

# COMMENCEMENT OF CEREMONY

*Prelude music is playing.*

*Doors open.*

*Pastor and bridegroom enter and approach.*

*Grandmother of bride, and Timothy, enter and sit.*

*Mother of bride, and Dale, enter and sit.*

*Groomsmen and bridesmaids enter.*

*Groomsmen and bridesmaids approach, best man and maiden of honor last.*

*Flower girl enters.*

*Doors shut.*

*Flower girl approaches, tossing flowers.*

# PROCESSION

*Doors open.*

*Wagner's Wedding March begins to play.*

*Bride and father enter.*

*Everyone stands, led by mother of bride.*

*Upon arrival of bride, congregation sits and the doors close.*

# DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

## MINISTER

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the presence of God and these witnesses to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

### Short Option

Matrimony is an honorable estate, instituted of God when the world was made, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ honored marriage, performing his first miracle at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Therefore marriage is not by any to be enterprised unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God.] Into this holy estate these two persons, Aaron and Serena, come now to be joined.

### Long Option

God himself instituted marriage at the beginning in the Garden of Eden, before sin entered the world. He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." Thereupon God created woman of man's own substance and brought her to the man. Our Lord Jesus Christ honored marriage by his presence and first miracle at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. And he confirmed it as a divine ordinance and as a union not to be severed when he declared, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh'? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Moreover, the Holy Spirit sets forth the sacred and exalted nature of marriage when he likens it to the mystical union that exists between Christ and his redeemed bride, the church, saying, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Accordingly, God has designed marriage for the enrichment of the lives of those who enter into this estate, for the orderly propagation of the human race, and for the avoidance of sexual immorality, all to the glory of the covenant God.

Husbands and wives thus have responsibilities befitting God's purposes for their relationship. The Holy Scripture says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for [her]." The husband is to love his wife as his own body, to care for her, and to cherish her. The Holy Scripture says also, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." The wife is to submit to her husband, to respect him, and to entrust herself to his loving care. Both husbands and wives are to be faithful to each other, to assist each other in all good things, to heartily forgive each other their sins and shortcomings, and to love each other as themselves. Thus united in love, they will more and more reflect in their marriage the unity of Christ and his church.

# PUBLIC DECLARATION OF CONSENT

*Bride and bridegroom face minister.*

MINISTER

Aaron, will you have Serena to be your lawfully wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of marriage? And will you love her as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, will you comfort her, honor and cherish her, and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto her as long as you both shall live?

BRIDEGROOM

I will.

MINISTER

Serena, will you have Aaron to be your lawfully wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of marriage? And will you love him, comfort him, respect and submit to him even as the church submits to Christ, and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto him as long as you both shall live?

BRIDE

I will.

# PUBLIC TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

MINISTER

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

FATHER

I do.

*Father places bride's right hand in the bridegroom's right hand and sits.*

# PRAYER

MINISTER

Optional

Most holy and most merciful Father, at once the God of nature and of grace, Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of mankind, fountain of life, of love, and of joy and peace, whose presence is the happiness of every condition; we beseech you to be present and favorable to these, your servants, and to fill them with a sense of the solemnity of the vows they are about to make. Enable them, we pray, to remember and to keep these vows, looking to you for your assistance, and help them to enter into these sacred obligations in humble dependence upon your enabling grace. Grant this, O Father, with the forgiveness of our sins, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

# HOMILY

*At this time it is fitting for the minister to give a short message from the Word of God appropriate to the occasion.*

# SINGING

MINISTER

The bride and bridegroom have selected two songs for us all to sing together. In the back of the pews you will find a blue book. Turn to number seven hundred thirty-one. Seven three one.

*Everyone sings.*

MINISTER

Amen; and the other is number six hundred twenty-six. Six two six.

*Everyone sings.*

# EXCHANGE OF VOWS

MINISTER; BRIDEGROOM REPEATS

I, Aaron, do take thee, Serena,  
to be my married wife,  
and do, in the presence of God, and before this congregation,  
promise and covenant to be a loving and faithful husband unto thee,  
in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow,  
until God shall separate us at death.

MINISTER; BRIDE REPEATS

I, Serena, do take thee, Aaron,  
to be my married husband,  
and do, in the presence of God, and before this congregation,  
promise and covenant to be a loving, faithful, and obedient wife unto thee,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
until God shall separate us at death.

# EXCHANGE OF RINGS

*Maiden of honor and best man step closer.*

MINISTER

What symbol do you give as a pledge that you will faithfully perform these vows?

*Best man gives ring to bridegroom.*

*Bridegroom puts ring on bride's left hand.*

BRIDEGROOM

This ring I give you as a token and pledge of constant faith and abiding love.

MINISTER

What symbol do you give as a pledge that you will faithfully perform these vows?

*Maiden of honor gives ring to bride.*

*Bride puts ring on bridegroom's left hand.*

BRIDE

This ring I give you as a token and pledge of constant faith and abiding love.

# PRAYER

MINISTER

Optional

Most merciful and gracious God, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, we beseech you, set the seal of your approval upon the marriage into which our brother and sister have entered this day. Grant them your fatherly blessing. Work in them the grace of your Holy Spirit. Enable them to fulfill with pure and constant affection the vow and covenant made between them. Guide them in the way of righteousness and peace, that, loving and serving you with one mind and heart all the days of their life, they may be abundantly enriched with the tokens of your everlasting favor in Christ Jesus our Lord. In all of life's experiences, lift up your countenance upon them, that they may be thankful in prosperity and patient in adversity. May their marriage be fruitful for this life and for the life to come. Grant them wisdom and strength to build a home that will be to the glory of your name and the coming of your kingdom. May they live together many years, and in the hour of death may they part in the blessed hope of celebrating forever with all the saints of God the marriage of Christ and the church he loved. Hear our prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



# PRONOUNCEMENT

*Minister joins their hands.*

MINISTER

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

MINISTER

Forasmuch as Aaron and Serena have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining hands; I pronounce that they are man and wife.

# KISS

MINISTER

You may now seal your commitment with a kiss.

*They kiss.*

# BLESSING

*Minister raises hands shoulder-level to address couple.*

MINISTER

The Lord our God fill you with his grace, and grant that you may long live together in all godliness and holiness. Amen.

# PRESENTATION

*Minister lifts his hands a bit higher to address the congregation.*

MINISTER

It now gives me great pleasure to present to you, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Brown.

# RECESSION

*Mendelssohn's Wedding March begins to play.*

*Bride and bridegroom exit.*

*Best man and maiden of honor exit.*

*Other groomsmen and bridesmaids exit.*

*Minister exits.*

*Parents of bride exit.*