

The Wedding Ceremony

(revised June, 2022)

Whether you have been a member of this church all your life or are a newcomer, we are glad that you have chosen to seek God's blessing as you declare your love and commitment for one another. We recognize that often times people come from different denominations or faith backgrounds, and that it is important that you feel comfortable with the words of faith expressed during the ceremony. We are willing to discuss adjusting some parts of the service to create a meaningful, welcoming environment for other faith backgrounds.

As a Christian church we assume a belief in God who creates, loves and forgives. We also assume an understanding of Jesus Christ as one who shows us the way of love by his words, his life, death and resurrection. During a wedding ceremony we seek God's presence and ask God's blessing upon the bride and groom. Normally, included in the ceremony are one or two passages of scripture, as well as the Lord's Prayer. Readings from other sources, prayers, or meaningful symbolic actions from other faith traditions may be included in consultation with the minister.

Even though this is a wedding ceremony, we still consider this to be first, and foremost, a service of worship. It is with this in mind that we reiterate that music for the service be of a sacred, not secular, nature. Contemporary music may be welcomed, but must speak of the sacred nature of love and commitment. Our organist, David Chafe, will be happy to discuss the different musical options available to you. He may be reached at (709) 579-3682

We offer this document to help with your arrangements in making your wedding ceremony as meaningful as possible. Please keep in mind that these are only suggestions and guidelines. You are free to discuss other possibilities with Rev. Bill.

Order of Service

(** denotes options within the service)

The Gathering

- ** Lighting of Family Candles (by mothers of Bride and Groom or others designated)
- Bridal Party Processional (** option for Soloist)
- Bridal Processional
- Greeting
- Statement of Purpose
- Statement to the Bride and Groom
- Opening Prayer
- ** Lighting of Family Candles (Option B)
- Declaration of Intent
- **Promises and Blessings by Family and Friends

Service of the Word

- ** Secular readings/poems may be included here
- Scripture Readings
- ** Option for Soloist

Service of Marriage

- Legal Declaration
- Prayer
- Exchange of Vows
- Blessing and Exchanging of Rings
- ** Lighting of the Marriage Candle
- Declaration of Marriage
- Blessing
- Sealing of the Vows
- Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Sending Forth

- **Option for Soloist just before or during signing of register)
- Signing of the Marriage Register
- Presentation of the Bride and Groom
- Bridal Party Recessional

Scripture Suggestions

Here you will find a number of Scripture readings which are appropriate for the wedding ceremony. Keep in mind, these are only suggestions and you are free to suggest other passages which may have special significance to you.

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

The voice of my beloved! Look, he come, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise my love, my fair one, and come away."

Isaiah 61:10, 11; 62:3-5

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord my whole being shall exult my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called my Delight Is in Her, and your land Married for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Matthew 22:35-40

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

John 15:9-12

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

I John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

I Corinthians 13:4-8a

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me and the God of peace will be with you.

John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine," And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water," And they filled them to the rim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him. Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Options for the Wedding Ceremony

Words for the Declaration of Intent

_____, will you have _____ to be your husband/wife, to live together in holy marriage? Will your love him/her in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others be faithful to him/her as long as you both shall live?

I will.

_____, will you take _____ to be your wife/husband? Will you share her/his joys and burdens? Will you be honest with her/him and be faithful to her/him always, as long as you both live?

I will.

Promises and Blessings of Families

Do you, the families of _____ and _____, give them your blessing and promise to uphold and care for them in their marriage/relationship?

We do.

(If applicable, a question may also be asked to the child(ren) of the couple. Suitable wording would be chosen or written in consultation with the minister.)

Question to the Community

Do you, the friends of _____ and _____, give them your blessing and promise to support and honor them in their marriage?

We do.

Words during the Exchange of Vows

_____ I choose you to be my husband/wife, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

In the presence of God and before these witnesses, I, _____ take you _____, 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; in joy and in sorrow; to love and to cherish and to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

_____, I choose you to be my wife/husband, to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, serving one another and our world in peace and in hope, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

_____, I choose you to be my wife/husband, to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

_____, I choose 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. This is my solemn vow.

Exchange of the Rings

_____, I give you this ring that you may wear it as a symbol of the vows we have made this day. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honour you.

_____, I give you this ring, as a sign of my loving commitment, and a reminder of the vows we have made this day. With all that I am and all that I have, I honour you.

_____, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and our marriage. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honour you.

Lighting of the Marriage Candle

_____ and _____ you are here today to united your hearts in loving commitment. You have come from separate backgrounds, with your own unique personalities, strengths and needs. The two candles represent your separate lives. Together, you light the center candle as sign of unity and commitment. *(The marriage candle is lighted)* Our hope is that you will show human love at its fullest and that your relationship will equip both of you to bring love and compassion to each other and the world.

_____ and _____ as you light this candle, let it represent the unity of your lives. *(The marriage candle is lighted)* From this moment on, as this one light cannot be divided, neither shall your lives be divided. May the radiance of this one light be a testimony of your love and unity.