

# **The Wedding Service**

## **Outline and options**

Rev Silvia Purdie, Cashmere Presbyterian Church

Weddings have a traditional form, and some legal parts, but there is plenty of room for creativity and how you wish to celebrate your wedding as a unique couple. This Outline is flexible and a 'starter for 10' as we discuss and plan together. What I offer as a Minister and marriage celebrant is a Christian wedding, which includes some prayers to welcome the presence of God and ask for God's blessing on you, a Bible reading and a brief comment from myself in honour of the commitments you make. This normally takes half an hour.

## **Setting up**

Our cleaner arrives one hour before your wedding to open up and get everything ready, including putting the white satin bows on the pews, and putting out cones ready for the wedding cars.

You will need to arrange flowers for the front of the church (1 or 2 bunches) and we ask that you leave these behind after your wedding for the church to enjoy. We have vases available, in the side room.

You are also free to decorate the church in your own personal style. Options could include candles, other displays, photos to remember people not present ...

Would you like to print an 'order of service' to hand to people as they arrive? it can be nice for folks to have a record of your 'big day', and it can include the names of those in the Wedding Party, any poems/readings/music. Normally you are responsible for getting this printed, but we can help with this.

If you would like to show a powerpoint of photographs this can be done (the screen retracts into the ceiling).

I will ask you if you would like me to wear traditional Minister's robes (white robe with a coloured 'stole' scarf), or dress more informal.

Will there be children at the service? At the church we have toys, books and clipboards for colouring/drawing, and a space at the back for children to play.

*Colours:*

*Decoration:*

*Service Sheet:*

*Silvia to wear:*

*Children:*

## **The first part: 'Coming Together'**

Traditionally the Groom and male attendants arrive at the church early, welcome guests and wait for the Bride. (Please, ladies, try not to be more than 10 minutes late. It always takes longer than you think to do those last minute preparations!)

You also need to ask a couple of people to be on 'door duty' to welcome people. They need to be at least 30 minutes early.

**Procession:** The Bride 'walks down the aisle', normally with her father (bridesmaids & any flower girls first, Bride last). You need to choose music for this.

**Welcome:** All the wedding party stand at the front (looking gorgeous!) while I welcome everyone. It is important to acknowledge those who cannot be there, especially those who have died. I also talk for a moment about marriage and why we are here.

**Families** coming together: Traditionally this is symbolized when the Bride's father 'hands her over' to the Groom. I encourage the parents/families to make some act or statement of support for the marriage. This can be done by lighting candles, hugs & handshakes.

**Prayer:** I will do a short opening prayer.

**Readings:** We can sing at this point, then someone reads a poem about love & marriage. and a Bible (or other) reading.

*Procession music:*

*People to acknowledge (esp those not present):*

*Symbols?*

*Readings:*

*1: (poem)*

*Read by:*

*2: (Bible)*

**Music:** You can play music from laptop or ipod through our sound system. Or we can arrange an organist. If you have a friend or family member who is a musician it is lovely to have live music.

## The central part: 'Getting Married'

At this point the Wedding Party can sit down (either in pews or other chairs), so that the focus is just on the couple making your vows). Or if you'd rather they stay standing at the front that is fine.

### **1) Statement of Intention**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ do you come freely and wholeheartedly to give yourselves in marriage to one another?

**WE DO**

*Community support question:*

S: (to congregation) Do you, their family and friends, fully support them in this?

**All: WE DO!!**

*Traditional option:*

Do you call upon these people here, in the presence of God, to witness your commitment today as you embark upon the journey of marriage, confident that this is God's best purpose for your lives?

**WE DO**

### **2) Vows**

With the vows, you can either say them yourself, or repeat lines after me, or we can phrase them as questions and you say 'I do'.

Do you, ..., take ... to be your husband?

**I DO**

**I, ..., take you, ..., to be my wife ...**

*Traditional:*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_  
to be my wife/husband, and give myself to be your husband/wife,  
to have and to hold from this day forward  
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,  
in sickness and in health, to love, honour and cherish,  
for as long as we both shall live.

