

SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

Rules for the wedding ceremony:

- 1. All music must be dignified and appropriate for the occasion. If a musical performance is desired, it may be done immediately before or after the minister's exhortation.*
- 2. The couple may not write their own vows, but are rather required to use the vows prescribed below.*
- 3. There will be no additional ceremonies in the service. Since the wedding service is also a service of worship to God, it must be done according to biblical standards for worship. Unity ceremonies and the like are not prescribed by Scripture, and are therefore prohibited.*
- 4. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the gospel belonging to the whole church; therefore, it may not be performed during the marriage ceremony.*

Following the procession, the minister begins with these words, the congregation standing.

Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God to join this man and this women in holy Matrimony; which is instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all men. Let us therefore reverently remember that God has established and sanctified Marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Savior has declared that a man shall forsake his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who enter into this relation to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with one another's infirmities and weakness; to comfort one another in sickness, trouble, and sorrow; in honesty and diligence to provide for one another and for their household in things temporal; to pray

for and encourage one another in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as heirs of the grace of life.

Forasmuch as these two persons have come here to be one in this holy estate, if there be any present who knows any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined in Marriage, I require him now to make it known, or ever after to hold his peace.

Speaking to the couple, the minister says the following words.

I charge you both before God, who knows all hearts, that if either of you know of any impediment hindering your lawful Marriage, you now confess it. For you ought to be well-assured that if any persons are joined together against God's command, their union is not blessed by Him.

If no impediment appears, the minister prays.

Almighty and ever blessed God, whose presence is the happiness of every condition, and whose favor sweetens every relation, we pray that your would be present and favorable unto these Your servants, that they may be truly joined in the honorable estate of Marriage, in the covenant of their God. As You have brought them together by Your providence, sanctify them by Your Spirit, giving them a new frame of heart fit for their new estate, and enrich them with all grace, whereby they may enjoy the comforts, undergo the cares, endure the trials, and perform the duties of life together as is fitting for Christians under Your heavenly guidance and protection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister instructs the congregation to take their seats.

The minister inquires of the intent of the couple.

M—, will you have this woman to be your wife, and will you pledge your fidelity to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of Marriage?

W—, will you have this man to be your husband, and will you pledge your fidelity to him, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of Marriage?

The minister seeks the blessing of the bride's father, guardian, or friend.

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

At this time, the minister reads a selection of Scripture and offers a brief exhortation to the couple and to the congregation. If so desired, a hymn may be sung or another musical selection may be performed before or after the exhortation.

The minister joins the hands of the couple and administers the vows.

I, M—, take you N—, to be my wedded wife, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

I, N—, take you M—, to be my wedded husband, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful wife, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

If rings are exchanged, they are first given to the minister. The man places the ring on the woman's fourth finger with the following words. The woman does likewise with the man.

This ring I give to you, in token and pledge, of our constant faith and abiding love.

The minister then prays for the couple.

Most merciful and gracious God, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, bestow on these Your servants the seal of Your approval and Your fatherly benediction, granting them grace to fulfill, with pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between them made. Guide them together, we pray, in the way of righteousness and peace, that loving and serving You, with one heart and mind all the days of their life, they may be abundantly enriched with the tokens of Your everlasting favor, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister announces the marriage.

By the authority committed unto me as Minister of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, I declare that M— and N— are now husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God, and the law of the State, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Whom God has therefore joined together, let no man put asunder.

The minister speaks to the couple.

You may now seal your covenant with a kiss.

The minister concludes with a benediction.

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make his face to shine upon and be gracious to you.

The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.