get access?

The church will open about an hour before the actual ceremony. If access is required before this time, arrangements should be made with the celebrant.

Is it possible to marry on a Sunday?

Yes, subject to the availability of a wedding celebrant. This applies to Bank Holidays too.

Is it possible for my partner and me to enter the church together, rather than with the father?

By all means. This is entirely a matter for the wedding couple in consultation with their wedding celebrant.

I have a relative/friend who is a religious leader from a different christian denomination or other religion. Is it possible for them to participate in the service in some way?

Yes. In fact, we encourage this. The legal parts of the ceremony must be performed by our celebrant, but it is possible for a person from another denomination/religion to give a blessing or to do a reading.

Is confetti or rice allowed?

We respectfully request that you do not have confetti or rice.

My partner and I will need a copy of our marriage certificate for legal reasons shortly after the wedding. Does the church provide one of these?

No. Marriage certificates are obtained from the Registrar's office on Lower Grand Canal Street. The 'Marriage Registration Form' that the Registrar issued to you has to be returned to the Registrar within 30 days of your marriage. You then must make application to the Registrar's office on Lower Grand Canal Street, to issue a Marriage Certificate.



What do Unitarians believe?

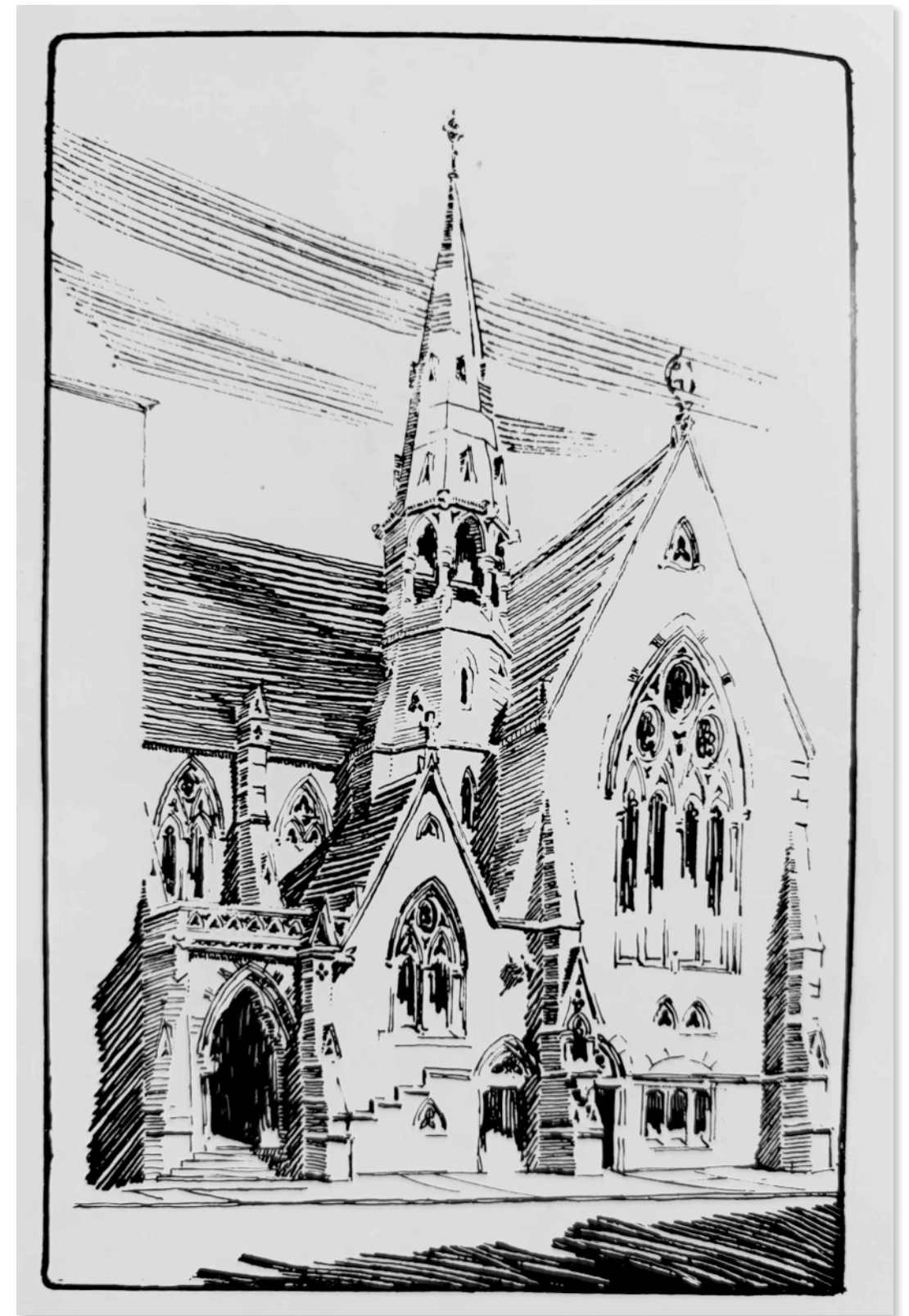
We are a spiritual community in which each person is encouraged to think for themselves in a spirit of freedom, reason and tolerance.

