

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Marriage Rite

ENTRANCE

The assembly stands as the ministers and the wedding group enter. Music—hymn, song, psalm, instrumental music—may accompany the entrance.

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

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

And also with you.

The minister may introduce the service with these or similar words.

OPTION A: Dear friends

Dear friends: We have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of *name* and *name*, to surround them with our prayers, and to share in their joy.

The scriptures teach us that the bond and covenant of marriage is a gift of God in which a man and a woman are joined as one, an image of the union of Christ and the church. As *name* and *name* make their promises to each other today, we remember that at Cana in Galilee our Lord Jesus Christ made the wedding feast a sign of God's reign of love.

Let us enter into this celebration confident that, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present with us now also. We pray that this couple may fulfill God's purpose for the whole of their lives.

OPTION B: The Lord God in goodness

The Lord God in goodness created us male and female, and by the gift of marriage founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come.

Because of sin, our age-old rebellion, the gladness of marriage can be overcast and the gift of a family can become a burden. But because God, who established marriage, continues still to bless it with abundant and ever-present support, we can be sustained in our weariness and have our joy restored.

OPTION C: Have come to make their marriage vows

Name and *name* have come to make their marriage vows in the presence of God and of this assembly. The uniting of this man and this woman in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy, for the help and comfort they give one another in prosperity and adversity, and that their love may be a blessing to all whom they encounter.

Let us now witness their promises to each other and surround them with our prayers, giving thanks to God for the gift of marriage and asking God's blessing upon them, that they may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in the love of God.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Those who are declaring their intention to marry may be accompanied by their parents. The parents may place a hand on the shoulders of their children while responding to the question addressed to families. The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:

OPTION A: Will you have

Name, will you have *name* to be your wife/husband, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love *her/him*, comfort *her/him*, honor and keep *her/him*, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?

Response:

I will.

OPTION B: Will you receive

Name, will you receive *name* as your wife/husband and bind yourself to *her/him* in the covenant of marriage? Will you promise to love and honor *her/him* in true devotion, to rejoice with *her/him* in times of gladness, to grieve with *her/him* in times of sorrow, and to be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?

Response:

I will.

OPTION C: Living in the promise of God

Name, living in the promise of God, [joined to Christ in baptism,] will you give yourself to *name* in love and faithfulness? Will you share your life with *her/him*, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, and will you be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?

Response:

I will.

If pastorally advisable, the minister may address the families of the couple in these or similar words.

Will you, the families of *name* and *name*, give your love and blessing to this new family?

The families respond:

We will.

The minister may address the assembly in these or similar words.

OPTION A: Will all of you

Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for *name* and *name* in their life together?
We will.

OPTION B: Families, friends

Families, friends, and all those gathered here with *name* and *name*, will you support and care for them, sustain and pray for them in times of trouble, give thanks with them in times of joy, honor the bonds of their covenant, and affirm the love of God reflected in their life together?
We will.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept.

OPTION A: Gracious God

Gracious God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ into the world to reveal your love to all people. Enrich *name* and *name* with every good gift, that their life together may show forth your love; and grant that at the last we may all celebrate with Christ the marriage feast that has no end; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OPTION B: Eternal God

Eternal God, our creator and redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so bring your joy to this wedding by his presence now. Look in favor upon *name* and *name* and grant that they, rejoicing in all your gifts, may at length celebrate the unending marriage feast with Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READINGS

The assembly is seated. Two or three scripture readings are proclaimed. When the service includes communion, the last is a reading from the gospels. Responses may include a psalm in response to a reading from the Old Testament, a sung acclamation preceding the reading of the gospel, or other appropriate hymns, songs, and psalms.

SERMON

Silence for reflection follows.

HYMN OF THE DAY

A hymn of the day may be sung.

VOWS

The presiding minister may address the couple in these or similar words.

Name and name I invite you to declare your vows to one another.

The couple may join hands. Each promises faithfulness to the other in these or similar words.

OPTION A: I take you to be my

I take you, *name*, 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.

OPTION B: In the presence of God

In the presence of God and this community,
I, *name*, take you, *name*, 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.

GIVING OF RINGS

When rings are to be exchanged, the presiding minister may say this prayer.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God of grace, for your love and faithfulness to your people.
May these rings be symbols of the promise *name* and *name* have made with each other;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

The couple may exchange rings with these or similar words.

OPTION A: This ring as a sign

Name, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

OPTION B: This ring as a symbol

Name, 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.

ACCLAMATION

The presiding minister addresses the assembly. In places where the announcement of

marriage is prescribed by law, that form should be used instead.

Name and name, by their promises before God and in the presence of this assembly, have joined themselves to one another as husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

The assembly may offer acclamation with applause. A sung acclamation, hymn, or other music may follow.

Other symbols of marriage may be given or used at this time.

MARRIAGE BLESSING

The couple may kneel. The presiding minister may extend a hand over the couple while praying for God's blessing in the following or similar words.

OPTION A: Most gracious God

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to endure the cross for our sake, that we may have abundance of life.

By the power of your Holy Spirit pour out the abundance of your blessing on *name* and *name*. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let your love be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads.

Bless them so that their lives together may bear witness to your love. 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 life and in their death.

Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast forever in your heavenly home, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

OPTION B: The Lord God

The Lord God,
who created our first parents and established them in marriage,
establish and sustain you,
that you may find delight in each other
and grow in holy love until your life's end.

Amen.

Parents or others may speak additional words of blessing and encouragement at this time.

THE UNITY CANDLE

While not incorporated into the official ELW marriage rite, if a Unity Candle is used, it is usually included at this point in worship. Music may accompany the lighting of the candle.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The assembly stands. Prayers of intercession for the world and its needs may be prayed. These prayers, prepared or adapted for the particular occasion, may include the following or similar petitions. An assisting minister may lead the prayers.

