

## **About the “Golden Stones” that shape our ceremony**

As many of you now know, we first dated while students at Wartburg College more than twenty years ago. By the time we reconnected over the summer of 1999, we had both lived full lives quite apart from the other. As we renewed our relationship, we each shared with the other the core values that had come to guide our own lives during the two decades we had been apart. We were surprised—but then again, not at all surprised—to find that we held many of these values in common. As we began to talk seriously about blending our lives together, we began to speak of these values, these foundational pieces of who we are—both on our own and in our vision of shared life—as Golden Stones. They are values we will seek to maintain and cultivate over the rest of our lives, so we use them today (June 2, 2001) to shape the ceremony in which we pledge ourselves to one another.

### **1. Connections to family, friends, strangers**

This stone honors the connections with our children, our parents, our siblings, and other members of our family and the wider world. It also honors the welcome we offer to those who become family through friendship with us or our children.

### **2. Connections to creation: honoring the earth from our bodies to the dirt**

This stone honors the joy we experience at being immersed in creation. It honors our celebration of being embodied persons and our celebration of the goodness of the earth, both in its wild grandeur and in its more mundane presence in our own backyard.

### **3. Cooperative living with one another**

This stone honors the simple joy we take in living and working side by side. It marks our commitment to share happily in all that it takes to build and maintain a home together—and to do so in ways that care for one another and the earth.

### **4. Communication and commitment to shared growth**

This stone honors the value we place on communication between us as both a grace and a skill, something we do naturally well, but which we also cultivate quite intentionally. It also honors our commitment, both in our communication and beyond to respect, support, and cherish the mystery of one another as our lives unfold side by side.

### **5. Spirituality: turning inward in reverence, celebration, and honor.**

This stone honors the value we place on our interior spiritual lives. It honors both our individual commitment that we each tend this facet of our own self with intention and joy and also our pledge to celebrate and support the unique spiritual journey of the other.

### **6. Spirituality: turning outward in compassion and justice.**

This stone honors the outward movement of our spirituality as our care for those around us. It honors the passion with which we seek to practice compassion and justice toward our neighbors, our companion creatures, and the earth itself. And it honors the various ways we each do this, together and individually, in our work and in our play.

### **7. Hospitality: food and festivity.**

This stone honors the central place that feasting and conviviality play in our lives. It honors the awareness that meals, both as day-to-day events and as festive occasions, are prized by us as moments which welcome all, friend & stranger alike, into our homes and at our tables. Hospitality is prized by us as a moment when what we taste most of all is conviviality.