

**At the Chuppah** Jacob Merlin Sam Novey  
Matthew Merlin Beth Novey *our siblings*

## Mi Adir/Blessings and Welcome

Elizabeth Richman *m'saderet shutfafut* (officiant)

“Welcome in the name of *Adonai*.

We welcome you from *Adonai's* house.” — *Tehillim/Psalms 118: 26*

“May the One who is more adored than all

May the One who is more blessed than all

May the One who is greater than all bless this loving couple.”

## Blessing Over Wine

One of the *kiddush* cups we are using today belonged to Ethan's grandmother Jean Merlin *z"l*. The other was given to Ethan's father Stephen at his *bar mitzvah*.

## Reading the B'rit Ahuvim/Lovers' Covenant

Shira Fischer and Emma Kippley-Ogman *friends*

## Kinyan/Acquisition of Partnership

Scholar Rachel Adler has developed a Jewish wedding ritual in which partners mutually acquire obligations to one another. *L'hatil b'kis* (to put in a pouch) is a Talmudic phrase for enacting a partnership. We will raise up a bag containing our wedding rings, and recite the blessing traditionally said on the occasion of seeing a rainbow, a sign of keeping promises and being faithful to one's word. Our mutual acquisition of these rings parallels our acquisition of obligations to each other and our assent to the terms of our *B'rit Ahuvim/Lovers' Covenant*.

We do not intend to effect *kiddushin* today, which was classically understood by Jewish law to mean a male partner enacting marriage by symbolically “acquiring” a female partner. To that end, we purchased the rings for our ceremony together, from a joint account, and they are of equal value. And we'll acquire the rings and our obligations to each other through Rachel Adler's ceremony. That said, astute wedding guests may hear some of the language classically associated with *kiddushin*; namely, we will pronounce ourselves and each other to be *m'kudash/m'kudeshet* (set apart for) each other.

*Harei ani m'kudash/m'kudeshet lakh/lecha.*

Behold, I am set apart for you.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh haOlam,  
zokheir habrit v'ne-eman bivrito  
v'kayam b'ma-amaro.*

Blessed are You ...

Who remembers your covenant and  
is faithful to your covenant  
and keeps Your word.

*Harei ata/at m'kudash/m'kudeshet li.*

Behold, you are set apart for me.

## Havtachat haKehillah/Communal Promise of Support

Do you who know and care for Ethan and Joelle give them your blessings now as they enter into this partnership?

Do you promise in the days and years ahead to help them fulfill the promises they've made today and to hold them to the terms of their covenant?

*Harei anu mavtichim.*

Behold, we promise.

## Signing the B'rit Ahuvim/Lovers' Covenant

## Sheva B'rakhot/Seven Blessings

The *sheva b'rakhot* are blessings that ground the union of a couple in the story of Creation and praise the Divine source of our capacity for love and joy. The interpretive English translations below are adapted from those by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Phyllis Berman, and Anita Diamant.

Sung in Hebrew Jacob Merlin *Ethan's brother*

*Barukh ata Adonai,  
Eloheinu melekh haOlam,  
borei p'ri haGafen.*

Blessed are You ...

Creator of the fruit of the vine.

— Harold Price *Ethan's uncle*

*Barukh ata Adonai,  
Eloheinu melekh haOlam,  
shehakol bara likhvodo.*

Blessed are You ...

Who created everything for Your glory.

— Evelyn Koblentz *Joelle's cousin*

*Barukh ata Adonai,  
Eloheinu melekh haOlam,  
yotzeir haAdam.*

Blessed are You ...

Creator of humanity.

— Michael Bass *Joelle's cousin*

*Barukh ata Adonai,  
Eloheinu melekh haOlam,  
asher yatzar haAdam  
b'tzalmo, b'tzelem d'mut  
tavnit, v'hitkin lo  
mimenu binyan adei ad.  
Barukh ata Adonai,  
yotzeir haAdam.*

Blessed are You ...

Who shapes humanity in your image and  
likeness and enables us to renew creation  
by nurturing generations to come.

Blessed are You *Adonai*,  
Creator of humanity.

— Louis Merlin *Ethan's uncle*

*Sos tasis v'tagel  
haAkarah b'kibbutz  
baneha l'tokhah b'simcha.  
Barukh ata Adonai,  
m'sameiach Tziyon  
b'vaneha.*

May all who are deeply rooted rejoice,  
for those they nourish will spring up  
to flower and be fruitful.

Blessed are You *Adonai*,  
Who gladdens Zion with her children.

— Marilyn Baltimore *Ethan's aunt*

*Sameiach t'samach reim  
haAhuvim k'sameichakha  
y'tzirkha b'Gan Eiden  
mikedem.*

May these loving companions rejoice  
as did God's first companions in  
the Garden of Eden.

Blessed are You *Adonai*,  
Who enables partners

to rejoice in their love.

— Larry Novey *Joelle's uncle*

*Barukh ata Adonai,  
Eloheinu melekh haOlam,  
asher bara sasson v'simcha,  
ahuv v'reiah,  
gilah, rinah,  
ditzah v'chedvah,  
ahavah v'achavah,  
shalom v'reiut.*

Blessed are You ...

