

Wedding Service Ideas

Book: The Christian Wedding Planner

Authors: Ruth Muzzy and R. Kent Hughes

Chapter 13 – “Ceremony Specifics”

ISBN: 0-8423-0456-8

The Christian faith, like marriage, aims at teaching us that the time when we are most ourselves is, paradoxically, when we are busy losing ourselves in another, when we are before the altar making vows of love and self-sacrifice, when we are out of our own depth and drowning in the deep waters of otherness. Mike Mason, The Mystery of Marriage

There is a tendency when planning a wedding to get caught up in all the extraneous details. But more important than how the church and/or the wedding party looks is how meaningful and worshipful the ceremony is. Take time as you read this chapter to focus on the sacredness of marriage, then concentrate on making your ceremony a reflection of that meaning.

The church office can probably provide you with an example of a ceremony done at the church. And many of the major denominations have standard orders of service that are readily available. We have included six of them in this chapter. Glancing through one or more of these orders may give you workable ideas for your own ceremony (see "Ceremony Plan," pages 150-151).

Before talking with the minister about the wedding ceremony, you should realize that the Bible doesn't specify exactly what a wedding should include. There isn't one "right" ceremony. That is why we have such extremes within the Church itself. For instance, an old Quaker wedding simply had the bride and groom declare their love and commitment as part of the Sunday morning worship service. On the opposite extreme were the lavish baroque marriage ceremonies of the European monarchs.

Even though the Bible doesn't give any clear-cut answers, some beautiful wedding traditions have developed from the Christian context. You and your groom will be wise to attend closely to the traditions of the church to which you belong.

Be careful as you plan your ceremony. We would not encourage the use of "pop" jargon because it might prove embarrassing as you look back on your wedding in future years. On the other hand, time-honored fortes of expression wear well with the years. This does not mean there shouldn't be any contemporary touches to your ceremony. However, they should be used carefully and tastefully. Do not think of your wedding as a show or performance. Your ceremony should be a time of worship as you pledge yourselves to each other and to the God who brought you together.

As you meet with the minister to discuss wedding plans, keep in mind that there are as many opinions of what is right or wrong in a ceremony as there are ministers. And each minister will vary in flexibility. Some won't allow variations, while others will be willing to try anything. You will have some idea of what to expect if the minister who is marrying you is from your home church. Whatever your situation, do not attempt to present your minister with orders. Be flexible yourself, be a learner.

Orders of Service Outlines

Below are examples of six standard orders of service: Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Baptist, followed by a service from an interdenominational church. Items listed in *italics* are considered optional. Though other samples could also have been included, most would be variations of one of these forms.

The complete texts of the denominational services are included at the end of this chapter.

PRESBYTERIAN ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude
- Solo (or special music)
- Processional
- Call to Worship
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Charge
(Minister's introductory remarks that describe the nature of Christian marriage.)
- Prayer
- Declaration of Intent
(Bride and groom signify intent by responding to the pastor's questions with a vocal affirmation. If the bride is being given away, it takes place at this time.)
- Reading of Scripture

- Homily (brief sermon)
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Christ Candle

It should be noted that the Christ candle (sometimes called the unity candle) may also be placed after the pronouncement of marriage.

- Prayer for the Couple (ending in the Lord's Prayer)
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Benediction
- Kiss Recessional
- Postlude

METHODIST ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude
- Solo (or special music)
- Processional
- Call to Worship
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Charge
(Minister's introductory remarks which describe the nature of Christian marriage.)
- Declaration of Intent
(Bride and groom signify intent by responding to the minister's questions with a vocal affirmation. If the bride is being given away, it takes place at this time.)
- Reading of Scripture
- Homily
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Christ Candle
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Prayer for the Couple
- The Lord's Prayer
- Benediction
- Recessional
- Postlude

EPISCOPAL ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude
- Solo (or special music)
- Processional
- Charge
(Minister's introductory remarks that describe the nature of Christian marriage.)
- Declaration of Consent
(Bride and groom signify their consent by responding to the minister's questions with vocal affirmation. The congregation also responds. If the bride is being given away, it takes place at this time.)
- Hymn (or psalm or anthem)
- People's Response
- Prayer
- Reading of Scripture
- Psalm (or hymn or anthem)
- People's Response
- Homily (or other response to readings)
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Prayers
(If Communion is to follow, the Lord's Prayer may be omitted here.)
- The Final Prayer (called "The Blessing of the Marriage")

