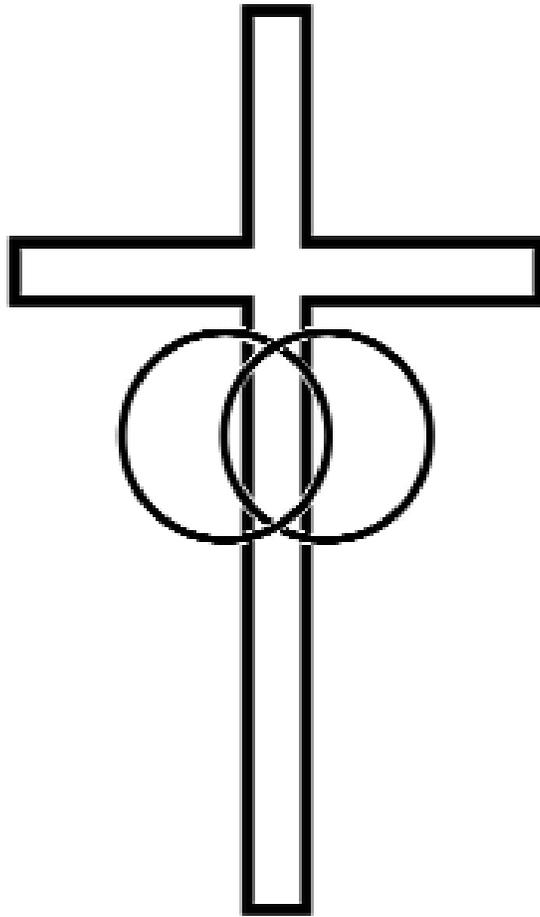


*Options  
for a  
Wedding Ceremony*



**Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

371 Wolcott Hill Road

Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109

(860) 529-5397

## ORGAN PRELUDE

### THE BRIDAL PROCESSION

#### INVOCATION

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

#### OPENING WORDS/WELCOME

**a.**

We gather today as a community of friends and relatives to celebrate the marriage of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We are here not just to observe this wedding service, but more importantly, we are here as participants gathered to share in this celebration with them. For above all, this is a service of worship. We are here, therefore, to give praise to God. God is the source of all true love, including that which binds \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to each other. Therefore, we are here to celebrate and share in the glorious act that converts that love into the holy and sacred estate of marriage.

**b.** *(Can be said during “Explanation” below.)*

Dear Friends, we are gathered in the presence of God and these witnesses to join together \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage, which was instituted by God for the welfare and happiness of humankind, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and compared by St. Paul to the union between Christ and his Church. This estate of marriage is to be held in honor by all people. Therefore, those who desire to enter this holy estate should do so with a deep sense of the seriousness of the obligations they are about to assume, (considering also what the Scriptures have to say about marriage and the responsibility of husbands and wives).

## DECLARATION OF INTENTION

*(This may take place later in the service before the vows.)*

*The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:*

*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.**

*(The minister may address the assembly in these or similar words. These may go later in the service, after the candle ceremony and before the final prayers.)*

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

**We will.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*The presiding minister leads the following or another prayer of the day.*

Let us pray.

**a.**

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.**

**b.**

Eternal God, our Creator and Redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so by his presence now bring your joy to this wedding. Look with favor upon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and grant that they, rejoicing in all your gifts, may at length celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end. **AMEN.**

## MUSIC POSSIBILITY *(optional)*

## **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**

### **MUSIC POSSIBILITY (optional)**

### **EXPLANATION OF INTENTIONS AND VOWS**

*The couple may chose one or more of the following:*

**a.**

Dear Friends, we are gathered in the presence of God and these witnesses to join together \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage, which was instituted by God for the welfare and happiness of humankind, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and compared by St. Paul to the union between Christ and his Church. This estate of marriage is to be held in honor by all people. Therefore, those who desire to enter this holy estate should do so with a deep sense of the seriousness of the obligations they are about to assume, (considering also what the Scriptures have to say about marriage and the responsibility of husbands and wives).

**b.**

Couples should bear in mind that the marriage covenant is intended to be permanent. By his apostles, Jesus instructs those who enter into marriage to cherish mutual honor and love; to bear with each other's weaknesses and faults; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble and sorrow; in honesty and diligence to provide for each other and their family in physical things; to pray for and encourage each other, especially in spiritual matters; and to live together as heirs of the grace of God.

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION** (*May take place before the readings*)

**a.**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you now stand before this company of friends and family as uniquely created children of God, to make promises to one another, to live according to the will of God in the holy estate of Marriage. If it is your intention to share with each other the joys and sorrows and all that the years will bring, and to, by your promises, bind yourselves together as husband and wife, then signify by saying, "We do."

**We do.**

**b.**

*The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:*

*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.**

*(Bride gives bouquet to maid of honor. Bride and groom face each other and join hands.)*

Into this holy estate you now come to be united. So that all people know that your mutual consent to this marriage is sincerely and freely given, I ask you in the presence of God and these witnesses to exchange your vows.

**VOWS**

Repeat after me: (*Vows are said next.*)

**a.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wife/**husband**.

From this day forward,

I promise to be faithful to you

in good times and in bad,

for richer for poorer,

in sickness and health,

and I will love and cherish you forever.

*(Vows are repeated)*

**b.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_ 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 there to I pledge you my trust.  
*(Vows are repeated)*

**c.**

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.

**d.**

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.

## **EXCHANGE OF RINGS**

*(Pastor takes rings from Best Man .)*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have chosen to exchange rings as a symbol and pledge of their love and faithfulness. The wedding ring is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, signifying to all the uniting of this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

Let us pray: Bless, O Lord, these rings which \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ give to each other. May they always serve as a perpetual reminder of love and faithfulness and of confidence in one another. Amen.