Creator of joy and gladness !

of lover and beloved !

of merriment and song !

of dance and delight !

of love and harmony !

of peace and companionship !

Oh *Adonai* our God, may all soon hear  
in the cities of Judah  
and in the courtyards of Jerusalem,  
the voices of joy and rejoicing,  
the voices of lover and beloved,  
the voices of partners under the *chuppah*,  
the voices of young people  
feasting and singing.

Blessed are You *Adonai*,

Who causes partners to rejoice  
in their love.

— Elizabeth Richman *officiant*

## Birkat Kohanim/Priestly Blessing

“May Adonai bless you and keep you.

May God cause God’s face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May God lift God’s face to you and grant you peace.”

—Bamidbar/Numbers 6: 24-27

## Breaking the Glass

The origins of this well-known ritual are mysterious, and interpretations abound. Today, the brokenness of the glass reminds us of

- the brokenness of the marriage institution, which is still restricted in most states to mixed-gender partnerships.
- the brokenness of the world and our obligation as a couple to work toward its repair.
- the irrevocability of our commitment to one another.

## Yichud/Unification

Immediately following the ceremony, we will be escorted to a private room, spending the first moments of our married life alone together. Our friends Suzanne and Jacob Feinspan will ceremonially guard the door. During this time, everyone is invited to *shmooze* and *nosh* (socialize and grab a bite) in the lobby. Many thanks to Beth, Joelle’s sister, for creating the display of family photographs in the lobby.

## Dancing!

Once we emerge from the *Yichud* room, dancing will begin!

Dancing at Jewish weddings typically involves going around and around in concentric circles. Some may choose to entertain us with fancy dance moves, athletic feats, and other *shtick*.

## Seudah/Festive meal

Thanks to our friends from the DC area who hand-painted the ceramics decorating each table:

Laura Bellows	Elana Brochin	Alix Davidson
Jessica Gordon	Rachel Hutt	Ariella Kurshan
Tim Hampton	Lori Leibowitz	Rob Levy
Darya Mattes	Lisa Morenoff	Beth Novey
Sam Novey	Scott Rechler	Becca Rosen
Adina Rosenbaum	Gwen Rubinstein	Zach Teutsch

## Why isn’t Joelle wearing a white dress?

She didn’t feel like it.

## Why isn’t Ethan wearing a white dress?

He didn’t feel like it, either.

## Thank you

to all of the family and friends who have supported us in reaching this moment, and to all of the friends who are helping in various ways to make today’s celebration joyous!

## Keep in touch!

Neither our names nor our address is changing today.

We’d love to host you when you’re in town:

**Joelle Novey** **Ethan Merlin**  
 Eastern Village Cohousing  
 7981 Eastern Avenue #419  
 Silver Spring, MD 20910  
 jnovey@post.harvard.edu  
 merlin@post.harvard.edu



## Where we are

Gann Academy: The New Jewish High School of Greater Boston is the school from which Ethan’s brother Jacob graduated in 2003. Gann takes a pluralistic approach to Jewish education, and its students take a diversity of approaches to Jewish practice.

## The four-sided canopy

The *chuppah* (wedding canopy) symbolizes the home that we will build together. It is open on all sides, just as we hope to create a household that welcomes guests and visitors.

The *tallit* (prayer shawl) that forms this *chuppah* is the same one under which Joelle’s parents were married on August 18, 1974.

## Today we remember

Ethel & Julius Novey

*Joelle’s grandparents*

Sara & Melvin Dray

*Joelle’s grandparents*

Gary Dray

*Joelle’s mother’s brother*

Jean Merlin, Max Rabinovitz, Edward Stoller

*Ethan’s grandparents*

*May their memories be a blessing.*

## Processional

George Merlin *Ethan’s grandfather*

Beth Novey *Joelle’s sister*

Matthew Merlin *Ethan’s brother*

Miriam Stoller *Ethan’s grandmother*

Sam Novey *Joelle’s brother*

Jacob Merlin *Ethan’s brother*

Stephen Merlin & Barbara Merlin

Michael Novey & Alison Dray-Novey

*with Ethan*

*with Joelle*

## What we are wearing

Before walking down the aisles, we will meet and each help the other put on a *kittel* (“robe” in Yiddish). In *Ashkenazi* (Eastern European) Jewish tradition, the *kittel* is a sacred symbol of simplicity and humility, worn on certain holidays, as well as at one’s wedding.

At time of death, the *kittel* serves as a burial shroud, symbolizing ultimate human equality. We are wearing *kittels* for our wedding ceremony as a reminder to embrace each other fully and honestly during the life that we have been given.

## Hakafot/Turning

“The Turning Song” by Minna Bromberg

vocals Sarah Beller *friend*

guitar Ben Dreyfus *friend*

**“My soul waits for You more than those who keep watch wait for dawn.”**

—*Tehillim/Psalms 130: 6*

Before stepping under the *chuppah*, we will circle each other a total of seven times, breaking down any last barriers between us.