**Covenant Wedding Ceremony**

**(adapted from selections at** [**www.covenantmarriage.com/couplefiles**](http://www.covenantmarriage.com/couplefiles)**)**

**CONGREGATIONAL HYMN—The Doxolgy**

***WELCOME***:

(Please be seated)

I welcome each of you today to witness the marriage of **GROOM** and **BRIDE**.
**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, take a moment to look around you and behind you at these friends and family gathered here. Every one of us is here with you to worship God, to celebrate your union, and to encourage and support you as you enter your new life together. God has blessed you two with a powerful love for one another. You’ve been patient as you have waited for this day but while you waited you worked hard to prepare yourselves in every way for a happy life together. Let us pray.

***OPENING PRAYER***

Dear Heavenly Father, this is an exciting time for these two young people. All of us here desire to feel your powerful presence with us today. You have wonderfully made us to unite with one special person whom you have made to be our complement, our soul mate, our life mate. In your time, you arranged for **GROOM** and **BRIDE** to find each other. Today they come desiring to be united as one. Pour out your blessing on all of us this hour and especially on the marriage of these two special people. In Jesus name, Amen.

***THE GIVING OF THE BRIDE***

Who gives this woman in marriage?

FOB: “Her mother and I.”

***THE STATEMENT OF MARRIAGE***

**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, what images come to mind when you hear the word marriage?

You probably picture loved ones or friends who are married – perhaps your parents. You may envision the two of you.
How did God see marriage when he created it for mankind?

In the church, marriage is most often seen as an institution. Marriage is understood as having been instituted by God. It was His design and plan for the human race. In creation, God declared, “It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him.” It was God who brought Eve to Adam after creating her, in effect pronouncing the first marriage union. In the New Testament, the husband and wife are said to be “joined together” by God. Jesus is seen as sanctioning marriage by His attendance at the marriage in Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a God-given institution created and blessed for our benefit. As a Body of Believers, we hold to the belief that God views marriage as a covenant. In the Bible, marriage is spoken of as a covenant and therefore we accept this view as our own.

A covenant is the most solemn binding relationship into which two parties can enter. As a holy covenant made in the name of God, Christian marriage is a freely chosen, lifelong, exclusive relationship between the husband and wife under the authority of God.

Marriage is not a contract but a covenant. It is important to note the difference between a covenant and a contract. A covenant is based on trust and selflessness between parties; a contract is based on distrust and self-interest. A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility; a contract is based on limited liability. A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur. A contract can be voided by mutual consent.

How strong is the bond of the marriage covenant? The marital bond is to be one of total commitment, complete faithfulness, selflessness, and permanence. Established and blessed by God, the marriage covenant is not to be broken. It is to be honored among all people. The Bible says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, today you must leave your parents and cleave to the spouse God has given you. With your new spouse you will experience the strongest of all human bonds – the covenant of marriage.

**GROOM**, believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, do you vow to God, to **BRIDE**, your family, and your community, to remain steadfast in selfless and unconditional love for her and do you promise to always seek reconciliation in times of trial? Do you promise to remain faithful and pure in mind and body while purposefully growing personally and spiritually in your covenant marriage relationship?

(***GROOM***, “I Do”)

**BRIDE**, believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, do you vow to God, to **GROOM**, your family, and your community to remain steadfast in selfless and unconditional love and respect for him and do you promise to always seek reconciliation in times of trial? Do you promise to remain faithful and pure in mind and body while purposefully growing personally and spiritually in your covenant marriage relationship?

(***BRIDE***, “I Do”)

***GOSPEL MESSAGE***

***SLIDESHOW- A Page is Turned***

**READING- These Hands- MOH & BEST MAN**

**MOH** reads:
**BRIDE**, please hold **GROOM**’s hands, palms up, so you may see the gift that they are to you.
These are the hands, young and strong and vibrant with love, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as he promises to love you all the days of his life.
These are the hands that look so large and clumsy, yet will be so gentle as he holds your baby for the first time.
These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness.
These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes: tears of sorrow and tears of joy.
These are the hands that will tenderly lift your chin and brush your cheek as they raise your face to look into his eyes: eyes that are filled completely with his overwhelming love for you.
**BEST MAN** reads:
**GROOM**, please hold **BRIDE**’s hands, palms up, so you may see the gift that they are to you.
These are the hands, smooth, young, and carefree, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as she pledges her love and commitment to you all the days of her life.
These are the hands that will hold each child in tender love, soothing them through illness and hurts, supporting and encouraging them along the way, and knowing when it’s time to let go.
These are the hands that will massage tension from your neck and back in the evenings, after you’ve both had a long hard day.
These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times.
These are the hands that will comfort you when you are sick or console you when you are grieving. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness.
These are the hands that will give you support as she encourages you to chase down your dreams. Together, as a team, following God’s plan for your lives.

