**The Basic Wedding Ceremony – The United Methodist Church**

*This document contains a number of options for the wedding ceremony and may be customized for each wedding. As the pastor and couple meet together, decisions will be made for their particular wedding, beginning with the first meeting.*

 **GATHERING**

**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**

 *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**

 The Lord be with you.

 **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

God of all peoples,

you are the true light illumining everyone.

You show us the way, the truth, and the life.

You love us even when we are disobedient.

You sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

We rejoice in your life in the midst of our lives.

We praise you for your presence with us,

and especially in this act of solemn covenant;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

**Suggested Scripture Lessons – *Couples may choose from this list or choose other scriptures that are meaningful to them. We can read more than one, if the couple desires.***

Genesis 1:26 28,31a -The creation of man and woman

Song of Solomon 2:10 14,16a; 8:6 7 -Love is strong as death.

Isaiah 43:1 7 - You are precious in God's eyes.

Isaiah 55:10 13 - You shall go out in joy.

Isaiah 61:10 62:3 - Rejoice in the Lord.

Isaiah 63:7 9 - The steadfast love of the Lord

Romans 12:1 2, 9 18 - The life of a Christian

1 Corinthians 13 - The greatest of these is love **(a decision on specific verses may be made as**

 **service is prepared)**

2 Corinthians 5:14 17 - In Christ we are a new creation.

Ephesians 2:4 10 - God's love for us

Ephesians 4:1 6 - Called to the one hope

Ephesians 4:25 5:2 - Members one of another

Philippians 2:1 2 - The Christlike spirit

Philippians 4:4 9 - Rejoice in the Lord.

Colossians 3:12 17 - Live in love and thanksgiving.

1 John 3:18 24 - Love one another.

1 John 4:7 16 - God is love.

Revelation 19:1, 5-9a - The wedding feast of the Lamb

Matthew 5:1 10 - The Beatitudes

Matthew 7:21, 24 27 - A house built upon a rock

Matthew 22:35 40 - Love, the greatest commandment

Mark 2:18 22 - Joy in Christ as at a wedding

Mark 10:42 45 - True greatness

John 2:1 11 - The marriage feast of Cana

John 15:9 17 - Remain in Christ's love.

**MEDITATION**

**INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

*An extemporaneous prayer may be offered, or the following may be prayed by the pastor or by all:*

Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all life,

 Author of salvation, Giver of all grace:

Bless and sanctify with your Holy Spirit

 ***Name and Name***, who come now to join in marriage.

Grant that they may give their vows to each other

 in the strength of your steadfast love.

Enable them to grow in love and peace

 with you and with one another all their days,

 that they may reach out

 in concern and service to the world;

 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

 **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 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.

**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**

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.

**LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE**

**MEMORIAL TRIBUTE**

***Holy Communion may be celebrated, if the couple desires,***

***as long as it is understood that everyone in attendance is invited to the Lord’s Table.***

***Additional service materials are available for this option.***

***Otherwise, the ceremony continues:***

 **SENDING FORTH**

**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 PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The couple may greet each other with a kiss and be greeted by the pastor, after which greetings may be exchanged through the congregation.*

**GOING FORTH**