- Kiss
- Recessional
- Postlude

ROMAN CATHOLIC ORDER OF SERVICE

- The Preparation Rites
 Informal greeting of the congregation and/or special directions about the liturgy
- Song practice (optional)
- Welcome of the bride and groom by the presider
- Processional
- Opening prayer for the liturgy
- The Liturgy of the Word
 The first reading
- Silence for reflection
- The second reading
- Silence for reflection
- Alleluia (music) Gospel welcome
- The Gospel reading
- The Rite of Marriage
 Take positions
- The questions and answers
- The consent (exchange of vows)
- The exchange of rings
- Prayer
- The intercessory prayer of the faithful
- The preparation of the table
- Solo (optional)
- Prayer
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 The Communion
- The conclusion
- Solo (optional)
- Recessional

LUTHERAN ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude
- Solo (or special music)
- Processional
- Call to Worship
- Reading of Scripture
- Homily
- Hymn
- Charge
 (Minister's introductory remarks that describe the nature of Christian marriage.)
- Declaration of Intent
 (Bride and groom signify intent by responding to the minister's questions with a vocal affirmation.)
- Presentation of the Bride
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Blessing on the Couple
- The Lord's Prayer
- Prayer for the Couple
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Benediction
- Kiss
- Recessional

- Postlude

BAPTIST ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude
- Solo (or special music)
- Processional
- Charge
(Minister's introductory remarks that describe the nature of Christian marriage.)
- Presentation of the Bride
- Homily
- Prayer
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Reading of Scripture (Ruth 1:16)
- Pronouncement of Marriage Prayer
- The Lord's Prayer
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Benediction
- Kiss
- Recessional
- Postlude

INTERDENOMINATIONAL ORDER OF SERVICE

Of course, there are hundreds of variations possible. Included here is one example to suggest some of the options. A service that ties the other five together can be very beautiful. The text for this service is included along with the other texts at the end of the chapter.

- Prelude
- Solo (or special music)
- Processional
- Presentation of the Bride
- Call to Worship
- Hymn (or solo or special music)
- Charge
(Minister's introductory remarks that describe the nature of Christian marriage.) .
- Prayer
- Hymn
- Reading of Scripture
- Homily
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Prayer
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Christ Candle
- Vows of the Christian Home
- Prayer for the Couple
- Solo (or special music)
- Kiss
- Presentation
- Recessional
- Postlude

Added Pastor's Note: This is usually the one I choose to work with in framing a wedding ceremony.

Variations

There are eight areas of the wedding service in which your pastor may possibly allow some changes. They are listed below along with several options. When considering these options, make sure your selection reflects your personal worship and commitment. Don't add something just because it's new and unusual. Words to be verbalized by the bride and groom are in italics.

The Call to Worship

- OPTION A.** Our Lord Jesus said: From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, so they are no longer two but one. Let us worship God.
- OPTION B.** We are gathered here to worship God and to witness the marriage vows of _____ and _____ [full names]. Let your light so shine before people that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Let us worship God.
- OPTION C.** Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. Let us worship God.
- OPTION D.** Let us join in celebration. We have been invited to share the joy of this day with _____ and _____. We are their family and friends, and together we form a community to worship God and to witness their wedding. Let us worship.
- OPTION E.** Except the Lord build the house, they that build it labor in vain. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Let us worship God.
- OPTION F.** _____ and _____ greet you. It is their desire that you enter into the joy and beauty and reverence of the following moments. Let us worship God.

The Charge

- OPTION A.** _____ and _____, marriage is an honorable estate whose bond and covenant was instituted by God in creation. Our Lord Jesus Christ adorned and beautified this holy estate by His presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and His Church. And the Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people. Therefore no one should enter this state of life unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly; but, reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained.
- OPTION B.** Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God to join this man and this 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 among all men. Let us therefore reverently remember that God has established and sanctified marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Savior has declared that a man shall forsake his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who enter into this relation 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 honor and industry to provide for each other and for their household in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as heirs of the grace of life.
- OPTION C.** Today you are presenting yourselves before this congregation to declare your intention of uniting your lives voluntarily and honorably for the service of God and man. You are making a double dedication: to each other, in a lasting and indivisible union that shall endure for the remaining years of your lives; and to God, that He may make you His dual instrument for the accomplishment of His purpose both in and by your personalities. The achievement of this purpose will require appreciation of each other's abilities and virtues, forgiveness of each other's faults, and unflinching devotion to each other's welfare and development. There must be on your part a united consent to the purpose of God as He progressively reveals it to you by His Word and by His Spirit, and an unhesitant acceptance by faith of the challenges that He sets before you. I charge you, therefore, first of all, to consider that your promises to each other are made in the presence of a God who remembers your pledges and who holds you responsible for performing them. They must be kept inviolable before Him. I admonish you to keep in mind that each of you is the object of Christ's redemption and should be valued accordingly. Neither should be neglected or belittled by the other. Esteem each other as God's gift for mutual aid, comfort, and joy, and as a

