

This service of Christian marriage used at Hyde Park United Methodist is provided for couples who wish to solemnize their marriage in a service of Christian worship. Christian marriage is proclaimed as a sacred covenant reflecting the Baptismal Covenant. Everything about the service is designed to witness that this is a Christian marriage.

Both words and actions consistently reflect the belief that husband and wife are equal partners in Christian marriage and that they are entering into the marriage of their own volition.

Those present are understood to be an active congregation rather than simply passive witnesses. They give their blessing to the couple and to the marriage, and they join in prayer and praise.

Holy Communion may or may not be celebrated. If it is, it is most important that its significance be made clear. Specifically: (1) The marriage rite is included in a Service of Word and Table. (2) Not only the husband and wife but the whole congregation are to be invited to receive communion. It is our tradition to invite all Christians to the Lord's table. (3) There should be no pressure that would embarrass those who for whatever reason do not choose to receive communion.

The decision to perform the ceremony is the right and responsibility of the pastor, in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church. All plans should be approved by the pastor. The pastor's "due counsel with the parties involved" prior to marriage, mandated by *The Book of Discipline*, includes premarital counseling and discussing and planning the service with them. Information concerning policies or guidelines established by the congregation on such matters as decorations, photography, and audio or video recording will be provided by the Wedding Coordinator. Any leadership roles taken by other clergy should be at the invitation of the pastor of the church where the service is held. The organist will be consulted and work with the couple in all decisions on music selection.

Ethnic and cultural traditions are encouraged and may be incorporated into the service at the discretion of the pastor.

Any children of the man or the woman, other family, and friends may take a variety of roles in the service, depending on their ages and abilities. They may, for example, be members of the wedding party, participate in the Response of the Families and People, read scripture lessons, sing or play instrumental music, or make a witness in their own words.

In the case of couples who are not church members or are not prepared to make the Christian commitment expressed in our services, adaptations may be made at the discretion of the pastor.

GATHERING

While the people gather, instrumental or vocal music may be offered.

Here and throughout the service, the use of music appropriate for Christian worship is strongly encouraged.

The woman and the man, entering separately or together, now come forward with members of the wedding party. The woman and the man may be escorted by representatives of their families until they have reached the front of the church, or through the Response of the Families, at which time their escorts are seated.

GREETING

Pastor to people:

Friends, we are gathered together in the sight of God
to witness and bless the joining together of Name and Name
in Christian marriage.

The covenant of marriage was established by God,
who created us male and female for each other.

With his presence and power
Jesus graced a wedding at Cana of Galilee,
and in his sacrificial love
gave us the example for the love of husband and wife.

Name and Name come to give themselves to one another
in this holy covenant.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

DECLARATION BY THE MAN AND THE WOMAN

Pastor to the persons who are to marry:

I ask you now, in the presence of God and these people,
to declare your intention
to enter into union with each other
through the grace of Jesus Christ,
who calls you into union with himself
as acknowledged in your baptism.

Pastor to the woman:

Name, will you have Name 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?

Woman: I will.

Pastor to the man:

Name, will you have Name 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?

Man: I will

RESPONSE OF THE FAMILIES AND THE PEOPLE

Pastor to people:

The marriage of Name and Name unites their families
and creates a new one.
They ask for your blessing.

Parents and other representatives of the families may respond in one of the
following ways:

We rejoice in your union,
and pray God's blessing upon you.

or, in reply to the pastor's question:

Do you who represent their families
rejoice in their union
and pray God's blessing upon them?

We do.

or, children of the couple may repeat these or similar words, prompted line by
line, by the pastor:

We love both of you.
We bless your marriage.
Together we will be a family.

If the woman and the man have been escorted by representatives of their families, their escorts, having blessed the marriage in the name of their families, may be seated.

Pastor to people:

Will all of you, by God's grace,
do everything in your power
to uphold and care for these two persons in their marriage?

People: We will.

PRAYER *

SERMON OR OTHER WITNESS TO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

INTERCESSORY PRAYER *

THE MARRIAGE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

The woman and man face each other, joining hands. The pastor may prompt them, line by line.

Man to woman:

In the name of God,
I, Name, take you, Name, 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.

Woman to man:

In the name of God,
I, Name, take you, Name, 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.

In place of the vows given above, one of the following may be used:

I take you, Name, to be my wife (husband),
and I promise before God and all who are present here
to be your loving and faithful husband (wife)
as long as we both shall live.
I will serve you with tenderness and respect,
and encourage you to develop God's gifts in you.

Name, in the name of God,
I take you to be my husband (wife) from this time onward,
to join with you and to share all that is to come,
to give and to receive,
to speak and to listen,
to inspire and to respond,
and in all our life together
to be loyal to you with my whole being,
as long as we both shall live.

BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The exchange of rings is optional. Other tangible symbols may be given in addition to, or instead of, rings.

The pastor, taking the rings, may say one of the following:

These rings (symbols)
are the outward and visible sign
of an inward and spiritual grace,
signifying to us the union
between Jesus Christ and his Church.

These rings (symbols)
are the outward and visible sign
of an inward and spiritual grace,
signifying to all the uniting of Name and Name in holy marriage.

The pastor may bless the giving of rings or other symbols of the marriage:

Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings (symbols),
that they who wear them may live in your peace
and continue in your favor

all the days of their life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

While placing the ring on the third finger of the recipient's left hand, the giver may say (prompted, line by line, by the pastor):

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.

If a unity candle is used, the two side candles representing the husband and wife are lighted first, and the center candle representing the marriage is lighted at this or some later point in the service. The side candles are not extinguished because both husband and wife retain their personal identities.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

The wife and husband join hands. The pastor may place a hand on their joined hands.

Pastor to husband and wife:

You have declared your consent and vows
before God and this congregation.
May God confirm your covenant
and fill you both with grace.

The couple may turn and face the congregation.

Pastor to people:

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 announce to you 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.

BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE *

The husband and wife may kneel, as the pastor prays:

O God,
you have so consecrated
 the covenant of Christian marriage
 that in it is represented
 the covenant between Christ and his Church.
Send therefore your blessing upon Name and Name,
 that they may surely keep their marriage covenant,
 and so grow in love and godliness together
 that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, the congregation turns to A Service of Word and Table III , or one of the musical settings (*United Methodist Hymnal*), and the service continues with the Thanksgiving and Communion. If Holy Communion is not to be celebrated, the service continues with the following Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Most gracious God,
we give you thanks for your tender love
 in making us a covenant people
 through our Savior Jesus Christ
 and for consecrating in his name
 the marriage covenant of Name and Name .
Grant that their love for each other
 may reflect the love of Christ for us
 and grow from strength to strength
 as they faithfully serve you in the world.
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.
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 lives and in their deaths.
Finally, by your grace,
 bring them and all of us to that table
 where your saints feast for ever
 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.

The Lord's Prayer, prayed by all, using one of the forms in UMH 270 71, 894 96.

**THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION, if celebrated, uses the
common liturgy of the United Methodist Church.**

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING *

Pastor to wife and husband:

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.

Pastor to people:

Bear witness to the love of God in this world,
so that those to whom love is a stranger
will 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.

The couple may greet each other with a kiss after which they recess out of the
church followed by the wedding party.