

Weddings

I. THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

When you have selected a tentative wedding date, please:

A. Call the church office (320.587.3031) and ask for an appointment with the pastor who will officiate at your wedding. The purpose of this appointment is to set the date of the wedding.

(Please note: the church office secretary will tentatively reserve a date for your wedding on the church calendar, but you must confirm the date during your initial appointment with the officiating pastor.)

B. Meet with the officiating pastor to:

- Confirm the date of the wedding
- Set the date and time for the wedding rehearsal
- Make arrangements for pre-marriage counseling
- Discuss in general your wedding plans

II. THE WEDDING SERVICE

The wedding service is first and foremost a service of worship. As such, the wedding service must be Christian and demonstrate a sacred character. Since you wish to be married at Peace Lutheran Church, it is obvious that you intend to bring praise, adoration, honor, and glory to the Almighty God in your wedding service.

A Christian wedding happens in a worship service that glorifies God. All preparation for the wedding will be directed toward achieving the goal of glorifying God. Thus, the focus of the wedding service is on GOD - not on you or on your relatives and family or on your friends. The wedding service, therefore, will consist of elements that help people worship.

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR A WEDDING

The following model for an order of worship at a wedding contains the principle elements of a Christian wedding ceremony:

The pre-service music

The lighting of the candles

The ringing of the bell

The procession

The invocation and the prayer

The Scripture reading

The meditation or message

The hymn or solo (optional)

The rite of marriage

The vows

The exchange of rings

The declaration of marriage

The unity candle ceremony (optional)

The hymn or solo (optional)

The nuptial prayer

The Lord's Prayer

The benediction

The recession

As long as the ceremony is Christian in character, the order for the service of worship can be modified according to personal taste and preference.

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR A WEDDING

On the following pages, samples of the constituent elements in the worship service at a Christian wedding have been prepared; a Christian wedding service is capable of much variety. The officiating pastor will be happy to work with you in developing the shape and content of your ceremony.

The various parts of the service, below, are designed by capital letters; options for those arts are indicated by Arabic numerals.

A. THE INVOCATION AND THE PRAYER (choose one)

1. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: Lord God, heavenly Father, Giver of life and love, let Your blessing rest upon these young people who have been drawn together in love. Help them build their home and their marriage. Give them wisdom for life. Let them look to You for guidance in living their lives. Let Your Fatherly hand be over them and Your Holy Spirit ever be with them, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.

Let us pray: O Almighty God, Your presence brings happiness to each situation in life, and Your favor is the foundation for every relationship. We thank You for blessing and guiding _____ and _____ as they come to be joined in marriage. As You have brought them together by Your love, sanctify them through Your Spirit and give them a new frame of heart for their new relationship. Give them now and throughout their wedding life Your divine guidance, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

3. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.

Let us pray: Eternal God, our Creator and Redeemer, as You gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of Your Son, so by His presence now bring Your joy to this wedding. Look in favor upon _____ and _____ and grant that they rejoice in all Your gifts, may at length celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end. Amen.

B. THE SCRIPTURE READING AND THE MEDITATION/MESSAGE

If you have a preference for the Scripture reading and the text for the meditation or message at your wedding, please share that information with the officiating pastor. If you want help in selecting a reading and a text, the officiating pastor will be happy to assist you. You wish, you may leave the selection of the reading and the text to the discretion of the officiating pastor.

The Scripture reading and the meditation/ message may be prefaced with the following statement:

Dear friends; We are here this day to share with _____ and _____ a most important moment in their lives. They have earned to know and love each other. They have decided to live their lives together as husband and wife. They now wish to enter upon the estate of holy matrimony which God ordained for the benefit of His creation, to add something to the measure of human happiness. Before they speak their vows they want me to speak to them on the basis of the Word of God which has been chosen for their wedding day. The text is

(The scripture reading and the meditation/message follow.)

THE SCRIPTURE (1 or more may be read)

1. Genesis 1: 26-28

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

2. Genesis 2: 4-9, 15-24

This is the account of the heavens and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground-- trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now the bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

3. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

4. Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8: 6-7

My lover spoke and said to me, “Arise, my darling, by beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruits; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.” Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

5. Matthew 5: 13-16

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

6. Matthew 19: 4-6

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

7. John 2: 1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water", so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

8. John 15: 12-15

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made know to you.

