

Marriage

This rite is from Church Rites (1994), prepared by the Commission on Worship, Lutheran Church of Australia.

NOTES

- 1 This rite is intended for the marriage of Christians. Pastors should exercise their pastoral responsibility in making the appropriate adjustments for exceptional cases, and according to culture and local customs.
- 2 This rite is intended for marriage in a church. When a marriage takes place in the home or elsewhere, the rubrics referring to the church and its appointments, eg chancel and altar, should be adapted.
- 3 This rite may be used as a service complete in itself. It may also be set within a service with or without holy communion, matins, or vespers. When it is set within another order, it follows the sermon, and necessary adjustments will be made to it, eg the omission of the readings.
- 4 When the rite is set within a service with holy communion, the communion must not be limited to the bride and bridegroom or the wedding party, but be open to the gathered congregation. The pastor will exercise his pastoral responsibility in determining who may be admitted to holy communion.

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Marriage

INTRODUCTION

ENTRANCE

EITHER

The minister(s) may meet the wedding party at the church entrance. The following may be said.

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Amen.

The procession forms and enters the church, led by the minister(s).

OR

The minister, together with the bridegroom and his attendant(s), may enter the church from the vestry. The minister stands at the altar, and the bridegroom and attendant(s) stand at the entrance to the chancel facing the altar. They all turn to meet the bridal party as it forms a procession from the narthex to the chancel.

HYMN

The congregation may stand and sing an appropriate hymn, or appropriate music may be played, as the procession enters.

OPENING

EITHER

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Amen.

OR

In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

PRESENTATION

The parents may present the couple to be married. The minister asks the presenters to stand, if they are not already in position, and says:

Who presents N and N to be married?

I/We do.

HYMN

If no processional hymn has been sung, a hymn may be sung.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

PRAYER

Let us pray for N and N who have come to be married.

One of the following prayers or another suitable prayer is said.

EITHER

Eternal God, our creator and redeemer: As you have established marriage and desire to make it holy, pour out your Spirit on N and N, so that they may live faithfully in the state of marriage to your glory and for their good; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OR

Lord Jesus Christ, as you were present at the wedding at Cana and blessed it, be present at this wedding and bless N and N. Fill them with your joy in their life together, and grant that they may finally celebrate with you the marriage feast that has no end.

Amen.

OR

Faithful God, since you have established marriage, unite N and N as they make their vows publicly to each other, and help them to remain faithful throughout their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PSALM

A psalm may be sung or said. It may be said antiphonally by the minister and the congregation. The following psalms are suitable: Psalms 23; 37:3–7; 100; 117; 127; 128.

READINGS

One or more readings may be read by the minister or a lector.

Hear the word of the Lord as it is written in —.

The following readings are suitable: Genesis 1:26–31; Genesis 2:18–24; Genesis 24:50,51,58–67; Ecclesiastes 9:7–10; Song of Songs 2:10–13; Song of Songs 8:6,7; Isaiah 63:7–9; John 2:1–11; John 15:7–12; John 15:9–17; Romans 8:37–39; Romans 12:1,2,9–12; Romans 15:5–7; 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13; Ephesians 5:31–33; Colossians 3:12–19; 1 John 4:7–11,19.

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ADDRESS

HYMN

THE MARRIAGE

FOUNDATION AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

The minister reads some or all of the following passages to the congregation and particularly to the couple to be married.

N and N: God established marriage as the basis of family life, and for the wellbeing of human society. He said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner'.

God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no-one separate.

The apostle Paul says to Christian couples: Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Husbands, love your

wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. So then, N and N, our Lord promises to bless those who honour his purpose for marriage and remain faithful to each other in it.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

The minister says one of the following to the man.

EITHER

I therefore ask you: N, will you have N as your wife, to live together faithfully in marriage?

Yes, I will.

OR

I therefore ask you: N, will you have N as your wife, to live together, as God has ordained, in the state of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her, as long as you both shall live?

