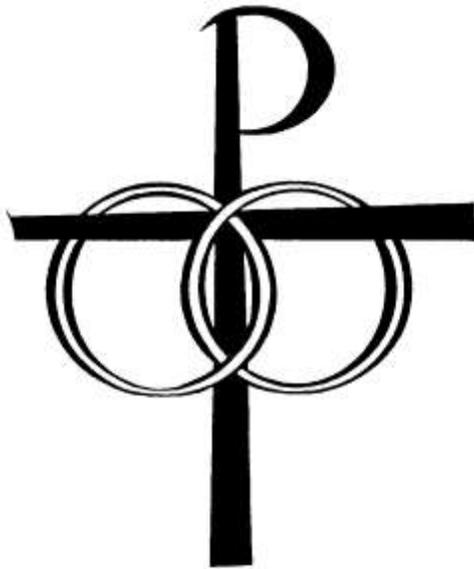


The Marriage Liturgy



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PLANNING YOUR WEDDING SERVICE

As you plan this service, we hope these materials will help guide you so that your wedding will be a joyous act of worship. By attending to details in a timely and thoughtful matter now, you and your guests will be able to focus on celebrating your union in the presence of God on the day you are married.

As you move through this planning process, do so carefully and prayerfully. Consider each detail in turn, and don't worry! All will be ready when the time comes. Remember that marriage is a rite of the church, "intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, ELW). The most important thing about your wedding day is not the flowers, the clothes, the pictures, or the party. The most important thing is worshipping the Creator and Giver of all things...the one who makes everything possible! Our sincere hope is that you will put far more energy into preparing for your marriage than for the single day of your wedding!

THINKING ABOUT YOUR WEDDING SERVICE

(adapted from "Marriage: A Worship Handbook" by Karen G. Bockelman)

Before your last session with your pastor, when you will discuss the details of the worship service, think about what your marriage means to you. How will the things most important to you be reflected in the service? Use the questions below to make some notes to prepare you to plan with your pastor.

How do you understand the wedding as a service of worship?

How do you understand the assembly to be involved in supporting your wedding and marriage?

What do you want the music to express (through instruments, voice, congregational singing)? What hymns or other music selections might you choose? (For suggestions and guidance, see the **Music Guidance** and **Hymns** sections of this guide.)

What Bible readings most clearly express for you God's love, God's intentions for marriage and God's blessings upon those gathered? (For suggestions and guidance, see the **Scripture** section of this guide.)

What promises are at the heart of the marriage vow? What words say that best for you? (For suggestions and guidance, see the **Vows** and **Ring Texts** sections of this guide.)

YOUR WEDDING SERVICE FOLDER

If you plan to provide a wedding service folder for your guests, which we encourage for their active participation in the worship service, you will need to arrange for your own typing and printing. Central provides two templates (word docs) on our website for your convenience.

The way you design your service folder, from the format to the colors, from the fonts to text itself, makes a great deal of difference in the worship experience of your guests.

We suggest:

- ◆ When you choose a format, consider whether the folder is easy to open and easy to hold open. Certain ribbons, seals, and stapling can make the folder challenging to use.
- ◆ When you look at fonts, font sizes and paper color, consider high contrast, serif fonts and print ten point or larger.
- ◆ When you choose how much text to include in the order of service, consider how familiar your guests are with the liturgy being used. Print all the words spoken by the assembly, including the Lord's Prayer.
- ◆ Extensive biographies or personal stories about bridal party members are best saved for the reception. A brief note from the bride and groom thanking guests for being a part of this special celebration is appropriate, as is an acknowledgment of loved ones whose memories are in your hearts at this special time.
- ◆ A photograph of the couple is not permitted on the cover.
- ◆ You may include your new mailing address or directions to your reception.