repository of complete confidence and trust. I encourage you to share willingly and sympathetically your joys and worries, your successes and your struggles, and to be neither conceited by the former nor depressed by the latter. Whichever may prevail, cling closely to each other, that defeats may be met by a united strength and victories by a united joy. I charge you to make your home a place where you will have a refuge from the storms of life not only for yourselves but also for others who may be your guests. Let it be a haven for the-weary, a source of uplift for the discouraged, and a convincing testimony to a cynical world. In short, recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as the head of your house, the ruler of your destinies, and the object of your deepest affection. If you do, He will confirm your marriage by His guidance and will overshadow it with His peace. I charge you to love each other, to support each other, and to serve Him with sincere hearts and determined wills until your mutual service for Him shall be completed.

The Declaration of Intent

In the following examples, (G) signifies groom, (B) signifies bride, and (P) signifies parents.

- OPTION A.** (G) _____, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live? (G) I will.
(B) _____, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live? (B) I will.
- OPTION B.** (G) _____, will you have this woman to be your wife, to live together in holy marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live? (G) I will. (B) _____, will you have this man 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? (B) I will.
- OPTION C.** (G) _____, will you have this woman to be your wife, and will you pledge yourself to her in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage? (G) I will. (B) _____, will you have this man to be your husband, and will you pledge yourself to him in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage? (B) I will.
- OPTION D.** (The minister will address first the man, then the woman; and finally the parents of both.)
(G) _____, do you desire to be united in marriage with (B) _____, and will you love her, comfort her, honor her, and be her helper, as long as you both shall live? (G) I do and I will. (B) _____, do you desire to be united in marriage with (G) _____, and will you love him, comfort him, honor him, and be his helper, as long as you both shall live? (B) I do and I will. (The parents of the bride and groom will stand.) Will you, the parents of (G) _____ and (B) _____, do all in your power to uphold their marriage in the years ahead, and will you promise to pray for and encourage them, that they may fulfill the vows they are making today? (P) We will.
- OPTION E.** (G) _____, will you take (B) _____, to be your wife, and will you be faithful to her, love her, honor her, live with her, and cherish her, according to the commandments of God in holy marriage? (G) I will. (B) _____, will you take (G) _____ to be your husband, and will you be faithful to him, love him, honor him, live with him, and cherish him, according to the commandments of God in holy marriage? (B) I will.
- OPTION F.** Christian marriage is most serious because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that the two of you will become one. Before you lies a future with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and its pains, its joys and its sorrows. These elements are mingled in every life and are to be expected, but for Christians they are not there to be received with resignation but with hope and joy and all the spiritual gifts God's Spirit promises us. (G) _____, do you come here freely to take (B) _____ as your wife, according to the commandments of God in holy marriage? (G) I do.
(B) _____, do you come here freely to take (G) _____ as your husband, according to the commandments of God in holy marriage? (B) I do.
- OPTION G.** (G) _____, do you take (B) _____ to be your wife, to live together in the holy bond of married life? Do you promise to honor and uphold her, and to join with her in making a home that shall endure in

love and peace? Do you affirm your purpose of a deeper union with her, whereby you both shall know joy and fulfillment of love? Do you pledge to her your complete faithfulness through all the changing experiences of life? And, of your own free volition, do you now give yourself to her completely (body, mind, and soul) that from this day forth you shall be hers alone, so long as you both live? (G) I do. (B) _____, do you take (G) _____ to be your husband, to live together in the holy bond of married life? Do you promise to honor and uphold him, and to join with him in making a home that shall endure in love and peace? Do you affirm your purpose of a deeper union with him, whereby you both shall know joy and fulfillment of love? Do you pledge to him your complete faithfulness through all the changing experiences of life? And, of your own free volition, do you now give yourself to him completely (body, mind, and soul) that from this day forth you shall be his alone, so long as you both live? (B) I do.