OPTION I: Seeing how greatly God has loved us

Seeing how greatly God has loved us, let us pray for the whole world.

For the Christian community everywhere; for the life and ministry of the baptized, and for all servants of the gospel, that the church may be the risen body of Christ in the world. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

For all who are joined by bonds of marriage, kinship, and friendship, and for communities everywhere; for the nations, for all those who govern, and for justice and peace throughout the world. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

For those we love easily, and for those with whom we struggle, for those different from us and for those familiar to us, that we might be instruments of God's peace. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

For those who suffer in any way, and those who are lonely, for the sick, the dying, and those who are bereaved, for those who are poor, hungry, homeless, or unemployed, for the victims of violence, hatred, and intolerance. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

For all those who are joined to us in love; for our families, friends, and neighbors, for those separated from us by distance or discord, and giving thanks also for those who have gone before us (especially *name/s*). Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

Other intercessions may be added.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers.

Creator of all,
you make us in your image and likeness and fill us with everlasting life. Hear the prayers of your people and grant to *name* and *name* grace to live in unity and joy all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and praise forever.

Amen.

OPTION II: On this day of rejoicing

On this day of rejoicing, let us bless God for divine love made flesh in Jesus Christ.

We praise you, O God, for the joy that *name* and *name* have found in each other, and we pray that their love and faithfulness may reflect your gracious love and enrich our common life. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

Give them gentleness and patience, affection and understanding, readiness to trust one another, and, when they hurt each other, grace to acknowledge their fault and to give and receive forgiveness. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

If pastorally advisable:

Give to *name* and *name* the gift and heritage of children in accordance with your will; make their home a haven of peace.

OR

You have given *name* and *name* the gift and heritage of children; make their home a haven of peace.

Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

Use us to support *name* and *name* in their lives together. Give us such a sense of your constant love that we may employ all our strength in a life of praise of you. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

Strengthen and bless friends and family gathered here, even as we call to mind those who are absent from us. Console those who mourn the loss of loved ones, and be present with those for whom love is a stranger. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

Look graciously on the world you have made and for which your Son gave his life. Strengthen marriages, families, and communities everywhere. Defend and guide all who suffer want or anxiety. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

Other intercessions may be added.

We give thanks to you, merciful God, for those who have died (especially *name/s*). Strengthen us by the example of the saints, and bring us all to the marriage feast of the Lamb. Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers.

Most gracious God, you have made us in your image and given us over to one another's care. Hear the prayers of your people, that unity may overcome division, hope vanquish despair, and joy conquer sorrow; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

A service with communion continues with the peace. After the presiding minister greets the assembly, the couple may greet each other with the kiss of peace, and the assembly may greet one another in peace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Loving God, we thank you that you have fed us in this holy meal, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. So strengthen us in your service that our daily lives may show our thanks, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OR

A service without communion continues as follows.

LORD'S PRAYER

The presiding minister may introduce the Lord's Prayer.

OPTION A: Gathered into one

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

OPTION B: Lord, remember us

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

OPTION A: Our Father in heaven

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.

OPTION B: Our Father, who art in heaven

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 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 and ever. Amen.

THE KISS OF PEACE

The couple may greet one another with a kiss using the words of 2 Corinthians 13:12.
Greet one another with a holy kiss.

PEACE

If it has not been included earlier in the service, the greeting of peace may be shared.
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

All present may greet one another with a gesture of peace, and may say,
Peace be with you

BLESSING

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing in these or similar words.
OPTION A: The blessed and holy Trinity

The blessed and holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace, now and forever.
Amen.

OPTION B: God almighty send you light and truth

God Almighty send you light and truth to keep you all the days of your life. The hand of God protect you; the holy angels accompany you; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you now and forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

An assisting minister may send the assembly forth in these or similar words.
Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

A hymn may be sung or instrumental music played as the wedding group and the ministers depart.

Suggested Scripture Readings & Hymns for Marriage

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-28 *Woman and man created in the image of God*

Genesis 2:18-24 *Companionship rather than loneliness*

Proverbs 3:3-6 *Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart*

Song of Solomon 2:10-13 *The voice of the beloved*

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 *Many waters cannot quench love*

Isaiah 63:7-9 *God's steadfast love lifts up the people*

Jeremiah 31:31-34 *The new covenant of the people of God*

PSALM

67 *May God be merciful to us and bless us*

100 *We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture*

117 *The steadfast love of the Lord*

121 *The Lord keeps watch over you*

127 *Unless the Lord builds the house*

128 *Blessed are those who walk in the Lord's ways*

150 *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord*

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 *If God is for us, who is against us*

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 *A living sacrifice and genuine love*

1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13 *The greatest gift is love*

Ephesians 3:14-19 *The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love*

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 *Walk in love, as Christ loved us*

Philippians 4:4-9 *Rejoice in the Lord always*

Colossians 3:12-17 *Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience*

1 John 3:18-24 *Let us love in truth and action*

1 John 4:7-16 *Let us love one another for love is of God*

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10 *The beatitudes*

Matthew 5:14-16 *You are the light, let your light shine*

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 *A wise person builds upon the rock*

Matthew 19:3-6 *What God has united must not be divided*

Matthew 22:35-40 *Love, the greatest commandment*

Mark 10:6-9 *They are no longer two but one*

John 2:1-11 *The wedding at Cana*

John 15:9-17 *Love one another as I have loved you*

HYMNS

ELW 312 *Jesus, Come for We Invite You*

ELW 585 *Hear Us Now, our God and Father*

ELW 586 *This is a Day, Lord, Gladly Awaited*

ELW 836 *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*

ELW 839/840 *Now Thank We All our God*