

# TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY

Hillside Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

**Minister:** Dearly beloved, we are here assembled in the presence of God to unite A \_\_\_\_\_ (groom's name) and B \_\_\_\_\_ (bride's name) in marriage.

The Bible teaches that marriage is to be a permanent relationship of one man and one woman freely and totally committed to each other as companions for life. Our Lord declared that man shall leave his father and mother and unite with his wife in the building of a home, and the two shall become one flesh.

Who gives the bride to be married?

**Bride's Father:** I do.

**Minister:** The home is built upon love, which virtue is best portrayed in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; ...So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:4-13, RSV).

Marriage is a companionship which involves mutual commitment and responsibility. You will share alike in the responsibilities and the joys of life. When companions share a sorrow the sorrow is halved, and when they share a joy the joy is doubled.

You are exhorted to dedicate your home to your Creator. Take his Word, the Bible, for your guide. Give loyal devotion to his church, thus uniting the mutual strength of these two most important institutions, living your lives as his willing servants, and true happiness will be your temporal and eternal reward.

Let us pray. (Minister prays for the couple)

**Minister to Groom:** A \_\_\_\_\_, will you take B \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wife; will you commit yourself to her happiness and her self-fulfilment as a person, and to her usefulness in God's kingdom; and will you promise to love, honor, and trust her in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to her, so long as you both shall live?

**Groom:** I will.

**Minister to Bride:** B \_\_\_\_\_, will you take A \_\_\_\_\_ to be your husband; will commit yourself to his happiness and his self-fulfilment as a person, and to his usefulness in God's kingdom; and do you promise to love, honor, trust, and serve him in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to him, so long as you both shall live?

**Bride:** I will.

**Minister:** The wedding ring is a symbol of marriage in at least two ways: the purity of gold symbolizes the purity of your love for each other, and the unending circle symbolizes the unbending vows which you are taking, which may be broken honorably in the sight of god only

by death. As a token of your vows, you will give and receive the rings.

**Minister to Groom:** A\_\_\_\_\_, you will give the ring and repeat after me: “B\_\_\_\_\_, with this ring I pledge my life and love to you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy spirit.”

**Minister to Bride:** B\_\_\_\_\_, you will give the ring and repeat after me: “A\_\_\_\_\_, with this ring I pledge my love and life to you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

**Minister:** Will both of you please repeat after me:

Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you: for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge: you people shall be my people, and your God my God (Ruth 1:16).

**Minister to Congregation:** Since they have made these commitments before God and (or, these witnesses), by the authority of God and laws of this state, I declare that A\_\_\_\_\_ and B\_\_\_\_\_ are husband and wife.

**Minister to Couple:** A\_\_\_\_\_ and B\_\_\_\_\_, you are no longer two independent persons but one. “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6).

(Couple will kneel for Communion)

**Minister to Couple:** If your marriage is to be maintained at a high level of mutual benefit, the sacred aspect must be continued throughout its entire course. Two people are not married in the ceremony of an hour; you only begin to be married. What is begun must continue with growing meaning as long as life shall last.

The dangers which married life faces are so great that only a strong moral commitment and spiritual motivations can last. Mere physical attractiveness will not suffice. Only the love of God will suffice.

In the ancient oriental culture, when two people entered into agreement one with the other, they sealed the covenant by breaking bread and drinking a cup together. To break faith with one whom you had broken bread, was considered a most atrocious breach of contract. When people were to be separated for a time, they broke bread and shared drink, meaning that they would be faithful to one another.

This is the Lord’s table. Jesus himself instituted the Supper. It memorializes the atoning death of Jesus Christ. It perpetuates the gospel of redeeming grace. It is a celebration, a thanksgiving for Christ’s gift to us, an acknowledgment of his living presence in the act of worship.

This is your first act of worship as husband and wife. By taking this Communion it symbolizes that you both desire to put Christ first in your marriage. Christ becomes the corner stone on which to build your marriage and to allow it to grow. Now, take and eat never forgetting these things.

(Couple will light the Unity Candle)