

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

This service of Christian marriage is provided for couples who wish to solemnize their marriage in a service of Christian worship. Christian marriage is proclaimed as a sacred covenant reflecting the Baptismal Covenant. Everything about the service is designed to witness that this is a Christian marriage.

Both words and actions consistently reflect the belief that husband and wife are equal partners in Christian marriage and that they are entering into the marriage of their own volition.

Those present are understood to be an active congregation rather than simply passive witnesses. They give their blessing to the couple and to the marriage, and they join in prayer and praise.

Ethnic and cultural traditions are encouraged and may be incorporated into the service at the discretion of the pastor.

Any children of the man or the woman, other family, and friends may take a variety of roles in the service, depending on their ages and abilities. They may, for example, be members of the wedding party, participate in the Response of the Families and People, read scripture lessons, sing or play instrumental music, or make a witness in their own words.

The decision to perform the ceremony is the right and responsibility of the pastor, in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church. All plans should be approved by the pastor. The pastor's "due counsel with the parties involved" prior to marriage, mandated by The United Methodist Book of Discipline, should include, in addition to premarital counseling, discussing and planning the service with them and informing them of policies or guidelines established by the congregation on such matters as decorations, photography, and audio or video recording. Any leadership roles taken by other clergy should be at the invitation of the pastor of the church where the service is held. The organist or person in charge of the music should be consulted and work with the couple in all decisions on music selection.

In the case of couples who are not church members or are not prepared to make the Christian commitment expressed in our services, adaptations may be made at the discretion of the pastor.

ENTRANCE

The woman and the man, entering separately or together, now come forward with members of the wedding party. The woman and the man may be escorted by representatives of their families until they have reached the front of the church, or through the Response of the Families, at which time their escorts are seated.

GREETING

Pastor to people: *Friends, we are gathered together in the sight of God to witness and bless the joining together of Name and Name in Christian marriage. The covenant of marriage was established by God, who created us male and female for each other. With his presence and power Jesus graced a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and in his sacrificial love gave us the example for the love of husband and wife. Name and Name come to give themselves to one another in this holy covenant.*

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Pastor to the persons who are to marry: *I ask you now, in the presence of God and these people, to declare your intention to enter into union with each other through the grace of Jesus Christ, who calls you into union with himself as acknowledged in your baptism.*

Pastor to the woman: *Name, will you have Name to be your husband, to live together in holy marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?*

Woman: I will.

Pastor to the man: *Name, will you have Name to be your wife, to live together in holy marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?*

Man: I will

RESPONSE OF THE FAMILIES AND THE PEOPLE

Pastor to the father of the Bride: *Who gives this woman to be married to this man?*

Father of Bride: Her mother and I do.

Pastor to the people: *The marriage of Name and Name unites their families and creates a new one. They ask for your blessing. Will all of you, by God's grace, do everything in your power to uphold and care for these two persons in their marriage? If so say we will.*

People: We will.

PRAYER

Pastor: *Let us pray. God of all peoples, you are the true light illumining everyone. You show us the way, the truth, and the life. You love us even when we are disobedient. You sustain us with your Holy Spirit. We rejoice in your life in the midst of our lives. We praise you for your presence with us, and especially in this act of solemn covenant; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

A Solo, hymn, psalm, canticle, anthem, or other music may be offered before or after the readings.

Suggested Scripture Lessons

Genesis 1:26 –28,31a

Song of Solomon 2:10 –14, 16a; 8:6–7

Isaiah 43:1 –7

Isaiah 55:10 –13

The creation of man and woman

Love is strong as death.

You are precious in God's eyes.

You shall go out in joy.

Isaiah 61:10 –62:3	Rejoice in the Lord.
Isaiah 63:7 –9	The steadfast love of the Lord
Romans 12:1 –2, 9–18	The life of a Christian
1 Corinthians 13	The greatest of these is love.
2 Corinthians 5:14 –17	In Christ we are a new creation.
Ephesians 2:4 –10	God's love for us
Ephesians 4:1 –6	Called to the one hope
Ephesians 4:25 –5:2	Members one of another
Philippians 2:1 –2	The Christ like spirit
Philippians 4:4 –9	Rejoice in the Lord.
Colossians 3:12 –17	Live in love and thanksgiving.
1 John 3:18 –24	Love one another.
1 John 4:7 –16	God is love.
Revelation 19:1, 5–9a	The wedding feast of the Lamb
Matthew 5:1 –10	The Beatitudes
Matthew 7:21, 24–27	A house built upon a rock
Matthew 22:35 –40	Love, the greatest commandment
Mark 2:18 –22	Joy in Christ as at a wedding
Mark 10:42 –45	True greatness
John 2:1 –11	The marriage feast of Cana
John 15:9 –17	Remain in Christ's love.

SERMON OR OTHER WITNESS TO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

PRAYER *

Pastor: Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all life, Author of salvation, Giver of all grace: Bless and sanctify with your Holy Spirit Name and Name, who come now to join in marriage. Grant that they may give their vows to each other in the strength of your steadfast love. Enable them to grow in love and peace with you and with one another all their days that they may reach out in concern and service to the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

The woman and man face each other, joining hands. The pastor will prompt them, line by line.

Man to woman:

**In the name of God,
I, Name, take you, Name, to be my wife,**

Woman to man:

**In the name of God,
I, Name, take you, Name, to be my husband,**

Together:

**to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
until we are parted by death.**

This is my solemn vow.

BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The pastor: These rings are the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, signifying to all the uniting of Name and Name in holy marriage.

Let us pray: Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings that they who wear them may live in your peace and continue in your favor all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(While placing the ring on the third finger of the recipient's left hand, the giver will say prompted, line by line, by the pastor):

**Name, I give you this ring
as a sign of my vow,
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.**

UNITY CANDLE:

(If a unity candle is used, the two side candles representing the husband and wife are lighted first, and the center candle representing the marriage is lighted at this or some later point in the service. The side candles are not extinguished because both husband and wife retain their personal identities.)

BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

Pastor: Let us pray: Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in making us a covenant people through our Savior Jesus Christ and for consecrating in his name the marriage covenant of Name and Name. Grant that their love for each other may reflect the love of Christ for us and grow from strength to strength as they faithfully serve you in the world. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their heads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their lives and in their deaths. Finally, by your grace, bring them and all of us to that table where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

The wife and husband join hands.

Pastor to husband and wife: You have declared your consent and vows before God and this congregation. May God confirm your covenant and fill you both with grace.

Pastor to people: Now that Name and Name have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands, and the giving and receiving of rings, I announce to you that they are husband and wife; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder. Amen.

THE MARRIAGE KISS

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEWLY WEDS

RECESSIONAL