Ask your Central pastor or your wedding coordinator to discuss these choices with you. Please bring or send a **draft** of your service folder to your Central assigned pastor at least fifteen days before the wedding service and before the full printing. **The Central pastor, musician and wedding coordinator must approve your service folder before it is printed.**

THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

Order of Service

Prelude

Title..... composer

Procession

Title..... composer

Greeting and Welcome

*All respond: **And also with you.***

Prayer of the Day

*All respond: **Amen.***

Readings

*After each reading all respond: **Thanks be to God.***

book versesreader

book versesreader

gospel verses..... Pastor Name

Homily

Vows

Exchange of Rings

Acclamation

Unity Candle

Title..... composer

Marriage Blessing

Prayers of Intercession

*After each petition, all respond: **Hear our prayer.***

LORD'S PRAYER (1975)

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

Benediction

Presentation of the Couple

Recession

Title..... composer

Postlude

MUSIC AT YOUR WEDDING SERVICE

It is our practice that Central Lutheran Church musicians play for all weddings held at Central. In rare circumstances musicians other than those employed by Central *may* play for weddings. Requests for guest musicians must be cleared with Central's Cantor or Associate Cantor six months before the wedding service. In most cases Central's Associate Cantor plays for weddings at Central. Should he/she be unavailable for your wedding date, another of Central's musicians will be assigned to play.

The wedding couple should contact the assigned musician at least two months before the wedding date to schedule a consultation regarding all wedding music. Bring your ideas to this meeting, but do not make final decisions before this meeting takes place.

A thirty minute consultation regarding music is included in the wedding fee. It is our expectation that a musician consultation, whether by phone or in person, is with the wedding couple not a family member or a wedding planner.

In cases when organ or piano music will not be used (i.e. a string quartet or brass ensemble), the Central musician assigned to the service will still need to approve musical selections, and, if needed, may be present to coordinate the music. If you are arranging a vocal soloist, instrumentalist, or instrumental ensemble, it is their responsibility to contact the assigned Central musician directly to arrange a rehearsal time. The wedding fee covers a brief rehearsal the day of the wedding. Additional rehearsals will incur additional fees. The couple is responsible for delivering printed music for vocal or instrumental soloists to the Central musician assigned to their service in a timely fashion (generally not less than three weeks before the wedding service).

Since the wedding service **is** a service of worship, musical selections – especially those that include texts (vocal music) **must** be appropriate for use at any worship service. These must be sacred in nature. Save secular selections for use at the reception. It is the responsibility of Central's Cantor to make decisions regarding the appropriateness of all music within the context of any service (including weddings) and specifically vocal music with texts. Solos to be included in any wedding service must be submitted to the Central musician assigned to the service no later than six weeks prior to the date of the wedding—preferably at the time of the consultation.

The nature of an instrumental piece of music also plays an important role. Occasionally recordings are presented to the musician – movements of symphonies, opera arias, etc., which may not translate well to the organ or piano. If you wish to use this type of music, the Central musician must first be consulted and approve the selection, it will then be your responsibility to secure a workable transcription. Most often, works

written specifically for the organ or piano are preferred – they sound and work the best. Tried and trusted transcriptions are also good choices – the consultation is a time when such possibilities can be explored. Recorded music is **not** permitted in the sanctuary during, before, or after the wedding service. This includes soloist accompaniments on CDs.

The singing of hymns can be a welcome addition to the wedding service – providing those in attendance are *likely* to sing. Nothing can be as joyous as a singing congregation. On the flip side, nothing can be as tedious as a group of people enduring four stanzas of a hymn while no one is singing. Hymns that focus on celebration, marriage and community in Christ are especially poignant. (See **Hymns** section below.)

Please note that soloist and instrumentalist (other than the assigned Central musician) fees are not included in the wedding fee. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact soloists and instrumentalists or ensembles. Central’s musicians are happy to provide recommendations. (We recommend that couples consult with the Central musician assigned to their service **prior to** signing a contract with any outside musical group, if such a group is desired.) Vocalist and instrumentalist fees can range anywhere from \$150 to \$700. Ensemble fees (string quartets, etc.) may be higher.

