

FIRST PARISH CHURCH – BRUNSWICK, ME
CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE – AN OUTLINE WITH SUGGESTED LANGUAGE¹

ENTRANCE

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

GREETING

The pastor first greets the couple, and then the people gathered, saying something like:

Friends, we have gathered to celebrate the marriage of *N and N*. Marriage is the promise of hope between two people who love each other, who trust that love, and who wish to share the future together.

It enables two separate people to share their desires, longings, dreams and memories, and to help each other through their uncertainties. It provides the encouragement to risk more and thus to gain more. In marriage, those in love belong together, providing mutual support and a stability in which their future and their family may thrive.

Here in the presence of God we recognize and affirm their relationship as they begin their married life in the community.

DECLARATION OF INTENTIONS

Pastor to the couple:

N and N, before your gathered community of love, I ask you to declare your intention to be wed.

The pastor then asks each:

N, do you love and trust *N* and desire to be (her/his) (husband/wife)?

“I do.”

Will you stand by (her/him) no matter what happens, respecting (her/him) as a person, understanding (her/his) needs and enjoying (her/his) love until death parts you?

“I will.”

The pastor asks the gathered congregation:

¹ Adapted from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*

Do you all, as a gathered community and loving people of God, pledge your blessing, support, and encouragement to the marriage promises that *N and N* are making together? If so, please say, "We do."

"WE DO!"

READINGS OF SCRIPTURE

One or more passages of scripture is read. Some suggestions follow, but other passages may be chosen in cooperation with the pastor. If you would like to include a communion service in your wedding, it is preferable to end the readings with a gospel.

Hebrew Scriptures

Genesis 1:26-29, 31
Ruth 1:16-18
Psalm 67
Psalm 100
Psalm 121
Psalm 128
Song of Songs 8:6-7

Gospels

Matthew 5:13-16
Matthew 22:35-40
Mark 10:6-9
John 2:1-11

Epistles

Romans 12:9-21
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Ephesians 3:14-21
Colossians 3:12-17
1 John 4:7-12

HOMILY

The pastor reflects on the meaning of love and marriage in the light of the couple and the scripture.

OTHER READINGS OR MUSIC

As selected by the couple in consultation with the pastor or those providing music.

THE MARRIAGE

The couple share vows with each other, either with one of the forms below, or with a form agreed upon in consultation with the pastor.

Vows:

***N*, I take you to be my
(wife/husband).
All that I have I offer you;
what you have to give I gladly receive;
wherever you go I will go.
You are my love.
God keep me true to you always
and you to me.**

Or:

**I, *N*, take you, *N*, 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 cherish,
until we are parted by death.
This is my solemn vow.**

BLESSING AND SHARING OF SYMBOLS (RINGS)

The pastor blesses the rings, saying:

By these symbols of promise, O God, remind *N and N* of your encircling love and unending faithfulness that in all their life together they may know joy and peace in one another.

The couple shares the rings, each saying:

N, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

The pastor announces the couple's marriage:

N and N, by your promises before God and your community of love, you have joined yourselves to one another as partners in marriage. May God so join you together that nothing shall ever part you.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The pastor or others may lead the people in praying for the newly married couple and for the world to experience the blessings and peace of God's love. (If performed by the pastor, and there is not a communion service, these prayers may be combined with the final blessing of the couple and congregation below.)

BLESSING

RECESSIONAL

Traditionally, music accompanies the couple as they leave the ceremony, followed by their wedding party and guests.