

MARRIAGE/WEDDING SERVICES

This text is adapted from the Book of Common Worship (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993). * *Indicates the congregation is invited to stand*

* Entrance

* Sentences of Scripture

My friends hear these words from the first letter of John, the fourth chapter: God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

* Statement on the Gift of Marriage

We gather this day in the presence of God, giving thanks for the gift of marriage and to witness the joining together of {name} and {name}. Our purpose is to ask God's blessing on union as {name} and {name} join one another in covenant union. We ask also for God's strength so they may be empowered to endure the many joys and trials that come with marriage.

God created us male and female, and gave us in marriage so that husband and wife may help and comfort each other, living faithfully together for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as they both shall live. Marriage is a gift from God, and is designed for us to express our love for one another, just as God expresses His love for us. In marriage we are called to a new way of life. This new way of living must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly and prayerfully.

We rejoice that marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be held in honor by all.

* Prayer

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are always faithful in your love for us. Look mercifully upon {name} and {name}, who have come seeking your blessing. Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them so that with steadfast love they may honor the promises they make this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord and our Savior. Amen.

Declarations of Intent

{name} and {name}, understanding that God has created, ordered and blessed the covenant of marriage, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter into this covenant with one another?

Response: We do.

Affirmations of the Families

Will the families of {name} and {name} please stand?

{name} and {name} are creating a new family, but their lives have been nurtured and sustained by you. You will continue to be an integral part of their lives together, and will be a main source of strength for them in the years to come. Do you give your consent and blessing to {name} and {name}, and do you promise to do everything in your power to uphold them in their marriage?

Response: We do and we will.

Affirmation of the Congregation

Will the congregation please stand?

Our God is a covenant God and calls us into communities of faith. You are witnessing the formation of this covenant bond between {name} and {name}, and as friends and relatives, are part of their covenant community. Will all of you witnessing these vows do everything in your power to uphold {name} and {name} in their marriage?

Response: We will.

Special Music/Solo/Hymn

The Readings

These are some suggested readings, widely considered appropriate for most weddings:

Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-31
Genesis 2:18-24
Ruth 1:16-17
Psalm 33:1-5
Psalm 37:3-7
Psalm 67
Psalm 100
Psalm 103
Psalm 121
Psalm 127
Psalm 128
Psalm 150
Song of Solomon 2:8-13
Song of Solomon 8:6-7
Isaiah 54:5-8

New Testament

Matthew 5:1-10
Matthew 7: 24-27
Matthew 19:3-6
John 15:9-17
Romans 8:31-39
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18
1 Corinthians 13
Ephesians 3:14-21
Ephesians 5:2, 21-33
Colossians 3:12-17
1 Peter 3:1-9
1 John 3:18-24
1 John 4:7-16

Homily

Special Music/Solo/Hymn

Vows

{name} and {name}, you have declared before God and these witnesses that it is your intention to marry. Now, I ask you to join your hands, and with these promises bind yourselves together as husband and wife.

I, {name}, take you, {name}, before God and these witnesses, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, to love and to cherish, for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

I, {name}, take you, {name}, before God and these witnesses, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, to love and to cherish, for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

Exchange of Rings

What do you bring as a physical sign and seal of this marriage?

The minister receives the rings (or other symbol) from the bearer, then offers the following prayer:

By your blessing, O God, may these rings be to {name} and {name} symbols of unending love and faithfulness, reminding them of the covenant they have made this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

{name}, repeat after me.

{name}, I give you this ring as a sign of our covenant, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

{name}, repeat after me.

{name}, I give you this ring as a sign of our covenant, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Eternal God, without your grace no promise is sure. Strengthen {name} and {name} with patience, kindness, gentleness, and all other gifts of your Spirit, so that they may fulfill these vows they have made before you and these witnesses. Keep them faithful to each other and to you. Fill them with such love and joy that they may build a home of peace and welcome. Guide them by your Word to serve you all their days.

Helps us all, O God, to do your will in each of our homes and lives. Enrich us with your grace so that, supporting one another, we may serve those in need and hasten the coming of peace, love and justice on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Debts and Debtors)

Announcement of Marriage

Before God, and in your presence, {name} and {name} have made their solemn vows to each other. They have confirmed their promises by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. Therefore, I declare, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that these two are now husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

Unity Candle/Special Music

Charge and Blessing

{name} and {name}, God tells us in holy scripture whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him.

The Lord bless you, and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift his countenance upon you, and grant you peace.

* Presentation of the Couple

Beloved, I give to you {name} and {name} {last name}.

You may now kiss the bride.

* Recessional

** Indicates the congregation is invited to stand*

Alternate Orders of Wedding Services

Adapted from Sourcebook of Weddings (Canton, OH: Communication Resources Inc., 1998) and the United Methodist Book of Worship (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992).

1. Prelude

Processional

Invocation

Greeting: Welcome and Introduction

Question

Minister's Remarks

Vows

Rings

Declaration of Marriage

Wedding Prayer

Benediction

Embrace and Kiss

Introduction of Couple

Recessional

2. Prelude

Processional

Invocation

Greeting: Welcome and Introduction

Minister's Remarks

Vows

Rings

The Unity Candle

Declaration of Marriage

Wedding Prayer

Benediction

Embrace and Kiss

Introduction of Couple

Recessional

3. Entrance

Gathering

Greeting

Declaration of Intent

Declaration by Man and Woman

Response of the Families and People

Prayer

Proclamation and Response

The Readings

The Sermon

The Marriage

Exchange of Vows

Blessing and exchange of rings

Declaration of Marriage

Blessing of the Marriage

Thanksgiving and Communion (*Optional*)

Sending Forth