*(To the Groom/Bride)* Place this ring on \_\_\_\_\_'s finger and repeat after me:

**a.**

\_\_\_\_\_, receive this ring  
as a sign of my love and faithfulness.  
[*or:* | as a token of my wedded love and trust.]  
*(This is repeated)*

**b.**

\_\_\_\_\_, 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.

### **CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

As a symbol of the families from which \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have come,  
their mothers will come forward and light the individual candles on the  
altar.

*(Mother's of bride and groom come to altar and light the individual  
candles from the altar candles.)*

*(\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ step up to the altar. Pause as Bride's train is  
fixed.)*

**1a.**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, on the altar are two lit candles, each one  
symbolizing the fact that both of you are unique and complete  
individuals. You have been created by God with gifts and talents, tastes  
and styles, likes and dislikes, that belong to you alone. Like you, each  
of these candles are distinct, capable of radiating its own light. You  
have made the decision to combine your lives, with all your strengths and  
weaknesses, and create a new life.

**1b.**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, upon the altar two candles are burning. They  
symbolize your lives to this moment. Each is distinct, capable of  
radiating its own light. In order that joy and peace prevail in you home,  
these two lights must be blended into one.

**2a. (*not extinguishing the candles*)**

As a symbol of your unity, you will each take your candle and together light the center one. While you won't extinguish your own candles, in the same way that in marriage you don't extinguish your uniqueness as individuals, let the center candle represent the union of your lives into one.

*(They light the candle)*

**2b. (*extinguishing the candles*)**

As a symbol of this new unity, you will each take your candle and together light the center one. You will then extinguish your own candle, and in so doing, let the center one represent the union of your lives into one.

*(They light the candle)*

As this one light cannot be divided, neither should your lives be divided. Be a united witness to the joy and love of a Christian home. May the radiance of this center light testify to the unity you have in Jesus Christ.

*(They return to their places)*

**CONGREGATIONAL PROMISES**

May the congregation please rise: As friends and family of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ you are called to lend your efforts to the health and stability of this marriage. Your presence here this day is a symbol of that commitment. I now ask you, Do you promise to do all you can to recognize, affirm and support this marriage through your words, actions, love, and prayers? If so answer together: We do!

*(Congregation sits)*

**THE PRAYERS**

Let us pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in their life together

Faithful Lord, Source of love, pour down your grace upon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, that they may fulfill the vows they have made this day and reflect your steadfast love in their life-long faithfulness to each other.

*or*

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.

*(Any or all of the following petitions may be used. Others may be substituted, also.)*

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.

From your great store of strength, give them power and patience, affection and understanding, courage and love toward you, toward each other and toward the world, that they may continue together in mutual growth according to your will.

Help them to continue to grow in their love for one another, and help them to understand that in you they can find the strength to face whatever the years may bring.

Help them to see that they are called by you to use their love and talents not only for their own enrichment, but also for the healing of a broken world.

Lord, we pray for those of us who as family and friends are gathered here today to witness and affirm this union. As members of Christ's body with them, use us to support them in their marriage.

We pray not only for this couple, but for all families throughout the world. Bless the unions of all your children everywhere. Fill all of the human family with faith, hope, justice, peace, and love.

*(If a close family member has previously died or is unable to be present, the following may be used or adapted to include them in memory:)*

And finally, Lord, while we rejoice in the beauty of this day, we recognize that as a family we are not complete. We remember with love one who has gone before us (*or* who is not here today), \_\_\_\_\_. While we wish that he/she could be here this day, celebrating in person this wedding, help us to take comfort in the knowledge that he/she continues to abide in your love.

*or*

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.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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 BLESSING**

Let us rise for the benediction.

*(Congregation stands for the blessing.)*

**a.**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, may the Lord bless you with a love that makes both of you better people and the world around you a better place; May the Lord bless you with joy for living and passion for life; and may the Lord bless you with a faith that helps you soar above any storm that the years may bring, and a commitment to justice and peace that draws you to the very heart of humanity.

And may almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, direct and keep you in his light and truth and love all the days of your life. Amen.

**b.**

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, direct and keep you in his light and truth and love all the days of your life. Go with God, he promises to go with you, and go in peace. Amen.

**c.**

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.**

### **THE PRONOUNCEMENT AND DISMISSAL**

Since \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have given their mutual consent to this marriage and have witnessed the same before God and this assembly, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring and the joining of hands, I pronounce them husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. What God has joined let no one divide.

**THE KISS** (*"Permission" to kiss is optional. Whether or not it is spoken, the kiss is appropriate here.*)

\_\_\_\_\_, you may now kiss the bride.

### **RECESSIONAL**

### **POSTLUDE**

## **SUGGESTED BIBLE LESSONS**

**(You are not limited to these)**

### Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28 (Male and female he created them...)

Genesis 2:18-24 (A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh...)

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love...)

### Epistles

Romans 12:1-2 (Present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God...)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind...)

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

Philippians 4:4-7 (Rejoice in the Lord always...)

Colossians 3:12-17 (Clothe yourselves in love...)

1 John 4:7-12, (13-16) (Let us love one another...)

### Gospels

Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)

Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light...Let your light so shine...)

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock...)

Matthew 19:4-6 or Mark 10:6-9, (13-16) (They are no longer two but one flesh...)

Luke 6:32-38 (Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful...)

John 2:1-11 (The marriage at Cana)

John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you...)

*updated: Aug. 2012*