Unitarians have no dogma and no set creed. But this does not mean that members are without beliefs. Few religious communities display such a wide range of deeply held views. This is partly because we come from varying traditions and backgrounds. Many of us have left traditional Christian churches, or other faiths. Some hold agnostic or even atheistic attitudes and of course there are those who have inherited Unitarian values from their families.

Traditionally, Unitarians have always believed in the indissoluble unity of God. This meant that they were unable to accept the doctrine of the Trinity, which holds that there are three persons in the one God. In times past, Unitarians were persecuted for taking this stance. Today, most Unitarians would probably hold the same view and believe that Jesus was an extraordinary human, from whom we can take considerable inspiration. We feel that Unitarians can be called Christians in the sense that a person is a Christian who tries to live in accord with the teachings of Jesus rather than struggling to accept the teachings about him. However, our spiritual lives and worship are inspired by many religions and by the great thinkers, religious and secular, throughout the ages.

Whatever our individual journey, few Unitarians would quarrel with the following:

- We believe in freedom of religious thought.
- We believe in the supreme importance of human reason and scientific inquiry.
- We affirm that tolerance is an essential virtue. We respect other religious traditions.
- We do not define for others what the word “god” means. For many it signifies what they believe to be of supreme worth.
- We examine all religious scriptures but accept only that they are human products.
- While we have rites of passage such as baptism, marriage, civil union and funeral ceremonies, we do not believe in the traditional concept of *sacrament*.
- We believe in the dignity and worth of every person. We believe in gender equality in all matters.
- We believe a person’s gender and sexuality are to be respected, celebrated and free from discrimination.
- We believe that we have a moral responsibility to care for the physical environment.



People

Minister

Rev Gavin Byrne: ministryunitarianchurch@gmail.com

Organist/Pianist

Josh Johnston: josh@joshjohnston.com



Suggested Readings

Biblical Readings

From **The Song of Songs**

Arise, my love, my fair one, come away. O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely...My beloved is mine and I am his....Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

Colossians 3:12-15

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

1 Corinthians, Chapter 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Other Readings

The Song of the Open Road

I do not offer the old smooth prizes,
But offer rough new prizes,
These are the days that must happen to you:
You shall not heap up what is called riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve.
However sweet these laid up stores,
However convenient these dwellings,
You shall not remain there.
However sheltered the port,
And however calm the waters,
You shall not anchor there.
However welcome the hospitality that welcomes you
You are permitted to receive it but a little while.
Afoot and lighthearted, take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before you,
The long brown path before you, leading wherever you choose.
Say only to one another:
Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love, more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law:
Will you give me yourself?
Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

Walt Whitman

Untitled

Now comes the knitting, the tying, the entwining into one,
Mysterious involvement of two, whole
separate people
Into something altogether strange and changing and lovely.
Nothing can ever be, will never be the same again;

Not merged into each other irrevocably, but rather From now on we go the same way, in the same direction,
Agreeing not to leave each other lonely, or discouraged, or behind,
I will do my best to keep my promises to you and keep you warm;
And we will make our wide bed beneath the bright and ragged quilt
Of all the yesterdays that make us who we are, The strengths and frailties we bring to this marriage, And we will be rich indeed.

Anonymous

from The Prophet,

Then Almitra spoke again and said, And what of marriage, master?
And he answered saying:
You were born together, and together you shall be for evermore.
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days,
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of heavens dance between you.
Love one another, but make not a bond of love;
Let it rather 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 lute 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 the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.
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.

Kahlil Gibran.

from Gift from the Sea

When you love someone you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern. The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what it was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. For relationships, to, must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides. One must accept the security of the winged life, of the ebb and flow, of intermittency.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

True Love

T rue love is a sacred flame,
That burns eternally,
And none can dim its special glow
Or change its destiny.
True love speaks in tender tones
And hears with gentle ear.

True love gives with open heart
And true love conquers fear.
True love makes no harsh demands
It neither rules nor binds,
And true love holds with gentle hands
The hearts that it entwines.
(Author unknown).

It takes years to marry completely two hearts, even of the most loving and well-assorted. A happy wedlock is a long falling in love. Young persons think love belongs only to the brown-haired and crimson-cheeked. So it does for its beginning. But the golden marriage is a part of love which the bridal day knows nothing of. A perfect and complete marriage, where wedlock is everything you could ask and the ideal of marriage becomes actual, is not very common, perhaps as rare as perfect personal beauty. Men and women are married fractionally, now a small fraction, then a larger fraction. Very few are married totally, and then only after some forty or fifty years of gradual approach and experiment. Such a large and sweet fruit is a complete marriage that it needs a long summer to ripen in, and then a long winter to mellow and season it. But a real, happy marriage of love and judgment between a noble man and woman is one of the things so very handsome that if the sun were, as the Greek poets fabled, a God, he might stop the world and hold it still now and then in order to look all day long on some example thereof, and feast his eyes on such a spectacle.
Theodore Parker.

from **Anam Cara**

Passage 1

Love is the nature of the soul. When we love and allow ourselves to be loved, we begin more and more to inhabit the kingdom of the eternal. Fear changes into courage, emptiness becomes plenitude and distance becomes intimacy. When you love, you open your life to another. All your barriers are down. Your protective distances collapse. This person is given absolute permission to come into the deepest temple of your spirit. Your presence and life can become their ground. It takes great courage to let someone so close. Since the body is in the soul, when you let someone so near, you let them become part of you. In the sacred kinship of real love two souls are twinned. The outer shell and contour of identity becomes porous. You suffuse each other.