- OPTION H.** (G) _____, will you have this woman to be your wife, to live together in holy marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, and do you now give yourself to her completely body, mind, and soul that from this day forth you shall be hers alone, so long as you both shall live? (G) I will. (B) _____, will you have this man 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 do you now give yourself to him completely-body, mind, and soul-that from this day forth you shall be his alone, so long as you both shall live? (B) I will.

The Reading of Scripture

Any of the following passages is appropriate for a wedding service:

- Genesis 2:18-24
- Psalm 90:17
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- Song of Solomon 8:6-7
- Matthew 5:13-16
- John 2:1
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- Colossians 3:12-17
- 1 John 4:7-12

The Exchange of Vows

Some couples write their own vows-an exercise we would advise against. Lance Morrow, in an editorial essay for Time magazine entitled "The Hazards of Homemade Vows" (June 27, 1983), warned: "Some couples remain tempted today by the opportunity a wedding offers for self-expression. It is a temptation that should be resisted. The vows that couples devise are, with some exceptions, never as moving to the guests as they are to the couple...."

"If the bride and groom have intimacies to whisper, there are private places for that. A wedding is public business. That is the point of it. The couple is not merely marrying one another. They are, at least in part, submitting themselves to the larger logics of life, to the survival of the community, to life itself.... At the moment of their binding, they should subsume their egos into that larger business within which their small lyricisms become tinny and exhibitionistic."

If, however, you are determined to write your own vows, take great care; don't make them any longer than the normal vows, and don't be overly sentimental or clever. Refrain from using florid language or conceits understood only by the two of you. Be sure your vows are Christ-exalting. Finally, ask your pastor to evaluate them.

Also, although it is nice to have your vows memorized, it is not advisable to try to say them from memory. The stress of the wedding day is enough without this added pressure.

- OPTION A.** I (G) _____ take thee (B) _____ to be my wedded 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, till death do us part. I (B) _____ take thee (G) _____ to be my wedded 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, till death do us part.
- OPTION B.** I (G) _____ take you (B) _____ 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow. I (B) _____ take you (G) _____ 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

- OPTION C.** I (G)_____ take thee (B)_____ to be my wedded wife, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy 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. I (B)_____ take thee (G)_____ to be my wedded husband, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be thy 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.
- OPTION D.** (B)_____ I promise with God's help to be your faithful husband, to love and to serve you as Christ commands, as long as we both shall live. (G)_____ I promise with God's help to be your faithful wife, to love and serve you as Christ commands, as long as we both shall live.
- OPTION E.** (B)_____, I promise before God, our family, and our friends, to be your loving and faithful husband, to share my life with you, in wealth and in poverty, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times, for as long as we both shall live. (G)_____, I promise before God, our family, and our friends, to be your loving and faithful wife, to share my life with you, in wealth and in poverty, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times, for as long as we both shall live.
- OPTION F.** I (G)_____ take you (B)_____ to be my wife, and I promise before God and these friends that I will share my life with you in all love and honor, in all faith and tenderness, through joy and sorrow, in sickness and health, as long as we both shall live. I (B)_____ take you (G)_____ to be my husband, and I promise before God and these friends that I will share my life with you in all love and honor, in all faith and tenderness, through joy and sorrow, in sickness and health, as long as we both shall live.
- OPTION G.** I (G)_____ take you (B)_____ to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life. I (B)_____ take you (G)_____ to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
- OPTION H.** (Said by both separately.) I draw you into my very being to share with you life's sorrows and joys. I promise to respect you and be respected by you, to forgive you and be forgiven by you, to instill hope in you and be given hope by you. I promise to accept the mystery of your uniqueness and to love you as an equal. Through these acts of teaching and learning, we will grow toward each other.

