

A Service Of Christian Marriage I

(The United Methodist Hymnal, Page 864)

This service of Christian marriage is found in UMH 864-69. It is provided for couples who wish to solemnize their marriage in a service of Christian worship, parallel in its structure to the Sunday service, which includes the proclamation of the Word with prayer and praise. 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. It is highly appropriate that the congregation sing hymns and other acts of worship. See the wedding hymns in UMH 642-47, those listed under Weddings in UMH 953-54, and others listed in the service below.

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, should include, in addition to premarital counseling, discussing and planning the service with them and informing them of policies or guidelines established by the congregation on such matters as decorations, photography, and audio or video recording. 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 or person in charge of the music should 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.

ENTRANCE

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. During the entrance of the wedding party, there may be instrumental music or a hymn, a psalm, a canticle, or an anthem.

PRELUDE

Family Entrance Order: Groom's Grandparents, Bride's Grandparents, Groom's Mother, Bride's Mother. As the Mothers are escorted in they may light the side unity candles.

PROCESSIONAL:

GREETING

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 PEOPLE

To the Families:

The marriage of Name and Name unites their families and creates a new one. Do you who represent their families rejoice in their union and pray God's blessing upon them?

Family

Members:: **We do.**

To All Present:

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

All: **We will.**

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

PRAYER

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.

SCRIPTURES

READINGS

SONGS

SERMON

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Let us pray. . . .

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

(The wedding party enters the chancel. the bride may pass her flowers to the Maid of Honor. The woman and may face each other, joining hands.)

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

(The man receives the woman's hands.)

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.

(The woman receives the man's hands.)

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.

BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS

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

Let us Pray.

Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings, 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.

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.

LIGHTING THE UNITY CANDLE

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

(The wife and husband join hands. The pastor may place a hand on, or wrap a stole around, their joined hands.)

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

Now that **Name**, and **Name**, have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands, the giving and receiving of rings, and the lighting of the unity candle,

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.

SONG: _____

BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

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 working 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 your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

No. 895

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

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.
You may kiss.

PRESENTATION TO THE CONGREGATION

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
I present to you (Mr. & Mrs.) **Name**.

Items or signs of love may be presented to the new in-laws.

GOING FORTH

The party may exit and then ushers return to escort the mothers out and then dismiss the congregation by row. The Bride and Groom may choose to come back in to greet and dismiss the people by row.

A Selection of Scripture Readings

Psalms

	23	34
	33	37
	67	127
	103 (sel.)	128
	112	145
(sel.)		
	121	148
(sel.)		

Old Testament•

	Genesis	1:26-31 2:18-25
	Song of Solomon	1:15-16a 2:2-3a,8- 14,16a
		4:1a,9-10 5:10,15b-16 6:3a; 8:6-7
	Isaiah	54:5-8
	Jeremiah	31:31-34
	Hosea	2:16-23

New Testament•

	Matthew	5:1-10,13-16 7:21,24-29 19:3-6 22:35-40
	Mark	10:6-9, 13-16
	John	2:1-11 15:9-16
	Romans	12:1-2,9-18
	1 Corinthians	6:15-20 12:31-13:8a 13:1-13
	Ephesians	3:14-21 5:2a, 21-33
	Colossians	3:12-17
	1 Peter	3:1-9
	1 John	3:18-24 4:7-16
	Revelation	19:1, 5-9a

Suggested Hymns for Weddings

166	All Praise to Thee, for Thou, O King Divine
559	Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
475	Come Down, O Love Divine
61	Come, Thou Almighty King
732	Come, We That Love the Lord
111	How Can We Name a Love
644	Jesus, Joy of Our Desiring
89	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
93	Let All the World in Every Corner Sing
117	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
66	Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
96	Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above
139	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
126	Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above
90	Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones
642	As Man and Woman We Were Made
451	Be Thou My Vision
158	Come, Christians, Join to Sing
164	Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life
695	O Lord, May Church and Home Combine
645	O Perfect Love
408	The Gift of Love
138	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
643	When Love Is Found
549	Where Charity and Love Prevail
647	Your Love, O God, Has Called Us Here
100	God, Whose Love Is Reigning o'er Us
384	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
102	Now Thank We All Our God