John O'Donohue.

from **Anam Cara**

Passage 2

Real friendship or love is not manufactured or achieved. Friendship is always an act of recognition. This metaphor of friendship can be grounded in the clay nature of the human body. When you find the person you love, an act of ancient recognition brings you together. It is as if millions of years before the silence of nature broke, his or her clay and your clay lay side by side. Then, in the turning of the seasons, your one clay divided and separated. You began to rise as distinct clay forms, each housing a different individuality and destiny. Without even knowing it, your secret memory mourned your loss of each other. While your clay selves wandered for thousands of years

through the universe, your longing for each other never faded. This metaphor helps to explain how in the moment of friendship two souls suddenly recognize each other. It could be a meeting on the street, or at a party, a lecture or just a simple banal introduction, then, suddenly there is the flash of recognition and the embers of kinship glow. There is an awakening between you, a sense of ancient knowing. Love opens the door of ancient recognition. You enter. You come home to each other at last.

John O'Donohue.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson.

Scaffolding

Masons, when they start upon a building, Are careful to test out the scaffolding;
Make sure that planks won't slip at busy points, Secure all ladders, tighten bolted joints.

And yet all this comes down when the job's done
Showing off walls of sure and solid stone.
So if, my dear, there sometimes seems to be
Old bridges breaking between you and me
Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall

Confident that we have built our wall.
Seamus Heaney.

I was sitting on a beach one summer day, watching two children, a boy and a girl, playing in the sand. They were hard at work building an elaborate sandcastle by the water's edge, with gates and towers and moats and internal passages. Just when they had nearly finished their project, a big wave came along and knocked it down, reducing it to a heap of wet sand. I expected the children to burst into tears, devastated by what had happened to all their hard work. But they surprised me. Instead, they ran up the shore away from the water, laughing and holding hands, and sat down to build another castle. I realized that they had taught me an important lesson. All the things in our lives, all the complicated structures we spend so much time and energy creating, are built on sand. Only our relationships to other people endure. Sooner or later, the wave will come along and knock down what we have worked so hard to build up. When that happens, only the person who has somebody's hand to hold will be able to laugh.
Rabbi Harold Kushner

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines, and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favourite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all-one known only by those who love.
Anonymous.

Look to this day for it is life
The very life of life
In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of our existence
The bliss of growth
The glory of action
The splendour of achievement
For yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision
But today, well lived,
Makes all our yesterdays a dream of happiness. And all our tomorrows a vision of hope. Look well therefore, to this day.
Sanskrit proverb by Kalidasa (Indian poet and playwright, 4 AD).

The Greatest Happiness

You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving. The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness. We pardon to the extent that we love. Love is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again. And great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for our selves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.
Victor Hugo (1802-1885), from Les Miserables.

Happiness

Live in joy, in love
Even among those who hate.
Live in joy, in health,
Even among the afflicted.
Live in joy, in peace, even among the troubled.
Look within. Be still.
Free from fear and attachment,
Know the sweet joy of living in the way.
There is no fire like greed,
No crime like hatred,
No sorrow like separation,
No sickness like hunger of the heart, and no joy like the joy of freedom.
Health, contentment and trust are your greatest possessions, And freedom your greatest joy. Look within. Be still. Free from fear and attachment,
Know the sweet joy of living in the way.
The Buddha

Quotations on Love

What is Love? Love is treating your heart with a great deal of tenderness and understanding. If you cannot treat your own heart this way how can you treat your partner with understanding and love.

True love is generated from within. For true love to be there you need to feel completely yourself.

A true partner is one who encourages you to look deep inside yourself for the beauty and love you are seeking.

In a relationship, when you and your partner share the same kind of aspiration, you are as one and you become an instrument of love and peace in the world.

To love is not to possess the other person or to consume all their attention and love. To love is to offer joy and understanding. You must love in such a way that the person you love feels free.

To find true love by looking deeply inside ourselves to understand the needs and aspiration of the person we love.

True love is like the sun shining with its own light and offering that light to everyone.

Thich Nhat Hanh

We arrive at last at that which is the highest, the most beautiful, and the most lasting of all things - love. It is the condition in which the soul expands beyond its own boundaries, finding itself not diminished, but enlarged.

For love is not a possession, nor a claim, but a reverence. It delights in the presence of the beloved, yet does not seek to confine it. It is a union of two spirits who remain distinct, yet are drawn together by a deeper harmony.

In this, love becomes a kind of truth - a recognition of something eternal in another person, something that calls us to be more fully ourselves.

Ralph Waldo Emerson - Essays: First Series "Love"



Notes

Notes

St Stephen's Green Unitarian Church, 112 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

dublinunitarianchurch.org