Exchange of Rings

- OPTION A.** Bless, O Lord, this ring, that he [she] who gives it and she [he] who wears it may abide in Thy peace and continue in Thy favor unto their life's end through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Said by both.) With this ring, I thee wed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.
- OPTION B.** Eternal God, we pray for your blessing upon these rings that they may be a permanent reminder of holy promises and steadfast love. Bless those who wear them that they may remain in your favor throughout all their earthly life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Said by both.) This ring is the sign of my promise, and I give it to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- OPTION C.** What symbol do you give of your love? A ring. (B)_____ this ring is the sign of my love and faithfulness, and I give it to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. What symbol do you give of your love? A ring. (G)_____ this ring is the sign of my love and faithfulness, and I give it to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Eternal God, bless these rings that as (G)_____ and (B)_____ wear them, they will be reminded of their faith in you and their promises to each other. Let these rings be symbols of a deep and an unending love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- OPTION D.** What symbols do you give of these holy promises? (Said by both.) This ring. Receive this ring as an outward pledge and symbol of my promise to fulfill these vows which we have taken.
- OPTION E.** What token do you give of your love? (Said by both.) A ring. With this ring I thee wed with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Prayer: Bless, O Lord, these rings to be a symbol of the solemn vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other in holy matrimony; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Christ Candle

Most churches provide a special Christ candle (or unity candle) candelabra that holds three candles. Usually, when the wedding candles are lit, the two outside candles are lit, leaving the center candle untouched. The two burning candles symbolize the bride and groom. When the bride and groom use their candles to light the center candle together, it symbolizes the union of their lives in Christ. The Christ candle may be lit without an introduction or after the minister's remarks (see the interdenominational text).

Vows of the Christian Home

Realizing the weakening structure of the family in society today, many Christian couples are interested in doing more than pledging themselves to one another; they desire to establish nurturing homes in which to build Christians. To this end, during the ceremony, the wedded couple repeats the following vows together.

“Depending upon God for strength and wisdom, we pledge ourselves to the establishment of a Christian home. Together we will constantly seek God's will and honor Christ in our marriage.”

Texts of Wedding Ceremonies

As you examine the six sample denominational wedding texts, you should remember that they do not mention the prelude, processional, recessional, or postlude. Neither do they consistently include the homily (short sermon) or suggestions as to where special music, hymns, or the Christ candle might be placed. However, if they are read with reference to the previous sample orders of service, they are easily understandable.

PRESBYTERIAN

CALL TO WORSHIP

Dearly beloved we are assembled here in the presence of God, to join this man and this 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 among all men. Let us therefore reverently remember that God has established and sanctified marriage, for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Savior has declared that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who enter into this relation 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 to provide for each other, and for their household, in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life.

Forasmuch as these two persons have come hither to be made one in this holy estate, if there be any here present who knows any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined in marriage, I require him now to make it known, or ever after to hold his peace.

CHARGE

I charge you both, before the great God, the Searcher of all hearts, that if either of you know any reason why ye may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured that if any persons are joined together otherwise than as God's Word allows, their union is not blessed by Him. PRAYER

Almighty and ever-blessed God, whose presence is the happiness of every condition, and whose favor hallows every relation: We beseech Thee to be present and favorable unto these Thy servants, that they may be truly joined in the honorable estate of marriage, in the covenant of their God. As Thou has brought them together by Thy providence, sanctify them by Thy Spirit, giving them a new frame of heart fit for their new estate; and enrich them with all grace, whereby they may enjoy the comforts, undergo the cares, endure the trials, and perform the duties of life together as becometh Christians, under Thy heavenly guidance and protection; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

(G) _____, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?

(G) I will.

(B) _____, wilt thou have this man to be thy husband, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to him, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?

(B) I will.

PRESENTATION OF THE BRIDE

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

VOWS

I (G)_____ take thee (B)_____ to be my wedded wife, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses, to be thy 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.

I (B)_____ take thee (G)_____ to be my wedded husband, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses, to be thy 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.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

[Before giving the ring, the minister may say the following:] Bless, O Lord, this ring, that he who gives it and she who wears it may abide in Thy peace, and continue in Thy favor, unto their life's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Said by both.] This ring I give thee, in token and pledge, of our constant faith, and abiding love. [or] With this ring I thee wed; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER

Most merciful and gracious God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; bestow upon these Thy servants the seal of Thine approval, and Thy fatherly benediction; granting unto them grace to fulfill, with pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between them made. Guide them together, we beseech Thee, in the way of righteousness and peace, that, loving and serving Thee, with one heart and mind, all the days of their life, they may be abundantly enriched with the tokens of Thine everlasting favor, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts; As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

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 law of the state; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Whom therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

BENEDICTION

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. [or] God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with His favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that ye may so live together in this life that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

(Adapted from the Book of Common Worship copyright 1978 by the Board of Christian Education of the United Presbyterian Church in U.S.A., Westminster Press, Philadelphia.)

