

SouthWest United Church & Mission
The Celebration of Marriage: Liturgy Possibilities

Words of welcome

Processional Music (The Bridal Party)
The lighting of the couple's candles.

Gathering

We gather in the presence of God our Creator,
in the love of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,
and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
our Sustainer.

or

May God, the author of life and love,
fill our hearts with joy today,
and be with us in our worship and praise.

Prayer

What language for God are you comfortable with? How do you address or name God?
For example: Holy God, Light of our lives, Giver of life, Healer of our woundedness,
Creator and Lover, God of dead ends (cul de sacs), Hope, God of mountains, streams,
trees and valleys, God who created us to live in relationship, God who risked love by
coming into the world, in Jesus Christ.

Hymn of Praise (See Hymn selections and Psalms, page 8)

What about a litany of praise with an easy response such as:
We give you praise O God!! or Thank you for love!

Statement of Purpose

The covenanting of two people to live together is a time to celebrate with
good wishes, feasting and joy. Jesus shares such an event in Cana of Galilee
where, turning water into wine, He gave a sign of new beginnings.

This bond between two people shows us the mystery of the union between God and God's people. The Holy Scriptures point to the centrality of love as the principal demonstration of God's presence. A couple shares in the spirit of Christ through the blessing of their love for each other, and of their families, friends, or children in good times and in bad. In love, they extend hospitality to others.

Today, _____ and _____ come before their friends and family to speak their promises. They join this congregation in asking God to bless their relationship. As community, we witness their commitment and express our support by our presence and prayers.

or

Friends, we are gathered here in the presence of God to witness the exchange of vows between _____ and _____ and to ask God to bless them.

God created us to be in relationship with one another and with all of creation. Today we celebrate the mysterious intimacy of the love between two people. We affirm the joy and freedom of lifelong union. We rejoice in the healing and new life we know even in the midst of our frailties and failures.

Trusting God's promise to be with us, may our hearts be open to God, and to one another, in faithfulness and in hope.

Declaration of Intent

To the couple:

Before God and this congregation, I ask you, _____ and _____ to affirm your willingness to enter this lifelong covenant, and to share all the joys and sorrows of this new relationship, whatever the future may hold.

Will you have this man/woman to be your husband/wife/spouse and will you love him/her faithfully as long as you both shall live? (I will.)

or

_____ and _____, you stand in the presence of God and of your friends and families to make a covenant with each other, a covenant grounded in mutual respect, in shared power, in compassion, and, in trust.

Will you love _____ with integrity and gentleness, speaking openly and listening patiently? Will you protect, comfort and challenge him/her, cherishing the holy in him/her? (I will.)

Affirmation of Support

(A question of welcome for the children of the couple could be asked and a sign of affirmation could be given.)

To the parents (who may stand):

As parents of _____ and _____, will you welcome your child's chosen partner into your family, and pledge your support and encouragement to them in their life together? (We will)

Other family members, and friends (who may be invited to stand):

As family and friends of _____ and _____, will you pledge your support and encourage them in their life together? (We will.)

Reading of Scripture (see Scripture suggestions, p.8)

Homily

Musical Pause

Prayer before the Vows

Exchange of Vows

In view of the congregation the couple face one another and take each other by the right hand.

The ideal vow is the one you write personally for your chosen spouse. The following examples may inspire you. There may be individual promises for each of you or the same vows spoken by each one. Personalized vows could be spoken for the first time at the service, and not be shared with the other until then.

The minister may discreetly help the couple by quietly reading the vow line by line. They may be written on cue cards or printed in the bulletin for all to follow:

In the presence of God and before the witnesses,
I, _____ take you _____
to be my wife/husband/spouse
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,
 as long as we both shall live.
 This is my solemn vow.

En présence de Dieu et devant ces témoins,
moi, _____, je te choisis toi, _____
pour être ma femme/mon mari/mon epoux,
 Je te garderai à partir de ce jour,
 pour le meilleur et pour le pire;
 dans l'abondance et dans la pauvreté;
 dans la maladie et dans la santé;
 dans la joie et dans l'adversité;
 Je t'aimerai, je te chérirai
 et te serai fidèle à toi seul-e,
 aussi longtemps que nous vivrons tous deux.

I, _____, join you _____ in life-long covenant,
 to laugh with you in joy,
 to grieve with you in sorrow;
 to grow with you in love;
 (to love your child(ren) as you do)
 to care with you for others;
 to be faithful to you alone
 as long as we both shall live.

_____, I choose you to be my wife/husband/spouse.

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.