***THE VOWS***

**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, are you ready now to be joined in this covenant of marriage?

Say: We are

The vows you are about to make are the most important pledges you will ever make to one another. I pray that you will remain faithful to the promises you make today all the days of your lives.

**GROOM** and **BRIDE** face each other and repeat these vows after me.

**GROOM**, repeat after me.

“I, **GROOM**, enter into this covenant of marriage with you, **BRIDE**./ I promise always to love you as my wife/ and to completely give myself and all that I have to you./ I pledge to care for you for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health /I will strive to live before you a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ./ I will love, honor, and respect you all the days of my life.

**BRIDE**, repeat after me.

I, **BRIDE**, enter into this covenant of marriage with you, **GROOM**./ I promise always to love you as my husband/ and to completely give myself and all that I have to you./ I pledge to care for you for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health /I will strive to live before you a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ./ I will love, honor, and respect you all the days of my life.

***THE RINGS***

**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, you will now place rings on each other’s hands as symbols of these vows of faith and love.

The exchanging of the rings expresses the couple's promise of faithfulness to each other. The unending circle of the ring is a symbol of eternity. The wedding ring is the outward expression of the inward bond, as two hearts unite as one, promising to love each other with fidelity for all eternity. Wearing of the wedding bands throughout the couple's lifetime will tell all others of their commitment to be faithful., From this time forward, let your wedding ring remind you of the gift of God you have in your mate and the power of Christ you have in your marriage.

**GROOM**, place the ring on **BRIDE**’s finger and repeat after me.

“**BRIDE**, I give you this ring/ as a symbol of my commitment to you/ and, thereby, seal this covenant of marriage.”

**BRIDE**, place the ring on **GROOM**’s finger and repeat after me.

“**GROOM**, I give you this ring/ as a symbol of my commitment to you/ and, thereby, seal this covenant of marriage.”

**CORD OF THREE STRANDS**

As **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** reads, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Today, **GROOM**and **BRIDE**have chosen to braid three strands together into a single cord. The braiding of the three stands demonstrates how **GROOM**and **BRIDE**are joined by God in marriage. Each strand has a significant meaning.

*The Gold Strand*symbolizes that the Lord Jesus has been invited by **GROOM**and **BRIDE**to the position of authority in this marriage relationship.

*The Purple Strand*represents the **GROOM**. It illustrates the majesty of God as head over the husband. As **GROOM**submits himself to the Lord, the Lord in turn will hold the marriage together through him.

*The White Strand*represents the **BRIDE**. It illustrates the purity of the Bride of Christ. As each has received Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, they are cleansed through Christ.

In braiding these three strands together, **GROOM**and **BRIDE**have demonstrated that their marriage is more than a joining of two lives together. It is a unity with God as well. They have chosen to allow God to be at the center of their marriage, woven into every aspect of it.

*Love Never Fails (played while we’re braiding the cord)*

***SIGNING OF MARRIAGE COVENANT***

**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, at the conclusion of this service I will sign and send your marriage license to the courts for legal purposes. But far greater than this and prior to the signing of such a document, you have expressed a desire to place your signatures on this Covenant Marriage Certificate which will stand as a witness to all those who enter your home that your marriage covenant before God supersedes any and all licensing of the court.

 *(****GROOM*** *and* ***BRIDE****, turn and face the congregation.)*

***CHARGE TO THE GUESTS (PASTOR SPEAKING)***

“Dear friends and family, as God has joined this couple together in His Covenant of Marriage through this Community of Faith, will you encourage and support them in their life in God’s kingdom? Will you stand by them in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, be true and loyal to God in support of this covenant relationship holding them accountable to their covenant, so long as they both shall live? If so answer, “We will.”

**GROOM** and **BRIDE** also ask you to affirm your covenant with them by signing your names on papers at the back of the sanctuary at the end of the service.

**GROOM** and **BRIDE**, do you wish to affirm your Covenant Marriage by signing this Covenant Marriage Certificate?

“We do.”

*When I Say I Do (played while Covenant is being signed)*

 *{The couple signs the Marriage Covenant.}*

*{The Bridal party and pastors sign the Marriage Covenant}*

***THE PRONOUNCEMENT***

Since **GROOM** and **BRIDE** have entered into this covenant before God and this Family, by the authority of God, the affirmation of this Community of Faith, and the laws of the state of \_\_\_\_\_, I declare that they are husband and wife. What God has brought together, let no man put asunder.

***GROOM****, you may kiss your wife.*

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. and Mrs. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.