OR:

Do you, \_\_\_\_\_, take \_\_\_\_\_  
to be your wife/husband, and give yourself to be his/her husband/wife,  
to have and to hold from this day forward  
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,  
in sickness and in health, to love, honour and cherish,  
for as long as you both shall live?

**I DO**

*Feel free to rework the wording of the vows to be most meaningful to you.*

*Alternative A: (short and sweet)*

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

Whatever life may bring I will love you and care for you always.

*Alternative B: (offering)*

\_\_\_\_\_, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you.

Whatever the future holds, I will love you and strengthen you, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

*Alternative C: (covenant)*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, covenant with you, \_\_\_\_\_  
to be your lawful wife/husband, in the partnership of marriage.

In joy and sorrow, sickness or health, poverty or riches,  
I will honour you and be with you.

*Optional personal statements of love*

If there is anything you'd like to say or promise to each other, now is the time for that.

### **3) Rings**

*The Best Man (hopefully!!) produces the rings and I bless them.*

Wedding rings are a visible, tangible sign of the invisible bond between you. As a ring is without seam or end, may your love share in the eternal love that is the heart of the living God. As a wedding ring is made of the finest materials the earth can offer, crafted with the utmost care, so may your marriage cultivate over the years the most precious things that human life can offer.

Wear these rings with pride. May they remind you always of your wholehearted commitment to be faithful, respectful, honest and kind to one another.

*As you give each other the rings you repeat after me:*

**I give you this ring  
as a sign of our vows  
and a token of our love.**

*Uber-traditional option:*

With this Ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow.

#### **4) Declaration and kiss**

You are now joined in the holy bond of marriage.

May nothing and no one come between you.

May you find each and every day the grace and the strength to grow in intimacy and companionship.

I pronounce you husband and wife, and invite you to "kiss the Bride" (and everyone will cheer & clap!)

This is also a moment to state your married name, if the Bride is changing her name.

#### **5) Signing the Register**

We play some music while we sign the certificate and smile for the camera.

There will be 2 copies of the Marriage Licence to sign, plus the church's Register. It helps if I can write in beforehand the details, including the address of your 2 Witnesses.

*Vows:*

*Witnesses:*

*Music:*

### The final part: 'Being Married'

**Silvia's Words:** I will then ask you to relax for a minute. No need to dash out. I will have something to say to you as you begin your married life together.

There could be a song.

**Prayer of blessing:** I like to conclude your wedding service by praying for God's blessing on you as a couple and family. Others could gather around to pray for you, so this is a good time for the Wedding Party to come up the front again and stand behind you.

**Benediction:** I will do a benediction (a blessing for everyone)

**Procession:** then everyone will stand as you will process out (you'll need music for this). Couple first, then the Wedding party, normally paired male-female. At Cashmere you would normally process out the old door and gather around outside for photos and hugs. However if the weather is unpleasant you can process out the internal door and people can mingle in the foyer or hall.

Done!

*Prayer:*

*Music:*

*What happens after the service:*

## Wedding Rehearsal

We need to make a time (normally 1-2 days beforehand) to meet for a Rehearsal. We don't need your full Wedding Party present, but it is helpful to have you 2 plus others involved. This takes about an hour.  
Please bring your Marriage Licence.

*Wedding rehearsal date/time:*

## Getting your Marriage Licence

Couples need to fill out their notice of intended marriage online at

<https://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-marriage-licence>

within 3 months of your wedding (and more than a week before, please!)

Cost is \$150

After the ceremony I scan and email the certificate to: [bdmtoregister@dia.govt.nz](mailto:bdmtoregister@dia.govt.nz).  
and copy you into this.

To order a computer-print-out formal Wedding Certificate:

<https://www.govt.nz/browse/family-and-whanau/getting-married/get-a-marriage-certificate/>

Cost: \$33 for original and \$25 each for additional copies

## Relax!

One final thing ... There's a lot of pressure for your wedding to be PERFECT. No doubt you want your wedding day to be wonderful, free of rain, stuff-ups or crying children. But we're only human and mistakes happen. I will do my best to make your wedding ceremony beautiful and meaningful. But I don't guarantee perfection. And you will enjoy the day more if you can ride with the glitches and relax during the service.