

Our customary wedding service is included below, with suggestions in italics for insertion of additional music, readings, etc. The service may be modified or substitutions made in consultation with the pastor to ensure their appropriateness.

FIRST PARISH CHURCH

A SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

ENTRANCE

During the entrance of the wedding party, there may be instrumental music, a hymn, or other vocal music.

GREETING

Pastor to people:

Friends, we have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of *Name* and *Name* in Christian marriage. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God who created us for each other. The union of two persons 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 in the providence of God, for the nurture of children. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but responsibly and reverently and in accordance with its divinely intended purposes.

Into this holy union, *Name* and *Name* come now to be joined.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Celebrant to the couple:

I ask you now, in the presence of God and these witnesses, to declare your intention to enter into union with one another through the grace of Jesus Christ, who calls you into union with himself.

The celebrant says to the couple, each in turn:

Name, will you have *Name* to be your *wife/husband*, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love *him/her*, comfort *him/her*, honor and keep *him/her*, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to *him/her* as long as you both shall live?

Response: I will.

The celebrant addresses the families and congregation:

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

People: **We will.**

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Celebrant: Let us pray

O gracious and everliving God, you have created us in your image: Look mercifully upon _____ and _____, 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.

SCRIPTURE READING(S)

One or more passages of scripture is read. Other passages than the ones printed here may be chosen. If there is to be Communion, a passage from the Gospels should always conclude the readings.

Genesis 2:21-24

The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

²³Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother
and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

1 Cor. 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but

when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

HOMILY

It is appropriate if desired to include a hymn or other musical selection at this point.

THE MARRIAGE

Both the man and the woman, facing each other and joining hands, will say in turn, beginning with the man:

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

The celebrant will ask God's blessing on the wedding rings:

Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings, that they may be a lasting sign of the vows by which *Name* and *Name* have bound themselves to one another; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The giver places the ring on the other's hand and says:

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. Amen.

Then the celebrant joins the right hands of the couple (the celebrant's stole may be wrapped around the hands) and says:

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 declare 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 PRAYERS

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 have made one flesh in Holy Marriage. Give them wisdom and devotion in ordering 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. 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. Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to acknowledge their fault and seek each other's forgiveness. Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair. Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern to others. May their home be a place of blessing for all who enter it. And grant that all who have witnessed these vows may find their own lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Here may follow a hymn or other musical selection.

Here also may be placed a symbolic act such as the lighting of a marriage candle.

If there is to be a Communion, the Great Thanksgiving will follow at this point.

SENDING FORTH

BLESSING

God the Eternal keep you in love with each other so that the peace of Christ may abide in your home. Go to serve God and your neighbor in all that you do. Bear witness to the love of God in this world, so that those to whom love is a stranger may find in you generous friends.

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

RECESSIONAL

ADDITIONAL INTRODUCTIONS, PRAYERS, AND SCRIPTURES

Any of the material below may be substituted or added to the customary service above.

INTRODUCTIONS

1. Dearly Beloved, we are gathered to celebrate the joining of and in marriage. Let us remember that marriage has been establish and sanctified for the welfare and happiness of humanity. Those who enter this relationship are 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; to encourage each other in the things which pertain to the spirit; and to live together as heirs of the grace of life.
2. We are gathered here, in the house of the Lord to join this man and this woman in the bond of holy matrimony. Let us rejoice in the knowledge that as God has seen fit for these two people to find each other, God will provide always the inner strength for them to be united in love and loyalty, trust and truth forever.

On this day, you are making the legal bond of commitment, the reinforcement of the love that you both have found. Since your first meeting, the steady building of your friendship and love has grown, enabling you both to see the world more fully and to envision the future you may build together.

Nothing is easier than saying words. Nothing is harder than living them, day after day. What you promise today must be renewed and re-decided tomorrow and each day that stretches out before you. God has ordained marriage. The laws of the state may grant you permission to marry, but the true joys of marriage, the making of a union secure and holy and spiritually fruitful, these are in your keeping; in the attitude of mutual trust in which you come to this moment purposing to make your marriage a success, through mutual reliance upon God.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament

Genesis 1: 26-28, 31; 2: 18-24

Psalms 23, 33, 34, 37: 3-7, 67, 100, 103, 112, 117,
121, 127, 128, 136, 145, 148, 150

Song of Solomon 2: 8-13, 8: 6-7

Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Isaiah 54: 5-8

Hosea 2: 16-23

Epistles

Romans 8: 31-39, 12: 1-2, 9-18

1 Corinthians 6: 15-20, 13: 1-13
Ephesians 3: 14-21, 5: 2, 21-33
Colossians 3: 12-17
! Peter 3: 1-9
1 John 3: 18-24, 4: 7-16
Revelation 19:1, 5-9

Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12; 5: 13-16; 7: 21, 24-29; 19: 3-6; 22: 35-40
Mark 10: 6-9, 13-16
John 2: 1-11, 15: 9-17

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

1. Lord, make _____ and _____ a channel of your peace, that where there is hatred they may bring love, where there is wrong they may bring the spirit of forgiveness, where there is discord they may discover and reveal harmony, where there is error they may embody truth, where there is doubt they may bring the spirit of inquiry, where there is despair they may bring hope, where there are shadows, they may bring your light, where there is sadness they may bring solace. For it is by giving that they receive, by self-forgetting that they shall find, by forgiving that they shall be forgiven. Lord, grant that and may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted, to understand than to be understood, to love than to be loved. Amen.
2. O Lord, our hearts are filled with great happiness. Today is the wedding day of _____ and _____. They come before you at the altar of love pledging their lives and their hearts to one another. Grant that they may ever be true and loving, living together in such a way as to never bring shame or heartbreak into their marriage. Temper their hearts with kindness and understanding and rid them of all pretense or jealousy. Help them to be sweetheart, helpmate, friend and guide, as so together they may meet the cares and problems of life more bravely. And as time takes away their youthful charm, may they find contentment in the great joy of rich companionship. May their home be a place of love and harmony where your spirit, O Lord, is ever present. Bless their wedding day and walk beside them, Lord, through all their life together. Amen.