METHODIST

CALL TO WORSHIP

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God, and signifying unto us the mystical union which exists between Christ and His Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence in Cana of Galilee. It is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons come now to be joined. If any here can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let them now speak, or else hereafter forever hold their peace.

CHARGE

I require and charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, before whom the secrets of all hearts are disclosed, that, having duly considered the holy covenant you are about to make, you do now declare before this company your pledge of faith, each to the other. Be well assured that if these solemn vows are kept inviolate, as God's Word demands, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of your heavenly Father, God will bless your marriage, will grant you fulfillment in it, and will establish your home in peace.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

(G)_____, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live? (G) I will.

(B)_____, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

(B) I will.

BRIDE GIVEN AWAY

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

I (G)_____ take thee (B)_____ to be my wedded 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, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

I (B)_____ take thee (G)_____ to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, signifying to all the uniting of this man and this woman in holy matrimony, through the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us pray. Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings that they who wear them may abide in Thy peace, and continue in Thy favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. [or] Bless, O Lord, the giving of this ring, that he who gives it and she who wears it may abide forever in Thy peace, and continue in Thy favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Said by both if a two-ring ceremony.] 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

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Forasmuch as(G)_____ and (B)_____ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other and have declared the same by joining hands and by giving and receiving rings; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together let no one put asunder. Amen.

PRAYER

Let us pray. O eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life; send Thy blessing upon this man and this woman, whom we bless in Thy name, that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Thy laws. Look graciously upon them, that they may love, honor, and cherish each other, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness; that their home may be a haven of blessing and a place of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord graciously with His favor look upon you, and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and love that you may so live together in this life that in the world to come you may have life everlasting. Amen.

(Adapted from The Book of Worship for Church and Home copyright 1964, 1965 by the Board of Publication of the Methodist Church, Inc. Used by permission.)

EPISCOPAL

CHARGE

Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in holy matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by His presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and His church, and holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by

God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Into this holy union (G)_____ and (B)_____ now come to be joined. If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now; or else forever hold your peace.

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you knows any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's Word, you do now confess it.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

(B) _____, will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of 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?

(B) I will.

(G) _____, will you have this woman to be your wife, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

(G) I will.

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?

People: We will.

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER

O gracious and ever-living God, You have created us male and female in Your image. Look mercifully upon this man and this woman who come to You seeking Your blessing, and assist them with Your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-28 (Male and female he created them)

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24 (A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh)

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love)

Tobit 8:56-8 (New English Bible) (That she and I may grow old together)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind)

Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom every family is named)

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 (Walk in love, as Christ loved us)

Colossians 3:12-17 (Love binds everything together in harmony)

1 John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

HYMN

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

Minister: The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes.)

Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light ... let your light so shine.)

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.)

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16 (They are no longer two but one.)

John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you.)

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

Minister: The gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

In the name of God, I (G) _____ take you (B) _____ 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

In the name of God, I (B) _____ take you (G) _____ 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Bless, O Lord, this ring to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Said by both if a two-ring ceremony.]. I give you this ring as a symbol 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 (or in the name of God).

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Now that (G) _____ and (B) _____ have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce 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.

People: Amen.

PRAYERS

Let us pray together in the words our Savior taught us. 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. [or] Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Let us pray.

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 for which Your Son gave His life, and especially upon this man and this woman whom You make one flesh in holy matrimony. Amen.

Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of 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. Amen.

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 one another all the days of their life. Amen.

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

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. Amen.

Bestow on them, if it is Your will, the gift and heritage of children, and the grace to bring them up to know You, to love You, and to serve You. Amen. Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others. Amen.

Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. Amen.

Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all Your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by Your grace, that Your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; where, O Father, with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, You live and reign in perfect unity, now and for ever. Amen.

Most gracious God, we give You thanks for Your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. We thank You, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in His name. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of Your blessing upon this man and this woman. 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 foreheads. 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 life and in their death. Finally, in Your mercy, bring them to that table where Your saints feast forever in Your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

[or]

O God, You have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and His Church. Send therefore Your blessing upon these Your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FINAL PRAYER

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with His favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may faithfully live together in this life, and in the age to come have life everlasting. Amen. RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION

Minister: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, Kingsport Press, Kingsport, Tennessee, 1977, revision of The Book of Common Prayer, 1928.