HYMNS

Below are some suggested hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth.....879	Now Thank We All Our God839, 840
Go, my Children, with my Blessing ...543	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father ...585	(paraphrased Psalm 100/150).....858, 859
Jesus, Come! For We Invite You	This is a Day, Lord, Gladly Awaited
(paraphrased John 2).....312586
Joy to the World	
(paraphrased Psalm 100).....267	Communion hymns:
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee836	Soul, Adorn Yourself with
Let All Things Now Living	Gladness488, 489
(paraphrased Psalm 150.6)881	What Feast of Love487
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.....631	

Hymn numbers are from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*



The marriage rite is a liturgy of the Church, celebrated by the local congregation who offer their witness and support to the couple and who, with them, seek God's blessings on this marriage. As such, only that which is appropriate for the worship of God is included in the wedding service. Music is chosen on the basis of Christian themes of faithfulness, self-giving love, and the seasonal context.

– Worship Wordbook

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROCESSION MUSIC

Prince of Denmark's March	Jeremiah Clark (also suitable as a recession)
Trumpet Tune	Henry Purcell (also suitable as a recession)
Canon in D	Johann Pachelbel
Trumpet Tune in D	David N. Johnson
Trumpet Tune in Eb	David N. Johnson
Bist du bei mir	J.S. Bach
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	J.S. Bach
St. Anthony Chorale	Johannes Brahms

SUGGESTIONS FOR RECESSION MUSIC

Rigaudon	Andre Campra
Hornpipe from "Water Music"	G.F. Handel
Allegro Moderato	Gordon Young
The Heavens Declare	Benedetto Marcello
Festival Toccata	Domenico Zipoli
Te Deum	Marc Antoine Charpentier (also suitable as a procession)

SCRIPTURE

Below are suggested scripture readings:

Old Testament

Genesis 1.26-31	<i>Humankind is created by God</i>
Genesis 2.18-24	<i>Created for relationship</i>
Proverbs 3.3-6	<i>Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart</i>
Ecclesiastes 4.9-12	<i>The value of two together</i>
Song of Solomon 2.10-13	<i>The voice of the beloved; Song of two lovers</i>
Song of Solomon 8.6-7	<i>Many waters cannot quench love</i>
Isaiah 63.7-9	<i>God's steadfast love lifts up the people</i>
Jeremiah 31.31-34	<i>The new covenant of the people of God</i>

Psalms

Psalm 33	<i>The Lord is our help and our shield (33.20) Let your lovingkindness be upon us, as we have put our trust in you (33:22)</i>
Psalm 67	<i>May God be merciful to us and bless us</i>
Psalm 100	<i>We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture (100.2) Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving (100.3)</i>
Psalm 117	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord</i>
Psalm 121	<i>The Lord keeps watch over you</i>
Psalm 127	<i>Unless the Lord builds the house Children are a heritage from the LORD (127.4)</i>
Psalm 128	<i>Happy are they who follow in the ways of the LORD (128.1)</i>
Psalm 136	<i>God's mercy endures forever (136.1b)</i>
Psalm 150	<i>Let everything that has breath praise the LORD (150.6)</i>

New Testament Letters

Romans 12.1-2, 9-18

I Corinthians 12.31 - 13.13

Ephesians 3.14-19

Ephesians 5.21-33

Philippians 4.4-9

Colossians 3.12-17

1 John 3.18-23

1 John 4.7-12

A living sacrifice and genuine love

The greatest gift is love

The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love

Walk in love, as Christ loved us

Rejoice in the Lord always

*Clothed in compassion, kindness,
meekness and patience*

Let us love in truth and action

Let us love one another for love is of God

New Testament Gospels

Matthew 5.14-16

Matthew 7.21, 24-29

Matthew 19.4-6

Matthew 22.35-40

Mark 10.6-9

John 2.1-10

John 15.9-12

You are the light, let your light shine

A wise person builds upon the rock

What God has united must not be divided

Love, the greatest commandment

They are no longer two but one

The wedding at Cana

Love one another as I have loved you



VOWS

Below are optional vows:

- (1) I take you, _____, 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.
- (2) I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful wife/husband, 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.
- (3) _____, 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 circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
- (4) I, _____, give you my hand this day. I open my mouth to declare before God, our ancestors, and this congregation, that I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I love you. In bitter days and in days of sweetness, in darkness and in light, in life and until death, I will walk in step with you. Your concerns will be my concerns. Your joys will be my joys. We will share our struggles, and we will share our triumphs. I will be with you all the days of my life. This is my vow. I have spoken.
- (5) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
- (6) I, _____, take you, _____, for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.
- (7) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband; and I promise, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful wife/husband; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.

- (8) Before God and these witnesses, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, and I promise to love you, and to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live
- (9) In the presence of God and this community, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband; to have and to hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.
- (10) In the Name of God, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better and 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.
- (11) *Or most traditionally, the source of most all English language vows:*
I, _____, take thee, _____, 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 (plight) (give) thee my troth.
- (12) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to love you, comfort you, honor and keep you, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.
- (13) I, _____, with love and joy and an honest and open spirit, make with you, _____ this covenant of marriage before God and this community of friends and family. I promise to love and trust you, as we share hopes and failures, and to support and encourage you so that we might grow individually and as a couple. I promise also to nurture you with faith and tenderness in the name of Christ. I shall always try to speak the truth to you and to listen with utmost concern for your desires and needs. I promise to be faithful to you and this pledge throughout our lives.
- (14) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband; to be faithful to you in tender love and honor, offering you encouragement and companionship; and I will live with you, and cherish you, as love and respect lead me, in the bond of marriage.

- (15) I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will [obey,] 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 better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come until death parts us.
- (16) _____, 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 circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
- (17) _____, I promise to share with you the sweet things of life as well as the bitter, to love you and enjoy you, to respect and encourage you, to listen to you and promise to strive for a life of courage, faithfulness, and dignity, and to seek understanding among all people, for as long as we both shall live. In all this, I ask God to help and guide us.
- (18) _____, I want to live with you just as you are. I will be honest with you and forgive you... I love you for what you are to me and for what you are to others... I choose you above all others, and promise to be faithful to you as long as life endures.
- (19) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband from this day forward; to be with you forever in times of joy and suffering, wealth and poverty; I pledge you my honor, patience and faithfulness, and by the grace of God offer you my unending love.
- (20) I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and before this community to be faithful to you and to share all that is to come. In times of happiness I will share your joy and laughter. In times of sorrow, I will share your tears and pain. I will forgive as I have been forgiven. I will love as I have been loved. I will join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
- (21) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my spouse, 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 law; this is my solemn vow.

- (22) I, _____, having full confidence that our abiding faith in each other will last our lifetimes, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife/husband; I promise to be your loving and faithful wife/husband; in prosperity and in need, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and to respect your privileges as an individual as long as we both shall live.
- (23) I, _____, give myself to you, _____. By the grace of God, I promise to support and care for you. In the love of Christ, I promise to love and cherish you. With the Spirit's help, I promise to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live.
- (24) I take you, _____, 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 forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will share my life with you, through the best and worst of all that is to come, until death parts us.



General counsel about composing original vows or modifying vows:

- The primary promise in Christian marriage is faithfulness to one another.
- Keep your vows simple as possible. You'll be living with them the rest of your life!
- Don't promise anything that is impossible. Avoid words like forever, never, only, always.

RING TEXTS

Below are suggested ring texts:

- (1) I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.
- (2) _____, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.
- (3) I give/take this ring as a sign of our covenant.
- (4) This ring I give you, as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love.
- (5) _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you.
- (6) _____, I give you this ring, as a sign of the covenant we have made today.
- (7) As this ring has no end, my love for you has no end.
- (8) I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honor you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- (9) _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. 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.



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This document can also be accessed and downloaded from Central's website:

www.centralmpls.org/formation/life-passages



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