9. 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

10. Ephesians 3: 14-19

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

11. Ephesians 5: 1-2, 21-33

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

12. Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

13. John 3:11-24

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

C. THE BLESSING OF THE PARENTS (Optional)

1. (To the bride's parents)

Who brings _____ to stand beside this man?

(To the groom's parents)

Who brings _____ to stand beside this woman?

(To both sets of parents)

Are you willing now and always to support and strengthen this marriage by upholding both _____ and _____ with love and concern? Then answer by saying together, "We are."

2. Would the parents of the bride and groom please rise? Mr. and Mrs. _____ and Mr. and Mrs. _____, will you support _____ and _____ with the same love and understanding that you have shown until now? By your prayers and encouragement, will you assist them in making their home a reflection of God's love and care? Then answer, "We will."

3. Mr. and Mrs. (bride's parents), will you accept (groom's name) into the fellowship of your family with the same love and understanding you have shown (bride's name)? By your prayers and encouragement, will you assist them in making their home a reflection of God's love and care?

(Bride's parent respond:) We give (bride's name) into this marriage and receive (groom's name) into our family with love and joy.

Mr. and Mrs. (groom's parents), will you accept (bride's name) into the fellowship of your family with the same love and understanding you have shown (groom's name)? By your prayers and encouragement, will you assist them in making their home a reflection of God's love and care?

(Groom's parents respond:) We give (groom's name) into this marriage and receive (bride's name) into our family with love and joy.

D. THE MARRIAGE RITE: THE VOWS

The marriage rite may be prefaced with the following statement:

_____ and _____, nothing is easier than saying words, nothing is harder than living them day after day. What you promise today must be renewed tomorrow. At the end of this ceremony legally you will be man and wife, but you still must decide, each day that stretches out before you, that you want to be married. A wedding is only for day, but marriage is for life. In marriage, love must prevail for it makes burdens lighter as you divide them. Marriage makes joys more intense because you share them. Marriage make you stronger so that you can reach out and become involved with life in ways you dared not risk alone. You have come here to be united in this holy relationship of love. That all may know that your mutual consent in marriage was freely and sincerely given, it becomes you to declare in the presence of God and these witnesses the sincere intent you both have. (The vows immediately follow.)

1. I, GROOM’S/BRIDE’S NAME, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you BRIDE’S/GROOM’S 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, till death us do part. I pledge you my faithfulness.

2. Today, as you exchange the vows of marriage which unite you as husband and wife, let us reflect upon just what a vow is. By definition, a vow is a solemn promise or pledge that binds one to perform a specified act. A formal dedication of such a promise or pledge. The vows pledged today are a formal and public announcement of your deep and devoted love and commitment to each other.

I, GROOM’S/BRIDE’S NAME, promise to you BRIDE’S/GROOM’S NAME to share with you all of my love and my life in good times and in bad, to respect and to cherish you as my WIFE/HUSBAND from this day forward. Nothing shall become more important than our love for each other.

3. The vows which you are about to exchange serve as a verbal representation of the love you pledge to each other. For it is not the words you speak today which will bind you together as one, but it is the inner sense of love and commitment that each of you feels within your soul.

GROOM’S/BRIDE’S NAME, do you take BRIDE’S/GROOM’S NAME to be your wedded WIFE/HUSBAND? Will you love HER/HIM, comfort HER/HIM, honor HER/HIM, and respect HER/HIM? Will you share all life has to offer, your hopes and dreams, your achievements and disappointments with HER/HIM from this day forward? Then answer, “I will”.

4. I, GROOM’S/BRIDE’S NAME, take thee BRIDE’S/GROOM’S NAME to be my wedded 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, according to god’s holy plan, I give you my love.

5. I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, take you BRIDE'S/GROOM'S 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.

6. I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, take thee BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME to be my wedded WIFE/HUSBAND, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses, to be thy loving and faithful HUSBAND/WIFE, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

7. BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME, I promise with God's hand to be your faithful HUSBAND/WIFE, to love and serve you as Christ commands, as long as we both shall live.

8. BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME, I promise before God, our family, and friends, to be your loving and faithful HUSBAND/WIFE, to share my life with you, in wealth and in poverty, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times, for as long as we both shall live.

