



WEDDING CEREMONY CHOICES

Check your choices for the following elements within the service: the first option is more traditional, while other selections may be more contemporary.

THE GIFT OF MARRIAGE

Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God to join this man and woman in holy marriage, which is instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor by all people. Let us, therefore, reverently remember that God has established and declared that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who choose to enter into this relationship to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with each other's infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble, and sorrow; in honesty and industry they are to provide for each other and for their household in early matters. They are to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God and live together as heirs of the grace of life. For as much as these two persons have come here this day to be made one in this holy estate, if there be any here present who know any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined in marriage, I require him now to make it known, or ever after hold his peace.

We gather in the presence of God to give thanks for the gift of marriage, to witness the joining together of:

_____ and _____,

To surround them with our prayers, and to ask God's blessing upon them, so that they may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in their love for God.

God created us male and female, and gave us marriage so that husband and wife may help and comfort each other, living faithfully together in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, throughout all their days.

God gave us marriage for the full expression of the love between a man and a woman. In marriage a woman and a man belong to each other, and with affection and tenderness, God gave us marriage for the well-being of human society, for the ordering of family life, and for the birth and nurture of children.

- Family and friends of _____ and _____, throughout history people have felt a need to celebrate the great moments of life, to invite their loved ones and friends to join with them in sharing the joy and significance of some high moment. But men and women of faith have wished, not only to share these experiences with those they love, but also to hold them up before the God who is the giver of all good and perfect gifts, including the gift of marriage. And so it is that we have been invited here today to join with _____ and _____ as they are made one in holy marriage and seek the Lord's blessing upon their union.

THE INVOCATION

- Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, our Father, whose presence is the happiness of every condition, and whose favor we implore in all of our relations, we ask that You would be present with and favorable unto these your servants, _____ and _____, that this day they may be truly joined in the honorable estate of marriage, in the covenant of their God. We rejoice that You have brought them together by Your providence, that through family and friends and life circumstances You have prepared them for each other and equipped them for the commitment they make this day. Sanctify them now by Your spirit we pray, and give them a new frame of heart fit for their new estate. Enrich them with all grace, we pray, so that they may enjoy the comforts, undergo the cares and endure the trials, and perform the duties of life together in a manner that is pleasing in your sight under Your heavenly guidance and protection. This we ask through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.
- Let us pray: Gracious God, You are always faithful in your love for us. Look mercifully upon _____ and _____, 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 Savior. Amen.
- Eternal God, our Heavenly Father, we remember how you gladdened a wedding in Cana of Galilee by presence of your Son Jesus, who turned the water into wine and celebrated the covenant of marriage with His family and friends. And so we ask that His presence here among us would make this similar occasion one of rejoicing. Look with favor upon _____ and _____, as they enter into holy marriage. As You have brought them together by Your providence, sanctify them now by Your Spirit. Enrich them with Your grace that they may enjoy the comforts, undergo the cares, endure the trials and perform the duties of life together in a manner well-pleasing in Your sight, for we ask these things in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE DECLARATIONS OF INTENT

- _____, will you have this woman to be your wife, and will you pledge your faithfulness to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her and cherish her as is God's intention, and will you provide for her needs and her desires as God enables you? Will you?
GROOM'S RESPONSE: "I WILL"

_____, will you have this man to be your husband, and will you pledge your faithfulness to him, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him and cherish him as is God's intention, and will you provide for his needs and his desires as God enables you? Will you?
BRIDE'S RESPONSE: "I WILL"

- The minister addresses the bride and groom individually, and says:*

_____, understanding that God has created, ordered and blessed the covenant of marriage, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter into this covenant?
ANSWER: "I DO"

THE GIVING OF THE BRIDE

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

- RESPONSE BY FATHER: "HER MOTHER AND I"
- ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE (e.g., "her mother/her father/her uncle/her stepfather/her grandparents): _____

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE FAMILIES

- The minister may address the families of the bride and groom:*
_____ (names of family members), do you give your blessing to _____ and _____ and promise to do everything in your power to uphold them in their marriage?
ANSWER: "WE DO"

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE CONGREGATION

- The minister may address the congregation, saying:*
Will all of you witnessing these vows do everything in your power to uphold _____ and _____ in their marriage?
ANSWER: "WE WILL"

THE CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

(optional)

- You may wish the congregation to join in singing a hymn from the hymnbook or have a presentation of sacred music as you move into the chancel.

Name of selection: _____

SELECTED READINGS

(optional)

Old Testament Reading: _____

Read by: Minister or _____

New Testament Reading: _____

Read by: Minister or _____

Personally Selected Reading: _____

Read by: _____

INSTRUCTION TO THE COUPLE (by Minister)

THE EXCHANGE OF VOWS

As you join hands would you now make your marriage vows before God and these witnesses.

- The groom says: I, _____, take you, _____ to be my wife; and I promise, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.

The bride says: I, _____, take you, _____ to be my husband; and I promise, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful wife; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.

- The groom says: _____, I take you to be my wife from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being.

The bride says: _____, I take you to be my husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being.

- The groom says: I take you, _____, to be my wife. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

The bride says: I take you, _____, to be my husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

- The groom says: I take you, _____, to be my wife, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you. I will respect, trust, help and care with you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world and God; through the best and worst of what is to come as long as we live.