Exchange of the Rings

The ring is a symbol of covenant love. It has no beginning and no end, but is ever encircling sign of God's embrace of unending love.

Prayer

Each member of the couple places a ring on the ring finger of the other, saying in turn:

_____, I give you this ring as a symbol of the vows we have made this day.

The Blessing

With ring hand on ring hand the minister blesses the couple and ends with the Lord's Prayer.

Declaration of Marriage

The couple may re-join hands, and the minister addresses the gathered community.

_____ and _____ have made a life long covenant before God and in the presence of us all. They have confirmed their commitment by the joining of hands, by the exchange of rings and by the giving of a kiss. Therefore, I declare them to be husband and wife, spouse and spouse.

or

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have made this solemn covenant before God and all of us here, I declare them to be husband and wife.

The Kiss

Lighting the Unity Candle

Signing the Register

Benediction

May the grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
and the Holy Spirit keep you. Amen.

May you enjoy length of days,
fulfillment of hope,
and peace and contentment of mind
May there be truth and understanding
between you.

May the blessing of God be with you
in your celebrating today,
and in your living and loving every day.
Amen.

May God who creates you give you light;
may God who sustains you make you wise;
may God who protects you give you joy,
may God who surrounds you give you peace.

Louise Skipsted, 1994 (VU#454)

Presentation of the couple

_____ and _____, we now welcome you as husband and wife.

Sending forth

Go now in peace and love.

Recessional Music

Scripture suggestions:

(You may wish to choose a poem in addition to a bible reading.)

Genesis 2:15, 18-24	Not good that we be alone
Ruth 1:1-8, 14-17	Where you go, I will go
1 Samuel 18: 1b, 3, 20: 16-17, 42a	Jonathan makes a covenant with David
Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12a	Two are better than one
Song of Solomon 1: 15-2,4	You are beautiful, my love
Song of Solomon 2: 8-13	Love is strong as death
Song of Solomon 8: 6-7	A seal upon your heart
Isaiah 61: 10, 11; 62:3-5	As a bridegroom, as a bride
Jeremiah 31: 31-34	The new covenant
Sirach 6: 6-10, 14-16	True friends
Matthew 5: 13-16	Salt and light
Matthew 7: 21, 34-29	A house built on a rock
Matthew 22: 35-40	Love, the greatest commandment
Mark 3: 31-35	Jesus' true family
Luke 6: 20-23	The Beatitudes
John 1: 1-5, 9-14, 16	The Word became flesh
John 2: 1-11	Wedding at Cana
John 13: 34-35	A new commandment
John 15: 1-11	Jesus, the true vine
John 15: 9-12	Remain in Christ's love
Romans 8: 31b-39	God's love in Christ
Romans 12: 1-2, 9-13	New life in Christ
1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a	The gift of love
Galatians 5: 1, 13, 14, 22-25	The fruits of the Spirit
Ephesians 3: 14-21	Rooted and grounded in love
Ephesians 5: 1-2, 8-14	Live in love
Philippians 2: 1-11	The same mind in you as in Christ
Philippians 4: 4-9	Rejoice in the Lord
Colossians 3: 1-4, 12, 17	Clothe yourselves with compassion
1 John 3: 18-24	Let us love, not in word, but in action
1 John 4: 7-12	Love one another
Revelation 19:1, 5:9	Marriage supper of the Lamb

HYMN AND PSALM SUGGESTIONS

VU232	Joyful, Joyful We Adore You/Joyeux, Joyeux
VU238	O Lord my God/Dieu tout-puissant
VU245	Praise the Lord/Louez Dieu
VU266	Amazing Grace/Grâce Infinie
VU293	We praise you creator/Les cieux et la terre
VU299	Teach Me, God, to Wonder/Enseigne-moi, mon Dieu
VU333	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
VU359	He Came Singing Love
VU372	Though I May Speak
VU409	Morning Has Broken/Levée première, brille l'amore
VU484	God the All-Holy
VU485	O God, Who Gave Humanity Its Name
VU486	God Who Blesses New Beginnings/O Dieu saint, donc la clémence
VU489	When Love Is Found
VU490	Our God, Creation's Loving Source
VU515	Holy Spirit, Source of Love
VU628	Come, My Way, My Truth
VU633	Bless Now, O God, The Journey
VU644	I Was There To Hear Your Borning Cry

Français-Tu es la au coeur de nos vies.

Responsive Psalms

VU740	Psalm 19
VU760	Psalm 33
VU786	Psalm 67
VU814	Psalm 95 (Part One)
VU824	Psalm 100
VU833	Psalm 111
VU871	Psalm 148
VU873	Psalm 149
VU875	Psalm 150