

The Procession

Officiant

Rabbi Neil Gold of Wayland, MA
(a mentor of Caren's childhood friend)

Chuppah Bearers

Laura

(Eric's college friend)

Roberta

(Eric's sister)

Michael and Susan

(Caren's brother and sister-in-law)

Groomsmen

Andy

Jorge

Bryan

Kirk

(friends from college and work)

Parents of the Groom

Norman and Marilyn

Groom

Eric

(the boy Caren is marrying)

Bridesmaids

Beth

Vanessa

Amanda

Jessica

(friends from high school)

Flower Girls

Jessica and Hana

(children of our first cousins)

Father of the Bride

Ken

Bride

Caren

(the girl Eric is marrying)

Dear Family and Friends,

Through the many stages of our two lives, you- our closest family and friends- have played a central role in bringing us strength and delight. We'd like to extend a special thank you to our parents for all their love and support. They have shown us how to be a loving family. Today, from right here in Massachusetts to the far corners of the globe, you have all gathered to celebrate the joining of our two lives and two families. We are delighted to welcome you to our wedding. It means so much to us to have you here on this special day.

The Jewish wedding ceremony is full of many beautiful traditions that give expression to the significance and purpose of marriage. These rituals symbolize the beauty of the relationship between husband and wife, as well as their obligations to each other and to the Jewish people. As some of these customs may be unfamiliar to you, we have included explanations below. We hope you find this information helpful.

Love, Caren and Eric

About the Ceremony

The Ketubah:

A *ketubah* is the Jewish marriage contract. Ours includes both the traditional text, outlining marital roles and responsibilities, and an English translation which reflects more modern concepts of love and partnership. In accordance with the rabbinic principle that a *ketubah* should be as beautiful as possible, ours is artistically decorated with intertwined vines, flowers, singing birds, and text from the Song of Songs. This pattern has been reproduced on the cover of this program.

We gather with our immediate families before the procession to sign the *ketubah*. It is also signed by two witnesses who are Jewish men and not related to the bride or groom. We are honored to have Mark and Rob sign as our witnesses.

The Bedeken:

As the final preparation before the wedding ceremony, the groom places the bride's veil over her face. The groom performs this task, recalling the biblical story of Jacob. Jacob wanted to marry Rachel, but was tricked into marrying her older sister Leah after she was presented to him already veiled. The groom "dresses" the bride to ensure he is marrying the correct woman.

The Chuppah:

The wedding canopy, known as a *chuppah*, represents the home we are creating today. It is a space where God is believed to be present, blessing the covenant of marriage. The structure is open on all four sides to welcome family and friends into our lives. (Come to think of it, our real apartment has a deadbolt and

a chain. That's OK, this lesson still holds, you are all warmly invited to our home anytime- but you'll have to buzz.)

It is a special honor to be asked to hold a *chuppah* pole. Because these four faces represent the larger community of loved ones, we are happy to have our siblings and close friends stand with us today. A special thank you to Michael and Susan for designing a beautiful *chuppah* for this occasion.



The Procession:

By Jewish custom, both the groom and the bride are escorted to the *chuppah* by their parents. We have chosen to walk to traditional Hebrew melodies. The procession begins with Erev Shel Shoshanim (Evening of Roses). Caren walks to Dodi Li (I am my Beloved's).

Before stepping into the *chuppah* together, the bride and groom circle each other seven times. The bride first circles the groom, the groom then circles the bride, and they walk around together once. These circles represent a mystical protective space, symbolic of the home we are creating. They also define a new family unit, visibly binding the couple to each other. The number seven has spiritual power as well, as it appears often in the Bible, such as in the seven days of creation.

The Erusin:

The Jewish wedding ceremony is actually two distinct ceremonies merged into one. The first half is known as the betrothal, or *erusin*. A prayer is recited that asks God to bless this marriage. Then the couple performs the *kiddush*, a ceremonial drinking of wine, after the prayer for sanctification. Wine is a symbol of joy in Jewish tradition and is often part of celebratory festivals.



The exchange of rings is the central act of *erusin*. In accordance with Jewish law, our rings are solid metal bands, with no stones or embellishments. The unbroken simplicity of the bands represents the wholeness achieved through marriage.

Interlude:

It is customary to distinguish between the two ceremonies. During this time, the rabbi will read from our *ketubah* and say some words about us.

The Nissuin:

The second half of the ceremony is called *nissuin*. This nuptial ceremony solidifies the betrothal from earlier. At the core of this portion are the *sheva b'rachot*, or seven blessings. These blessings address many of the great themes of Judaism: creation, Eden, Zion, redemption, Jerusalem and celebration. They also describe our relationship with God and the joy of being a bride and groom. Many thanks to Beth for lending her beautiful voice for the chanting of these blessings. During the *sheva b'rachot*, we also drink a second cup of wine.

Breaking the glass:

One of the best-known elements of a Jewish wedding, the breaking of the glass, concludes the ceremony. There are many interpretations for the symbolism of this act. Some say it reminds us about the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Even at the height of personal joy, we recall communal sadness. Others take it as a call to action, believing that the shattered glass echoes the broken state of the world today. We remember our responsibility as humans to repair the world (*Tikun Olam*) through good deeds and charity.



Most importantly, the startling noise wakes us up from the solemnity of the ceremony ritual and prepares us for joyful celebration. It is customary to join together in hearty shouts of “Mazel Tov!” to wish the couple good luck and congratulations. Now the party may begin!

Yichud:

After they leave the chuppah, the bride and groom spend some time alone in a tradition known as *yichud* (seclusion). This provides us with a chance to reflect on the joy and meaning of our wedding day during our first moments as husband and wife.

Celebration:

Weddings are a *simcha*, or a festive occasion, so go ahead and enjoy yourselves! Schmooze with friends, nosh on hors d'oeuvres, and join us in a lively *hora*. We hope you have fun tonight.

In Memory

Today and every day, we lovingly remember those no longer with us. Cherished and wonderful memories remain in our hearts. Their spirits are forever near, guiding our lives and celebrating our joys.

Judy

Caren's mother

"Grampy" Sam

Jacob and Minnie

Caren's grandparents

Stanley

Eric's uncle

"Papa" Abraham and "Mama" Ruth

Eli and Theresa

Eric's grandparents