The bride says: I take you, _____, to be my husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you. I will respect, trust, help and care with you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world and God; through the best and worst of what is to come as long as we live.

- The groom says: I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife and I promise with God's help to love you as God has loved us. I will strive to be patient and kind; neither envious or boastful, arrogant or rude. I will not insist on my own way or be irritable or resentful. I will rejoice in the truth, not in wrongdoing. Together with you I will bear and believe all things; hope and endure all things. My love for you will never end. And though my knowledge is imperfect, I will endeavor to know you and God more fully, even as we are fully known. It is my prayer and my vow that in all our years to come, faith, hope and love will abide. But love will be our greatest and most sacred bond.

The bride says: I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband and I promise with God's help to love you as God has loved us. I will strive to be patient and kind; neither envious or boastful, arrogant or rude. I will not insist on my own way or be irritable or resentful. I will rejoice in the truth, not in wrongdoing. Together with you I will bear and believe all things; hope and endure all things. My love for you will never end. And though my

knowledge is imperfect, I will endeavor to know you and God more fully, even as we are fully known. It is my prayer and my vow that in all our years to come, faith, hope and love will abide. But love will be our greatest and most sacred bond.

- The bride and groom will write their own vows (to be shared with the minister prior to the ceremony).

THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

- The minister will receive the rings from the best man and the maid/matron of honor, saying:

These rings will serve as the visible symbols of vows you have spoken and as you wear them may you be ever mindful of the promises that undergird and mold your life and your future as husband and wife.

Bless, O Lord, these rings that they may be for _____ and _____ and for all others, a sign of the promise of love and fidelity exchanged this day.

Each places a ring on the finger of the other, repeating the following:

- In token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love, with this ring I thee wed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- or**
- This ring I give you, as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

THE LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

(optional)

- Although not included in more traditional marriage services, this is popular with many. If included, the minister will say:

We read these words of our Lord in Matthew's Gospel:

Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

And now in an act symbolic of these words of our Lord, _____ and _____ will light a single flame from two separate flames, symbolizing the two becoming one.

THE NUPTIAL BLESSING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

(optional)

- Check if you wish to kneel for this.
- Check if you intend to have the Lord's Prayer sung instead of recited.

Most merciful and gracious God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named: bestow upon these your servants, _____ and _____, the seal of your approval, and your fatherly benediction. Grant unto them the grace to fulfill, with pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between them made this day, guide them together, we pray, in righteousness and peace, that loving and serving You with one heart and mind all of the days of their life, they may be abundantly enriched with the tokens of your everlasting favor, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who teaches us to say when we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

- Eternal God, Creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: look with favor upon the world You have made and redeemed, and especially upon _____ and _____.

Give them wisdom and devotion in their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy.

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in Your will, and their spirits in Your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with You and each other all the days of their life.

Give them the grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and confess their fault, and to seek each other's forgiveness and Yours.

Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair.

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual love that they may reach out in concern for others.

[Give to them, if it is your will, the gift of children and the wisdom to bring them up to know You, to love You, and serve You.]

Grant that all who have witnessed these vows today may find their lives strengthened, and that all who are married may depart with their own promises renewed.

Enrich with Your grace all husbands and wives, parents and children, that, loving and supporting one another, they may serve those in need and be a sign of Your kingdom.

Grant that the bonds by which all Your children are united to one another may be so transformed by Your Spirit that Your peace and justice may fill the earth through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

- O God, our dwelling place in all generations: Look with favor upon those who come before You this day and grant them the joy of Your Kingdom. As You have made covenant with Your Holy Church, so also bless and guard this marriage by the mercy of Your eternal love. As You love them so also may they love each other until You have accomplished Your purposes through them. Grant that every marriage and every home here this day may be inspired with Your Holy presence, that we may be able to show forth Christ to those around us. This we pray for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

- We praise You for creating mankind male and female, so that each may find fulfillment in the other.

We praise You for all the ways in which Your love comes into our lives and for all the joys that come to men and women through marriage.

Today especially we think of _____ and _____ as they begin their life together.

With them we thank You for the love and care of their parents, which has guided them to maturity and prepared them for each other.

[With them we pray for their parents, that at this moment of parting they may find new happiness as they share their children's joy.]

And now, Father, we pray for _____ and _____.

Give them the strength to keep the vows they have made, to be loyal and faithful to each other, and to support each other throughout their life; may they bear each other's burdens and share each other's joys.

Help them to be honest and patient with each other, to be loving and wise parents of any children they may have, and to welcome both friends and strangers into their home.

In all the future together, may they enjoy each other's lives and grow through each other's love.

Finally, we ask You to keep them faithful to You, and at the end of this life on earth to receive them, and us, into Your eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ, to whom with You our Father and the Holy Spirit be all honor and praise, now and forever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

THE DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

- And now, by the authority committed unto me as a minister of the church of Christ, I declare that _____ and _____ are now husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God and the laws of the state: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Whom, therefore, God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

THE BENEDICTION

- Now may the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace both now and in the life everlasting. Amen.

The grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you, the Holy Spirit keep you, that you may live in faith, abound in hope and grow in love both now and forevermore. Amen.

THE PRESENTATION

(optional)

- Another recent custom not ordinarily included in the traditional service is called the Presentation. Following "the kiss," as the Bride and Groom turn and face the congregation, the minister will say:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present to you
Mr. and Mrs. _____."

RECESSIONAL

POSTLUDE