BAPTIST

CHARGE

Dear friends [or dearly beloved or beloved friends], we are here assembled in the presence of God to unite (G) _____ and (B) _____ in marriage. The Bible teaches that marriage is to be a permanent relationship of one man and one woman freely and totally committed to each other as companions for life. Our Lord declared that man shall leave his father and mother and unite with his wife in the building of a home, and the two shall become one flesh.

PRESENTATION OF THE BRIDE

Who gives the bride to be married?

HOMILY

The home is built upon love, which virtue is best portrayed in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.... So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" [1 Cor. 13:4-13, RSV]. Marriage is a companionship that involves mutual commitment and responsibility. You will share alike in the responsibilities and the joys of life. When companions share a sorrow, the sorrow is halved, and when they share a joy, the joy is doubled. You are exhorted to dedicate your home to your Creator. Take His Word, the Bible, for your guide. Give loyal devotion to His church, thus uniting the mutual strength of these two most important institutions, living your lives as His willing servants, and true happiness will be your temporal and eternal reward.

PRAYER

Let us pray. O Lord of life and love, bestow Thy grace upon this marriage, and seal this commitment of Thy children with Thy love. As Thou has brought them together by Thy divine providence, sanctify them by Thy Spirit, that they may give themselves fully one to the other and to Thee. Give them strength and patience to live their lives in a manner that will mutually bless themselves and honor Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

(G) _____, will you take (B) _____ to be your wife; will you commit yourself to her happiness and her self-fulfillment as a person, and to her usefulness in God's kingdom; and will you promise to love, honor, trust, and serve her in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to her, so long as you both shall live?

(G) I will.

(B) _____, will you take (G) _____ to be your husband; will you commit yourself to his happiness and his self-fulfillment as a person, and to his usefulness in God's kingdom; and will you promise to love, honor, trust, and serve him in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to him, so long as you both shall live?

(B) I will.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The wedding ring is a symbol of marriage in at least two ways: the purity of gold symbolizes the purity of your love for each other, and the unending circle symbolizes the unending vows which you are taking, which may be broken honorably in the sight of God only by death. As a token of your vows, you will give and receive the rings (or ring).

(G) _____, you will give the ring and repeat after me: (B) _____ with this ring I pledge my life and love to you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

(B) _____ you will give the ring and repeat after me: (G) _____ with this ring I pledge my love and life to you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

(In the case of a single ring ceremony, the bride will say, (G) _____ I accept this ring and pledge to you my love and life, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.)

SCRIPTURE

Will both of you please repeat after me: "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. [Ruth 1:16, RSV].

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Since they have made these commitments before God and this assembly [or, these witnesses], by the authority of God and the laws of this state, I declare that (G) _____ and (B) _____ are husband and wife. (G) _____ and (B) _____, you are no longer two independent persons but one. "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" [Matt. 19:6, NASB].

PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace [Num. 6:24-26, RSV] [or] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all [2 Corinthians 13:14, RSV]. Amen.

(Adapted from The Broadman Minister's Manual by Franklin M. Segler copyright 1969 Broadman Press. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

ROMAN CATHOLIC

A couple choosing this service may make a selection from four standard rites of service published in a booklet, Rites for Marriage. It is available for a small fee from United States Catholic Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., Washington, D.C. 20005.

LUTHERAN

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: O Lord, open my lips,

Congregation: and my mouth will declare your praise.

Pastor: Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

Congregation: Make haste to help me, O Lord. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia.

[The following Psalm may be sung or said.]

The Lord is good and His love endures forever.* His faithfulness continues through all generations. Shout for joy to the Lord,* all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness;* come before Him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God.* It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise;* give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever;* His faithfulness continues through all generations. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,* is now, and will be forever. Amen. The Lord is good and His love endures forever.* His faithfulness continues through all generations. (Antiphon, Ps. 100)

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Two or more of the following portions of Holy Scripture are read:

Genesis 2:18-25

Ephesians 5:21-33

John 2:1-11

John 15:12-15

Matthew 19:4-6

Ephesians 5:21-33 and Matthew 19:4-6 are always read.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

[Eph. 5:21-33, NIV]

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator `made them male and female,' and said, `For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." [Matt. 19:4-6, NIV]

Pastor: O Lord have mercy on us.