9. I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, take you BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME to be my WIFE/HUSBAND, and I promise before God and these friends, that I will share my life with you in all love and honor, in all faith and tenderness, through joy and through sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

10. I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, take you BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME to be my wedded WIFE/HUSBAND. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will live you and honor you all the days of my life.

11. Now face one another and make your promise each to the other: I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, in the presence of God and these witnesses take you, BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME to live this common life with me. I promise to be faithful to you, to be honest with you, to forgive you, to support you and to honor you above all others. I will do this until death separates us.

12. GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, I take you to be my wedded WIFE/HUSBAND from this time onward, to join with you and share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being.

13. I take you, BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME, to be my WIFE/HUSBAND and to be your faithful HUSBAND/WIFE, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

14. I take you, BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME, to be my WIFE/HUSBAND and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and the worst of what is to come as long as we live.

15. GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, will you have BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME to be your WIFE/HUSBAND, and will you love and honor HER/HIM as you share your life with HER/HIM? Will you faithfully strengthen and encourage HER/HIM in sickness and health, in sorrow and joy, forsaking all others as long as you both shall live? Then answer, "I will."

(To the congregation:) Fellow servants of God, will you on this day renew the promises of love which you have made to your spouses and families? Will you again dedicate yourselves joyfully to serve one another with a love that patterned after the love of Christ. Then answer, "I will."

GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, please say these words after me; I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, in the presence of God and these witnesses, pledge to you my unending love and loyalty as we together fulfill our calling in Christ, until He shall take us to be with Him.

16. The Lord God in goodness created us male and female, and by the gift of marriage founded human community in a joy which begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come. Because of sin, our age-old rebellion, the gladness of marriage can be overcast and the gift of the family can become a burden. But because God, who established marriage, continues still to bless it with His abundant and ever-present support, we can be sustained in our weariness and have our joy restored.

GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, if it is your intention to share with each other your joys and sorrows and all that the years will bring, with your promises bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife.

I take you, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, to be my WIFE/HUSBAND from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

17. I draw you into my very being to share with you life's sorrows and joys. I promise to respect you and be respected by you, to forgive you and be forgiven by you, to instill hope in you and be given hope by you. I promise to accept the mystery of your uniqueness and to love you as an equal. Through these acts of teaching and learning, we will grow toward each other.

18. I, GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, take thee BRIDE'S/GROOM'S NAME to be my wedded 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, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

19. GROOM'S/BRIDE'S NAME, will you have this WOMAN/MAN to be your WIFE/HUSBAND; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love HER/HIM, comfort HER/HIM, honor and keep HER/HIM, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to HER/HIM as long as you both shall live? Then answer, "I will." Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage? Then answer, "We will."

E. THE MARRIAGE RITE: THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

1. Exchange rings as a promise and symbol of wedded love and faithfulness.

(The best man hands the rings to the pastor. Groom places ring on bride's finger; bride then places rings on groom's finger.)

2. _____ and _____, you have brought rings symbolizing these vows. Give them to each other as a promise of love. (The bride and groom exchange rings and repeat these words:) "I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness."

May the giving and receiving of these rings ever be a symbol of the faithful and unselfish sharing of goods that you as husband and wife will constantly develop, and may they be a reminder of the excellent Christian virtues with which you will adorn your marriage. To this end may God bless you through the heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

3. (Pastor receives rings from best man.) Wear these rings as symbols of the unbroken and unending love you have promised to each other. (The rings are exchanged.)

4. _____ and _____, you have brought rings symbolizing these vows. Give them to each other as a promise of your love. _____, this ring is a symbol of my promise to you, and sign of my growing love for you that we have in Christ."

F. THE MARRIAGE RITE: THE DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

1. Join your right hands. _____ and _____, we have heard you promise to share your lives in marriage. We recognize and respect the covenant you have made. You have done this in the presence of your friends and loved ones and in the sight of God. We do now acknowledge that you are husband and wife and pronounce you this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. What God has joined together let no one put asunder.

The Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant you His Holy Spirit, and be with you and richly bless you forevermore. Amen.

