

Father Dyer UMC Combined Service

<Welcome>

Friends, we are gathered here at this hour to witness and to celebrate the coming together of two separate lives. We have come to join this man, _____, and this woman, _____, in marriage... to be with them and rejoice with them in the making of this important commitment. The essence of this commitment is the taking of another person in his or her entirety, as lover, companion, and friend. It is therefore a decision which is not to be entered into lightly, but rather undertaken with great consideration and respect for both the other person and oneself.

<Presentation of bride>

Who presents _____ to be married to _____?

<Family Segment – optional>

<Reading One – optional>>

<Homily>

Love adds depth and meaning to our lives, and is one of the highest experiences human beings can have. The sensual part of love is one of life's greatest joys, and when this is combined with real friendship, both are infinitely enhanced. Day-to-day companionship, and the pleasure in doing things together... the pleasure of doing separate things and delighting in exchanging experiences, are all central and continuous parts of what a man and a woman who love each other share.

Marriage symbolizes the intimate communion of two lives... a sharing that enhances the individuality of each partner. A marriage that lasts is one which is continually developing...one in which each person is individually developing, while growing in understanding of the other.

Deep knowledge of another is not something that can be achieved in a short time... and real understanding of another's feelings can develop fully only with years of intimacy. This wonderful union grows out of caring for the other so much that one wants to understand as completely as possible what the other is feeling. Thus, it is possible to share not only joys and successes, but the burden of sorrows and failures as well. To be known in this way is a priceless thing.

But, again, while marriage is the intimate sharing of two lives, it can yet enhance the differences and individuality of each partner. We must give ourselves in love, but we must not give ourselves away. A good and balanced relationship is one in which neither person is overpowered nor absorbed by the other. Thus, the separateness and union that is love, whose strength is equal only to its fragility, are born and reborn.

We are here today, then, to celebrate the love that _____ and _____ have for each other, and to give social recognition to their decision to accept each other totally and permanently. Into this state of marriage these two persons come now to be united.

<Reading Two – optional>

<Question>

Are you ready to be married?

<Vows>

(Bride passes bouquet to maid of honor; the couple faces each other)

(Groom:) _____, I take you as my wife. I pledge to share my life openly with you, and to speak the truth to you in love. I promise to honor, cherish and tenderly care for you, and to encourage your own fulfillment as an individual through all the days of our lives. I will be yours in plenty and

in want, in sickness and in health, in failure and in triumph.

(Bride:) _____, I take you as my husband. I pledge to share my life openly with you, and to speak the truth to you in love. I promise to honor, cherish, and tenderly care for you, and to encourage your own fulfillment as an individual through all the days of our lives. I will be yours in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in failure and in triumph.

<Meaning of the Rings>

In the presence of God and of these families, seal these promises now with rings... sign and token of the life you enter together, the world you will create - single, whole and full.

Do you have rings?

<Blessing of the Rings>

Bless these rings, O Lord, that in giving them and receiving them, these children of yours may be strengthened in the commitments they make in this hour. Let them dwell in your favor, and continue faithful to each other and to you through all the days of their lives, we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

<Ring Vows>

(Bride and Groom repeat after officiant separately)

I give you this ring as a symbol of my constant and abiding love.

<Pronouncement of Marriage>

(Couple place hands atop one another, officiant places hand atop)

Since _____ and _____ have vowed to be loyal and loving toward each other, formalizing in our presence the existence of the bond between them, we bear witness to the ceremony they have performed - the ceremony that has made them husband and wife.

<Unity Candle – optional >

<Pastoral Prayer of Blessing>

(Bride and Groom face each other)

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your children, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen.

<The Lord's Prayer>

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, they 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Bride gets bouquet back from maid of honor, they face each other)

<Closing Prayer>

May these two people, now married, keep this covenant which they have made. May they be a blessing and a comfort to each other, sharers of each other's joys, consolers in each other's sorrows, helpers to each other in all the ups and downs of life. May they encourage each other in whatever they set out to achieve. May they, trusting in each other, trust life and not be afraid. Yet may they not only accept and give affection between themselves, but also together, have affection and consideration for others.

We who are here present, and those who are absent thinking of these two people, hope that the inspiration of this hour will not be forgotten. May they continue to love one another forever.

<Benediction>

**God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, bless, preserve, and keep you.
The Lord mercifully with favor look upon you and fill you with all spiritual
benediction and grace, that you may so live together in this life, that in the
world to come you may have life everlasting. Amen.**

<The Kiss>

<Introduce Couple>

I know present to you _____ and _____.

<Recessional>