Congregation: Thanks be to God

HOMILY

HYMN
CHARGE

We are gathered here in the sight of God and of His church that this man and this woman may be joined together in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate, which God Himself has instituted and blessed, and by which He gives us a picture of the very communion of Christ and His Bride, the church. God has both established and sanctified this estate and has promised to bless therein all who love and trust in Him and who seek to give Him their faithful worship and service, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has ordained marriage for the good of man and woman in lifelong companionship according to His good pleasure and that children may be nurtured to the praise of His holy name. He has further ordained marriage so that the love you have for each other may be hallowed and fulfilled according to His bountiful purposes, both in prosperity and adversity all your days. Christian marriage consists in your mutual consent, sincerely and freely given, which you now solemnly declare before God, these witnesses, and each other.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

(G) _____, will you have this woman to be your wife; to live with her in holy marriage according to the Word of God? Will you love her, comfort her, honor her, and keep her, in sickness and in health and, forsaking all others, be husband to her as long as you both shall live? (G) I will.

(B) _____, will you have this man to be your husband; to live with him in holy marriage according to the Word of God? Will you love him, comfort him, honor him, obey him, and keep him, in sickness and in health and, forsaking all others, be wife to him as long as you both shall live? (B) I will.

PRESENTATION OF THE BRIDE

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

I (G) _____ in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you (B) _____ 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, till death us do part. I pledge you my faithfulness.

I (B) _____ in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you (G) _____ 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, till death us do part. I pledge you my faithfulness.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Grant your blessing, O Lord, to these your servants that they may be ever mindful of their solemn pledge and, trusting in your mercy, abound evermore in love through all their days; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

[Said by both.] Receive this ring as a pledge and token of wedded love and faithfulness.

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Join your right hands and kneel. Forasmuch as (G) _____ and (B) _____ have consented together in holy marriage and have declared the same before God and these witnesses, I therefore pronounce them husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

Congregation: Amen.

HYMN

BLESSING

The almighty and gracious God abundantly grant you His favor, and sanctify and bless you with the blessing given our first parents in paradise that you may please Him both in body and soul, and live together in holy love until life's end. The eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, bestow upon you His Holy Spirit, be with you, and richly bless you forever.

Congregation: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

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, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. [or] Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.

Pastor: The Lord be with you. Congregation: And with your spirit.

PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray to the Lord.

Almighty, everlasting God, our heavenly Father, having joined this man and woman in holy marriage, grant that by Your blessing they may live together according to Your Word and promise. Strengthen them in faithfulness and love toward each other. Sustain and defend them in all trial and temptation, and help them to live in faith toward You in the communion of Your holy Church and in loving service to each other that they may ever enjoy Your (heavenly family's) blessing; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

HYMN

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace.

Congregation: Amen.

(Adapted from the Lutheran Worship Agenda copyright 1983 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission.)

INTERDENOMINATIONAL

PRESENTATION OF BRIDE

Minister: Who gives this woman in marriage?

Father: I do, on behalf of her mother and me.

CALL TO WORSHIP

(G)_____ and (B)_____ welcome you. It is their desire that you enter into the joy, and beauty, and reverence of the following moments. Let us worship God.

CHARGE

Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God to join this man and this 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 among all men. Let us therefore reverently remember that God has established and sanctified marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Savior has declared that a man shall forsake his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who enter into this relation 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 honor and industry to provide for each other and for their household in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as heirs of the grace of life.

PRAYER

READING OF SCRIPTURE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

I (G)_____ take thee (B)_____ to be my wedded 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, according to God's holy plan, I give you my love.

I (B)_____ take thee (G)_____ to be my wedded 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. According to God's holy plan, I give you my love.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

(G)_____, what token do you give of your love?

(G) A ring.

(G) With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER

Bless, O Lord, these rings to be a symbol of the solemn vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other in holy matrimony; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Forasmuch as (G)_____ and (B)_____ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this congregation, and in so doing have given and pledged their vows to each other, and have declared the same by the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce them man and wife together, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

CHRIST CANDLE (OPTIONAL)

Inasmuch as Christ is the Light of the world, and inasmuch as He reigns in your hearts and it is your desire that your lives burn as one flame for Him, bringing light and life to a dark world _____ will you now portray your desire.

UNISON VOWS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME (OPTIONAL)

Depending upon God for strength and wisdom, we pledge ourselves to the establishment of a Christian home. Together we will constantly seek God's will and honor Christ in our marriage.

PRAYER FOR COUPLE

PRESENTATION

May I present Mr. and Mrs. _____