2. Join your right hands (the couple may kneel). The marriage promises which you have made today are to be regarded not as burdens to weigh you down, but as a source of strength to lift you up to a more abundant life. Remember that love grounded in Christ is not the passion to possess and rule but it is the passion to give and to share and to bless. Do not be divided by secrets, driven apart by rivalries, or embittered by differences. Instead, seek by openness, reason, and goodwill to find the spiritual key to peace. Do not let either adversity or prosperity overcome you, but work to build your lives in forgiveness understanding, and a firm faith in God.

And now in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, I pronounce you husband and wife. Those whom God has truly joined together, no one can drive apart. May God in whose presence you have spoken these promises bless you and make you a blessing to the other.

3. _____ and _____, have been united by the grace of God and have made their vows before us all. I, therefore, declare them to be husband and wife in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

4. _____ and _____, by their promises before God and in the presence of this congregation, have bound themselves one to the other. I, therefore, declare them to be 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 Lord God, who created our first parents, and established them in marriage, establish and sustain you, that you may find delight in each other and grow in holy love until your life's end. Amen.

G. THE UNITY CANDLE (optional)

1. _____ and _____ are about to perform an ancient ceremony to symbolize what it means to become husband and wife. The two lighted candles at the altar symbolize their separate lives. In marriage two become one. Each gives to the other; the two become one flesh. With the lighted candles each lights another candle to reflect this union. Together they begin a new life, and as they serve one another in love, this new life will glow and grow. May God help them to make it so. Amen.

(The couple lights the unity candle with the other two candles; when they return to their places, the pastor says:)

In His power God created you man and woman, and in His wisdom God brought you together, for He thought it better that neither of you should be alone. In His grace God has now made you one, for He knew that each of you needed someone else. In His providence God wills that your union in Christ endure, ever under His blessings, in faithful communion with His Church, in love and affection, and in constant faithfulness and service to each other until He Himself sees fit to take you to His heavenly home.

2. _____ and _____ are about to perform a ceremony to symbolize what it means to become husband and wife. The two lighted candles symbolize their separate lives before this moment. In marriage two persons become one. With the lighted candles they light the central candle to reflect His union. Like two rivers merging into one, they begin a new life. As they serve one another in love and faith, this new life will glow and grow. Although unified through marriage _____ and _____ will continue to be the unique persons whom God created; thus, the individual candles remain lighted as a reminder of their individual identity and worth. But now their focus will be to develop and nurture the oneness they share. May God's grace dominate their life together.

(If there is a second solo or hymn, it may be sung at this time as the unity candle is being lighted.)

H. THE NUPTIAL PRAYER

(The couple kneels for the Nuptial Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and the benediction.)

1. Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all humankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life, send Your blessing upon these Your servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in Your name, that, living faithfully together, they may keep the vow and covenant made between them, and may ever remain in love and peace together, and so live in this life according to Your will that in the world to come they may have life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

2. Let us pray for _____ and _____ in their life together. Faithful Lord, source of love, pour down Your grace upon _____ and _____ that they may fulfill the vows they have made this day and reflect your steadfast love in their life-long faithfulness to each other. As members with them of the Body of Christ, use us to support their life together; and from Your great store of strength give them power and patience, affection and understanding, courage and love toward You, toward each other, and toward the world, that they may continue together in mutual growth according to Your will in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

3. Let us pray together: O Eternal God, Maker and Preserver of all humankind, the Author of everlasting life, send Your blessing upon the new home which You have now begun. Bless also our homes and marriages. Give us Your grace that we may always keep these promises which we have made today. Keep us in perfect love and loyalty together and help us to live according to Your will until we live in heaven with You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

4. (Optional prayer in addition to one of the three, above:) Let us pray for all families throughout the world. Gracious Father, You bless the family and renew Your people. Enrich husbands and wives and parents and children n more and more with Your grace that, strengthening and supporting each other, they may serve those in need and be a sigh of the fulfillment of Your perfect Kingdom where, with Your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, You live and reign, one God through all ages. Amen

I. THE BENEDICTION

1. The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you,

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen

2. The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen

3. May God bless you with a strong sense of His near presence;

To guide you, to protect you, to help you,

That you may know what it is to walk close with Him your whole life long. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

4. Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, keep you in His light and truth and love now and forever. Amen

J. INTRODUCTION OF COUPLE (optional)

(The couple rises from the kneeler, faces the congregation, and the pastor says:)

“I now present to you Mr. and Mrs. _____.