Yes, I will.

The minister says one of the following to the woman.

EITHER

N, will you have N as your husband, to live together faithfully in marriage?

Yes, I will.

OR

N, will you have N as your husband, to live together, as God has ordained, in the state of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him, as long as you both shall live?

Yes, I will.

VOWS

N and N, join your right hands and *say after me/exchange your vows.*

The man

EITHER

**I, N,
in the presence of God and these witnesses,
take you, N, to be my wife;
and I promise to be faithful to you
as long as we live.**

OR

**I, N,
in the presence of God,
take you, N, 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,
so long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow.**

The woman

EITHER

**I, N,
in the presence of God and these witnesses,
take you, N, to be my husband;
and I promise to be faithful to you
as long as we live.**

OR

**I, N,
in the presence of God,
take you, N, 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,
so long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow.**

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

If a wedding ring is to be given (or rings exchanged), the minister receives it (them) and gives it (them) to the man (the man and the woman in turn) to be put on the fourth finger of the partner's left hand.

Take this ring and say after me:

EITHER

**(N,) Receive this ring
as a pledge and token
of wedded love and faithfulness.**

OR

**(N,) I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage
and the vows we have made today.**

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

Turn to each other and join your right hands.

The minister may place his right hand on their hands.

He says to the congregation:

Since N and N have promised themselves to each other before God and in the presence of us all, I, as a servant of God and by the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia, declare them to be husband and wife. What God has joined together, let no-one separate.

The bridegroom may raise the bride's veil.

AFFIRMATION BY PARENTS

The parents of the couple may come forward to greet them.

Do you, *parents/N and N*, give your blessing to this marriage?

We give our blessing to N and N.

BLESSING AND PRAYERS

BLESSING OF COUPLE

The minister goes to the altar. The man and woman follow him and kneel. The minister lays his hands on them and says one of the following.

EITHER

Live together in faith and love, so that your marriage may reflect the union of Christ with his bride the church. And the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit †, be with you always.

Amen.

OR

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless, protect, and enrich you † in your married life.

Amen.

PRAYER

One of the following prayers or another prayer is said.

EITHER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our creator and preserver: Be with N and N, so that they may keep the promises made to each other, and may always live together in peace and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OR

Let us pray.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, as you have united N and N in marriage: Help them to live together according to your word. Strengthen them in faithfulness and love toward each other. Give them the heritage of children. Make them wise and loving parents, so that they may bring up their children to know, love, and serve you. (Help them to accept and love N, N, and N [*children/grandchildren of previous marriage*], so that they may grow together as a family.) Watch over them in the joys and troubles of their life. Keep them in the fellowship of your church. Strengthen their faith in you and encourage them to serve each other; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

OR

Let us pray. (As we pray, respond to each prayer with the words 'Lord, hear our prayer'.)

Lord God, our ever-present helper and counsellor: Be with N and N, who have promised each other lifelong love and faithfulness in marriage.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Guide and strengthen them by your Holy Spirit to fulfil this promise.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Make them of one mind, and help them to live together in harmony with each other.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Make their home your dwelling-place, and teach them to ask you for whatever they need.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Give them joy in their work and let your blessing rest upon it.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Make them ready to ask and receive forgiveness from each other.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

When their life on earth is over, bring them to your eternal home; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

The minister may lay his hands on the couple as the congregation says:

**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.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

The man and woman stand.

HYMN

CONCLUSION

BLESSING

EITHER

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit †, be with you all.

Amen.

OR

(May) God, who gives patience and encouragement, help you to live in harmony as you follow Christ Jesus, so that together you may praise God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit †, be with you always.

Amen.

RECESSION

The bridal party leaves the sanctuary for the signing of the register.

When the party returns, the minister may say the following or similar words.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Mr and Mrs N.

The congregation may greet the couple with applause.

Any necessary announcements may be made before the bridal party leaves the church.