ORDER OF WORSHIP
FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

THE APPROACH TO GOD

The service of worship may begin with instrumental and/or choral music in praise of God. When the wedding party has assembled they may approach the front of the church during a

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

All present shall stand to sing, and remain standing through the Salutation.

VOTUM

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Amen.

SENTENCES

One of the following or another appropriate scriptural sentence shall be read.

I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever;

with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known to all generations.

I will declare that your love stands firm forever,

that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. Psalm 89:1-2

Or,

O servants of the Lord, you that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God! Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for he is gracious! Psalm 135:1b-3

SALUTATION

Grace and peace be yours in fullest measure, through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. Amen. II Peter 1:2
DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

After the people have been seated, the minister shall say:

We are gathered here to praise God for the covenant of grace and reconciliation made with us through Jesus Christ, to hear it proclaimed anew, and to respond to it as we witness the covenant of marriage N. N.________ and N. N. _________ make with each other in Christ’s name.

Christian marriage is a joyful covenanting between a man and a woman in which they proclaim, before God and human witnesses, their commitment to live together in spiritual, physical, and material unity. In this covenant they acknowledge that the great love God has shown for each of them enables them to love each other. They affirm that God’s gracious presence and abiding power are needed for them to keep their vows, to continue to live in love, and to be faithful servants of Christ in this world. For human commitment is fragile and human love imperfect, but the promise of God is eternal and the love of God can bring our love to perfection.

THE WORD OF GOD

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Most gracious God, be with us in this time of joy and celebration. Reveal the good news of your love for us in the proclamation of your Word. Enable us to respond to you with faithfulness and obedience, so that in all we do and say your name may be praised. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

LESSONS

One or more lessons from Scripture shall be read. If there is only one lesson, it shall be from the New Testament.


Epistle: I Corinthians 12:31-13:8a; Ephesians 3:14-21; Colossians 3:12-17; I John 4:7-16

SERMON

The minister may preach a brief sermon relating the Word of God to the response of Christian Marriage.

PRAYER FOR BLESSING

Almighty God, through your grace write these words in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruits of the Spirit, to the honor and praise of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE RESPONSE TO GOD

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

The persons to be married shall stand with their attendants before the minister, who shall ask the man:

N.______ will you receive N.______ as your wife and bind yourself to her in the covenant of marriage? Will you promise to love and honor her in true devotion; to rejoice with her in times of felicity and grieve with her in times of sorrow; and be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

I will, with the help of God.

The minister shall ask the woman:

N.______ will you receive N.______ as your husband and bind yourself to him in the covenant of marriage? Will you promise to love and honor him in true devotion; to rejoice with him in times of felicity and grieve with him in times of sorrow; and be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

I will, with the help of God.

The minister shall ask the family members of the persons to be married to stand. When they have done so, the minister shall ask:

Will you receive N.______ and N.______ into your family and uphold them with your love as they establish themselves as a family within your own?

We will.
The minister shall ask all present to stand. When they have done so, the minister shall ask:

Will you who witness this covenant between N.______ and N.______ respect their marriage and sustain them with your friendship and care?

We will.

VOWS

The minister shall say to the man and the woman:

N.______ and N.______, before God and these witnesses, make your covenant of marriage with each other.

Vows may be exchanged to Form I or Form II below.

Form I

The man shall face the woman, take her hand in his, and say:

I, N.______ take you, N.______, to be my wife,
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
as long as we both shall live.
To this I pledge myself truly with all my heart.

The minister shall receive the ring from its bearer and give it to the man, who shall place it on the hand of the woman and say:

This ring I give in token of the covenant made this day between us; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The woman, still facing the man and taking his hand in hers, shall say:

I, N.______ take you, N.______, to be my husband,
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
as long as we both shall live.
To this I pledge myself
truly with all my heart.

The minister shall receive the ring from its bearer and give it to the woman, who shall place it on the hand of the man and say:

This ring I give in token of the covenant made this day between us; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Or,

Form II

The man and the woman shall face each other and take hands. They shall say to each other, in turn,

N._____,
I give myself to you in marriage
and vow to be your husband wife
all the days of our lives.

I give you my hands
and take your hands in mine
as a symbol and pledge
of our uniting in one flesh.

I give you my love,
the outpouring of my heart,
as a symbol and pledge
of our uniting in one spirit.

I give you this ring
from out of my worldly goods
as a symbol and pledge
of our uniting as one family.
After each has said the vows, he/she shall take the ring from the minister and place in on the other’s hand.

BLESSING

Prayer may be offered according to Form I or Form II. The minister may ask the married persons to kneel, or to remain standing and face the minister.

Form I

Let us ask for the blessing of the Lord.

Eternal God,
in whom we live and move and have our being;
bless N.______ and N.______
that they may live together in marriage
according to the vows they have made before you.

Bless them with your love,
that their love for each other
may grow ever deeper,
and their love for you may shine forth
before the world.

Bless them with your mercy
that they may be patient and caring,
willing to share each other’s joys and sorrows,
to forgive and to be forgiven,
in their life together and in the world.

Bless them with your peace,
that they may be calm and sure,
trusting in you with confident hearts
and living in harmony and concord
within their family and among all people.

Bless them with your presence,
that within their hearts and their home
Christ may reign as head,
and that they may acknowledge his Lordship
with praise and thanksgiving.
now, and through all their life together, to the glory of your holy name! Amen.

Or:

Form II

Let us pray.

O God, Creator of life, Author of Salvation and Giver of all good gifts; look with favor upon N.______ and N.______ who have covenanted marriage in your name. Bless their union, and sustain them in their devotion to each other and to you.

Grant them the desire to order their lives according to your will, that in their relationship with each other, and those around them, they may show forth the joy and peace of Christ.

Sustain them in the seasons and conditions of their lives by the power of your Holy Spirit, that in joy and sorrow, leisure and labor, plenty and want, they may give thanks for your steadfast love and declare your faithfulness before the world.

Increase in them the will to grow in faith and service to Christ. Let their life together bear witness to the healing and reconciling love of Christ for this troubled, broken world.

Give them a deep appreciation of the unity of all persons within your creation, that their love for each other may be reflected also in their desire for justice, dignity and meaning for all your children.

Keep ever vivid in their hearts a vision of your kingdom, and enable them to live in the hope of its fulfillment. By the power of your Spirit, O God, accomplish these petitions as they accord with your will, for we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION

N.______ and N.______ have made their covenant of marriage together before God and all here present, by solemn vows, by the joining of hands, and the giving and receiving of rings. Therefore, I declare that they are husband and wife; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
and (to the couple)

Be united; live in peace, and the God of peace and love will be with you.

II Corinthians 12:11

or (to all present)

They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, no one may divide. Amen.

Matthew 19:6

PEACE

The husband and wife greet each other with the kiss of peace.

BENEDICTION

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

II Corinthians 12:13

RECESSIONAL HYMN

A hymn of thanksgiving may be sung, or instrumental music played, during which the married persons and their attendants may recess.