

# A Service of Christian Marriage

used at St. Paul's  
United Methodist Church, Houston

*This service is based on the one in The United Methodist Hymnal, as are all of the wedding services at St. Paul's.*

## ENTRANCE

### The Prelude

*The woman and the man, entering separately or together, now come forward with the 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.*

### The Processional

*Wedding Party processes in. All stand.  
Bride processes in.*

### The Greeting

Friends, we are gathered together in the sight of God to witness and bless the joining together of Bride and Groom 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. Bride and Groom come to give themselves to one another in this holy covenant.

*All sit.*

## DECLARATION

### The Declaration of Intention

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.

Bride, will you have Groom 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?

Bride: *I will.*

Groom, will you have Bride 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 for as long as you both shall live?

Groom: *I will.*

*(Ask parents and/or other representatives of the families to stand.)*

### The Response of the Families

The marriage of Bride and Groom unites their families and creates a new one. They ask you for your blessing. Do you, who represent their families, rejoice in their union and pray God's blessing upon them?

Families: *We do.*

*(Parents and/or other representatives of the families sit down.)*

## The Response

### of the Congregation

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

Congregation: *We will.*

## The 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

### Scripture Lessons

#### The Homily

#### The Intercessory Prayer

Let us Pray. Eternal God, creator and preserver of life, author of salvation, giver of all grace: Bless and sanctify with your Holy Spirit Bride and Groom, 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.

*(Move to Inner Altar. Remove Veil. Hand Bouquet to Bridesmaid)*

## THE MARRIAGE

### The Exchange of Vows

*(Choose from one of these three. // indicates pause and repetition of vow.)*

**Vow #1.** In the name of God.// I, Groom (Bride), take you Bride, 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, // as long as we both shall live. // This is my solemn vow.

**Vow #2.** I take you, Bride (Groom), 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.

**Vow #3.** Bride (Groom), in the name of God, // I take you to be my wife (husband) // 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.

### The 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 Bride and Groom in holy marriage.

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.

Bride, 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.

Groom, 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.

### The Declaration of Marriage

*(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.

*(To congregation)* Now that Bride and Groom 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.**

### Unity Candle

#### The 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 Bride and Groom. 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 forever 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, Hymnal 895

*(said in unison or sung)*

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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

### The Dismissal with Blessing

*(To husband and wife)* 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.

*(To congregation)* 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 Kiss

### The Recessional

### The Postlude